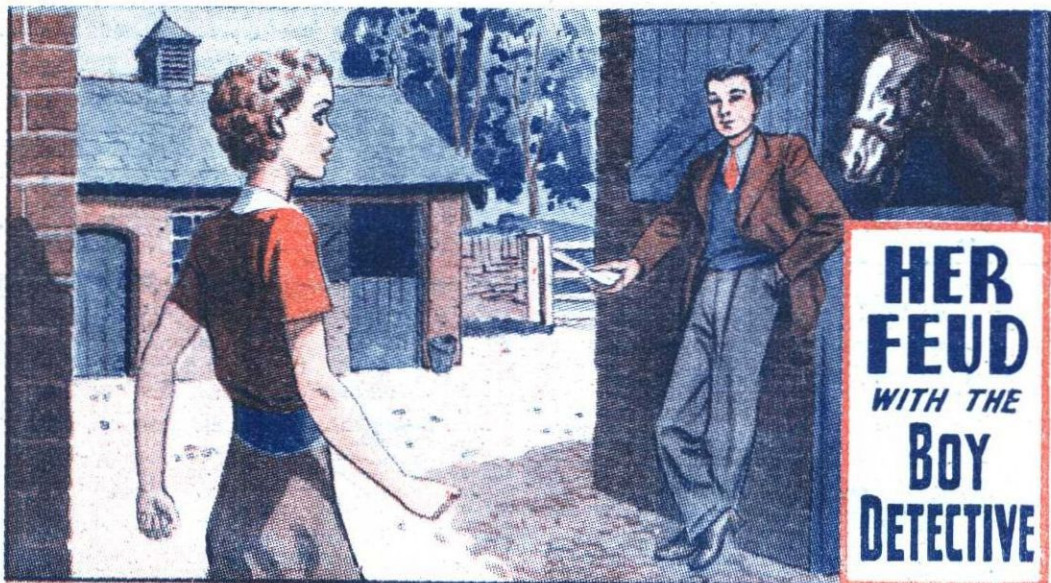


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# GIRLS' CRYSTAL <sup>3<sup>d</sup></sup>

AND "THE SCHOOLGIRL"

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## HER FEUD WITH THE BOY DETECTIVE

Avril Shannon Liked The Boy Detective, Yet She Was Compelled To Engage In A Desperate Battle Of Wits With Him—By RENEE FRAZER

### THE FUGITIVE

"SMOKE!" breathed Avril Shannon as she reined in her filly on the lonely moor. "Smoke coming from the rocks!"

She brushed back her fair hair, shading her eyes from the glare of the sun.

Smoke there was—a thin blue trail of it, and it seemed to be rising from a clump of gorse and scattered rocks in a near-by hollow.

Black Diamond moved restlessly, tossing her head and sniffing the air.

"Steady, my pet!" breathed Avril, patting the animal's glossy mane. "Just a little canter to the hollow—and back to the stables for some well-earned oats!"

As though it understood, the black filly whinnied faintly, stretching its neck to crop the grass.

Avril's attractive face was flushed from the keen breeze, and there was a sparkle of excitement in her eyes. Only a week more to the Grenville Stakes, and the Ladies' Steeplechase in which she and Black Diamond were taking part!

Then—if she succeeded—the coveted post of assistant to Mr. Hunter, the famous owner-trainer, was hers for the asking!

For barely eighteen months she had been employed at the Red Holm Stables—as stable-girl, groom—and now deputy assistant to young Mr. Vernon. Next month Mr. Vernon was leaving to go into business on his own—and the great Mr. Hunter himself had sent for Avril, and offered her the vacancy—on condition that she won the race!

Avril's eyes shone at the thought as, faintly curious, she watched the distant whisp of smoke.

Mr. Hunter had entered two horses for the

meeting—Rajah, the handsome bay, pride of the stables; and the filly, Black Diamond, for the ladies' race.

A last-minute catastrophe had spoilt Rajah's chance—for young Mick Carter, the boy jockey, had absconded, robbing his employer of some valuable jewellery. And Rajah refused to be ridden by any other than the boy who had trained him.

Mick's treachery had come as a terrible shock to everyone at the stables. The filly was now Mr. Hunter's only hope—and he was relying on Avril.

"We'll show them, Diamond!" she breathed, her hand tightening on the rein. "Now—to investigate the little mystery!"

A touch of the whip and Black Diamond was away at a canter. As they neared the hollow Avril drew rein and slid from the saddle, leading her mount cautiously among the gorse and scattered rocks.

Then, as she rounded a huge boulder, her heart gave a violent jump.

She was staring into a shallow cave—and crouching by a smouldering fire, partly screened by a rough bank of earth and moss, was a boy!

A boy wearing soiled riding-breeches and leggings, his tousled hair uncombed, his dark eyes defiant against the pallor of his face.

"Mick!" exclaimed Avril in startled tones. "Mick Carter! So this is where you've been hiding?"

The boy gave a mirthless laugh as he rose to his knee, and Avril was conscious of a sudden pang as she noticed that one of his sleeves was ripped to the elbow and his arm roughly bandaged.

"Yes—this is where I've been hiding," he retorted defiantly, "and now, I suppose, the

game's up. Well—why don't you say something, Miss Avril! Call me a thief—a rotter, if you like—don't just stare at me!"

Avril drew a quick breath, advancing a step. She had always liked Mick Carter. There was something about the boy's rugged, slightly whimsical face that invited trust; yet everyone knew that Mick had been caught red-handed—and had escaped by hitting out at his captor, young Mr. Vernon.

"Mick—why did you do it?" asked Avril quietly.

The young fellow shrugged, with a twisted smile.

"If you mean why did I slobber Mr. Vernon—well, I was pretty desperate and lost my head, I guess. But as for pinching the old man's valuables—I didn't, Miss Avril—and that's the truth!"

Avril's eyes lit up.

"Mick—honest?"

"Sure!" said Mick. "You know me, Miss Avril. Listen."

Briefly and dramatically, while Avril listened, her hand on Black Diamond's glossy mane, Mick recounted the story of the fateful night. He had gone round to Mr. Hunter's house to ask for a rise, owing to money troubles at home. The door had been ajar, and no one answered his knock. As he stepped into the darkened hall someone had brushed into him; there was a struggle, and Mick had gone down under a vicious blow.

He was groping dazedly for the switch when old Mr. Hunter had returned unexpectedly, accompanied by Howard Vernon, the assistant trainer. Accused of burglary, Mick had lost his head, struck out at the young trainer, and dashed out on to the moor.

The next morning he had learnt of the theft of valuable jewellery, and had not dared to return.

In spite of her better judgment, Avril was convinced by the boy's tone—the gleam in his dark eyes. She drew a quick breath.

"Mick—I believe you!" she breathed. "And

—and I'm going to prove your innocence!"

"Gosh—Miss Avril, d'you mean that?" The boy's face lit up. "If you could, I'd—" He broke off suddenly, his hands clenching, as he stared out across the moor. "It's too late!" he groaned. "He—he's on my trail!"

"Who?" gasped Avril, startled, as she followed the direction of his pointing finger.

In the distance she saw a debonaire figure in immaculate tweeds strolling among the bushes. His back was towards them, and he halted to scan the moor through a pair of binoculars.

"That's Rex Barrington—the son of the famous 'tec!" breathed Mick. "He's come down here at Mr. Hunter's request, as his dad's on another case. I heard him talking to one of the stable-hands this morning—I was crouching in the bushes only a few yards away. He's on my track, right enough!"

Avril's face paled slightly and her heart beat more quickly. So that was Rex Barrington—the boy sleuth of whom she had heard so much. And he was on Mick's trail!

Her hands clenched and her mind worked swiftly. Where he stood, on a small hillock, the boy detective was plainly visible to his quarry; but the cave where Mick was hiding was screened by the dense bushes.

"Mick—he shan't find you!" Avril breathed. "Leave this to me. We've got to outwit him, between us—and prove your innocence. Quickly—give me your cap!"

"My—my cap!" echoed Mick uncomprehendingly, as Avril bent swiftly to snatch up the crumpled check cap that lay on the ground beside him. "Miss Avril—I don't know what you're going to do," he ventured, "but don't go running into trouble through me. You've got the race to think of—"

"I'm thinking of it!" breathed Avril, as she scrawled something hastily on the page of a little pocket diary, while keeping one eye on

the distant boy sleuth. "And I'm thinking of the honour of the stable, Mick! Listen—you can't stay here, or Rex Barrington'll find you. I'm going to decoy him away—never mind how. You know the old barn at the back of Holmstead Spinney?"

Mick nodded.

"Make your way there," whispered Avril, "and hide in the loft. No one ever goes near it. I'll keep in touch with you and bring you food—"

"Bless you, Miss Avril!"

Avril hastily checked his thanks as she anxiously watched the distant figure.

"Good-bye for the present, Mick!" she breathed.

Seizing her chance as the boy detective moved out of sight, Avril led Black Diamond out of the hollow and, mounting swiftly, galloped for a few hundred yards to a clump of trees. Concealed there, she waited, making certain preparations, till she saw the boy sleuth's elegant figure stroll into view.

He was much closer to her now, and he appeared to be examining certain marks on the ground through a magnifying-glass. Avril smiled as she touched Black Diamond lightly with the rein and cantered out to meet the boy, dropping the cap on her way.

He straightened abruptly at their approach, an expression of surprise crossing his good-looking face. He was a year or two older than Avril—lean and sun-tanned, and with an air of determination about his manner. He encountered Avril's glance with a cool stare, a half-smile on his lips as he raised his cap.

"Good-morning, Miss Shannon!" he remarked.

Avril drew rein, returning his stare with disarming interest.

"You seem to know me," she countered. "Have we met before?"

"Not exactly," rejoined the boy coolly. "I make it my business to know something about everyone, when I'm on a case. Elementary precaution, y'know."

"Oh!" breathed Avril, as though suddenly enlightened. "You must be Rex Barrington!"

"Right first time," rejoined the boy, eyeing her quizzically. "I suppose you know why I'm down here?"

Avril felt that his steel-grey eyes were attempting to probe her thoughts—to catch her off her guard. She smiled disarmingly.

"I suppose you're looking for Mick Carter," she replied. "Do you think you'll find him?"

"When I'm after a chap, I always find him," returned Rex. "It's just a question of time."

Avril's blue eyes glistened as her hands tightened on the reins. The boy's self-assurance put her on her mettle, but there was something about him she found very likeable.

"What makes you think he's hiding on the moors?" she asked lightly. "He might be miles and miles away."

"Not him! He's around here somewhere!" And Rex smiled confidently.

Avril's heart jumped worriedly. The boy sleuth was too sure of himself for her comfort. Now was the time to put her little plan into action.

"What's that over there?" she cried suddenly, pointing and peering in the direction which she had come.

Rex started, and raced forward. In a moment he was back, the cap in his hands.

"Goodness!" exclaimed Avril in innocent amazement. "That—that looks like Mick's cap!"

Rex eyed her sharply, but her innocent excitement obviously disarmed his suspicions.

"It's Carter's, right enough," he declared. "I've got a full description of his outfit. It's lucky you spotted it, Miss Shannon! I'd have been searching in the opposite direction—towards the hollow."

"Yes—wasn't it lucky!" breathed Avril, her heart missing a beat. She had only been in

the nick of time! "Do you think the cap will help you?" she asked.

"Might," admitted Rex, turning the head-gear inside-out. "Sometimes chaps keep bus tickets and things in the— Pshaw!" He broke off, extracting a scrap of crumpled paper from the lining. His grey eyes glittered. "Holmford crossing—stopping train—London!" he read tersely. "So that's his little game!"

Avril held her breath as the boy consulted a pocket timetable.

"First train midday—just about make it!" he jerked. "I left my car down at the inn. See you later, Miss Shannon—thanks for your help!"

Avril gave a little gasp of relief, her eyes shining as she watched the boy's athletic figure sprinting towards the moorland road. Mick was safe—for the time being!

"Back to the stables, Diamond, my pet!" she breathed as she vaulted into the saddle. "Some food for Mick, before that too-smart boy finds out his mistake. We'll beat him between us—and prove Mick's innocence—for the honour of the stables!"

A breathless gallop across the moor—and through the paddock to Red Holm Stables, mellow and picturesque in the noonday sun.

Avril's first visit, after stabling and grooming the filly, was to the staff kitchen, where the motherly housekeeper gladly supplied her with sandwiches for a supposed outing.

With the parcel in a small satchel, she returned to the stables.

Black Diamond gave a little whinny of pleasure at the sound of her step, but as Avril opened the door of the stall her heart gave a violent jump.

An elegant figure was leaning against the horse-box, hands in pockets, a sardonic smile on his face.

"Well, well—Miss Shannon!" remarked Rex Barrington. "So we meet again."

Avril clenched her hands, trying to still the thumping of her heart. How had the boy returned so quickly? His shrewd eyes seemed to read her thoughts.

"Too bad—I missed the train," he said. "Not that it matters; I thought that little rosete too good to be true, so I examined it again. One thing you forgot, Miss Shannon—boys like Mick Carter don't use lavender scent! I toddled back and had another look round—and found this!"

He held out his hand dramatically, and Avril felt the ground giving way beneath her as she stared at the incriminating little pocket diary she had dropped from her handbag!

"I wonder if you could explain how the note in Mick's cap came to be written on a page torn from your diary, Miss Shannon?" inquired the boy sleuth, as he smilingly barred her way.

## A BATTLE OF WITS



AVRIL gave a quick, unsteady laugh; her mind worked like lightning. The boy sleuth was smarter than she had imagined—but he had not succeeded in finding Mick!

"Of course that's my diary," she said. "I must have dropped it in the stables when I was

grooming Black Diamond. I expect Mick found it and meant to return it to me—before this happened."

She spoke calmly, realising that she was fighting for Mick—and for herself.

"Clever," said Rex, a mocking gleam in his eyes. "It does you credit, Miss Shannon—as did your false clue, this morning. Where is Mick Carter?" he shot out.

Avril regarded him steadily, a smile on her lips.

"Why ask me?" she countered. "I thought you were the clever young detective who was going to track him down. Well—go ahead!"

The thrust went home, and Rex flushed slightly, his lips tightening.

"Very well!" he snapped. "Now, at least, we know where we stand." His eyes darted to the satchel in her hand. "I see you've brought your lunch."

"Any objections?" countered Avril. "I happen to like sandwiches. Good-afternoon, Mr. Barrington—I mean, Rex!"

With a disarming smile she led Black Diamond from the stable and mounted, waving her hand to the boy detective as he stood frowningly in the doorway.

At the gate of the paddock she encountered young Mr. Vernon, the assistant trainer.

"How's the filly shaping, Avril?" he called.

"Fine, Mr. Vernon, thanks!" rejoined Avril.

"The ladies' race is as good as ours!"

"Splendid!" rejoined the other. "We'll need it, with Rajah out of the running. Take good care of her!"

With a pleasant nod he stepped into his car and drove away. Avril drew a deep breath. If only she could prove Mick's innocence, everything at the stables would be perfect. She thought of Rex Barrington, the boy who was out to track Mick down. A defiant gleam in her eyes, she urged the filly to a gallop. She would beat the boy sleuth at his own game. She would find the real culprit!

As she reached the moorland road she became conscious of other hoofs gradually overtaking her. Curiously she drew rein, glancing over her shoulder.

And just then there was a crashing among the bushes at the side of the road, and over a low hedge vaulted one of the stable hacks, mounted by that same youth who was troubling her thoughts.

He must have saddled a horse and followed her as soon as she left the stables—and it was plain that Rex Barrington knew how to handle his mount.

"Thought I'd never catch up with you," he remarked cheerfully.

"I wasn't expecting company," Avril rejoined coldly.

"Then it'll be a pleasant surprise," said the boy, quite unruffled by her manner. "Which way are we going?"

"We?" echoed Avril, feeling suddenly choked. "You can't—you can't follow me round like this—"

"No trouble, I assure you," replied the boy, a gleam of amusement in his eyes. "All part of the job, y'know. You needn't talk to me, unless you like—I'll ride at a respectful distance."

Avril tossed her head and urged Black Diamond to a canter.

It was plain that the boy sleuth had guessed the purpose of her ride, and she wondered desperately how she could shake him off.

Inspiration came to her suddenly. On the edge of the moor was an old stone-built cottage, once the home of a shepherd, but long since empty, its windows barred and boarded against the weather.

Avril knew that Rex suspected her mission and was watching her. She drew a quick breath, a reckless smile in her eyes as, with a pretence of caution, she took out her handkerchief and fluttered it several times—as though signalling to someone in the cottage!

She heard the boy draw rein as he called after her sharply.

"Miss Shannon—just a minute, please!"

"Well?" Avril turned, making a hasty and obvious attempt to conceal the hanky. "What is it?" she asked coldly.

"Does anyone live in that cottage?" asked the boy, eyeing her closely.

"Really—I couldn't say," replied Avril with a shrug.

"Think I'll have a look round," said Rex

dryly. He sprang from the saddle, tethered his horse to the tumbledown fence, and strode up to the cottage door. It swung open creakingly as he pushed it, obviously unlatched.

"Better wait outside, Miss Shannon," he warned, "unless you want to run into trouble!"

Avril bit back a smile as she watched him enter cautiously. Her little ruse had succeeded! She liked Rex and hated to trick him like this, but it was the only way. She sent her horse galloping forward.

Back along the road they had been following—up a steep bank and over a hedge. Black Diamond was on her mettle, seeming to sense her young mistress' urgency.

A breathless gallop across the moor, and into Holmestead Spinney. Avril drew rein at length outside the tumbledown barn and whistled softly.

An answering whistle came from the loft, and Mick face peered down through the dark opening.

"All right, Mick—it's me!" breathed Avril. "Let down the ladder!"

A rope ladder clattered down, and Avril climbed quickly into the loft. As Mick hungrily set to on the sandwiches, she examined the boy's injured arm, cutting away part of the sleeve to adjust the bandage.

"How did it happen, Mick?" she asked. "Dunno," admitted the boy. "Must have caught it on something in the struggle. It's only a scratch."

"Do you think you'd be fit enough to ride in the Grenville Steeplechase on Wednesday, Mick?" asked Avril abruptly.

"Would I—give me the chance, Miss Avril!" exclaimed Mick. Then his face fell. "But it's not much use talkin' about that, is it—with that detective chap on my heels?"

"I'll take care of him, Mick!" breathed Avril. "Keep your pecker up!"

She returned the boy's fervent grip and slid down the swaying ladder. Mounting Black Diamond, she headed back across the moor, taking a circuitous route in case Rex Barrington should spot her.

She half expected to encounter the boy sleuth on the way, for he was bound to have set out to look for her when he discovered the little trick she had played on him.

But as she came in sight of the shepherd's cottage her eyes widened in amazement.

Rex's horse was still tethered to the fence, contentedly cropping the grass—and the door of the cottage was shut, bolted on the outside!

What did it mean? Even as Avril slid from the saddle and hurried towards the gate the answer came in no uncertain way. From within the cottage came a muffled shouting and a sound of thunderous blows on a door.

Rex had been locked in! But—by whom? Her heart beating quickly, Avril unbolted the door and entered.

Rex Barrington, his face pale and angry, darted forward and caught her by the shoulder. "What's the bright idea, young lady?" he snapped. "I suppose you thought it a clever move to lock me in here—"

"I didn't!" protested Avril indignantly.

"Then—who did?" demanded Rex, staring round. His grey eyes narrowed. "Of course, it was that young scoundrel Mick Carter! He was hiding here—you signalled to him— What are you smiling at?"

"I'm sorry, Rex," said Avril, "but that signal was just a ruse—to get away from you. Mick wasn't hiding here. Someone else must have shut you in."

Rex regarded her narrowly, half convinced by her tone.

"Just a minute," he said. "If you're so certain Mick wasn't hiding here, that means you know where he is!"

"Really!" Avril's reply was mocking.

"Yes, really!" rejoined Rex grimly. "I warn you, Miss Shannon, you'd better watch your step!"

He strode out of the door, and Avril stared after him, her thoughts racing.

Someone had locked the boy sleuth in the cottage—but who? Avril caught in her breath in sudden enlightenment. Of course! There was one person besides Mick who would wish to avoid the young detective. The real trickster! The scoundrel who had robbed Mr. Hunter and allowed the boy jockey to be blamed.

He must have gone to the cottage for some reason and found Rex there.

Avril's heart beat quickly as she stared round the bare, dismal room. Why had he come to the cottage? If only she could find some clue that would enable her to prove his identity and clear Mick—

And suddenly her pulses leaped as she stared towards the fireplace. Several of the red tiles were out of place, as though they had been recently removed and hurriedly put back. She crossed the room quickly and lifted one of the tiles.

In the dark cavity beneath the hearth something glimmered faintly. Her hand trembled; she groped for it—and a little gasp escaped her lips as she brought it to light.

It was a bronze paper-knife with a curiously carved handle, and it seemed vaguely familiar to her. With a start, she remembered where she had last seen it—on the desk in Mr. Hunter's study!

Even as her mind groped for an explanation of the mystery there was a soft footstep behind her, and Rex Barrington caught her by the wrist.

"A-ha!" remarked the boy sleuth interestedly. "What have we here? A paper-knife, eh?" A soft whistle escaped his lips and his grey eyes were triumphant. "The very thing!"

"What—what do you mean?" faltered Avril, her heart contracting slightly at his tone.

Rex laughed softly as he dangled the clue between his fingers.

"The paper-knife used for prising open Mr. Hunter's desk drawer!" he said tersely. "I hoped to find it, and you've saved me the trouble. A big slice of luck for me, Miss Shannon—if not for you."

"I—I don't understand," breathed Avril, encountering his mocking glance.

"Simple," said Rex coolly. "I hate to be unchivalrous, young lady, but you give me no choice. If I told Mr. Hunter I found you with this—"

Avril gave a little cry, the blood draining from her face as she confronted the boy.

"You couldn't—you wouldn't do a hateful thing like that!" she gasped. "I didn't put it here—I know no more about it than you do—"

"That's your story," interrupted Rex calmly. "Whether Mr. Hunter would believe it is another matter. You're in a tight corner, Miss Shannon—and you know it!"

Avril stared into the boy's cold grey eyes, her hands clenched, trying pluckily to hide the desperation in her heart. If he carried out his threat it would mean the end of everything for her—the end to all her hopes and ambitions.

"Well," she breathed, her gaze unflinching, "what are you going to do?"

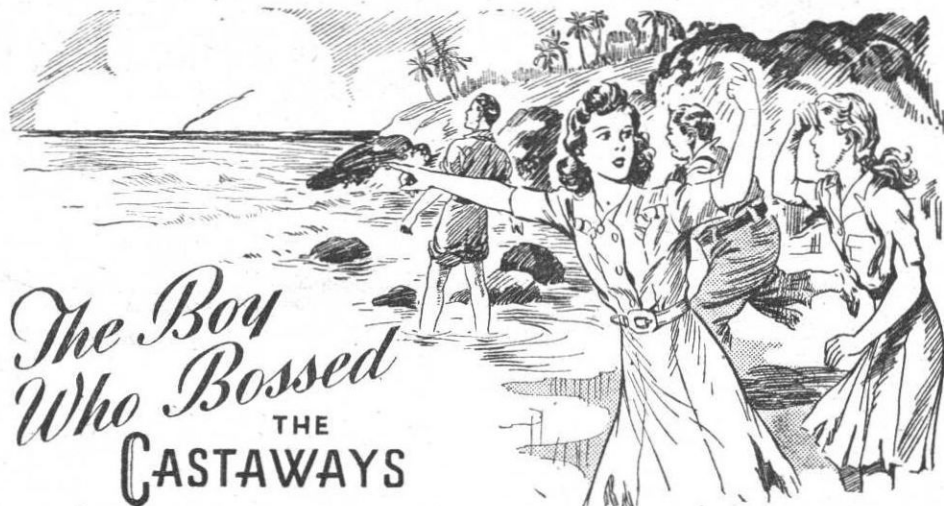
"Do?" The boy sleuth smiled coolly. "I'm going to give you a chance, Miss Shannon," he said. "I'll keep this little clue to myself for the time being—on one condition. That you tell me where Mick Carter is hiding!"

Avril started back, her face pale, her eyes flashing. Rex was offering her safety in return for betraying the boy who trusted her!

If she refused, he could get her dismissed from the stables. And that would mean disaster not only for herself, but for Mick. Her chance of proving the young jockey's innocence depended on her keeping her job.

On the other hand, if she agreed—Mick would be arrested!

(Please turn to page 497.)



# The Boy Who Bossed THE CASTAWAYS

FORBIDDEN TO USE THE TELESCOPE

By HAZEL ARMITAGE

**J**ULIE WALLACE and her chums, Elsie and Roly Maynard and Dick Mardle, and a party of other passengers from the s.y. *Daffodil*, found themselves marooned on the Island of the Golden Palm—upon which Julie's father had been castaway for two years.

On the island was a strange gold-coloured pillar in the form of a gigantic palm-tree. Upon it were hieroglyphics which resembled those on a locket which Julie's father had given her.

Also on the island was a lawless boy named Larry Woodstock, who seemed to have a strange interest in Julie's locket. He offered to help the castaways on the condition that they recognised him as boss, and eventually they all agreed to accept his leadership, although two of them—Neil Gilson and Ada Henshaw—were particularly reluctant to do so.

When Julie & Co. visited the Golden Palm they found it surrounded by an impenetrable hedge, erected by Larry Woodstock, in order that Julie should not examine it. But Julie, as she followed Larry back to camp, resolved that she was not beaten—she would solve the secret of the Golden Palm!

**J**ULIE'S mind was full of conflicting thoughts about Larry Woodstock as she followed his tall figure through the long grass.

The trick he had played on her chums, trapping them in the hedge surrounding the island's strange stone monument, filled her with resentment. Yet the idea had been a clever one, she was forced to admit, and only Larry could have made such an effective barricade—a thorn hedge treated with gum and resin, which had held her chums, Dick and Roly, in uncomfortable fastness until he had released them.

"But he certainly has made a difference since he has been in command of the camp," Julie reminded herself. "The food's been lovely. Without him we wouldn't have had any. And he's made our cave really homely."

But she did wish he wouldn't be so aggressive, so insolent. That he wouldn't regard all of them as enemies.

At last they reached the camp, with Roly and Dick still very sticky and sore, limping in the rear.

The trench fire glowed. Near it Mr. and Mrs. Fry lay stretched on the sand, asleep, while Aunt Martha sat by them, trying to fashion a sun hat from palm leaves.

A little distance away stood Hitchcock, sharpening a stout branch of wood with his clasp-knife, and near the cliff face was the professor poring over some specimen he had just unearthed from the mound of debris scattered in front of the cave. But of Gilson and Ada Henshaw there was no sign.

Larry glanced round sharply. Julie saw him frown. Then he looked at Aunt Martha.

"Auntie, where's my telescope?"

"Your what?" Aunt Martha looked up. "Goodness, boy, how you worry! There's no harm come to it. Mr. Gilson's got it."

"Oh!" Larry's lips compressed. "And who gave him permission to have it?"

"I don't know. He just took it," Aunt Martha said. "I had an idea that we were each going to share and share alike—"

There came a chuckle from Roly and Dick at that. It was, Julie felt, a fair remark, for Larry certainly had given that impression. But rafter to her bewilderment he frowned.

And then, as he stared almost angrily about him, Gilson and Ada wandered into sight from around the little headland beyond the cave. Under Gilson's arm the brass telescope glistened in the rays of the sun. Suddenly stopping, he turned towards the sea and put the telescope to his eye.

"Gilson!" Larry rapped.

If Gilson heard he did not heed. Calmly he continued to gaze out to sea. But Ada heard. Julie saw the involuntary half-turn she gave. Then she saw her wheel back as though deciding to ignore it.

"Gilson!" Larry called again.

Again Gilson ignored him. Apparently absorbed, he continued to gaze.

Julie, watching Larry, was a little scared by the darkening anger that clouded his face. She saw his jaw tighten, saw that familiar flash come to his eyes. He said no more, but with a grim stride he began to advance towards the pair.

"Gosh, he's waxy!" Roly murmured. "Now

there's going to be a rumpus. The way that chap throws his weight about!"

"Anyway, what's he ratty about?" Dick grumbled. "Gilson won't hurt his telescope. In any case, I don't see that it is his, if it comes to that. That telescope pretty obviously came from the Daffodil. Hallo, look, though!" he added next moment.

They were too far away to hear what was said. But Julie's heart began to race as she saw what happened. Larry, reaching Gilson, had spoken to him. Gilson, still staring out to sea, pretended to take no notice. Suddenly Larry's arm came up. He caught Gilson by the shoulder and spun him round.

"Looks as if there's going to be a scrap!" Dick said.

With one accord they moved forward, Julie quickening her steps as they hurried towards the scene. Gilson was obviously angry now. There was a swift exchange of words between him and Larry, and then, to Julie's dismay, Larry stepped forward and wrenched the telescope from Gilson's hands. Gilson clenched his fist.

It seemed for one moment that there was to be a fight. Ada, in anticipation of such an event, opened her mouth and screamed. Larry was ready; his attitude seemed to be inviting the other to attack. But in the nick of time Gilson mastered his control, and with that strange dignity of his coldly drew away. And then Julie, Dick and Roly were on the scene, and the professor, also attracted by the commotion, was hurrying from the cave across the sands.

"And I still insist," Gilson was saying, "I've got every right—"

"You've got no right. I'm in charge here," Larry answered. "If you were on board the Daffodil, you'd never think of grabbing Captain Stafford's telescope without permission, would you? Well, just get this into your head, Gilson. While you're on this island I'm the boss, and you do not take my telescope."

"Does that mean nobody is allowed to use that telescope except you?" Dick asked angrily.

"It means nobody will use it until I've given permission," Larry said.

"Which means that the permission will never be given," Gilson sneered.

"That permission will always be given—if it is asked for!" Larry snapped back. "And if," he added significantly, "there's a good reason for asking."

"For a moment Gilson's lip turned down in a sneer. Then scornfully he faced the boy boss of Golden Palm Island again.

"And my reason wasn't a good reason—of course?" he asked. "I took the telescope because I fancied I glimpsed the smoke of a ship out at sea. I took it because I'm sure that everyone except you wants to get off this island. Because, in a word, we all want to be rescued."

"Gilson," cried the professor who had just arrived on the scene, "you say—you saw—"

"I thought I did, sir," Gilson answered smoothly. "I was just making sure when this fellow rushed up and snatched the telescope from my hand."

But the accusation was lost for the moment in the terrific and immediate excitement.

"You say you saw a ship?" Roly cried.

"I say I thought I saw the smoke of one," replied Gilson. "Just beyond the horizon."

"Woodstock, let's look!" Dick cried.

All their faces were suddenly alight with hope, with eagerness, with joy—all except Julie's. After the first spontaneous enthusiasm she found herself wondering if she was so glad to hear the news after all.

Like the rest, she was anxious to get off the island, but on the island now she had a purpose. She was remembering the vow she had made—to solve the secret which she felt was contained in her locket. That secret she was sure was one which Larry Woodstock was trying to ferret out for himself. She had vowed

to beat him in that—and she must beat him! And not until she had done that and discovered Larry Woodstock's real purpose on the island did she want to leave.

Now, looking at Larry, she wondered at the odd expression on his face as he regarded Gilson; then, with a shrug, he put the telescope to his eye.

"Which direction?" he asked.

"There!" Gilson said rigidly, pointing. Larry peered through the tube of the telescope. He peered a long time. Was it Julie's fancy, or was there an expression of relief in his features as he lowered the instrument?

"There's nothing there," he announced gruffly.

"Larry, let me see!" Julie cried.

For a moment he hesitated. Then, with a shrug, he handed the telescope over. And Julie, raising the instrument, put it to her eye, anxiously scanning the sea in front of her. But as Larry had said, there was nothing—just nothing.

With a mingled sense of disappointment and relief she lowered the telescope, to have it immediately annexed by Larry again.

"You made that up, Gilson," he accused. "You're just wasting time. Please don't raise hopes when there's no reason—"

"I tell you—" Gilson protested.

"Pipe down! Come along to the camp. I've got something to say." And with a curt nod he strode away, leaving them bunched there, glowering and disappointed.

"Oh, blow!" sighed Roly.

He, Dick, Julie and Elsie strolled off together, leaving Gilson and Ada and the professor to follow. It was cooler now. The sun was no longer blazing with the same fury overhead, and the blue sky had a coppery tinge. They reached the camp where Larry, with a glance round, deliberately hung the telescope on the branch of a rustling lime.

"There it is, and there it stops!" he said. "I said it was for everybody's use, and so it is. But please ask me before you do use it."

"Is that necessary?" Hitchcock put in.

"It's necessary, because it's discipline," Larry retorted. "And now," he went on calmly, "we've got to get down to our job. That job is to make yourselves as comfortable as possible on this island until help arrives."

"Which it will never do if you have anything to say about it," Ada murmured.

"And what do you mean by that?" Larry asked her.

"You know what I mean," Ada faced up to him. "You stranded us here, and you don't want to get away. Deny it if you like, but you were scared stiff when Mr. Gilson said that he thought he'd seen smoke from a ship. You want to keep us here, Larry Woodstock. You don't want us to be rescued."

"Miss Henshaw—" the professor protested.

"Well, let him deny it!" Ada flared.

"I won't bother," Larry said quietly.

But Julie, gazing round, and hardly knowing herself whether she agreed or disagreed with Ada's outburst, saw that the accusation had taken hold of the assembly; saw that Ada had planted a firm suspicion in their minds.

"Now to work out a programme," Larry went on. "Gilson, you and Hitchcock and Roly will collect brushwood for the fire—heaps of it—"

"But we've got—" Roly protested.

"Not enough. Not half enough. The stuff you've been using so far is mostly bamboo, and once the fire gets really going bamboo burns like fury. Get some heavier stuff—lime and cedar—and make a stock of it. Righto, off you go!"

"Oh, come on!" Roly grumbled.

"Aunt Martha and Mrs. Fry will look after the cooking. Mardie, you and the three girls had better go food gathering. Look for turtles' eggs. You'll find 'em in the shady places, and you'll be able to tell them by the little round mounds of sand the turtles pile on top of them. Also, while you're about it, you might as well

collect some shell fish. You'll find plenty in the clear waters beyond the headland there."

"That suits us," Dick said. "Come on, girls!"

Julie followed him at once, leaving Larry detaching orders to Hitchcock, Mr. Fry and the professor. There were still a few hours to go before sunset, and the refreshing breeze now blowing off the sea was cool and comforting after the heat of the afternoon. Stepping round the headland, Julie was eagerly scanning the beach when she gave a shout.

"Gosh, look!"

"What?"

"There—turtles!"

For a moment the little party stopped. Then a whoop ripped from Dick's lips. For there, fifty yards ahead, waddling uncertainly over the sands, were two greeny-brown, ungainly shapes which were obviously off for a bath.

Turtles they were—big and heavy. Dick's eyes shone.

"Come on, after them!" he cried. "Turtles are better than turtle's eggs, anyway. Who says turtle soup for supper?"

It was a cheering thought. It set them all running at once. But unfortunately the turtles also seemed to have ideas on the matter. Swerving away, they began to hurry at a pace which surprised Julie, who had always classed turtles with tortoises.

Hearing their shouts, Roly left his work and came running after them, thrilled by the thought of so substantial a supper.

They pelted on until Elsie, with a yell, kicked against an unseen stone and measured her length on the sand. Dick, breathlessly helping her up, found his foot caught in a miniature quicksand, and also yelled, and Julie and Ada Henshaw had to run back to help him out. By that time the turtles were almost at the water's edge.

"Gosh, quick!" Julie cried. "They'll get away!"

She sprinted forward hard, not in the least knowing what she was going to do if she caught up with the turtles. But that problem, as it happened, was solved for her before ever it took complete shape in her brain. For ten yards away from the nearer of her quarries, both turtles, with a shrill little wheeze, vanished into the sea.

"Bother!" Julie cried in vexation.

She arrived at the water's edge, to stare in mortification at the two turtles, now flapping quickly away in the deep, clear water out to sea. And then, lifting her eyes as Dick, Ada and Elsie came racing up, she forgot the turtles—almost for the moment forgot her power of speech.

For what was that? She wasn't dreaming, surely?

As she stared she knew she wasn't dreaming. She saw it clearly—a thin trail of smoke rising above the horizon out at sea.

"A ship!" she cried. "It is a ship—cruising in these waters! So Gilson was right after all."

### THE TELESCOPE TRICK



THE turtles became immediately forgotten. Sharp, breathless excitement seized them all as, with one accord, they stared out in the direction which Julie's quivering finger now indicated. Did they see that little tendril of smoke? Was it, after all, just a mirage?

"It is smoke," Dick breathed. "It is. Or—is it?" He strained his eyes. "I can't be sure. But it must be, of course. Come on, let's get that telescope."

"But Woodstock won't allow——" Ada protested.

"Bother Woodstock!" snapped Dick. "This is vital."

He himself set the pace, Julie at his side.

Larry had said that the telescope could be used by all—had placed it in a position where it was accessible to all. She felt in her bones that he had meant that, though she was by no means sure now that she wanted the ship to be sighted. At least, not for her own benefit. Rescue at this stage would affect all her plans.

All the same, she still had her duty to her friends.

Skipping over the low coral belt that reached out from the headland, they found themselves on the broad, sandy beach again, with the gleaming limestone cliffs in the rear, and Mr. and Mrs. Fry, the professor, and Aunt Martha tending the fire. And near that fire, stolidly obeying Larry's orders, Nell Gilson and Hitchcock were stacking a huge pile of freshly cut timber.

"Where's Larry?" Julie gasped as she burst on the scene.

"Larry—Woodstock, you mean," Aunt Martha looked up. "Don't know. He went off a quarter of an hour ago——"

"But the telescope's there!" Dick whooped. "Never mind waiting for his permission. Get it, Julie!"

Julie was already running towards the tree, where the telescope glinted among the green branches. With one swift glance seawards she lifted the instrument to her eye. And then she stood still, bewildered.

For no enlargement of the view rewarded her. Instead she found herself gazing down a thin funnel with just the tiniest circular view at the end of it—a view natural size.

It took her a moment to realise what had happened. The lenses had been removed. The telescope was useless!

"It—it won't work," she found herself stuttering. "It——"

"Julie, let me try," Dick said feverishly.

He took it from her. Eagerly he peered. But by this time Gilson & Co., attracted by the excitement, had arrived, and the professor, Aunt Martha and Mrs. Fry had also joined the group. And while Ada Henshaw breathlessly explained to Gilson, Dick, his face the picture of mystified mortification, lowered the instrument.

He did not speak. Disappointment seemed to have dazed him. His arm dropped limply at his side. Gilson snatched up the telescope. His face was grim, as after a brief glimpse he faced them.

"We might have guessed it," he said scornfully.

"What?" Elsie challenged.

"That Woodstock would play a trick like this!" He laughed mirthlessly. "No wonder he said the telescope was for us all—and why? Because he made sure nobody would be any the better off if they used it. Because he took the precaution in the first place of removing the lenses from each end."

"Mr. Gilson, you don't know——" Julie found herself blurting.

But the words froze on her lips. What Gilson said was true. She knew it, and while in dismay she stared at her companions, again Gilson gave another sneering laugh.

"Isn't it plain?" he said. "Woodstock was scared because he thought I'd seen the ship in the first place. He determined that nobody else should see it—why? Because he wants to keep us marooned on this island. Because he's determined that rescue shall never reach us. And so—well," he shrugged, "he just removed the lenses from this instrument, making it impossible to see."

"The cad!" Roly choked.

He stared towards the sea. They all did. But there was no trace now of the smoke. No trace at all visible to the naked eye to show that rescue might be at hand. And all because of Larry's treachery.

"Well, he beats us—again," Mr. Fry said.

A sickly silence fell. But Julie found her heart beating in relief. She despised Larry for

that trick, but all the same it meant she would now have the chance to carry out her plans. She tried to cheer the others.

"Well, does it matter?" she asked. "After all, we haven't got long to wait, ship or no ship—only ten days or so. You forget the Daffodil is coming back—"

"Why, yes, there's that," Dick said. "All the same—"

"All the same, it's no reason why we shouldn't get away earlier," Gilson put in. "Who wants another ten days of being ordered about by that young crook? And is it so certain, either, that the Daffodil will come back to time—"

"Why not?" Julie flashed. "The weather for one thing." Gilson looked at her. "You forget that the monsoon season is due, and monsoons might hold up the Daffodil for weeks. Also," he added darkly, "you can bet Woodstock has also thought all that out—might, in fact, have worked it so that the Daffodil doesn't come back—"

Julie stared at him. She knew a mild flutter of panic. She hadn't thought yet of further possible treachery on Larry's behalf. How he could prevent the Daffodil's return she did not know, but she remembered suddenly—vividly—that there was another motor-boat on the island—the motor-boat which Larry had stolen from the Daffodil.

And that boat was equipped with a receiving and a transmitting set. Wasn't it possible that Larry was using it—was still in touch with the yacht, giving bogus instructions which would keep the Daffodil away from the island until it suited his own plans for the vessel to return?

Yes, she thought, that, indeed, was quite possible. And though it suited her to remain on the island, so that she could endeavour to solve the mystery surrounding her locket, she felt a duty towards her fellow castaways. Something must be done. She frowned, wracking her brains. Then—

"Wait a minute!" she cried. "Why can't we let the ship know we're here? That was a ship, because we did see it, as Mr. Gilson saw it earlier in the day. We want to get out of this—"

"We've got to get out of it," Dick said grimly. "And so," Julie said, "we've got to attract their attention somehow. So what about lighting a beacon?"

"A what?" Roly asked. "A beacon. A fire. On the cliff top there, where it will be seen," Julie cried. "Once they spot it they're bound to come along to investigate. Come on, let's get it going!"

New, radiant hope spread through the party. As Julie breathlessly led the way forward, they followed after her in a bunch—even the professor limping in the rear.

Julie shot up the cliff, Dick and Gilson close on her heels. Her eyes sparkled as, reaching the top, she felt the fresh breeze on her face—just the sort to keep the fire going merrily, she thought. And as she looked out to sea she saw, with a renewed thrill, the faint spiral of smoke again.

"Look!" she cried. "It's still there. See it?"

"I'll say—yes!" Roly cried. They all saw it after a few moments. The sight put heart into them, giving them renewed strength and energy for the task they had set themselves. Within a few moments they were in the trees, cutting branches, stripping leaves, and piling dried bracken into a great heap with branches on top of it.

"Make it big," Julie said. "Once we've lit it, it mustn't go out until we've got some signal from the ship. We—"

And then she broke off as she found herself confronting a figure—a rather grim-looking figure—who was eyeing the huge pile of brushwood and bracken with the utmost disfavour.

"And what does this mean?" Larry Woodstock asked. It was the leader of the castaways himself.

## THE BEACON



"WE'RE making a beacon," Julie said.

"So I see," Larry nodded. "And what about the jobs I left you doing?"

"Oh," Julie said, "as if they mattered now! Larry, you don't understand. There's a ship in the offing—the ship we saw this afternoon. Look!" And she pointed and then blinked, for the smoke spiral was no longer there. "It's somewhere over there."

"I don't see it," he said. "Perhaps you don't want to," Gilson said.

"I don't see it," Larry repeated steadily. "Neither do we now," Dick said. "But we have seen it—all of us. We know there's a ship out there somewhere—hanging just below the horizon. And so—well, we're going to light this beacon—"

"Now?"

"Why not?" "If the ship is below the horizon, do you think it will see your beacon?" Larry asked contemptuously. "In bright sunshine like this! The time to light beacons is at night. So let's get on with the other jobs—just in case you're not rescued," he added. "And if anybody has anything to say about that—"

"Yes, I have," Gilson said immediately. "You would, what?"

"Just this," Gilson braced himself, while Julie stared, wondering what was going to happen now. "You don't want us to be rescued. You've got your own plans for keeping us marooned here, and you don't want that ship to come inshore. That's why," he added, "you removed the lenses from the telescope—"

Larry stared. "Oh!" he said, and his lip curled. "Anyway, until you are rescued, I'm still boss. And I say that pile of wood on the beach must be shifted into one of the caves along the cliff. Wet timber is no good to anybody."

"But, dash it, it's not wet!" the professor protested.

"It will be before long," Larry said significantly. "It's going to rain."

"When?" The professor gazed at the sky, untouched by cloud. "Not for days and days, man."

"You forget I know these islands," Larry reminded him quietly. "It will rain before dawn. So stop worrying about rescue, and let's get on with it."

There were mutters—grumbles. But Larry seemed to be unaffected, and Julie reflected, if his prophecy was right, he was entirely justified. Nobody believed it was going to rain, but everybody did believe now that Gilson was right in his assertion that Larry was determined to handicap their chances of rescue.

On the other hand, it was sensible, just in case their hopes did turn to disappointment, that they should carry on as before. And so, without any enthusiasm, they all tramped down to the beach again.

There, once more, the work was resumed—with many an anxious eye on the sea, and many an uplifting throb of hope as, from time to time, the spurt of smoke was observed once again.

And then, at last, darkness fell, and Julie, looking round, found Dick at her side.

"What about it, Julie?" he asked. "Do we go and light that fire?"

"Where's Larry—"

"He's gone with Hitchcock to look at his traps in the wood. I've got some matches—the professor found some. Come on!"

Julie hesitated, but only for a moment. "Come on!" she breathed.

And off in the darkness she and Dick set, climbing the stiff hill to the cliff top. There, basking in the moonlight, stood the great

(Please turn to the back page.)



The Exhibition Looked Like Being A Failure. The Superstitious Girl's Warning Seemed To Be Coming True!



By

DAPHNE GRAYSON

#### PLANS FOR THE EXHIBITION

"IT'S not a duck—it's my glass swan from Pernaibuco," said Sally Warner with mock sternness, giving her chum, Johnny Briggs, a playful prod with the glittering beak. "Well, you can't mistake the boomerang I brought from Elephant Island—Ow, steady, Don!" And Johnny Briggs dodged just in time to avoid a dig from Don Weston's Eskimo sleigh, which was loaded with Fay Manners' old English spinning-wheel.

The chums of Roxburgh Co-ed College were taking these curios into their clubhouse—the Merry-makers' Club, exclusive to J House.

The clubhouse looked like some strange bazaar to-day, crammed with every kind of souvenir and curio ever collected by the co-eds. More and more were crowding in as Sally & Co. deposited their trophies, and so much interest had been aroused by the exhibition that Sally had thought of charging the public twenty-five cents admission to view—all for the best cause in the world, to raise funds for the kiddies' ward of the local hospital.

Her own enthusiasm had met with a marvellous response.

"It was sweet of you to come along and help, Freda!" she said gratefully to a girl who was busily checking and arranging the display.

Freda Lane wasn't a student. She was employed on the dean's staff as assistant librarian, and seldom had much to do with the students. But she had delighted Sally by volunteering to do all the cataloguing and organising.

"Must do something to help the hospital, Sally—I knew a dear little kiddy who was there," she said with a shy smile.

"Oh, Johnny!" A plaintive protest rang out from Pat Waters, who was incurably superstitious. "Mind my Dutch mirror! It's seven years' bad luck if you break it!"

Johnny swung round from gazing critically at the club's solitary ornament in its glass cupboard over the mantelpiece—a shabby, squat little Toby Jug.

"Don't want old Toby here—spoils the effect!" he said. "Have you got the key of this cupboard, Sally?"

"No—and anyway, old Toby belongs here," Sally said.

"Leave him there—he's lucky!" said Pat Waters, which was sweet of her, because she knew that the little old jug had been given to the club by Nellie Bryan, a well-liked scholarship girl who wasn't as well off as the others.

"You and your luck, Pat!" laughed Sally.

"I suppose you don't know the superstitious power of this boomerang, Pat?" said Johnny, advancing towards her with a teasing light in his eyes.

"No—but I know these brass candle-snuffers are unlucky," insisted Pat earnestly, as she backed away. "I don't know who lent them, but we don't want them in the exhibition. I've got a book which says they snuff out all the luck—Johnny, what are you doing?"

Johnny gave a sweep of his arm and the boomerang went flying out through the window.

"O-oh!" There was a startled cry outside, a clatter of falling books. "Bless my soul!"

Then the door shot open and in burst angry Professor Grittal, minus his mortarboard.

"Who did that? S-someone threw something at me!" he cried, and his eyes glowered upon Johnny at the window. "Was it you, Briggs?"

"Er—it was a boomerang, sir—" began Johnny hurriedly.

"Look out, sir! It's coming back!" yelled Sally.

Crash! The boomerang missed Mr. Grittal's ear by a hairbreadth and knocked the glass clean out of Pat's Dutch mirror.

"Oh!" Pat rushed to the broken mirror in frantic consternation. "Oh, that'll be seven years' bad luck, Johnny, and—"

"Briggs!" hissed Mr. Grittal. "Go and pick up those books I was carrying! I thought I was loaning them to a serious cause. Instead, it seems that I've brought them to a heargarden. If there is any more of this—"

And not trusting himself to say more, Mr. Grittal grabbed his fallen mortarboard and stormed away, while Johnny hurriedly retrieved the stodgy-looking books he had brought.

"What a pity, Pat!" said Sally. "Johnny's silly boomerang! I'll get Don to put a new glass in for you, and—"

"That won't make any difference!" Pat burst in. "It means bad luck—and I knew we'd have bad luck! I've been trying to warn you all

along. It isn't only those candle-snuffers. It's these horrible green goblins of Elsie Pymm's—"

"They're jade mascots, you silly! My uncle brought them from Tibet!" scoffed Elsie, glaring at her.

"Tibet! That makes it worse. I'm sure they're omens!"

"Cheer up, Pat! And look, Freda wants a hand with that shelf there," said Sally cheerily.

She could see that Pat was more than usually agitated, and she hoped to get her mind off these superstitious fancies. But Pat, who was usually the soul of willingness, drew away. There were eleven objects already on the shelf, and those sinister goblins would make it thirteen.

"I couldn't touch those things, Sally—they give me the creeps!" she shuddered. "I know they'll bring us bad luck."

Everyone laughed, but Sally could see that Pat really was edgy, and she didn't want her superstitious fancies to cast a shadow over their exhibition.

"That's all for now, everybody—let's pack up for to-day!" she sang out. "Just time for a dip before the light fades!"

Sally locked the door when the helpers had trooped out, and carefully she removed the key as a precaution against any joking raiders from the rival K House.

"If any of us wants it, the key's here—see?" she said, hiding it conveniently under the terrace steps. "Race you down to the beach, Johnny!"

The sea was delicious at this hour of the evening, and Sally only wished that Pat had joined them. It would have cooled her worried imagination, she remarked with a chuckle to Don. All the rest took the plunge—and afterwards, of course, hot coffee and cookies were indicated.

"I'll meet you in the cafeteria, boys!" said Sally, slipping away from them as they got back to the coll. grounds. "Left my bag and all my wealth in the club."

She was cutting through the shrubbery when she saw a girl's figure stoop under the steps of the clubhouse.

It was Pat Waters. She also had evidently come to get the key. But in that instant Pat straightened suddenly, as if she had heard Sally's step. Quick as a flash she darted away in the dusk.

Queer, Sally thought. Fancy Pat dodging her like that! Must be because she was still upset.

Dismissing the incident, Sally retrieved her bag, locked up again, and put the key back where it was, and rejoined Don & Co. in the cafeteria.

"Sally, is that right we've got some distinguished people coming to our exhibition on Friday?" blinked Johnny, as he ordered her a coffee-shake from Mrs. Barwell.

"Bags of 'em—including all that party who called to see the dean the other day!" beamed Sally. "One of them, that Mr. Renfrew, is a millionaire—"

"Gee, I'll make him drop a few dollars in the hospital box!" exclaimed Johnny.

"We all will," said Sally. "Mr. Renfrew is also an expert on curios. So he's naturally interested in the show, because he'll also know what's what."

"We mustn't let him think he's walking into a junk shop," nodded Don.

"So to-morrow," proceeded Sally, "I think it would be a good idea if we all give the exhibition a bit of a polish-up after morning lecture!"

"Hear that, everybody?" sang out Johnny to the others, who were all taking a lively interest in Sally's news. "All hands on deck twelve-thirty to-morrow!"

Mr. Grittal's lecture had scarcely finished next morning when Sally led an eager rush to the clubhouse. She fished out the key from under the steps.

"Now I want you all to imagine you are Mr.

Renfrew!" she said gaily, putting the key in the lock. "You are an expert on curios, you have been to the finest exhibitions in the world, but when you step into this stupendous— Oh!" And with a gasp Sally stopped dead in the open doorway.

A shambles of broken glass and shattered china met her gaze! Every green object, Elsie Pymm's jade mascots, a host of quaint vases, ornaments and effigies lay in smithereens on the floor, just as if some mischievous hand had smashed them right and left with a hammer!

## MORE THAN BAD LUCK!



"I TOLD you," a wild cry came from Pat Waters. "I told you something awful would happen!"

"Pat, what are you saying?" gasped Sally.

"We asked for bad luck and we've got it!" Pat cried, wringing her hands. "I warned you the place was crammed with horrible, uncanny things that—"

"It wasn't anything uncanny that smashed my jade mascots!" burst in Elsie Pymm, turning upon her in a fury. "Who was it? Do you know anything about this, Pat Waters?"

"We'll find out who it was!" came a cry from the others, as they rushed into the wrecked clubhouse. "Look! Look at the mess!"

"My Turkish vase!"

"My glass crocodile!"

"My candle-snuffers!"

"It— it isn't a house jape!" Sally stuttered.

"K House wouldn't do a thing like this!"

"Of course they wouldn't!" said Don and Johnny. "Who—"

"Nobody did it! It's—it's a v-visitation!" panted Pat. "It's a kind of g-ghost that destroys and does mischief, and it's called a—"

"You know a lot too much about it!" Elsie Pymm blazed at her.

"A poltergeist—that's what it's called!" Pat rushed on feverishly. "It breaks things, and turns tables over, and throws chairs about. If only you'd listened to me—"

"You listen to me!" cried Elsie. "Did you come in here after we left yesterday, Pat Waters?"

Sally gave a start. In a flash she remembered seeing Pat stooping for the key last night, then scurrying away at sound of her step.

"I—I—" Pat stammered and broke off, turning suddenly crimson.

But Elsie Pymm wasn't waiting for an answer. She rushed to the corner, whisked Don's sleigh aside, then swung round excitedly.

"You were here, Pat—you did come here again!" she accused her. "Your mirror's gone!"

"I—I did come in to get my mirror," stammered Pat.

"And what else did you do?" Elsie flashed, grabbing her. "You smashed these things, didn't you? Own up!"

"I didn't!" Pat said wildly.

"You did!" Elsie accused her hotly. "You deliberately smashed our things—because you had some idiotic superstition about them. You—"

"Quiet, Elsie!" came a sudden gasp from Fay. "Here's the dean! He's coming here!"

"Golly! Don't let him see this mess!" wailed Sally, with a frantic glance to the window.

She dived for a broom. She had spotted not only the dean, but also Mr. Grittal. They were coming along the path with Freda Lane, who was carrying a bundle proudly under her arm.

Before Sally could sweep away a tenth of the litter, in stepped the dean.

"I have been asked if I would contribute something to your exhibits, Miss Warner—" he began graciously, then stopped, aghast.

Both he and Mr. Grittal were gazing in startled pain at the smashed exhibits. Freda looked thunderstruck.

"Oh, Sally! Whatever's happened?" she faltered.

It was the rankest bad luck that Freda had brought the dean here at such a moment, Sally thought with a groan. But of course, Freda hadn't known.

"Just a little accident!" she answered hurriedly.

"It wasn't an accident——" blurted Elsie Pymm. "Ow!"

Too late Sally jogged her elbow. The dean had heard. His pained expression became decidedly grim.

"H'm!" he said, frowning. "I was loaning my collection of Redskin moccasins, but I am wondering now if this is a safe place for them!"

"Are my books all right?" gasped Mr. Grittall, panting with relief when he discovered that they were.

"We'd be most grateful to you for the loan of the moccasins!" Sally assured the dean breathlessly.

"I'll be responsible for them, sir—I know their value!" cried Johnny, grabbing the bundle eagerly from Freda. "As a matter of fact, we were clearing out this rubbish to make room for them!"

He kicked some of the broken glass away as he spoke, avoiding Elsie Pymm's glare, but the dean still looked apprehensive.

"Very well," he said at last. "I will leave you to get your exhibition into—er—better order. But you will understand," he added seriously, "that these Redskin moccasins are of great value, and you must take the utmost care of them!"

"Rather, sir! Thank you!" chorused everybody.

No sooner was he gone with Mr. Grittall than Pat Waters was faced with another storm of accusation.

"I didn't do it! I tell you it's all because of the unlucky exhibits!" she said brokenly. "There's a sort of spell at work, I'm certain. And I've got a feeling something worse is going to happen!" And out she went, almost in tears.

Sally stood up for her, against all logic and reason. She had a heated squabble over it with Elsie Pymm. But nearly everybody else took Elsie's side—except Don & Co., loyal as ever—and Sally had a guilty feeling that she was probably being unfair to Elsie, just because she was fond of Pat and not fond of Elsie.

"What do you make of it, Sally?" murmured Don perplexedly, when they locked up and set off to lunch. "If Pat didn't do it——"

"It isn't like her!" faltered Sally. "Yet who could it have been? I can't think of anyone. Oh, blow, I'll be getting superstitious myself next!" she added almost crossly. "I do wish it hadn't happened, Don. Anyway, we'll take jolly good care we don't have any more trouble!"

Andy Ruggles, bristling with ideas as usual, came bustling to their table in the cafeteria.

"I've taken up hypnotism, Sally, and I can solve this biz, as easy as winking," he said in triumph. "Pat let these superstitious fears play on her mind, you see? That put her into a kind of hypnotic trance. She was like a sleep-walker. She went to the clubhouse and smashed those things without knowing she did it!"

"Bunk!" scoffed Elsie Pymm from the next table. "Of course she did it—purposefully! But she'll know all about it if she tries it again!" threatened Elsie. "We all heard what she said—that something worse is going to happen!"

Why had Pat said that? The words made Sally uneasy, though she didn't know what to believe or how to explain the first calamity. At bedtime that night a thought suddenly struck her, and with a hurried word to Fay she threw on her coat and hurried out.

Fay laughed at her for being so anxious, but Sally went straight to the clubhouse and let herself in with the key.

Everything, of course, was just as she had

left it earlier. The variety of exhibits neatly arranged and labelled, Freda's catalogue book lying tidily on the mantelpiece beside the Toby jug in its glass cupboard, Mr. Grittall's ponderous volumes enjoying pride of place next to the dean's Redskin moccasins.

But it was a last-minute recollection that had brought Sally hurrying here. Just supposing that the earlier mischief had been the work of an outsider, then there was still a way by which he could enter the locked clubhouse if he contemplated a fresh blow. There was the secret entrance in the shrubbery, opposite the dean's garden!

Sally darted down into the cellar and along the narrow tunnel that wound towards the shrubbery. At the end of it, above a flight of steps, she came to the iron trapdoor, like a manhole, that formed the entrance.

With satisfaction she bolted it securely from the inside—then ran back through the tunnel and let herself out by the clubhouse door, locking it and hiding the key under the steps.

Sally spent a more easy night for having taken that precaution.

Next morning, in the crowded cafeteria, the last to come to breakfast was Pat Waters. There were dark shadows under her eyes, and she looked pale and unrested.

"Hallo, Patsy—come and sit with us!" Sally said gently. "You look sad!"

"I couldn't sleep, Sally," Pat said in a quivering little voice. "S—something kept tapping at my window!" And she shivered. "It was terrifying!"

Tap, tap!—and even Elsie jumped. The door opened and Freda Lane put her head in, eyes shining and arms loaded.

"Sally!" she called in her shy, eager voice. "The dean's here and he's lent us a wonderful collection of coins for the exhibition!"

Sally & Co. leapt up, and the whole of J House followed them out. The dean and Mr. Grittall were there with Freda, both enjoying their after-breakfast cigar.

"This is a new collection of coins," the dean said genially, "so your exhibition shall be the first to show them, Miss Warner!"

"They must be worthily displayed, and we will come and assist you in this!" Mr. Grittall said in his pompous way.

Johnny gallantly took the case of coins from Freda, who was also carrying a cumbersome book, and the procession made triumphantly for the clubhouse.

"Sorry I called you away from breakfast, Sally," apologised Freda, "but I don't know where you keep the key!"

"Don't you, Freda?" Sally said, surprised. "It's under the steps. I always keep it there."

"I didn't know!" Freda said, and smiled enlightenedly as Sally stooped and unearthed the key.

Running up the steps, Sally unlocked and opened the door in one movement, turning then to allow the dean to enter first.

"What on earth——" It was a shocked cry from the dean which made Sally jump round. "Who—who has done this?"

Then a shout of horror from all. Sally gazed, petrified.

The Redskin moccasins had been slashed to tatters! Mr. Grittall's books lay ripped and mutilated with a dagger stuck through them to the hilt!

"This—is this is wanton destruction!" thundered the dean.

"A wanton outrage!" cried Mr. Grittall, going towards his books in trembling rage. "Miss Warner—Briggs—who is responsible——"

"We're all of us responsible, sir," Sally said faintly, "but who——"

"You know who it was! We all know!" came shrilly from Elsie Pymm. "It was Pat Waters!"

"No! How dare you accuse me! No——" But Pat's frantic voice was lost in the violence of Elsie Pymm's outburst.

"It was you, Pat Waters! You said you couldn't sleep! You did this last night! You

were here! I heard you come back into our chalet! I saw you!"

"Silence!" commanded the dean. Sally's heart hammered in dread. She had never known him so angry. His scholarly face was white. There was a sensational hush.

"I charge all of you, among yourselves, to unmask the culprit!" he said in trembling tones. "Unless that culprit comes to me and confesses, everyone here will be held responsible, Miss Warner—and the exhibition will be banned!"

### THE SPELL IS BROKEN



IN a stunned silence the dean went out with Mr. Grittal. Sally closed the door the moment they were gone, and with an unsteady hand she locked it on the inside.

"No one's to go till we've cleared this thing up!" she announced tensely to all.

"Hear, hear!"

"If you'll excuse me, Sally, I'd better get back to the library—" Freda Lane began gently.

"I think everyone should stay, please, Freda," said Sally. "Somebody here is working against us, determined to spoil our exhibition—"

"We know who she is!" blazed Elsie Pymm, leading a score of furious voices. "Own up, Pat Waters!"

"If you don't make her, Sally—we will!" they cried.

Sally's gaze swung upon Pat, who was shaking like a leaf and fingering her handkerchief. "Did you do it, Pat?" she asked levelly.

"I didn't, Sally, but I knew something like this would happen and I warned you all!" she burst out, half in fear and half in defiance. "This place is haunted, it's unlucky, and we brought it on ourselves by—"

"Oh, cut that out and tell us why you went out in the middle of the night!" burst in Elsie.

"Did you go out, Pat?" Sally asked.

"N-no," stammered Pat. "I—I mean—"

"I saw you!" flashed Elsie. "I heard someone at the door of our chalet, and I saw you come in and creep back to your cubicle!"

"Is that true, Pat?" pursued Sally.

"Y-yes, but I didn't go two yards away," Pat choked out. "S-something was tapping at my window. L-like ghost fingers. I was terrified. I just couldn't lie there in bed. I had to do something. So I got up. I—I crept out of the chalet and had a quick look outside—"

just in case I was frightening myself over s-some ordinary thing. Then I crept back. I wasn't out for more than a few seconds!"

"And did you see anything outside?" Sally asked.

"No, it had gone!" Pat said with a shiver.

"There wasn't any more tapping!"

"There never was!" cried Elsie. "It all sounds phoney to me. You came here and did all this damage! Why don't you own up?"

Sally murmured a word in Don's ear. She opened the door, and with a nod to her Don slipped out. There was silence—dismayed, wondering silence—while he was gone. In a few seconds he was back.

He was frowning queerly, and in his hand he held a heap of tiny pebbles.

"I browsed round where you told me to, Sally," he said in an odd voice, "and I found these on Pat's windowsill!"

Sally's eyes glinted.

"There's your ghost, Pat! Those pebbles!" she announced. "Those are what you heard tapping on your window last night. Someone was throwing them against the glass."

"Sally!" Pat's distress gave way to grateful bewilderment. "B-but who—"

"Yes, if it wasn't Pat Waters, who was it?" demanded Elsie Pymm heatedly.

Sally gazed helplessly around her, trying in her mind to reconstruct the scene since her

visit last night, trying feverishly to find some clue that might betray the secret marauder.

Was there no scrap of evidence left behind, except for the damage done? All the rest of the exhibits stood in their neat, orderly rows, just as she had last seen them. Her gaze wandered slowly and hopelessly to the mantelpiece, to the glass cupboard holding the old Toby jug, and then—then a vague recollection startled her.

Nothing was there which ought not to have been there. But something was missing! Something had gone from the mantelpiece since she had locked up last night! A crazy thought—a crazy suspicion dawned upon Sally.

"Got any brain-waves, Sally?" asked Don.

Sally wrinkled her brow a moment longer. It might be a monstrous injustice. It would be terrible if she was making a mistake. And yet—could it be a mistake? How could she put it to the test?

"I'm wondering if it was an outsider, after all—perhaps one of K House," she said slowly, and turned to Freda Lane. "You can see the shrubbery from your window in the dean's house, Freda—and that's where the secret entrance is to this clubhouse. Did you see or hear anyone go into that entrance last night?"

"No, Sally—and they couldn't have got in that way, anyhow," Freda said at once. "It was bolted!"

"How did you know it was bolted?" Sally said quickly.

Freda gave a violent jump. Her face changed colour.

"I— Well, I take it for granted, of course," she said in confusion. "You're bound to have bolted it after what happened the night before."

Sally's gaze remained fixed upon her. No one but Fay had known that she bolted that entrance last thing at night.

"Did you go there yourself and try to get in that way, Freda?" she asked her.

"Of course not!" Freda exclaimed.

"Then how did you get in here last night?" inquired Sally.

"I?" Freda cried, and her knuckles clenched white over the catalogue book she was nursing. "I wasn't in here last night. How could I have been?"

"There's a door," said Sally.

"But it was locked, and I didn't know where the key was till this morning!"

"So you said before—and it's not true!" Sally said quietly. "You came in here last night, Freda, after I locked up!"

"I did not!" cried Freda hotly, jumping to her feet.

"Then how did you get that catalogue book?" Sally fired at her. "It was lying here on the mantelpiece last night—and you were carrying it under your arm this morning when you called me from breakfast!"

Freda fell back into her chair quicker than she'd got up. Her lips twitched, but no words came. Guilt was written on her face for every startled eye to see.

"You were going to make that book an excuse for coming here, if anyone had seen you!" Sally pursued her. "It was you who threw those pebbles at Pat's window and brought her out of her chalet! Why, Freda?"

"I—I—"

"Because you'd slashed these moccasins, the same as you smashed our things the night before, and you were taking care that suspicion should point to Pat again!" Sally went on relentlessly. "All this damage was your work, Freda Lane! Why did you do it?"

In the horrified hush Freda answered through parched lips:

"I—I only wanted the exhibition to be p-put off!"

"Why?" pursued Sally.

"For a—for a friend of mine," gasped Freda. "He knew Mr. Renfrew was coming, and—and"

(Please turn to the back page.)



# The CASE OF THE Frightened Girl

## JUNE'S VISIT TO TEMPLE ISLE

**J**UNE GAYNOR, niece and partner of Noel Raymond, the famous young detective, went to Glen Hall, as the guest of Mr. Henley, to solve the mystery of a spectral figure known as the Green Rajah, who was out to find the Lost Secret of the Purple Mountains. The clue to this was a crystal goblet hidden by the former owner of Glen Hall, Colonel Raikes.

June discovered the Green Rajah to be Roger Standish, one of the guests at Glen Hall, but she was unable to prove it. Everyone else believed the trickster was Jack Linton, a boy who had disappeared from Glen Hall and was hiding in a cave.

He told June that he was out to prove the innocence of his friend, Ronnie Baring, who had once been secretary to the colonel, and who was now a fugitive from the police.

Leaving Jack grappling with Roger Standish and his men, June went to the cottage where Ronnie Baring and his sister were hiding. Eva Baring managed to translate a clue which indicated that the crystal goblet, together with the proofs of Ronnie's innocence, were hidden in the museum on Temple Isle. Suddenly there was a thunderous tattoo on the door, followed by a man's voice. June's face paled.

"The police!" she whispered.

"**WHAT** are we going to do now?"

As there came another thunderous rattle on the door of the tiny cottage, June and Eva Baring regarded each other in despair.

It looked as if their plan to outwit the Green Rajah was doomed. If Eva and her brother were arrested, then gone would be all hope of securing the hidden crystal goblet. Long before they could convince the authorities of the truth of their story, Roger Standish would have found the vital clue himself and destroyed the evidence against him.

"There's only one thing for it." It was Ronnie Baring who spoke, and, painfully dragging his injured leg, he limped towards the window. "You must try to get away, June. Even if you're only held for questioning, valuable time will be lost." As she started to demur, he laid a pleading hand on her arm. "Please!" he begged. "The crystal goblet's all that matters."

Seeing the good sense of what Ronnie said, and knowing there was no time for argument, June nodded.

"Just as you say, Ronnie. It'll be the one means of clearing your name, too!"

"Good girl! Then get cracking! You'll find a boat moored to the landing-stage just to the right of the house."

As he spoke he unfastened the window and pushed up the lower sash.

"Quick!" he urged, as from down below a rattle of bolts announced that Granny Benton was unlocking the door. "They'll be up here in a jiffy. And the best of luck!" he added, as June clambered on to the sill.

Clamped to the wall beside the window was a convenient drain-pipe, and as June clutched this she smiled reassuringly at Ronnie and his pale-faced sister.

"Don't worry," she said. "I'll get that goblet somehow."

Then she was sliding down the pipe, to land silently on the flower-bed below. For a moment she paused to get her bearings. The moon had risen, and by its light she saw a wicket gate which gave access to a narrow passage at the side of the house. To reach the landing-stage she would have to creep up this path, perilously near the front door of the cottage.

On tiptoe she stole forward. From the open door came the sound of argument. Two uniformed figures stood there, and Granny Benton, her frail figure quivering with indignation, was striving manfully to refuse them admittance.

"I tell ye there are no criminals here!" she was declaring. "This is a respectable house, this is!"

"Now, it's no use arguing, mother," said one of the policemen. "That letter Jack Linton dropped during the fight told us all we wanted to know."

"Fight?" There was a note of alarm in the old woman's voice. "Have ye been fighting w' Master Jack?"

"Not us, ma'am. That happened before we were called on the scene."

"But where is he? Where's Master Jack now?" demanded Granny Benton, all her thoughts concentrated on the boy she had nursed as a baby.

The uniformed figures exchanged uncon-

fortable glances, while June, crouching in the shadows, caught in an anxious breath.

"Well, we hardly know," said one of the policemen at length. "Last seen, he was tumbling down the mountainside. No doubt the rescue-party will find him."

Granny Benton gave a horrified scream, and, flopping down on a chair, she buried her head in her arms.

June also had gone very white, and the tears had risen to her own eyes. It was terrible to know that it had been to save her that Jack had met with this accident. It was impossible to believe that he could have escaped severe injury, or even worse.

"Oh, Jack, if only I knew the truth! If only I could help you!"

Clinging to the wicket gate, June stood there, engulfed in her apprehensive thoughts; then a loud bang roused her. The policemen, entering the cottage, had shut the door behind them. Now was her chance to reach the tethered boat unseen.

Striving, but not very successfully, to stifle her tears, June hurried along to the landing-stage, clambered into the boat, and cast off the painter. Next moment she was rowing across to Temple Isle.

Never had the lake looked lovelier. The silvery light of the moon was mirrored in its rippling water, and half a mile ahead the rocky cliffs of the island were silhouetted against the pale sky.

Slowly, but surely, the island drew nearer, and at last the boat beached itself in the shallows. Jumping out, the girl detective hauled it up the steeply shelving beach, then made her way up the path to the temple-like museum.

Despite herself, she knew a thrill as she pushed open the big oaken door and entered. Hidden here was the vital clue to the Lost Secret of the Purple Mountains.

What could that secret be? Did it concern, as Jack had once hinted, some fabulous treasure in far-off India?

And hidden with the clue would she find Colonel Raikes' last will and the evidence which would reveal the truth about the Green Rajah?

Eagerly June stepped into the museum, feeling in her pocket for her torch; but, to her dismay, it was not there. She had left it behind. However, she had a packet of book matches, and, as she struck one and looked around, she saw a couple of candles lying on one of the window-sills.

"The Green Rajah must have left them here," she told herself. "What luck!"

Lighting the candles, she picked her way past the hideously grinning idols and other garish curios which were arranged on the flagged floor in serried rows. At last she reached the alcove where she remembered having seen a big brass bell. She gave a sigh of satisfaction as she saw it hanging from a wooden post fixed to the wall and, putting down the candles, she examined it with thrilled eyes.

Weird Indian picture writing covered the brass bell, and from the top of its clapper hung a queerly plaited rope.

Was this the bell which Colonel Raikes had mentioned in his last message?

But how could it possibly reveal the secret?

She took out the copy of the message and studied it by the candlelight. Her heart gave a leap as she saw the cryptic reference to the voice of the bell.

"I believe I've got to ring it," she told herself excitedly.

Immediately she clutched the plaited bell-rope and gave it a strong pull.

Clang! Clang!

The deep note of the great bell reverberated through the museum, arousing a score of rumbling echoes. And then, as they subsided, June heard a muffled whirring sound. She spun round, and then gasped, for one of the

flagstones had risen like a trapdoor, revealing a square, shallow cavity in the floor.

"Well, of all the clever stunts!" she gasped.

"In some way that bell must operate the mechanism, though how—"

Leaving the sentence unfinished, she darted across to the cavity, and her eyes gleamed triumphantly as she saw lying there a small wooden box.

## THE ONE CHANCE

"THE crystal goblet!"



June gave a delighted cry as, picking up the wooden box, she opened the lid and found herself gazing at the long-sought clue to the Lost Secret of the Purple Mountains.

The goblet was about eighteen inches high and shaped rather like a tall wineglass. Lying in a bed of cotton-wool, it was a golden yellow in colour, and its translucent surface was covered with a delicate tracery, within which had been engraved a series of strange-looking Indian symbols.

Wonderingly, the girl detective regarded them.

What had they mean?

She had not the slightest idea, and she knew that they could only be decoded with the aid of that other clue which had been stolen by the Green Rajah, and which she suspected was rowed stored away in a secret compartment in his suitcase.

But the crystal goblet, although its exquisite workmanship brought a gasp of admiration to her lips, interested her little at the moment. What caused her heart to leap, set her pulses racing, was the heavily sealed packet which had been stuffed into the goblet.

Eagerly she drew it out, to see that the packet contained not only Colonel Raikes' last will, but also a sheet of paper in which the colonel accused Roger Standish of being the Green Rajah, and asked forgiveness of Ronnie Baring for the injustice which had been done him.

"In an effort to make amends, my boy," the colonel had written, "I have prepared a new will, making you my heir, not only to my property, but to the Lost Secret which I have spent half a lifetime in trying to discover."

June's eyes gleamed.

"My, won't Ronnie and Eva be bucked when they see this!" she exclaimed. "And Jack, too! This paper clears up the whole mystery—"

She broke off, and stiffened in alarm.

What was that?

A faint creaking noise. It was made by the door, and, even as she straightened up, the feeble light of the flickering candles was swallowed up by the dazzling glare of a powerful electric lantern—a lantern which was carried by a green-robed, eerie figure.

Involuntarily June's fingers tightened on the box containing the crystal goblet and the sealed packet.

"The—the Green Rajah!" she whispered.

From the bearded, turbaned figure that had appeared so unexpectedly in the doorway came a harsh laugh.

"Yes, I came to search for the goblet," he declared, "but I see you have saved me the trouble. Your interfering ways have their uses, after all!" He gave another harsh laugh and came striding forward, one brown hand out-thrust "Hand me that box!" he ordered.

June hugged it to her, and recoiled away from him.

"No!" she gasped. "You shan't have it!"

And, turning, she darted wildly away, dodging in and out of the wooden idols. If only she could reach the open doorway! If only—

In a wild effort to get away from the green-clad figure that was pursuing her, she pushed

against one of the idols, sending it crashing down behind her.

With a startled bellow, the Green Rajah pulled up, and June took advantage of his momentary confusion to streak past him and plunge blindly for the doorway.

Here, in the centre of the museum, the light of the lantern did not reach, and in her frantic haste June forgot the open trapdoor in the floor.

Cannoning into it, she toppled and fell headlong, the precious box flying from her grasp. Before she could regain her feet the Green Rajah, lantern in hand, had hurled himself forward and snatched up the padded box.

Triumphantly he opened it and, with burning eyes, surveyed the crystal goblet.

"At last!" he cried. "The clue to the Lost Secret!"

And then, laying the box down, he took out the packet of papers and put a hand to the tiny pocket in his turban. Next moment there came the scrape of a match, and June gave a gasp of horror as she realised his intention.

"No! You shan't destroy the will!" she gasped; and, scrambling up, darted forward, snatching desperately at the papers.

But the Green Rajah thrust her brutally aside, so that she slipped and fell again, striking her head against one of the idols.

As she lay there, dazed and breathless, he grinned mockingly down at her.

"Once these are burnt I'll be safe!" he hissed. "Impossible then for you to prove my identity. As for Colonel Raikes' property, it will all be mine!"

He laughed harshly, and June gave another gasp as she saw him bring the flaming match towards the outheld documents.

Though she still felt faint from her fall, she battled her way to her feet. At all costs she must prevent those vital papers from being destroyed.

But how could she, a young girl, hope to get the better of a ruthless ruffian like the Green Rajah?

As he saw her standing there, a look of frantic desperation on her face, he scowled menacingly.

"Keep back!" he ordered. "If you dare try to interfere again you will regret it! These documents are going to be burnt to ashes!"

"That's what you think, you scoundrel!" The ringing shout came from the doorway. The Green Rajah gave a startled cry, while June swung round, staring with incredulous eyes, convinced that she must be dreaming. For there stood a tall, boyish figure, with dishevelled hair and torn muddy clothes.

"J-Jack!" she gulped. "Oh, it's Jack Linton!"

## THE LAST ROUND



ALMOST delirious with delight, June surveyed with shining eyes the boy she had thought to be seriously injured. As for the Green Rajah, he stood as if turned to stone. Jack Linton's dramatic appearance had startled him even more than it had the girl detective.

A grin softening the grim look on his face, Jack looked across at the petrified crook.

"Yes—Jack Linton!" he said. "Thought you had got rid of me, didn't you, you beauty? But I'm not so easily disposed of. A ledge broke my fall when you pushed me off the peak, and I was only stunned. When I recovered I guessed June would lose no time in searching for the crystal goblet, so I thought I'd come and help her. Well, by the look of things, I've arrived just in time."

"Oh, Jack," breathed June, "you can't imagine how glad I am to see you!"

He flashed her a wide grin, then turned,

and, fists clenched, commenced to advance grimly across the flagged floor.

The Green Rajah, flinging aside the burning match, bared his teeth.

"Keep back, you interfering jackanapes!" he hissed. "I'm not going to be thwarted now! Keep back, or—"

And one brown hand flashed down to the sash about his waist.

June gave a scream of alarm.

"Look out, Jack! He's got a gun!"

But Jack had been expecting such a move. Even as his enemy's hand had dropped, the boy launched himself across the floor in a flying Rugger tackle.

Crack!

The revolver thundered out, but the bullet went screaming harmlessly amongst the curios, for Jack's arm had closed around the Green Rajah's waist and, with a bone-jolting thud, both had gone crashing to the ground.

There they rolled over and over, fighting furiously.

June, watching with bated breath, suddenly saw the scorched papers lying on the flagstones. Darting forward, she snatched them up; then, as she reached for the box containing the crystal goblet, there came a panting gasp of approval from the desperately struggling boy.

"Make off with them! I'll deal with this scoundrel!"

June paused, torn with indecision. She hated to leave Jack, yet there was nothing she could do to help him. Besides, if she fled she might be able to secure help. That possibility decided her, and, clutching the precious box, she stumbled out of the museum and went running down the path to the beach.

"I must get back to the mainland!" she panted. "I must—"

And then her voice trailed away, and abruptly she pulled up, for the second time that night to stare with wild, incredulous eyes.

For a motor-launch was anchoring in the shallows, and, even as she stood there in amazement, its occupants scrambled over the side and came striding up the beach.

First came two uniformed police officers, then a portly figure she recognised as James Henley, then—

She blinked dazedly at the fourth person, hardly able to believe her eyes.

"N-nunky!" she gulped. "Uncle Noel!"

And Noel Raymond it was!

At sight of her they all pulled up, as astonished as she was. June was first to recover from the shock. Amazedly she regarded the famous young detective.

"Uncle, where have you sprung from?" she gasped.

He eyed her a little grimly.

"I managed to get back from Ireland earlier than I had expected," he said, "and on my way to Glen Hall I ran into Mr. Henley and these police officers. Learning that they intended visiting Temple Isle, I thought I'd join them. Apparently—"

But urgently June interrupted: "Come with me—oh, quickly! Quickly!" she cried.

And, turning, she led the way back up the path. Wonderingly Noel Raymond, Mr. Henley, and the police officers followed her. June's heart was in her mouth as she pushed open the museum door.

What would she see in there?

All was astonishingly quiet, and, as apprehensively she stepped through the doorway, she gave a gasp—half of surprise, half of relief. For the dazzling glare of the electric lantern revealed two panting figures, one seated astride the other.

And it was Jack Linton who was on top!

From the other watchers came a chorus of startled shouts; then, as Mr. Henley glimpsed the green-robed figure whom the boy was pinning to the floor, he gave a dazed cry.

"Then—then Jack Linton isn't the Green Rajah!" he exclaimed.

June smiled reproachfully. "Of course he isn't! I told you that all along," she said.

The elderly solicitor passed a dazed, incredulous hand across his brow.

"Then—then who can the scoundrel be?" he stammered.

June's eyes twinkled. She was beginning to enjoy herself.

"Take a look and see for yourself," she said; and, crossing to where the exhausted Green Rajah was lying sullenly in Jack's triumphant grip, she bent and plucked off his false beard, then his turban and wig.

Mr. Henley staggered back, his eyes almost popping from his head.

"S—Standish!" he gasped. "R—Roger Standish!"

And he blinked amazedly as he found himself staring at the defeated, glowering face of the man he had believed to be his trusted friend.

"JUNE, my dear, I don't know what to say!

I have done both you and Jack Linton a cruel injustice!"

It was half an hour later, and, Roger Standish having been escorted away by the police, June had just finished telling the whole sensational story to Mr. Henley and the guests at Glen Hall.

Mildred, Ted, Billie, and the other boys and girls regarded June in breathless admiration as she finished.

"Gee, but you deserve a medal!" exclaimed the plump boy.

"I think you've been simply wonderful!" declared Mildred.

"Rather!" cried Ted Brandish. "Absolutely wizard!"

June blushed at their praise; then, turning, she found Noel Raymond at her side. The famous detective's face was aglow with pleasure.

"You certainly deserve everyone's thanks, my dear!" he declared, and put a fond arm around her shoulders. "And you've certainly more than justified the trust I put in you. Congratulations, partner! I'm proud of you!"

"And so am I!" declared Jack Linton; and the look he bestowed upon her made her colour again.

But Mr. Henley was still shaking his head ruefully, a look of remorse in his eyes. It was clear that he still had not got over the devastating shock he had received.

"What a fool I was," he muttered, "to trust Roger Standish—to listen to that scoundrel's poisoned words—when all the time you were right, Miss Gaynor!" He regarded her apologetically. "Can you ever forgive me, my dear?"

"Of course I can!" said June, with a smile. "And what about you, my boy?"

He turned to Jack Linton, and that boy grinned engagingly.

"Forget it, sir," he said. "I don't bear you any grudge. In the circus, it was quite natural for you to suspect me, and Eva and Ronnie, too. But, I say," he went on excitedly, "what about this jolly old Lost Secret? What exactly is it? I'm just dying to know."

"Same here!" cried Mildred, and from all around came an eager chorus.

Mr. Henley lifted the crystal goblet out of the padded box and frowningly regarded the queer symbols engraved on it.

"I am afraid these are beyond me," he declared. "Without a key we'll never be able to decode them."

June gave a happy chuckle.

"And I know just where the key is," she declared. "Billie"—she turned to the plump boy—"pop up to Roger Standish's room, will you, and bring down his suitcase?"

"Right-ho!"

With a nod, Billie rushed away, and wonderingly everyone waited until he returned, clutching the big, heavy suitcase. As he laid it on the table the girl detective smiled around.

"You remember the package which Colonel Raikes' servant sent from India," she said. "Well, that contained the key to the secret, but it was intercepted by Roger Standish. He stole the original contents and placed those bricks in the box instead. Now, I rather fancy—"

Breaking off, she opened the suitcase and tossed aside the shirts, socks, and other items of clothing packed inside it.

Mr. Henley frowned in bewilderment as he stared at the now empty case.

"But there's no clue in there!" he cried.

June chuckled as her fingers probed the outside of the case, running carefully over the leather. Next moment there came a chorus of amazed cries as suddenly there sounded a click, and the false bottom of the case rolled up like a blind, revealing an unsuspected cavity. And in the cavity was a square ebony object.

"The plinth on which the goblet once stood!" ejaculated June, lifting it out. "And—look, there's writing on it! That'll be the key to the symbols on the goblet."

Noel Raymond whipped out a magnifying-glass and stepped forward.

"Let me look, my dear," he said; and there was an expectant hush as, focusing the magnifying-glass on the queer-looking writing, he bent over the plinth. "Sanskrit!" he announced. "And—Half a minute!"

He studied first the plinth, then the symbols on the goblet, then his eyes gleamed. "Yes, it's as I thought," he declared. "The Lost Secret refers to a treasure hidden in the Himalayas by the Moguls who overran that particular province hundreds of years ago. It will take me some time to decode the whole message, but there's no doubt about it—those symbols reveal the hiding-place of vast treasure."

Jack Linton gave an excited shout.

"And it belongs to—Ronnie and Eva!" he cried in delight. "Colonel Raikes left it them in his last will. Whoopee! Won't they be crazy with delight when they hear the news! That reminds me"—abruptly his infectious grin faded—"the police ought to have finished their investigations by now. I must pop into town right away. Someone must be there to meet the Barings when they are released." He turned to June. "Would you like to come with me?" he asked.

"I'd love to," she answered, then looked across at Noel Raymond. "What about you, nunky?" she asked. "Would you care to join us?"

He shook his head, his eyes twinkling, as he looked first at his young niece, then at the beaming Jack.

"No, I think I'll stay and finish decoding these symbols," he said.

"And we'll stay and prepare a big celebration for the Barings," declared Mildred.

So, alone, June and Jack departed, completely happy that at long last the remaining barrier to their friendship had been removed.

Outside the moonlight was brighter than ever, and in the porch June paused.

"Oh, isn't it lovely!" she cried.

Whether she referred to the moonlit garden or to something else was not clear, but Jack seemed to understand, for his fingers closed around her arm.

"I'll say it is—simply whizzo!" he declared, and together they went walking down the drive.

THE END.

You've enjoyed every word of this serial, haven't you? And now you can look forward to reading the grand opening chapters of "False Friend of the River Revelers," a thrilling new school serial by Renee Frazer.





# HER FEUD *With the* BOY DETECTIVE

(Continued  
from  
page 484.)

Her mind worked desperately as she encountered the boy detective's cool, slightly pitying stare. He knew that he had cornered her, but any compunction he might have felt was stifled by a ruthless determination to carry out his task.

And that task was the arrest and conviction of Mick Carter—the boy he believed guilty.

## THE PAPER-KNIFE CLUE



AVRIL knew that it was useless to appeal to him. Her only hope was to match her wits against his—beat him at his own game! With a pretended sob, she buried her face in her hands.

Rex coughed uneasily.

"Er—look here, Miss Shannon, I don't want to be hard," he said. "Why not be sensible and strike a bargain? Mick Carter's a young scoundrel and you're wasting your pity on him. Believe me, I know what I'm talking about. Just tell me where he's hiding."

Avril looked up, her lips trembling. She was acting now—playing desperately for time.

"Perhaps you're right," she whispered as she crossed to the door. "Look!" She pointed. "You see that clump of trees and the old windmill on the right?"

"Yes!" Rex crossed quickly to her side. "Go on!"

Avril stole a quick glance at his hand, idly playing with the fatal clue.

"If you search the windmill," she said slowly, "I think you might find—"

"Yes?" breathed Rex as she touched his hand, bending towards him.

"That Mick has fooled you!" exclaimed Avril as, with an unexpected movement, she grabbed the paper-knife from his hand and sped for dear life.

"Stop!" shouted Rex furiously as he started in pursuit. "You can't get away with that, Miss Shannon!"

Avril's eyes flashed defiantly as she raced across the tangled cottage garden, crashing through shrubs and nettles, bent on postponing capture even if she could not hope to evade it.

If only she could dispose of the fatal clue; or, better still—

Her eyes lit up suddenly as she paused for breath in the shelter of a clump of bushes. Half hidden by the tangled weeds, she saw the stone parapet of a well. Avril bent swiftly, snatching up something from the ground as the boy's footsteps came thudding among the bushes, cutting off her retreat.

Rex burst into the clearing in time to see Avril scramble on to the parapet of the well, raising her hand.

"Wait!" exclaimed the boy huskily. "Miss Shannon—"

Avril gave a quick, defiant laugh—and something fell from her hand, flashing in the sunlight. There was a hollow splash far below, even as Rex reached the well and leaned over

the parapet, in time to see the widening ripples on the dark water at the bottom of the shaft.

"You—you little idiot!" he rapped, seizing her arm. "What have you done?"

"What do you suppose?" countered Avril, with a quick toss of her head as she confronted him. There was a slight flush on her cheek and her blue eyes gleamed mockingly. "You thought you had me cornered, my clever young detective. You thought you were smart enough to make me betray a friend. What are you going to do about it now?"

Rex bit his lip, his good-looking face a trifle pale. For a moment he looked nonplussed, but his discomfiture was only momentary.

A wry smile flickered on his lips as he regarded her, a glint of reluctant admiration in his eyes.

"You've beaten me this time, Miss Shannon," he admitted coolly. "But you won't get another chance. Good-afternoon!"

He raised his hat and strode off without a backward glance. Avril watched him as he mounted and rode away across the moor in the direction of the stables.

Her heart was beating unsteadily and her momentary sense of elation was mingled with a vague uneasiness at the boy sleuth's confident manner.

What new scheme had he in mind? He could not denounce her without proof—and the only proof was safely in her own keeping!

Cautiously she felt in the inner pocket of her riding jacket and drew out the bronze paper-knife! The scrap of waste metal she had thrown into the well had served its purpose.

Avril could hardly explain what impulse had prompted her to retain the incriminating clue—except a slender hope that it might help to prove Mick's innocence, instead of his guilt.

She examined the bronze blade and elaborately carved handle and her eyes lit up with sudden excitement. Here was something that Rex had missed—though he would doubtlessly have noticed it if she had not diverted his attention.

A tiny shred of blue-grey cloth, caught on the ornamental hilt—and Mick had been wearing a brown jacket, so it was not his!

Avril's thoughts were racing as she wrapped the precious scrap of cloth in her handkerchief and tossed the knife out of sight among the undergrowth.

Her eyes were sparkling as she rode back to the stables. She had something to work on now—something tangible. All she had to do was to compare that thread of cloth with the jackets of her fellow stable-workers and members of the staff. Though many of them were old friends, others were comparative strangers about whom she knew little.

She might beat the boy sleuth even now! Humming softly to herself, Avril stabbed Black Diamond and made her way across the paddock to the girls' quarters in the big red house.

But as she reached the door she encountered young Mr. Vernon. The assistant-trainer's face was rather grave as he beckoned her.

"Oh, Miss Shannon, I've been looking for you! Mr. Hunter wishes to see you in his study immediately."

Avril's heart missed a beat and her face paled slightly. The "boss" rarely sent for the junior members of his staff unless there was trouble brewing.

With vague foreboding, she followed Mr. Vernon to the great man's study, and as the door opened her worst fears were confirmed

For standing negligently beside Mr. Hunter's desk was Rex Barrington!

The boy sleuth grinned faintly as he met Avril's startled glance, and Mr. Hunter looked up. The famous trainer looked more worried than angry.

"Miss Shannon," he said tersely, "I've sent for you to give you a word of warning."

Avril's hands clenched as she waited, avoiding the boy's gaze.

"Young Barrington has told me that you are in the habit of exercising Black Diamond on the moor unaccompanied," went on Mr. Hunter. "Though I approve of your enthusiasm, I cannot permit you to take such risks with the valuable filly, especially as the Grenville Stakes are to be run the day after to-morrow. In future, Rex Barrington will accompany you officially on your rides, and he will be personally responsible for the filly's safety. You will kindly hand him the key to Black Diamond's stable."

Avril caught in her breath sharply, her lips trembling. In a flash she saw how Rex had tricked her.

How could she hope to visit Mick Carter—to smuggle food to the fugitive—if Rex was to accompany her on all her rides? The old barn was at least five miles across the moor, and her only chance of visiting it was during her practice gallops with Black Diamond.

And the boy sleuth was to hold the key to the stable!

A hot refusal rose to her lips; but, meeting the boy's amused smile, she realised that it would be useless. Once again Rex Barrington had got the better of her, and for a moment she felt that she almost hated him as she tried desperately to think of a way out.

### THE VANISHED HORSE



"SHALL I take the key now, Miss Shannon?" inquired Rex suavely.

With an effort Avril controlled her anger and dismay as she twisted the stable key from her bunch, dropping it on the floor in her agitation. Young Mr. Vernon bent to retrieve it, handing it to the boy sleuth.

And just then Avril's heart gave a violent bound. She had seen something that brought an excited gleam to her eyes—something that dramatically confirmed her belief in Mick!

Her pulses racing, she encountered the boy detective's amused glance.

"I—er—hope you don't mind my butting in like this, Miss Shannon?" inquired Rex.

"Not in the least," replied Avril coolly. "It's the best thing that could have happened! Thank you, Mr. Hunter," she added, turning to the old trainer. "I'm sure Rex Barrington will make an excellent bodyguard!"

And with a challenging smile at the surprised boy sleuth, she walked quickly from the study.

Avril's thoughts were racing as she hurried to her own room. Rex believed that he had scored over her, but she held a trump card that he did not suspect.

Something that was going to prove Mick's innocence without a shadow of doubt!

A daring, almost breath-taking plan was taking shape in her mind. To-morrow, she knew, old Mr. Hunter would be away in town; he was not expected back till the morning of the races. Anything could happen before then.

That evening she sought out Bert Hoskins, the senior stable-hand, who had taken care of the high-spirited and temperamental Rajah since Mick Carter's disgrace. Bert had always stoutly maintained Mick's innocence, and Avril took him partially into her confidence, without revealing her actual plans.

Bert hesitated at first, but it was his day off to-morrow, and Avril's offer to look after Rajah seemed innocent enough.

Late that night, with a large bundle under her arm and the key of Rajah's stable in her pocket, Avril crept out into the moonlit yard.

The big horse greeted her with a savage bearing of its teeth, but by dint of coaxing and fearless handling Avril managed to adjust its harness and strapped her bundle to the saddle.

Crossing the yard in the moonlight with the restive horse was a nerve-racking test, but Avril was prepared for that, and she knew just what she was risking.

Luck was on her side, and a quarter of an hour later she was out on the moor, engaged in a desperate tussle with her high-spirited mount.

Several times Rajah almost threw her, and only superb horsemanship enabled her to retain her seat. Pale and breathless, she managed at length to check the horse's wild rearing, and by skilful coaxing and persuasion urged it to a canter, heading towards the old barn.

Mick, startled and wary, opened the trapdoor as she called to him.

"Miss Avril, what—what has happened—"

he began anxiously.

"It's all right, Mick!" breathed Avril. "Come down. I've an old friend of yours here."

Mick, almost incredulous with delight, listened to Avril's breathless story as he caressed his favourite mount.

"You're going to ride in the Grenville Stakes, Mick!" concluded Avril eagerly. "Don't worry about anything else. Mr. Hunter didn't inform the police about you—no one knows what happened except the stable people and Rex Barrington."

"But he'll have me arrested, Miss Avril—"

he began.

"He won't!" breathed Avril. "Not when I confront him with the proof I've got. I want to find out a bit more before I tell him. Meanwhile, it isn't safe to leave Rajah at the stables—you must look after him till the morning of the race, Mick. Enter him and weigh-in as though nothing had happened. Mr. Hunter won't be back till the races start. I've got your riding kit here, with the stable colours. The rest is up to you, Mick!"

She took her departure a few minutes later, hurrying back on foot across the moor.

It was nearly two hours later when she reached the stables and the chill of the dawn was already in the air.

As she crossed the moonlit yard her heart missed a beat. The door of Black Diamond's stall stood open!

With cold premonition, she darted forward—to encounter a tall, familiar figure in the doorway.

"So it's you!" breathed Rex Barrington, seizing her arm. The boy sleuth's face was white and his grey eyes glittered angrily.

"Where's Black Diamond?" he demanded.

Avril stared at him, her eyes bewildered.

"What—what do you mean? You've got the key to the stall; I gave it to you!"

Rex laughed mirthlessly.

"A clever move, Miss Shannon," he said. "I congratulate you! But it happened to be the wrong key—and Black Diamond's gone!"

"Gone?" echoed Avril, her heart sinking.

"Then—then you've been tricked!"

The boy detective's face looked rather drawn in the moonlight. He smiled bitterly.

"It's your laugh, Miss Shannon," he said.

"This'll mean disgrace for me. I suppose that's what you wanted?"

Avril's mind whirled; she saw everything in a blinding flash. The trickster had outwitted them both, but with the boy sleuth's help she might still be able to turn the tables—if only Rex was willing to forget their feud.

"Rex, listen!" she breathed, catching at his arm. "We've wasted enough time at cross-purposes. You've got to help me now."

"Is this another little ruse?" asked Rex cynically.

"Yes!" rejoined Avril, her eyes gleaming. "A ruse to catch a scoundrel instead of an honest

boy. You asked me to tell you where to find Mick—and now I'm going to tell you! You'll be able to arrest him if you like, but somehow I don't think you will!"

WHEN the great Mr. Hunter arrived at the Grenville racecourse, in time for the Ladies' Steeplechase, he was met by his perturbed assistant.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Hunter," faltered Ralph Vernon, "I've had news for you. I tried to contact you in town, but you didn't get my message. Black Diamond's not in the race. She's been stolen—by that young scoundrel, Mick Carter—"

"What!" shouted the trainer incredulously, his face crimsoning. "But—but Rex Barrington was taking care of her—"

"That fellow's useless," rejoined the other. "He cleared off when he discovered the loss. And the girl, Avril Shannon, is nowhere to be found. It's my belief that she's in the plot with young Carter—"

"I'll have the police on them!" exclaimed Mr. Hunter furiously. "Rajah out of the running—and my finest filly stolen—"

He choked, glaring towards the track, as a distant shout went up.

"They're away!"  
The entrants in the Ladies' Steeplechase were coming down the straight, neck-to-neck at first, but gradually one of them pulled out from the rest, easily leading the field.

"Congratulations, Mr. Hunter!" remarked one of the onlookers, recognising the trainer. "Your filly's running well—and who's the young lady jockey?"

"My—my filly?" ejaculated Mr. Hunter, his hands trembling as he raised his binoculars. "Great goodness, those are my colours—and it's Black Diamond, right enough, with Avril Shannon riding her!"

He turned to glare questioningly at the astounded Ralph Vernon.

The assistant-trainer's eyes were goggling and his face looked suddenly grey.

Avril, her eyes shining, her cheeks flushed, was riding the race of her life.

"Faster, Diamond, my pet!" she breathed. "Steady now—steady for the next hurdle! Up! Over!"

A roar of applause went up from the crowd as Black Diamond took the difficult hurdle in her stride, leaving her nearest rival floundering on the wrong side of the fence.

As they thundered past the winning-post the applause rose to a yell, and a boyish figure in the colours of the Red Holm stables darted forward to catch the rein.

"Bravo, Miss Avril!" exclaimed Mick, his face alight with pleasure. "A grand race—and I only hope I do as well!"

But just then the crowd parted, and on the scene burst Mr. Hunter, followed by the assistant-trainer.

"Arrest that boy!" shouted Ralph Vernon, pointing to Mick.

A police-inspector appeared from the crush, accompanied by a constable. Mick's face turned rather pale as he looked anxiously at Avril.

"Just a minute, inspector!" put in a cool voice, and Avril's face lit up with relief as Rex Barrington strolled forward. "Just a minute," repeated Rex. "The man you want is standing beside you!"

With an unexpected move the inspector caught Ralph Vernon by the shoulder.

"You'd better come quietly," he warned. White to the lips, the assistant-trainer struggled in the inspector's iron grip.

"This—this is preposterous!" he blurted. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"No? We're talking about the robbery at the stables," put in Rex coolly, taking a bundle from his pocket. "We have a paper-knife with your finger-prints on it, Mr. Vernon—and a letter I found in your room, from a confederate,

disclosing your plot to disgrace Mick Carter and keep Rajah out of the big race.

"You stood to win several thousand pounds if he was withdrawn," went on Rex grimly. "Not content with that, you attempted to kidnap Black Diamond and throw the blame on Miss Shannon and myself. Thanks to Miss Shannon, I was able to trace the filly to the stables where you'd hidden her—and to find the proof of the plot."

Old Hunter turned to Avril, his face twitching with emotion.

"Then it's you I've to thank for exposing the dastardly plot, Miss Shannon," he said huskily. "And, Mick Carter, if there's anything I can do to make amends, my boy—"

"Wait till I've won the big race for you, Mr. Hunter!" said Mick, grinning happily. "I've promised Miss Shannon I will—and I'm not going to let her down!"

MICK was as good as his word, and the second race of the meeting ended in another triumph for the Red Holm Stables.

At the celebration lunch that followed, old Mr. Hunter presented Avril and Mick with a cheque for a hundred pounds to divide between them.

"Rex, you must share my portion," urged Avril as she laughingly flourished the cheque in the boy detective's face.

"Not me!" chuckled Rex. "I get paid for my detecting, remember. By the way—the boy sleuth eyed her curiously—"you never told me how you came to suspect Vernon."

Avril's eyes twinkled.  
"I noticed that his sleeve was torn when he bent to pick up the key to the stable, and the cloth was identical with that little thread I found on the handle of the paper-knife."

"You beat me, there," said Rex, with a chagrined grin. "In fact, you've beaten me all along the line, Avril. You ought to come into partnership with me!"

"I might"—Avril's eyes twinkled—"but I prefer riding! Anyway, let's shake on it, Rex!" And they shook hands in complete understanding.

THE END.

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Look Out For Them In Next Friday's  
GIRLS' CRYSTAL

## THE BOY WHO BOSSSED THE CASTAWAYS

(Continued from page 488.)

bonfire pile, and out at sea the moon gleamed on the white coral reef, and turned the rolling waves into polished silver. And—was it her fancy—or was that a gleam—a glow—on the horizon?

"Dick, I believe it is!" she breathed, and excitement ran through her veins like wildfire. "Dick, quick, light the beacon!"

Dick was already striking the match. Now, as it flared into life, he held it to the dried bracken and ferns that formed the base of the fire. Flames shot up with a roar, yellow, hot and crimson. In a moment the beacon was flaring like a mighty torch.

From below on the beach there came a cheer. "Well, that's done it!" Dick chuckled. "Now we'll soon know our fate. Come on, let's get down to the cave and join the others."

Together they raced back, hearts thumping jubilantly now. On the beach, in the glow, some of the other castaways were gathered. They were all staring towards the sea.

"Good work, Dick!" the professor said. "Gad, what a blaze! If they don't see that they're blind."

"There was a light," began Dick, staring anxiously. "We saw it from above. We saw it. And then he stopped. Swiftly his head went up, for suddenly the beacon seemed to flare, once fiercely, and then die down. They heard a crash, a thud. Then abruptly the flames died out, leaving them blinking in the darkness that followed.

"The beacon! It's gone out!" stuttered Roly. "It couldn't have," Dick said. But he stared up again. There was no flame now, only a cracking and splintering that told of burning embers, and a dull sort of glow which certainly would not be visible for more than a few yards. "Something's happened," he murmured. "Let's see!" Julie cried.

She began to hurry away, the others on her heels. Very soon they were storming the slope of the cliffs again. And on reaching the spot they stopped, gazing at the bonfire—or its remains—in horror.

There it lay, a mere mass of burning embers, strewn about in a wide circle.

"Somebody's wrecked it—somebody's scattered it!" stormed Roly. "Oh, gosh, what a dirty, rotten trick! Who's done it?"

"Who do you think?" retorted a voice, and Julie, turning, saw Gilson. "Who could have done it, except the fellow who's straining every nerve to keep us here? It's Larry Woodstock, of course—Woodstock, who's kidding us he's doing his best for us! His best!" He sneered. "What Woodstock is doing all the time is his treacherous worst. And I, for one, say this ought to be the end of him."

"What?" Julie cried.

"His leadership, I mean." Gilson stared round at the others' angry faces. "Woodstock, so far from leading, has only proved himself so far a traitor to us all. It's time we finished with Woodstock, and told him so. He's keeping us here for his own purposes, and we, like fools, are letting him do it. Well, this is the end—or should be! He's turned on us, so let's turn on him. We'll have a new leader from now on!"

"And who will that be?" Julie asked amid dead silence.

"Me!" Gilson answered boldly.

Would the castaways really be better off under Gilson than under Larry Woodstock? There are surprising developments in next Friday's chapters of this story in the **GIRLS' CRYSTAL**. Don't miss them.

## THE MERRYMAKERS AT COLLEGE

(Continued from page 492.)

there was something he didn't want him to see. "Something my friend was going to buy from you—" And then she stopped; she seemed to bite back the words.

"What do you mean?" Sally demanded. "What thing?" came from Don. "I won't tell you!" panted Freda. "I'll deny everything. You can't prove I cut the dean's moccasins. He won't let you hold the exhibition, and—"

The door quietly opened. It had been left unlocked since Don came in. There on the threshold stood the dean, and he had heard Freda convict herself with her own lips.

"Miss Lane—" he began, thunderstruck—and that was the last word he ever spoke to Freda Lane.

She fled past him to the door. She packed her belongings, and she fled from Roxburgh College as though pursued by all the ghosts of Pat's lively imagination.

And she took her guilty secret with her.

There was a strange sequel on Friday. The Merrymakers' Exhibition had opened with a swing, and was doing well, when the distinguished visitor and curio expert, Mr. Renfrew, duly arrived.

"Now we'll know which is this mystery exhibit, Sally!" Johnny whispered excitedly. "I believe it's my boomerang—"

In eager anticipation they all watched as Mr. Renfrew made his way from one exhibit to another, carefully examining each.

"No," Johnny said, with a sigh of disappointment, as Mr. Renfrew passed his boomerang by with only a casual glance of interest; "it's not my boomerang. I wonder what it can be?"

"Don't know," Sally whispered. "Perhaps there isn't—"

But with a sudden exclamation Mr. Renfrew turned from the exhibits. He made a quick start towards the mantelpiece cupboard.

"Why, surely—" He caught his breath animatedly. "Where is the key? Let me see this jug!"

Wonderingly, Nellie Bryan unlocked the cupboard, and Mr. Renfrew seized in his hands her little Toby jug.

"Seventeenth Century!" he cried. "A genuine old Toby! One of the few remaining originals brought here by the Pilgrim Fathers! Miss Warner! This is the rarest treasure in your exhibition! It is worth a great deal of money!"

Nellie Bryan was more overcome than on the day she had won her scholarship.

Sally gazed at Toby in his chipped little three-cornered hat—she gazed at her stupefied chums—and Freda's secret burst upon them like a dazzling light. This was why she had schemed to get the exhibition banned rather than Mr. Renfrew should come here. Freda had known the value of that old Toby jug! Her friend would have offered the club a dollar for it—and would have walked away with a treasure worth a small fortune!

"The little old Toby jug!" breathed Pat Waters, and she gazed fondly across at Nellie Bryan. "Oh, Nellie, I'm so glad!"

Sally put an arm round her.

"Pat, my superstitious lamb," she murmured, "you said old Toby was lucky—and this time you were right!"

(End of this week's story.)

Another of the Merrymakers' adventures will appear in next Friday's **GIRLS' CRYSTAL**. Don't miss it, whatever you do.