

EXCITING NEW SCHOOL STORY BEGINS THIS WEEK

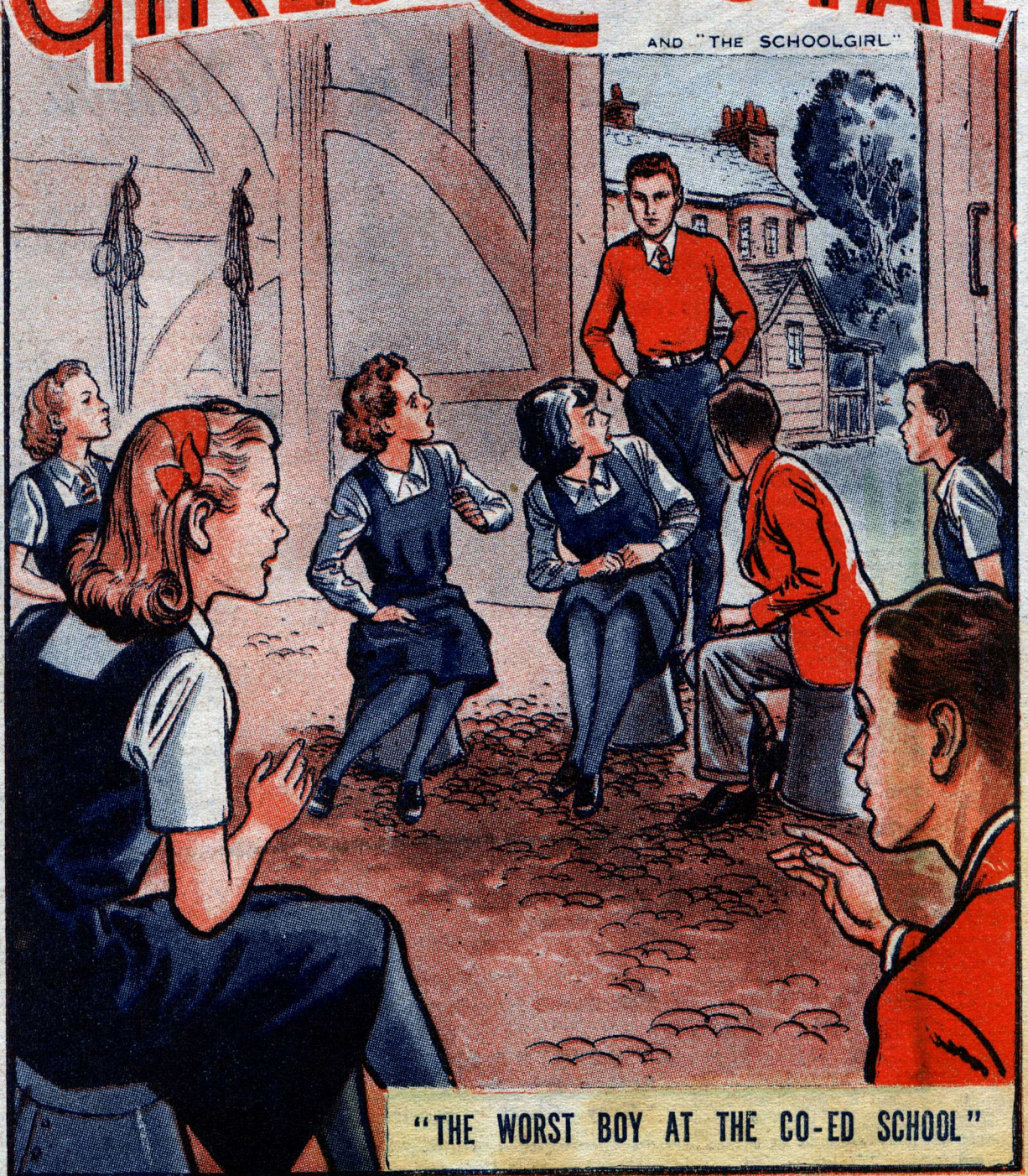
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EVERY FRIDAY.

Week Ending February 25th, 1950.

GIRLS' CRYSTAL ^{3¢}

AND "THE SCHOOLGIRL"



"THE WORST BOY AT THE CO-ED SCHOOL"



The Worst Boy AT THE Co-ed School

RESCUE IN THE LANE

GO steady with the mare, young Paddy!" said Mr. Jody, the corn merchant. "She's fresh. Drive her easy to the school."

Paddy Dare twinkled down at him from the seat of the light trap. "Now, don't worry, Mr. Jody," she teased. "You know me—"

"I sure know you!" He laughed. "Young harum scarum! But you know horses, too, or I wouldn't be lending you Molly and the trap! There, that's the last of your cases!"

He swung the suitcase into the body of the trap behind Paddy, then rested a hand on the side, smiling up at the fair-haired schoolgirl. "Glad to be back, eh?"

"Oh, you bet, Mr. Jody!" Paddy sighed happily. "I've missed a whole half term, you know. It's going to be whizzo, to see everyone again! And, gosh," she bubbled on, "it's jolly good of you to lend me Molly and the trap! I'd've been stuck here at the station else! I'll leave her at the school stables for you to collect, eh?"

He nodded and stepped back. "That's it. Now off you go! Molly's getting restive!"

Paddy gathered up the reins with tender, expert fingers and clucked her tongue. "So-long, Mr. Jody! Thanks a million again!"

He waved, smiled, and watched with critical approval as Paddy smartly took the mare and trap out of the station yard of Mallington Halt, en route for school.

It was a glorious spring day, sunny, crisp. "Ah, this is good!" Paddy breathed deeply, contentedly. She glanced down at the chestnut mare trotting between the shafts. "Lovely to be back—and lovely way to come back! Thanks to Mr. Jody!"

Paddy had missed the first half of the spring term at Mallington Co-Educational College. She had spent it, with special permission of the Head, with her parents in America. It had been a wonderful holiday, new and exciting, but she was glad to be back.

As they moved smartly down the lane from the little station, she gazed round at well-known and well-loved landmarks with sparkling blue eyes. Paddy, who was tall, slim, and fair-haired, had a tremendous vitality and enthusiasm, and a deep interest in horses and riding.

She thought about horses now. She thought about the school; her girl- and boy friends there. They revolved round her pet ambition. "We've got to do it this term," she murmured. "Just got to! We've got to turn out a riding team from Junior School that'll sock the Critchley College lot into a cocked hat! They've beaten us at hockey;

they've whacked the boys at soccer and rugger—so it's up to us riders to turn the scales! We just must—just will!"

Paddy gave a determined nod, gazing dreamily before her. "We'll do it," she murmured confidently. "If we can—here, Molly, steady!" she broke off with a gasp, and sat up sharply. "Oh—"

It happened quickly. One moment mare and trap were clipping along at a steady pace; the next, Molly had shied, jerked the reins out of Paddy's hands—and broken into a gallop.

What had caused Molly's behaviour Paddy had no idea. In any case, she had no time to wonder. The reins were out of her hands, and Molly, excited, unrestrained, was bolting.

"Molly, steady—whea!" Not yet alarmed, Paddy stretched forward to retrieve the reins. "Steady, old girl!"

The light trap was bumping, jolting. The jolting caused the reins to slip on to Molly's hindquarters and out of Paddy's reach.

Paddy's teeth set hard. There was real peril here. If the reins slipped right down and entangled with Molly's hind legs, there would be a pile up, a bad accident.

She kept cool, but felt helpless. "Steady! Steady!" she yelled, watching the trailing reins. But just then a flickering movement on her left dragged her gaze round to the tall hedge that separated the lane from a field.

Over that hedge in a superb leap appeared a black horse.

It struck the lane at an angle ahead of the mare, and even in that jumpy moment Paddy thrilled to the perfection of the leap, at the way the black's rider kept control as he raced alongside, reaching for Molly's reins.

He grasped them with his right hand, controlling the black with his left. He pulled Molly in steadily. The gallop became a canter, a trot, and finally both horses and trap came to a halt.

"Gosh!" breathed Paddy. Her alarm was completely gone. Her eyes shone. "That was riding! That was terrific!"

The black's rider, a boy of about her own age in jersey and jodhpurs, had swung down, still holding Molly.

Paddy watched him with admiration and interest.

He knew what he was doing obviously, and he did it swiftly and competently. With touch of fingers and soothing tone, he quietened the restive mare.

Only when Molly was standing quietly, quivering a little, did he look up.

Paddy met the cool, studied gaze of greenish-grey eyes. This boy was a little taller than herself. He had shortish red hair. He was lightly built, but obviously wiry. He had a straight nose and slightly twisted mouth.

"You lost your reins? The mare got nervy—bolted?" he stated, rather than asked. "Hurt? Scared?"

He was very calm, and Paddy liked that.

"Neither! But"—she smiled frankly—"I might have been both, if it hadn't been for you. Thanks a lot! That was terrific riding!"

He shrugged, as if dismissing the whole affair.

"Thank Whitey," he said. "He made the jump!"

He ran one hand down the satiny neck of the black. There was fondness in the gesture.

"Whitey? You call him Whitey?" Paddy echoed. "But he's a black!"

He looked up at her, hesitated, then grinned slowly.

"Oh, I call him Whitey as a change from myself."

"Eh? I don't get you—" Paddy paused then, and momentarily forgot his puzzling reply as she realised that he was wearing a blue and red striped tie. "I say!" she exclaimed.

"That's a Mallington tie! You're from the College. You must be new this term, eh? Golly, that's fine!"

"I'm from the school," he admitted.

"But what's so good about that?"

She beamed down at him, her interest deepening.

"Why, everything! You're a rider—a jumper! You know horses! And me—well, I sort of run junior riding at Mallington," she rushed on. "My name's Paddy Dare, and this term—"

"Paddy Dare?" he cut in. "Ah, yes, I've heard of you. Most popular girl on Junior Side, I believe."

"Rot!" scoffed Paddy, but was conscious of an odd note in his voice, almost like bitterness. "Just one of the gang, except perhaps when it comes to riding. I'm in charge of that, and I'm hoping to do great things with Junior School—boys and girls—against Critchley College. And you—"

"Yes, and me?" he asked coolly, as she paused.

"You've just got to be in the team, too!" finished Paddy with typical impulsiveness and decision. "Absolutely must!"

He dropped his head for a moment. When he looked up, Paddy was startled. For a second she could

This Grand New Serial Is
By
DOROTHY PAGE,
Author Of The Popular
"Grey Ghost" Stories

have sworn there was a wistful look on his rather lean face.

"You want me in?" he asked slowly.

"Of course! I've said so. You're tops with horses. Besides—" She paused and studied him. "Besides," she added frankly, "quite apart from the fact that you came to my rescue so whizzingly, I like you. You're a bit odd, I think, but I like you!"

He appeared to ponder that in a calm, detached way.

"You like me," he muttered, stroking the black's neck. "Well—thanks. But—for how long do you usually like people?"

Paddy stared, half laughing. "What a queer thing to ask," she said. "Why, when I like people—well, I like 'em. Time doesn't come into it."

"Doesn't it?" he said. "Suppose I suggest that your period for liking me will last—say, about an hour!"

Paddy's blue eyes widened.

"Gosh, you are a bit queer, aren't you!" she exclaimed. "You're ragging! But fooling apart," she went on eagerly, "I can book you for the Junior Team—yes? And look, I'm going to have a preliminary meeting after tea—in the school stables, I expect. You'll be there?"

He did not immediately answer, but at last he handed up Molly's reins into Paddy's hands, and met her gaze.

"You mean that?" he asked quickly. "You want me in? You want me at the meeting? That's a promise?"

"But of course!"

"Then—" His whole face changed; he seemed to throw off a load. "Then—thanks, yes! Thanks! I'm on! Look, I've got to dash now! Got an appointment in the village!"

He turned and swung easily into the black's saddle.

"Hey," called Paddy, "what's your name? I told you mine, remember?"

He checked, looked back, and again gave that twisty grin.

"Yes, you'd better know that," he said. "It's Conrad—Vincent Conrad. Got it? Vincent Conrad."

She nodded, smiling.

"Got it! Quite a distinctive name. Not likely to forget that!"

"No," he said quietly—"no, I'm afraid you're not!"

And with that rather cryptic remark, he turned the black's head and cantered off smartly down the lane in the direction of Mallington.

A SHOCK FOR PADDY

PADDY proceeded on her way, intrigued, but immensely pleased with her meeting with Vincent Conrad.

"He's different—but nice," she decided. "And what a scoop for the riding team!"

Molly behaved perfectly now, and in less than thirty minutes the tall stone gate posts of Mallington College appeared round a bend.

"Good old coll!" Paddy murmured.

As she took the trap in through the gates, the pleasant paths and front lawns spread out before her. Beyond lay the three main buildings—Girls Side and Central Hall and Boys Side.

The scene was quiet. On the distant playing fields there were a few figures, but it was close on tea-time, and obviously most of the scholars were indoors.

"I'll tuck you away in the stables, Molly," called Paddy.

She had swung the trap on to a secondary drive, when a tall man in gown and mortar board suddenly appeared in her path, hand upraised. "Stop!" he ordered sharply.

Paddy reined in in surprise.

"Hallo," she thought, "another newcomer to the coll—and a master this time!"

The gown and mortar board proved that. He was a tall, angular man with a high colour and sported big glasses.

"What does this mean?" he demanded. "Who gave you permission to drive that vehicle in here? Who are you?"

"Paddy Dave—Girls Side, sir," responded Paddy promptly and cheerily. "Just returned from long holidays. Mr. Jody lent me his trap at the station. I've driven it into school before," she added by way of explanation.

"Oh—I see. Hm!" The new master frowned and shrugged. "Very well—if this sort of thing is permitted by your mistress—very well!"

Obviously, he doesn't approve! thought Paddy. Wonder who he is? Looks rather a tartar for the boys!

"My name," said the master sharply, as if reading her thoughts, "is Mr. Voster. But tell me. If you have come from the village, have you seen anything of one of the boys—a red-haired boy?"

Paddy smiled and nodded vigorously.

"Rather, Mr. Voster! You must mean Conrad. Gosh—yes, I met him near the station, and I'd like to—"

"Thank you," he interrupted curtly and stalked off.

Paddy's jaw dropped a little. She stared after him, then grinned.

"Nice cheerful type!" she murmured. "So chatty!"

She paused then, for a soft, pleased call reached her ears.

"Paddy! Oh, Paddy, you're back!"

Third Form girl scuttling across the lawns. She called.

"Hey, kid, just a sec! Be an angel and take the mare and trap along to the stables, will you? Tell old Jock to hold it for Mr. Jody, please. O.K.?"

The Third Former bounced up, beaming. Paddy was popular.

"Hallo, Paddy! You bet I will! Leave it to me!"

"Thanks a lot," smiled Paddy.

"Now, Jo—just time for a coco-cola at The Dive before it closes for tea. Come on! I've masses to tell you—masses to ask you!"

She linked her arm in Jo's and whirled her off happily to where on the other side of Main Gate was situated the café-cum-tuckshop known to the college as The Dive.

"Jo, what about the riding team?" asked Paddy eagerly.

Jo side-glanced at her friend's lively face with quiet affection.

"We've left that to you to get started, Paddy, as promised."

"Dear old Jo!" Paddy grinned.

"You're tops enough at riding to run the team yourself. But what I meant was—how many of you entered for the village gymkhana, and did you do any good?"



"It was Conrad who crocked Jo," Paddy's chums told her. The boy she had been so attracted to, she was now learning, was the worst outsider the college had ever known.

Paddy sat up, jerked round her head. A sturdy girl with dark waving hair, thick eyebrows, and a captain's badge on her tunic, was hurrying towards her from the direction of the stables.

Paddy took one look, then whooped, and leapt from the driving seat, still clutching Molly's reins.

"Jo!" She rushed and gave the newcomer a rapturous hug, reins and all. "Jo, how wizard! You old so-and-so, let me look at you!"

She held the other girl at arms-length and regarded her with real affection, for Josephine Winter was her closest chum at Mallington and her study-mate into the bargain.

"Still the same old Jo! Still a bit solemn!" she teased, despite the fact that the other girl's rather serious features were lit up with pleasure.

"How've you been? Did you get all my letters? And I say, how are the rest of the girls? How're the boys? What has—"

"Whoa! Whoa!" protested Jo laughingly. "Still the same old Paddy! It's lovely to see you. Was it a good holiday?"

Paddy lifted her eyes skyward and sighed.

"Super, Jo—just super! But it's tops to be back, too. But we can't stand here clutching Molly. Got to celebrate!"

Her sparkling gaze alighted on a

"Quite well. Jimmy Court had a first—"

"Good old Jimmy!" approved Paddy warmly.

"Ron Bullton had a second—"

"But you, you old chunk of modesty!" protested Paddy. "What about you? I bet you showed 'em all what riding is?"

Jo smiled faintly and shook her dark head.

"No, I couldn't enter, Paddy. I crocked my wrist just before."

Paddy looked at her with quick concern.

"Oh, Jo, what awful luck! You're all right now, aren't you?"

"Of course, goose!" smiled Jo.

"It was weeks ago!"

"Good!" Paddy sighed. "But—I say, that reminds me of something exciting that happened to me this afternoon. Must tell you—"

She paused there. They had come in sight of the low, rather rambling café-tuckshop, and just inside the open side door stood chatting a small knot of girls and boys.

Paddy was seen. A bright-faced, plump girl waved excitedly.

"It's Paddy!" she yelled. "Hi-yah, cowgirl! Did you show them t'ar Amurricans?"

"Paddy! Paddy's back! Cheers!"

"Grand to see you, Paddy" beamed a freckled-faced, curly-headed boy. This was Jimmy Court, leader of

juniors on Boys Side, and a special chum of Paddy's. "Pile in! Just been talking about your return! Just a liffy and I'll get you a drink!"

Paddy entered with Jo, and the little group clustered round. The welcome made her eyes dance. Gosh, it was good to be back!

"It's lovely to see you all again!" she cried. "Hallo, Jimmy! Hallo, Dot, Max, Ron, Isabella, Bette—"

A coco-cola was thrust into her hand. They stood round the doorway. "Here's to Paddy's return!" called cheery Jimmy Court. "And here's to the downfall of Critchley! Up the riding team!"

The toast was enthusiastically and laughingly drunk. Then Paddy suddenly remembered and excitedly raised her hand for silence.

"Talking of riding," she said, "what a surprise I had this afternoon! Do let me tell. This is a pat on the back for the boys—and what an acquisition for our riding team!"

She rounded on Jo with mock accusation.

"Jo, you old meanie, why didn't you tell me about him in your letter? I should've thought he was hot news!"

Jo looked bewildered. The others looked interested.

"About who, Paddy?"

"Why, about Vincent Conrad, of course!"

"Vincent Conrad?"

"Yes!" exclaimed Paddy. "I met him this afternoon—and gosh, can he ride! I've asked him into the team, of course, and to come to a preliminary meeting to-night, so—"

She stopped, suddenly conscious of silence—suddenly conscious of a variety of expressions that replaced the previous smiles. Some faces were set, some dismayed, some even grim.

Jo Winter looked almost horrified. "Paddy," she gasped, "you've— you've done what?"

"Why, I asked Vincent Conrad into the team," said Paddy, staring round. "I say, you all know him, don't you?"

"Yes—yes, we know him!" Jimmy muttered.

"I'll say!" growled Ron Bullton.

Paddy was puzzled, half smiling.

"Well, then," she said, "there we are! Why, he dashed to the rescue like a knight of old! You see, something strange made my horse bolt!"

"Strange!" Ron Bullton cut in with a sharp, scornful laugh. "Not so strange, Paddy," he said. "I should say the answer is simply that Vincent Conrad caused the horse to bolt in the first place. Just the sort of trick he'd play!"

It was such an amazing statement to Paddy that she paused with her lips parted, completely startled and bewildered. She stared at burly Ron Bullton. She looked at Jimmy. Jimmy was obviously uneasy. Jo looked distressed. The others seemed uncomfortable.

"Look here," she exclaimed, and flushed. "I don't get this at all! Ron, are you crackers? Funny sort of joke!"

"Ron wasn't joking, Paddy," said Jimmy quietly.

"And I'm not crackers, either!" put in Ron Bullton. "If you think so, Paddy, ask Jo here, who caused her to pile up when she was out riding! Ask Jo, who caused her to crock her wrist and put her out of the village gymkhana!"

Paddy started. She whirled, wide-eyed, to her chum.

"Jo," she gasped, "you don't mean to say that—that—"

"It's rather difficult to explain," murmured Jo.

"Nothing difficult about it at all," snorted Ron Bullton. "Paddy, it was Conrad who crocked Jo."

"What!"

Paddy was aghast, shaken. The boy she had been so attracted to—the boy she had liked at first sight had—

"And that's not the only count against him!" said Ron Bullton grimly. "You weren't to know, Paddy, but the fellow you've promised can join the riding team is the worst outsider Mallington's ever known!"

JO TELLS THE STORY

"Jo, I—I just don't know what to think or say," confessed Paddy. "I meet a boy who I think is nice, if odd, who I think has done me a dashed good turn; then I arrive at school to learn that—"

She paused and looked up from the cosy armchair in Study B on Girls Junior Side. Jo was busily getting tea ready.

The rather tense moment in The Dive ten minutes before had been broken by the arrival of a prefect to close up. Paddy had deliberately hurried off immediately with Jo, for her mind was in a whirl, and she wanted to talk alone to her chum.

Jo, a teapot in her hand, looked down at her with a faint smile of perfect understanding.

"I know, Paddy," she said gently. "Ron Bullton's so tactless and aggressive—"

"But don't you see, Jo," Paddy cried, "I liked Vincent Conrad! And yet how can I like a boy who—who—?" She paused. "Jo, it really was Vincent Conrad who did that awful thing—who crocked you?"

"I don't know," Jo answered after a pause.

Paddy stared.

"But Ron Bullton said—"

"Paddy, I'd better tell you about Vincent Conrad from the beginning. Sit still, like a lamb, and I'll talk while I get tea."

Jo's calm, rather sweet voice steadied restive Paddy. She sank back, and while Jo was busy with the kettle her mind dwelt on Vincent Conrad and what had been said about him.

So clearly now she understood much of his odd manner, some of the puzzling things he had said. But she remembered, too, that half-wistful look on his face; his sudden change when she had promised him to be included in the riding team—remembered his cool rescue of her.

Surely such a boy couldn't be a complete outsider? Surely she couldn't be so wrong about anyone? Surely he couldn't have caused harm to dear, sweet Jo? Oh, that was awful!

She looked up. Jo was calmly pouring out tea.

"Jo, tell me," she pressed. "I've got to know about him. I've made a promise to him, and—"

"I'll tell you all I know," said Jo, passing her a cup of tea. "Of course, a lot of this is hearsay!" She paused and chose her words carefully.

"Vincent Conrad started badly on his first day, Paddy. Some of the boys, including that loutish boy in the Fifth, Guy Quist, started ragging him. Conrad didn't take it well, apparently. He started fighting them like a wild cat. He nearly knocked Guy Quist unconscious and gave Ron Bullton an awful black eye!"

Paddy grimaced a little. Jo noticed it, and went on quietly:

"It's only fair to say, Paddy, that he was one against many; that I've since learnt he'd never been to a big school before, and we all know that Guy Quist's a bully, and Ron's not tactful to say the least!"

Paddy nodded slowly. New boys sometimes had a rough time.

"On the same day," continued Jo, "he hit trouble with Mr. Voster, a new master, who's very strict. In return, Conrad played some trick on him, and Mr. Voster gated the whole Form because Conrad didn't own up to it!"

Paddy grimaced again, a tiny frown on her forehead.

"Even so," said Jo very quietly, "Conrad may not have known it was the code at Mallington to own up!"

Paddy looked at her chum. How sweet and fair Jo was!

"That was a bad start, of course," said Jo seriously. "It put him in very bad with a lot of the unthinking boys. Conrad began to keep to himself. There were other small things, then—then—" She hesitated. "I don't really know about this, but it's said among the boys that Conrad's made shady friends in Mallington, and that he breaks

bounds, doesn't play sports, and—"

Paddy suddenly leant forward earnestly.

"But, Jo, the thing that really matters," she said, "You're getting crocked. That's the important thing. Tell me!"

Jo told her. She had been riding in Mallington Woods, when someone had come galloping furiously up behind her at dangerous speed. That rider had knocked into Jo's mount. Jo had been thrown and hurt her wrist. The unknown rider had dashed on without stopping.

Paddy's eyes blazed, but she was conscious of a strange sinking feeling.

"Oh, how beastly, Jo!" she exclaimed. "But did you see—"

Jo shook her head darkly.

"No, Paddy. By the time I looked up he was out of sight. Mr. Voster found me and helped me back to school. But this is the point, Mr. Voster said he'd seen a red-haired boy on a black horse riding in that area just before."

"And Vincent Conrad was accused!" flashed Paddy.

"Well—yes. There wasn't definite evidence, of course; and the matter rather died down!"

"But, Jo, what did Vincent Conrad say?" Paddy pressed.

"Apparently he denied it," said Jo. "He claimed he wasn't in that area, but absolutely refused to say where he was!"

Paddy sat silent. She thought of what she had heard and of her own meeting with Vincent Conrad. She just could not credit Ron Bullton's suggestion that Conrad had purposely scared Molly, the mare. If so, why should he then rescue her?

And the other things she had been told—

She visualised a boy new to a big college and its unwritten laws—a boy perhaps sensitive beneath a cool exterior. Hadn't he perhaps had a bad start, and drawn into his shell because of it—become embittered, feeling he had no friends? And, after all, Mr. Voster might have seen another red-haired rider without it necessarily being Vincent Conrad.

Paddy flushed. She suddenly realised she was trying to find excuses for the boy. She looked up.

"Jo, tell me," she asked earnestly. "Do you believe he ran you down? What do you really think of him yourself?"

Jo answered frankly in her soft voice.

"Paddy, I think I rather liked him at first. A good rider, and fond of his horse, too. Now, I just don't know. Jimmy feels like me, I think. You know how nice Jimmy is. But Ron Bullton's dead against him—lots of the boys are! And the girls—well—"

She shrugged slightly.

"Most of them haven't had much contact with him, of course. They're—well, coolish, I suppose." She paused, and looked at Paddy with an affectionate smile. "I think I can guess how you're feeling, Paddy. And so—you know I'll back you in anything you want to do!"

Paddy rose swiftly and squeezed Jo's hands.

"Dear Jo! You know me, don't you? Listen! If I accepted that he'd done that caddish thing to you—I'd never want to speak to him again! But—but somehow I can't accept it yet. I feel that he's stepped off on the wrong foot. I feel he wants a chance, and so—"

"And so—" asked Jo gently.

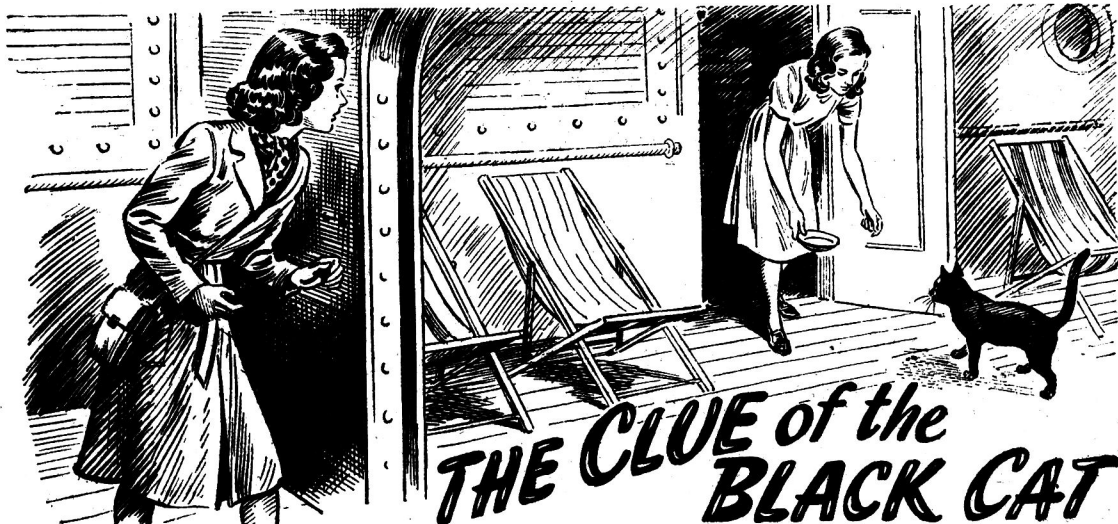
"And so I'm going to put up a notice in Central Hall now about a meeting at six to-night in the stables. I want to keep my promise. I want to find out about him, whatever the others say! Jo, you don't think I'm being a—a sort of traitor to you?"

Jo smiled.

"Of course not, Paddy. I like you for it, even if you turn out to be wrong!"

No more was said then, for Paddy

(Please turn to the back page.)



THE CLUE of the BLACK CAT

By RHODA FLEMING

THE GIRL STOWAWAY

"HOW are tricks, Julie?" Julie Wilson, the girl reporter, thoughtfully staring down at the sea as it washed past the side of the great liner, turned with a start.

"Why, Barry!" she exclaimed. "I thought you'd got left behind at Marseilles!"

A cheeky smile crossed the good-looking face of Barry Doyle, her friendly rival from the "Daily Comet."

"You should know by now, Julie, that my paper never misses the boat!" he grinned. "You thought you'd given me the slip, but I was on board long before sailing-time. I lay low as I wanted to catch Professor Henzig on his way to his cabin."

"And did you?" asked Julie, with disarming sweetness.

"No—worse luck!" Barry shrugged. "That fellow's a pretty tough assignment, Julie; but I bet I'll get the interview before you do. I've discovered that the worthy professor hates reporters—girl reporters in particular! He had one of 'em turned off the ship at the last port of call—so your luck's right out!"

Julie tried to look unconcerned, though her heart sank. This particular assignment meant a lot to her.

It had all started when Mr. McCraig, her fiery news editor, had sent for her before going on his holiday.

"Julie, you're losing your grip!" he barked. "It's three weeks now since you had a front-page story. Before I return, mind you get something red hot—something that'll hit the headlines and put the 'Comet' in its place. Then, maybe, we'll talk about that rise!"

Julie had fled before her impulsive tongue could frame a retort she might have regretted. Losing her grip, indeed. She would show him!

But a fortnight later the big story still eluded her. Then, like a gleam of sunshine, came the rumour that Professor Henzig—the eccentric scientist-inventor—was on his way home from India. His ship would call at Marseilles that week-end.

Julie's hopes had risen. An exclusive interview with the famous professor would make headlines for the "Echo." Gaining permission from the deputy news editor, she collected her expenses and caught the first available boat. By boarding the liner at Marseilles, she hoped to outmanoeuvre the crowd of reporters who were bound to be waiting at Southampton.

But she had reckoned without the professor's dislike of reporters—and without the persistent Barry Doyle!

"Penny for your thoughts, Julie!" grinned the boy reporter, noticing

her silence as he lounged beside her on the deck. "Don't look so glum! I'll let you have the interview in full after I've wired it to my paper."

"Thanks—for nothing!" replied Julie lightly. "I can take care—"

She broke off, stiffening slightly, as there came the sound of a commotion from farther along the deck.

A junior ship's-officer was rapping out orders to a group of seamen.

"Jones—you and Smethers had better search the holds. Gregory, take a look round the boat-deck—and you, Carter, try the engine-room. If we don't get that scoundrel this time the old man will blow sky high."

"Anything wrong, sir?" panted Barry, as he and Julie hurried up.

"We're reporters, and—"

"The officer whirled on them. "Reporters, eh? Fact is, we've got a stowaway on board."

"A stowaway?" gasped Julie, her pulses quickening.

"Great stuff!" Barry exclaimed, reaching for his notebook.

"Come on board at Aden, we believe," said the officer. "Startled one or two nervous passengers who saw a mysterious figure creeping round the ship after dark. But we didn't take serious action till we had a report of a theft—a distinguished passenger missed a wallet with some valuable papers. He's created no end of a fuss, and insisted on having a steward posted outside his cabin at night."

"Name?" asked Barry keenly, his pencil poised.

"You may have heard of him—Professor Henzig, the scientist."

Julie's eyes lit up, and Barry whistled as he met her glance.

They waited till the officer's footsteps had clattered down the stairs.

Then—

"Gosh, Julie, what a story!" Barry chuckled. "If only I could catch that stowaway I'd have the professor eating out of my hand! Just imagine the headlines in the 'Comet'—"

"In the 'Echo, you mean!" cut in Julie, smiling sweetly.

Barry chortled—then he looked serious.

"Better keep clear of this, Julie," he warned. "The stowaway may be a dangerous customer. This is a man's job—not a chance for girlish intuition. Well, I'll have to scoot if I'm to catch up with the hunt. See you at dinner to-night!"

He went off, pelting down the

stairs in the wake of the officer. Julie sighed a little pensively.

Was she really losing her grip? Was she going to allow Barry Doyle, that live-wire reporter, to make rings round her—

Julie started as a lugubrious voice called suddenly through the dusk:

"Tibbles! Tibbles!"

The girl reporter turned in surprise. A rather mournful-looking steward was standing at the entrance to the kitchen quarters, twiddling his fingers and peering into the shadows.

"Tibbles! Tibbles!" he repeated in wheedling tones.

Julie's eyes bubbled with fun as her sense of humour came to her aid.

"Are you calling me, steward?" she asked sweetly.

The man started violently, touching his cap in embarrassment.

"Er—no, miss! Beg pardon, I was calling the ship's cat. Always slinking off on its own these days," he added complacently.

"Gone off its food, too. It's my belief one of the passengers is feeding it."

Julie's heart missed a beat. Barry had scoffed at her girlish intuition; but perhaps this was where she came into her own.

"How long has this been going on?" she asked.

"Ever since we left Aden, miss."

Julie thrilled: she was becoming more sure of herself—and her intuition. She had not lost her grip, after all!

After a few more seemingly casual inquiries she departed, making her way up to the boat-deck—deserted at this time in the evening. Tibbles, the ship's cat, had last been seen coming this way—and Julie had a hunch.

"Tibbles!" she called softly.

"Tibbles!"

She caught in her breath as, from the distant shadows, there came a faint "miaow!" The girl reporter quickened her steps, then suddenly she stiffened, staring at a lifebelt cupboard. Even as she watched, the door swung slowly open, and the figure of a girl emerged, holding a saucer of milk.

Next moment a sleek black cat appeared and commenced to lap up the milk.

Julie's eyes gleamed. Thanks to the clue of the black cat she had found the stowaway!

Those Live-Wire Reporters, Julie And Barry, Return In Another Enthralling Adventure—This Time Aboard Ship

Just then the unknown girl turned, catching sight of Julie. With a little gasp she ducked back into the life-belt cupboard, attempting to close the door. But Julie was there first. "I say," she breathed, "what-ever are you doing here?"

"Oh, ma'm'selle"—the girl spoke in a broken accent, her lips trembling—"ma'm'selle, please don't give me away!"

Julie's thoughts were racing, instinctive pity struggling with her excitement. A girl stowaway—there was a real story here!

"I won't give you away!" she promised softly. "But tell me"—she hesitated, deciding to ask a blunt question—"have you stolen—I mean, taken anything that doesn't belong to you?"

A little sob escaped the girl's lips. "Ma'm'selle, I take only food from the kitchen because I am hungry. I swear that is all."

Julie looked at her steadily. She was a shrewd judge of human nature, and she felt convinced that the girl was not lying.

"Why did you come on board?" she asked.

"Because"—the girl swallowed hard—"because, ma'm'selle, I wish to see the great Professor Henzig."

Julie started, her eyes gleaming. This was even better than she had dared to hope!

"You know the professor?" she whispered.

"Oh, no, ma'm'selle! I"—the girl clenched her hands—"I cannot tell you—I dare not. Please," she went on, looking appealingly at Julie, "you will not speak of this—to anyone? You will not tell?"

"I won't breathe a word to anyone on board," promised Julie with a mental reservation about the story she might send to her paper after she had discovered all the facts.

This would make Barry sit up—when he read it—to say nothing of her news editor.

Just then she caught sight of a crumpled paper bag in the girl's lap—a bag containing a few dry crusts. Julie's heart melted, her professional keenness momentarily swept aside by sympathy.

"Is that all the food you have?" she breathed.

"Oui, ma'm'selle," replied the other unsteadily. "It was all right at first, but now they all keep watch, and I dare not go out."

Julie's grey eyes softened.

"And you've been feeding the ship's cat with the remainder of your rations! Look here"—she spoke impulsively—"we can't let this go on! I'll get you some proper food. And then, when everything's quiet, I'll smuggle you to my cabin."

A quarter of an hour later, at a secluded table in the dining-saloon, Julie was rapidly transferring cold chicken from her plate into several crisp, buttered rolls.

"Hungry, Julie?" asked an amused voice.

Julie looked up with a start, to find Barry standing there.

"Awfully!" she said, her heart beating rather quickly. "It's the sea air."

Barry sank into the chair opposite.

"It's funny about that stowaway," he said. "We couldn't find a trace of the fellow. Wonder where he's hiding?"

"I can't imagine," murmured Julie, toying with the chicken.

Barry eyed her curiously.

"What's up, Julie?" he asked. "You don't seem very interested. Still got Professor Henzig on your mind?"

"Perhaps," murmured Julie, smiling. Then she stiffened, glancing towards the porthole. "I thought I caught sight of him on the deck just now."

Barry turned, staring eagerly out of the porthole. With swift sleight-of-hand, Julie transferred the chicken-rolls to her capacious handbag.

"Can't see anyone," grunted Barry. "You must have been mistaken."

He turned to the table, reaching for his knife and fork. Then he

paused, staring at Julie's empty plate, his eyes goggling.

"Cosn," he said. "You've got some appetite, Julie!"

"Nothing like a voyage to make you peckish!" murmured Julie, smiling, as she rose to her feet.

Well, have a good-dinner, Barry. I think I'll go to my cabin and write some letters."

She strolled carelessly out of the saloon, followed by Barry's puzzled stare.

On the table in her cabin she spread a tasty little supper—the chicken-rolls, some cake she had bought at Marseilles, and coffee and milk obtained from the cabin steward.

Then waiting till she felt certain that most of the passengers would be in the dining-saloon, she made her way cautiously up to the boat-deck, shrouded now in a faint sea mist.

Glancing towards the life-belt locker, her heart missed a beat. The door stood ajar, and there was no sign of the young stowaway.

Then a slender figure darted suddenly from the shadows.

"Ma'm'selle, it is you! Thank goodness! I am frighten—" demanded Julie, gripping the girl's arm.

The young stowaway was wearing a shabby raincoat and a small felt hat with a veil, previously hidden in the locker.

"Ma'm'selle, it is that young man!" she gasped. "A tall young man—he came searching the deck after you had gone. He try the door of the cupboard, but I hold it fast from the inside and make no sound. I fear he go to give the alarm."

Julie drew a quick breath, a startled look in her grey eyes.

"Barry!" she breathed. "I wonder—"

She broke off, holding the girl tightly as there came a distant sound of hurrying footsteps—and Barry's voice raised excitedly.

"I'm pretty certain I'm right, sir! There was a girl in the life-belt cupboard—I caught a glimpse of a green hat, with a veil. I shouldn't wonder if she's the stowaway!"

"All right, men—spread out!" boomed the voice of the ship's officer. "Who ever she is, she won't escape!"

White-faced, despairing, the young stowaway looked at Julie—and a reckless gleam flashed into the girl reporter's eyes.

"Barry Doyle won't get away with this!" she breathed.

JULIE TAKES A RISK

HER precious story was at stake—and the safety of this mysterious girl in whose innocence she believed!

Julie's actions were almost as swift as her thoughts.

"Quickly!" she whispered, dragging off her smart hat and coat. "Give me your things, and I'll act as a decoy!"

Dazed and agitated, the young stowaway obeyed without question.

"The number of my cabin is thirty-four," Julie whispered, "and here's the key. Don't be scared. No one will take any notice of you—they'll be too busy chasing me!"

The footsteps were coming closer now, and dim figures loomed in the mist.

Julie knew that she was taking a big risk. Shielding a stowaway—and a suspected thief—was a serious offence. But Julie, the reporter, was after a story!

With a warning gesture to her companion, she sprang out suddenly from the shadow of the deck-house, and streaked towards the companion stairs.

"There she goes!" shouted Barry Doyle. "Leave this to me, sir!"

"Oh, no, you don't, Barry!" Julie breathed as she saw her young rival bearing down on her.

She waited till he had almost reached her; then she dodged, diving behind a locker.

She heard Barry's stifled ejaculation as he collided with the locker

in the mist. Chuckling, she doubled on her tracks, making for the stairs.

But another figure barred her way, and Julie recognised the mournful steward who had inadvertently given her the first clue to the stowaway's hiding-place.

The man made a grab at her, catching at her veil. Julie started back, but not before he had seen her face in the light from the lamp above the stairs.

She heard his surprised ejaculation as she dived down the stairs, footsteps pounding after her.

"Golly, he recognised me!" she thought, dismayed. "He doesn't know my name, but he's bound to give a description. Barry may smell a rat—guess I'm helping the stowaway—but I'll have to hoodwink him somehow!"

Defiantly she ran off, halting in the shadow of one of the giant ventilators to pull off the tell-tale veiled hat and shabby raincoat.

Hollering them quickly into a bundle, she strolled out on to the deck, joining a group of excited passengers who were watching the chase at a distance.

What's going on?" she asked innocently, addressing an irate-looking gentleman who stood near to her.

"It's that confounded stowaway!" he grunted. "They say, now, that she's a girl—a pretty dangerous character. Possibly a foreign spy who's after Professor Henzig's latest invention. I hear that the old gentleman is unwell and keeping to his cabin. We'll all feel safer when the stowaway's locked up!"

Julie's blood boiled as she remembered the girl's appealing face. A foreign spy! That sounded like one of Barry's bright ideas.

The sounds of the pursuit had died away, and with a sigh of relief Julie made her way demurely down to her cabin. Looking round quickly, she tapped gently on the door.

"It's only me—your friend!" she whispered.

She heard the lock click, and the door opened cautiously to reveal the pale, anxious face of the young stowaway.

Julie stepped in quickly, locking the door behind her.

"Ma'm'selle, they are after you?" faltered the girl.

"They were!" chuckled Julie. "I managed to give them the slip. Don't worry!"

She sat down on the bunk, smiling at her agitated companion.

"We'd better talk in whispers," she said, "in case anyone gets suspicious. To start with—what's your name?"

"Nichette, ma'm'selle — Nichette Dupont."

"You don't happen to be a spy?" Julie asked casually.

The other's dark eyes widened in amazement.

"A—a spy, ma'm'selle?" she faltered.

"Never mind," said Julie, smiling. "Forget it! Some bright person has been putting round rumours. I say, you haven't eaten your supper!"

"Ma'm'selle, is that for me?" whispered the girl. You tuck in—while I have a talk to you."

Julie casually opened her notebook, looking on with sympathetic approval as the girl eagerly devoured a chicken-roll.

"I say, what made you pretend to be a reporter when you first came on board?" she demanded suddenly.

The girl started, gazing uneasily at her questioner.

"You—you guessed, ma'm'selle?" "Just put two and two together," said Julie, smiling. "A girl reporter was ordered off the ship at Aden—and shortly afterwards there were rumours of a stowaway. You're not a reporter, are you?"

The girl shook her head.

"No, ma'm'selle, but I have worked as copy-girl in a French newspaper office, and that gave me the idea of how to get on board."

Julie held out her hand.

"Shake!" she said, her eyes twinkling. "I'm on a newspaper,

too, Nichette—and so's Barry, the young man who nearly caught you!"

"Oh!" The girl's face paled, and she started to her feet. "Then—then you just pretend to help me because you want my story—"

"Sit down!" breathed Julie. "You've got me all wrong, Nichette. I do want your story, but I want to help you, too. Whatever you tell me, I shan't breathe a word without your permission. I'm really more interested in interviewing Professor Henzig. Why are you so anxious to see him?"

The girl hesitated, glancing apprehensively towards the door. Then, taking courage from Julie's friendliness, she blurted out her story.

Her brother, Jaques, had been confidential valet to the professor for many years. He was the only person who shared his eccentric employer's full confidence, and whom the professor trusted to look after his valuable pet cats.

While on holiday with Nichette, Jaques had received a curt letter from Professor Henzig, enclosing a month's salary in lieu of notice. There had been no explanation for his dismissal, other than that the professor was sailing for England.

"Poor Jaques was distressed," declared Nichette. "He was ill at the time, and not able to travel. We hear that the professor's ship is calling at Aden and I try to get on board as a reporter, but they order me off. So—so I hide, and"—she swallowed hard—"you know the rest."

Julie's eyes were shining as she scribbled busily. The story held more possibilities than she had dared to hope. The professor's mysterious action in dismissing his trusted valet—his suddenly planned voyage to England—and his anxiety to avoid reporters.

At all costs, thought Julie, she must ferret out the truth before Barry got an inkling of the mystery. What a scoop for the "Echo"—and for her hard-to-please news editor. The fiery Mr. McCraig would welcome her with open arms if she could pull off this story under the very nose of the "Comet's" star reporter—

Her thoughts were interrupted by a gentle tap at the door. Julie's heart jumped, and she gripped Nichette warningly by the arm.

"I say—Julie!" came an eager voice from outside. "Julie, are you there?"

It was Barry! He must have seen the light in the cabin.

Julie flashed a reassuring glance at her scared companion, and gave a stifled yawn.

"That you, Barry?" she asked sleepily. "Did you want anything?"

"Oh, so you are there!" said Barry. "Look here, Julie—come clean! What do you know about that girl stowaway?"

"Girl stowaway?" repeated Julie, yawning again. "Please don't talk in riddles, Barry. I'm awfully tired!"

Barry snorted. "You were wide-awake enough at dinner, and I saw you slip up to the boat-deck soon after. You can't kid me, Julie!"

"I'm not trying to," sighed Julie. "I haven't the faintest idea what you're driving at. Do run away, Barry, and let me get some sleep—there's a good boy."

"All right!" said Barry huffily. "If that's how you feel. You're welcome to your precious story, for what it's worth. Now that we know the stowaway is a girl, it'll only be a matter of hours before she's caught. Meanwhile"—he chuckled, his good-humour returning—"meanwhile, Julie, I've wangled that interview with Professor Henzig!"

Julie caught in her breath, but she was not going to let Barry suspect her anxiety.

"How nice!" she murmured. "Did you sing outside his door—or what?"

Barry chuckled again. "The captain put in a word for me," he boasted. "Grateful for my help in tipping them off about the stowaway. I'm seeing the professor

in an hour's time—and I'll get the whole story!"

"Good for you, Barry!" Julie yawned. "You can tell me all about it in the morning. Goo'-night!"

"Eh? Oh, good-night!" grunted Barry, obviously piqued by her seeming lack of interest. "And just you wait till you see those headlines!"

Julie smiled as she heard him stamp away; but her smile quickly faded. She started to her feet.

"Nichette, you wait here!" she breathed. "You'll be perfectly safe if you don't answer any knocks. I've got to see Professor Henzig somehow—before Barry gets a look in!"

"But he will not see girl reporters," said Nichette anxiously.

Julie smiled, opening her handbag.

"He won't know I'm a reporter. I'll be—yes—an autograph-hunter!" She donned a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles that gave her attractive features a very different expression. "From the U.S.A., I guess! I'm sure keen on collecting celebrities!"

Her nasal intonation was perfect, and the young stowaway smiled despite herself as, with a reassuring nod, the girl reporter left the cabin.

Julie had ascertained that the professor's suite was No. 7, on the principal deck reserved for more im-

portant passengers. To her relief she found it unguarded. The steward appointed to keep watch had probably gone for his supper, and the corridor was deserted except for Tibbles, the ship's cat, prowling in search of its missing friend.

Julie bent to stroke its sleek black coat—for luck! Then, her heart beating quickly, she tapped boldly on the cabin door.

She had to knock several times before the door was opened cautiously. A grey-bearded face was thrust out—a face familiar to her from many photographs. The redoubtable Professor Henzig!

"Huh! What do you want?" he grunted, glaring through thick-lensed spectacles. "I give orders I do not see anyone—"

"Say, forgive me, professor" cut in Julie, with a disarming smile. "I guess I'm with a party of students who'd sure be honoured to have your autograph."

"I do not sign autographs!" growled the professor, his face darkening as he made to close the door. "Go—and take that animal with you!"

He aimed a kick at the inoffensive cat, which had strolled between Julie's feet.

The girl reporter's eyes flashed angrily; but even as an indignant ex-

clamation rose to her lips, there came a sound of hurrying footsteps. Julie turned, and her heart missed a beat as she recognised the steward whom she had already twice encountered that evening. At once he recognised her in spite of the horn-rimmed spectacles.

"Hi!" gasped the steward. "That girl, professor—she's the stowaway we're looking for—"

The professor gave an angry roar. "Hold her, man!" he thundered.

Julie fled, without stopping to argue. Diving under the steward's arm, she sprinted desperately down the corridor.

Though it would be simple to prove her identity, there were bound to be awkward questions—questions she could not answer without betraying the young stowaway.

And now, more than ever, the girl reporter was anxious to avoid trouble. For her brief interview with the professor had provided her with a start-



Having diverted Barry's attention, Julie quickly transferred the chicken rolls into her handbag. Julie wanted that food for the stowaway—and Barry must not know anything about it.

ling clue—a clue she was determined at all costs to follow up!

Now, to her dismay, she heard other footsteps coming towards her. Julie halted, her heart pounding. She imagined herself being caught—and marched in front of the captain—cross-questioned about her part in aiding the stowaway.

They might even get in touch with her paper, and Julie shuddered to think what the fiery Mr. McCraig would say!

Desperately Julie looked round; then her eyes lit up as she saw the open door of a cabin which was in darkness.

Without a second thought, she dived into the cabin, closing the door behind her. But even as she stood there, regaining her breath, she heard voices outside the cabin; the door-handle rattled, and someone entered the room, fumbling for the switch.

Holding her breath, Julie backed into a curtained alcove where several coats were hanging, allowing the curtain to drop behind her.

Just then the light was switched on.

"Dangerous girl stowaway—poppy-cock!" growled a voice—a voice that caused Julie's heart to turn over.

"Some crazy yarn put around by a daft reporter, I ken!"

Her mind feeling numbed, Julie

attempted to peer from behind the curtain. Her slight movement betrayed her.

The next moment the curtain was dragged back—and the girl reporter's gasp was echoed by an amazed shout from the owner of the cabin.

"Julie!" Julie gulped, her lips parted as she met the astounded gaze of her news editor—the fiery Mr. McCraig himself!

SENSATIONS ON BOARD

JULIE'S mind felt momentarily stunned by the encounter, and it was clear that Mr. McCraig was no less dumbfounded.

"What—what in the name of everything does this mean, Julie?" he barked. "What are you doing on board this ship—hiding in my cabin? And what's all this about a stowaway?"

Julie tried to speak as, with a sinking heart, she heard footsteps pounding along the corridor outside—heard excited shouts.

"The stowaway! Have you seen her?"

"She came this way! Fair-haired, girl—tallish, wearing horn-rimmed spectacles!"

"Better warn the passengers! She's a dangerous character—a thief—"

The voices faded into the distance. Mr. McCraig made a strangled noise in his throat. He was staring at Julie like a man in a dream.

"Fair girl—tall—horn-rimmed spectacles," he spluttered. "Julie, what is all this? What have you been up to?"

"I— Please, Mr. McCraig, it's a story—"

"A story!" snorted her chief. "A pretty hot story, Julie—for our rivals. Girl reporter arrested as stowaway!" "Daily Echo," editor charged with abetting. "A fine scoop for the 'Comet'!" he added bitterly.

"Mr. McCraig, you don't understand!" Julie burst out. "I—I can explain—"

"Well?" barked her editor. And suddenly Julie realized that she couldn't explain.

"I'd rather not say anything yet—"

"What? Why not?" "Because—Julie seized at an obvious excuse—"Barry Doyle is after the same story, and I want to beat him to it."

Mr. McCraig's face took on a deeper crimson.

"So the 'Comet' fellow is here—on board this ship—and his story about the girl stowaway will be all over London to-morrow!"

"But he doesn't know yet that I'm hiding—I mean," Julie corrected herself hastily, "that I'm mixed up in this."

"A good thing for you, my girl!" growled Mr. McCraig. "Listen, Julie. If you let young Doyle beat you to it with this story—or if so much as a paragraph appears in the 'Comet' connecting our paper with this stowaway scare—then you're fired! Have you got that clear?"

Julie nodded, her face pale.

"And now—scram!" ordered her editor, opening the door. "And get that story, Julie—if you want to keep your job!"

The door slammed behind the girl reporter.

Julie leant against the wall of the corridor. The sounds of the hunt had receded into some distant part of the ship. For the moment, at least, she was safe from capture.

The girl reporter stiffened suddenly, slipping quickly into an adjacent doorway. Coming jauntily along the corridor was a familiar boyish figure, notebook in hand.

Barry Doyle was on his way to interview the professor—while she, Julie, was being hunted as a stowaway, thanks largely to her rival's intervention!

The girl reporter waited till Barry was almost out of sight; then she moved away. Instead of following him, she made her way up to the

mist-shrouded deck, a daring plan in her mind.

Groping her way along the rail, she reached one of the jutting platforms beneath the lifeboat davits. Earlier that evening she had casually noted the iron ladder that descended from the platform, running flush with the side of the ship.

That ladder passed close to several cabin portholes—and among them, Julie believed, was Professor Henzig's suite!

Her pulses beat unsteadily as she climbed the rail, descending the narrow ladder like a wraith in the mist.

Then, quite close to her, she saw a gleam of yellow light streaming from an open porthole, heard a murmur of voices.

A gruff, foreign-sounding voice—and true, crisp, breezy tones of her young rival.

Julie's heart quickened as, holding on to the ladder with one hand, she leant as far as she dared towards the porthole and looked in.

There, barely a yard away, the burly professor stood with his back to the porthole, while Barry confronted him, very alert, notebook in hand.

Barry was scribbling busily, not looking up. And just then the girl reporter's sharp eyes noticed something lying on a shelf, close to the porthole.

It was a bulky, black leather wallet, embossed with its owner's initials. And the initials were not those of Professor Henzig!

For a fraction of a minute Julie hesitated.

Then, with infinite caution, she reached her free hand through the porthole, her fingers closing on the leather wallet.

At that moment Barry looked up, catching sight of Julie's tense face framed in the opening.

He blinked incredulously, made a quick effort to recover; but the professor had seen his expression, and he turned sharply. Then a bellow of rage escaped his lips, and he sprang towards the porthole.

Barry, however, was even quicker. His agile mind had already grasped the position. He had recognised Julie's description from the steward's story—and he realised that his girl rival was in a tough "spot."

Even as the professor made a grab at Julie's wrist, Barry collided with him in an apparent attempt to seize the "stowaway" himself.

"Hein!" shouted the professor furiously. "She escape—with my wallet! Steward!"

The steward burst into the cabin. Julie, her heart pounding scrambled wildly up the ladder and climbed over the rail.

Footsteps were pounding across the deck; muffled voices were shouting on every side. With a stab of dismay, the girl reporter remembered that she was still grasping the tell-tale wallet she had taken on a moment's wild impulse. If she were caught with the wallet in her possession she would be arrested as a thief!

The searchers were closing in, and Julie shrank back towards the rail. Groping in the fog, she collided against something hard. It was the corner of the lifebelt locker in which the young stowaway had hidden.

A glimmer of hope crept into the girl reporter's eyes.

She groped for the door of the locker. It stood ajar, and she crept inside, pulling the door to behind her.

Hardly daring to breathe, she crouched there in the darkness, listening to the voices and footsteps on deck. At length they moved away, and the girl reporter gave a little sigh of relief.

From her pocket she produced a fountain-pen, fitted at the end with a torch bulb. Directing the narrow beam on to the wallet, she quickly examined the papers it contained.

Her heart quickened, and her grey eyes widened in excitement. But at that moment, as she scanned the closely written sheets, she heard a movement in the darkness behind

her—and something sprang suddenly on to her shoulders.

The unexpected shock was too much for Julie's tensed nerves. She screamed aloud—realising a moment too late that her alarm was needless. It was only Tibbles, the ship's cat, that had tried to attract her attention, imagining that she was his missing friend.

But Julie's unwary cry had betrayed her. Even as she caught up Tibbles, the door of the locker was jerked open, and the glare of a torch dazzled her eyes.

"Here she is, sir!" panted the steward.

"Out you come!" ordered the sharper tones of the ship's officer.

Julie emerged from her hiding-place, still holding the cat. She was pale and dishevelled, but there was a reckless gleam in her grey eyes.

"I say, sir, there's been a mistake!" panted Barry's voice, as the boy reporter pushed his way forward.

"I've an idea the real stowaway is hiding in Cabin 34. This young lady is a reporter on the 'Daily Echo'—"

"Ye mean she was, young man!" barked the irate tones of Julie's long-suffering editor. "She's fired!"

"Hein—I demand her arrest!" thundered Professor Henzig, his bearded face and broad shoulders looming in the mist. "She steal my wallet! Gif it back to me, young woman!"

He took a menacing step towards her; but at that instant something sprang like a black streak from Julie's arms, landing on to the professor's shoulders.

"Ach, take the cat away!" he bellowed, making a wild grab at it.

"I thought you loved cats, professor!" said Julie sweetly. "Barry—quickly—look at his beard!"

In the struggle the professor's grizzled beard seemed to be suddenly askew! With an amazed shout, Barry sprang forward and grabbed at it. His shout was echoed by the on-lookers as the beard came away, revealing a sullen, clean-shaven face.

"Arrest that man!" cried Julie, her eyes shining. "Hold him, Barry! He's an impostor!" She flourished the papers she had taken from the wallet. "The real Professor Henzig is a prisoner in his own yacht, and this man was bringing plans of the professor's latest invention to be sold to someone in England. His plan would have succeeded, too, if it hadn't been for Nichette, the young stowaway—and Tibbles, the ship's cat!"

The scoundrel made an attempt to break away, but Barry held him in a ju-jitsu grip, and the pseudo professor was marched away to be questioned by the captain.

When Barry returned, he walked straight up to Julie, a rather chagrined look in his blue eyes.

"Congrats, Julie!" he said. "I was wrong about that feminine intuition. This is your scoop, after all—and what a story!"

But Julie shook her head. "You forget, Barry," she said. "I—I've been fired."

"Poppycock!" barked a voice from the mist, as Mr. McCraig loomed into view. "If you think I'd let my star reporter go so easily, my girl, you can think again! Bring that—that stowaway along from your cabin, Julie—and you join us, Barry. I ken we'll have a little celebration supper to mark the occasion!"

Julie's grey eyes sparkled.

"Then Barry and I will share the story!" she declared. "And—er—Mr. McCraig—"

"Well, Julie?" "Just before you went on holiday you did speak of a rise—"

"Och! We'll go into that later!" said Mr. McCraig gruffly, though his eyes twinkled. "You get your story wired off, before I change my mind!"

THE END.

Another grand long complete story next week, entitled: "The New Girl Was A Circus Star." Make sure of reading it by ordering your copy of GIRLS' CRYSTAL today.

Detective June's STRANGEST CASE



By PETER LANGLEY

JUNE'S CHALLENGE

JUNE GAYNOR, niece of Noel Raymond, the famous detective, went to lonely Knoll Castle under an assumed name, Carolyn Stuart. She had been asked to go there by Ronald Garth, an author whose story about the legendary Green Archer was to be filmed there. He believed that a mysterious figure dressed as the Green Archer was threatening the film.

June received a terrific shock when she met Noel there, for she had believed that he was on the Continent. He told her that he wished to conduct the case on his own, and that she must leave at once.

When the girl detective looked at some film scripts early the following morning she believed she had found evidence that the Green Archer was a member of the film unit.

When Noel appeared on the scene he disagreed with her theory about the Green Archer. But June urged him to let her stay on at the castle if she could prove that she was right.

WOULD her uncle accept her challenge?

Breathless with suspense, June awaited his reply.

But Noel Raymond did not speak, and once again June became acutely conscious of how the famous detective had changed. A few months ago his reaction would have been instantaneous; he would have responded to her challenge with boyish zest.

But now—

She caught in her breath, gripped by the strangest of feelings. Some inner voice seemed to be warning her that it was absolutely vital that she should remain at Knoll Castle—that not only was her own happiness at stake, but that of her uncle's as well.

"Well, nunky, what do you say? Come on! Be a sport! You've nothing to lose, you know!"

Though she tried to speak lightly, there was a husky quaver in her voice. She was too worked up to hide her emotion, and almost desperate was the look of appeal in her blue eyes.

Abruptly Noel's frown faded, and he gave a rather rueful laugh.

"When you put it like that you don't give me much option, do you, my dear?" he said. "Very well; I accept your challenge."

"Oh, that's wonderful!" June cried, and gave her uncle a hug. "I can't tell you how much—"

But smilingly he checked her exuberant outburst.

"I should save the cheers, my dear. You haven't won yet, you know."

"But I shall!" June declared, with a chuckle.

Once more that worried frown appeared between his eyes.

"I sincerely hope not, my dear, for there are very special reasons why you should not be mixed up in this case. It's only because my investi-

gations have convinced me that the Green Archer has no connection with the castle that I agreed to your proposal, and I think it only fair to warn you, June, that it will take really glittered evidence to make me change my mind."

Gravely he regarded her, then there appeared that quizzical smile which had once been so characteristic of him, but which nowadays was seen so rarely.

"Well, what makes you so positive that the scoundrel lives at the castle?" he asked.

"Several things, nunky. First of all, there's the costume."

"Costume?" His eyes opened wide with surprise.

"Yes, the Green Archer's costume. You didn't know I'd found it, did you? Well, I have. It was lying on the stairs leading down from the battlements. He must have discarded it and thrown it there just after escaping from you, and surely that's very significant."

Challengingly she regarded him, and she could not resist a chuckle as she saw how taken aback he was.

"If the Green Archer lived outside," she went on, "then surely he wouldn't have wasted time taking off his costume. He would have run off as quickly as he could. On the other hand, if I am right—if he really does live in the castle; is a member of the film unit—then he wouldn't dare go indoors until he'd stripped off the costume."

She paused expectantly, but Noel Raymond made no comment.

"Have you anything else to support your theory?" he asked.

June chuckled again.

"You bet I have, nunky! There's this film script, for instance. Just as you came into the banquetting hall I made a big discovery about it."

She held out the manuscript she had picked up from the refectory table so that he could see it clearly.

"You will note, nunky; that it's typed on very, expensive and distinctive paper," she went on, "and that the name of the castle is embossed on the top of the first page. Well—her voice rose excitedly—that threatening message which the Green Archer fired by means of an arrow was written on exactly similar paper. And if he isn't living in the castle, how could he have got hold of it?"

Triumphantly she surveyed him, and he gave her arm an admiring squeeze.

Unless June Won Her
Detective Challenge She
Would Have To Leave
The Haunted Castle.

"Congratulations, my dear! Little misses your sharp eyes, and it's certainly a most ingenious theory you have built up. But I'm afraid I must disagree with you. Take the costume, for instance. The Green Archer would have had just as strong a reason for discarding it, even if he doesn't live here."

"But why, nunky?"

"Well, the main exit was guarded, my dear. That means that to escape he would have to climb over the wall. But that would necessitate his crossing the courtyard where people were searching for him. If he wore his green costume he would have been recognised instantly. But if he discarded it and slipped across in his ordinary clothes, then it would be ten to one that no one would pay any attention to him. If he were seen he would be mistaken for one of the searchers."

June's face fell. There could be no denying the famous detective's logic. Then desperately she held up the film script.

"But what about this, nunky?" she asked. "How do you explain that the Green Archer used castle paper for his note?"

He examined the paper, then again shook his head regretfully.

"This is certainly distinctive and fairly expensive," he said, "but I should imagine you could buy similar stuff at many high-class stationer's. It's just a coincidence that that scoundrel used the same kind of paper."

"But, nunky—"

"There, there, my dear! You mustn't be too upset. You've done jolly well, and it's a shame that you've lost the test. I only wish—"

"But I haven't lost, nunky!" June broke in excitedly. "I haven't finished yet."

"Not finished!" He stared in astonishment. "You mean, you have more evidence to submit?"

She nodded, her cheeks flushed, her eyes agleam.

"You bet I have, nunky! Finger-prints! They are infallible, aren't they? So suppose I checked up on the finger-prints of everyone in the castle? That would definitely prove whether or not the Green Archer is living here, wouldn't it?"

He surveyed her blankly.

"But how can you check up on them?" he asked. "You could take everyone's finger-prints, true but what good would that do unless you had a sample of the Green Archer's prints to compare them against?"

June chuckled. "No good at all, nunky; but, you see—she could not hide her triumph—"I have a sample of the Green Archer's prints!"

"What!"

There could be no doubt about it; she had impressed Noel at last. In

silent wonder he stood there for a moment or two. Then—
"You have the Green Archer's finger-prints?" he said slowly.

She nodded.
"Yes, there was a print on the threatening note he sent Ronald Garth, the screen writer. A real beauty it was, too. I've got the note locked up in my suitcase, so if we use it to compare it with the prints of all the other people living here—"

June did not finish. There was no need to. Obvious it was that if any of the occupants of the castle did have a finger-print which matched that on the note, then she would have won her challenge, and have discovered the identity of the mystery man into the bargain.

Looking almost as excited as she did, Noel seized her by the arm.

"Come on! Let's go and get that note right away," he urged.

But she resisted his pull, eager as she was to show him the note.
"No, we'll have to wait until after breakfast, nunky," she said. "The other girls in the dormitory aren't up yet."

"All right." Reluctantly he nodded. "I'll meet you up on the first-floor landing at a quarter past nine, my dear. I'm afraid I shan't be having breakfast with you. I've got some work to do, so I'll get it sent along to my office. Meanwhile—"

He broke off as voices and footsteps sounded from above.

"We'd better not be seen together," he whispered, and hurriedly left her.

Hardly had he gone than Kaye Turner, Vera March, and the rest of the young film people who had been nicknamed the Tweenies came hurrying down the stairs.

They were all very excited, for they had just learnt that Theodore Cronberg, the excitable producer of the film, was arriving at midday, and, knowing his hustling ways, they guessed that he would straight away call for the first rehearsal.

June found it difficult to join in the chatter, for all her mind was concentrated on the urgent necessity of winning her challenge with Noel. More and more the strange feeling that she must at all costs stay on at the castle grew and deepened.

The moment breakfast was over she slipped away. She found Noel waiting on the landing, and together they hurried along to the dormitory June shared with five other girls.

Eagerly June pulled out her biggest suitcase, and, dropping to her knees in front of it, she fumbled for her keys. Flushed and confident was the face she turned up at the famous detective.

"Now for it, nunky!" she cried, and unlocked the two catches. "It's not often that I get the better of you, but I'm going to this time. When you see that note—"

She broke off, and abruptly the excited flush died from her cheeks. For, on lifting the lid, she instantly saw that something was wrong. The clothes she had left neat and tidy had been all ruffled up. But that was not all. The green garments she had placed on top were missing.

"The Green Archer's costume—it's gone!" she gasped.

Noel's voice was as startled as her own, and in consternation June nodded.

"Yes, someone's tampered with my suitcase. They've stolen the costume, and—"

Once again breaking off, she rummaged in the silk pocket left into the lid.

Next moment her worst fears were confirmed.

The pocket was empty. The Green Archer's note had also gone.

The piece of evidence on which all her hopes rested had vanished!

MORE FINGER-PRINTS

"IT'S been stolen, nunky! The note I told you about—the one with the Green Archer's thumb-print on it!"

There was anguish in the girl detective's voice, and helplessly she knelt

there, gazing from the rifled suitcase to her uncle and back again.

Her discovery had left her dazed. Obviously, the thief must have been the Green Archer himself, but how could he possibly have known that the note, let alone his costume, were locked in this case?

Noel was already bending over it, and he frowned in surprise as he examined the locks.

"No sign of them having been tampered with," he announced. "That seems to suggest that the scoundrel must have got hold of a duplicate key."

"But how could he have done, nunky?" objected June. "There's only one set of duplicates, and they are in our flat back in London." She shook her head in bafflement, then excitedly she caught at his arm.

"But this robbery proves at least one thing!" she cried. "Unless the Green Archer actually lived here, he couldn't possibly have committed this robbery."

Noel shook his head.
"Not necessarily, my dear. Remember most of the household was at breakfast. He could easily have got into the castle unnoticed."

"But how could any outsider possibly have known what was locked in my case?" urged June. "Unless he overheard us talking in the banquetting hall—"

"Exactly, my dear. The rascal must have been eavesdropping," agreed Noel. "But that doesn't prove he lives here. He might easily have broken in for some other purpose and overheard our conversation by accident."

In consternation June regarded him.

"You mean that—that you're still unconvinced?" she gulped.

Slowly, with evident reluctance, he nodded.

"And that—that you're still going to insist on my returning to London to-morrow?"

Again he nodded.

"I'm afraid so, my dear. I hate to keep to the letter of our bargain, but we did agree that you should only stay providing you proved your theory up to the hilt, didn't we?"

It was her turn to nod, and he put a fond arm around her.

"It's a shame, your losing the note on which you pinned all your hopes," he added, deep sympathy in his voice. "Although I must say, my dear, I don't believe that your finger-print check-up would have been successful. My investigations have convinced me that the Green Archer is working from the outside."

"But, nunky—"

As again that inner voice seemed to warn her of the vital necessity for her to stay, she cried out in protest, but gently, reluctantly he interrupted her.

"I hate being firm—would love to give in to you," he said, "but I can't. This case is too dangerous for you to get mixed up with, and there are other reasons why you should not get involved. I can't tell you what they are, my dear, but I assure you that for both our sakes it's best if you leave here to-morrow."

June could not help being impressed by his earnest tone, yet there was a feeling of dissatisfaction in her heart.

Why was he so anxious for her to go? What could be the secret reasons he had hinted at? Above all, why couldn't he confide in her as he had always done in the past?

With an effort she forced back her tears of disappointment.

"Very well, nunky," she said. "I'll do as you say."

He gave her arm a fond squeeze.

"Good girl!" he exclaimed. "Now I'm afraid you must excuse me. I must try to discover exactly how the Green Archer managed to slip in and out of the castle so easily."

Flashing the girl detective another sympathetic smile, he made for the door. Moodyly June watched him go. Despite what he had said, she was anxious to stay, for she found it impossible to silence that inner voice with its urgent warning.

"I'm certain that nunky's wrong for once," she told herself. "The

Green Archer does live in the castle. Oh—if only I could prove it! Then perhaps—"

Breaking off, she again dropped to her knees beside the suitcase. An exciting idea had occurred to her. Perhaps the Green Archer had left his finger-prints on it. If so, then she could still carry out her test.

But an expert examination showed that the case had either been wiped clean or else the Green Archer had worn gloves. Only her own finger-prints could be seen.

Glumly June straightened up. It looked as if her last hope had gone. She thrust her hand into the pockets of the little coat she wore, and then abruptly her despairing frown vanished.

For her right hand had closed on the strip of parchment paper she had found in the Green Archer's costume.

In her anxiety to prove her theory to Noel Raymond, she had told him nothing about that piece of paper with the cryptic words "Rainbow Cave" written on it.

But that fact did not worry her now. It was quite a different thought which buzzed in her brain.

Surely on this scrap of parchment there would be a telltale print!

Almost breathless with excitement, June got out her detective outfit and sprayed grey finger-print powder over the paper. Carefully she blew on it. Most of the powder fell off, but here and there, where handling had made the paper slightly greasy, it adhered, forming significant oval blotches.

Finger-prints!

Most of them were her own—she quickly realised that. But, as she examined each mark through a magnifying-glass, she caught in her breath.

Two of the prints were bigger—had been definitely made by a man. To an ordinary person there would have appeared nothing distinctive about them, but June had been trained to read finger-prints, and instantly she recognised them.

They were exactly the same as the thumb-print which had appeared on the note which had been stolen from her suitcase. She was sure of it.

Her eyes gleamed with triumph as carefully she put the strip of parchment into an envelope and pocketed it.

"The Green Archer's been clever, but not clever enough," she whispered. "I've got his finger-print, after all."

For a moment she stood there, hesitating. Should she tell Noel Raymond of her discovery?

Slowly she shook her head.

"No, I'll carry out the test myself," she murmured. "I'll only tell him when I've got proof that I'm right."

Feeling very pleased with herself, she went downstairs, to find that the first rehearsal was definitely to be held that afternoon. Electricians were busy; cameramen were fitting up their expensive apparatus; and the rest of the film company, ignoring the clatter of the workmen, were studying their parts.

Looking around the busy scene, June smiled to herself.

Perhaps, after all, she would get a chance to appear in her first film!

If only her finger-print check-up was successful—

"But it's got to be—just got to be," she told herself, and racked her brains for some way of obtaining the prints of everyone who lived in the castle.

Actually, had she only known it, it was the Green Archer himself who all unwittingly was to solve the problem for her.

But that did not happen until after lunch—until Theodore Cronberg, supercharged with energy, and even more excitable than usual, arrived at the castle and ordered preparations for the first rehearsal to be made.

Neither June nor any of the other Tweenies would be appearing in the scene which was to be gone through, but eagerly they gathered on the broad staircase.

They all wanted to see Cecilia Selwyn in partnership with Donald Hinton, the handsome young actor who had the role of detective hero.

Admiringly they watched the two film stars take up their positions in the banquetting hall, while Theodore Cronberg, smoking a huge cigar as usual, settled down in a canvas-backed chair.

"Doesn't she look simply smashing?" whispered Bob Staines, his gaze riveted on Cecilia, who looked lovely in a shimmering, off-the-shoulder evening gown.

Kaye Turner, standing at his side, gave a heavy sigh.

"But not half as smashing as Donald," she said. "If you ask me

But a stentorian roar from the excitable little producer cut her short.

"Where's that fellow Raymond?" he demanded. "He's supposed to be the technical adviser, isn't he? Sufferin' mackerels, then why isn't he here?"

And ferociously he glowered around. Darling June stepped forward.

"I expect he's still trying to track down the Green Archer, Mr. Cronberg," she suggested.

The producer had already been told about the Green Archer's threatening note, and the name was like a red rag to a bull. Hurling down his cigar, he leapt to his feet.

"Green Archer!" he roared. "I'm not interested in that crazy practical joker. It's a film we're supposed to be making—not organising a doggone man-hunt. Raymond had no right to go off like this. Doesn't the fellow know that time's money? That—"

"I'll go and see if I can find him," interrupted June, and hurriedly she sped down the long corridor, at the far end of which her uncle had his office.

But she was fated never to reach it. Suddenly from a side passage on the right came a scream in a high-pitched, girlish voice.

"Help! Help! The Green Archer!"

There followed another scream, then an eerie silence settled over the ancient castle.

A TRAP FOR THE GREEN ARCHER

HER heart throbbing wildly, June pulled up in alarm, but it was impossible to ignore that shout for help; so, after a moment's hesitation, she went plunging down the side corridor.

On rounding a bend, she found it widened out ahead into a small, flagged hall, from which radiated several passages. There was no sign of either the girl who had screamed or of the Green Archer, but she heard a faint mean from beyond an open doorway.

Again June hesitated; then, screwing up her courage, she ran to investigate, and as she reached the doorway a startled gasp left her lips.

She found herself looking into a large room which had been used for storing costumes and other film gear, but it looked now as if a hurricane had swept through it.

Hampers had been overturned. Film gear had been thrown all over the floor. Several beautiful frocks had been wantonly torn, and the rest of them lay in a crumpled heap against one wall.

And lying on the pile of costumes was a limp, girlish figure in a blue uniform. With a cry of sympathy, June ran forward, dropping to her knees beside the girl.

"One of the maids," she told herself. "She must have caught the Green Archer red-handed trying to destroy the film costumes."

Obviously it was now that the mystery man's threat had been meant in grim earnest. But what possible reason could the Green Archer have for wanting to prevent a film being produced at Knoll Castle?

June did not attempt to solve that mystery. She concentrated all her efforts on trying to bring round the maid. A quick glance showed that she was not injured; she had only fainted.

The girl was just recovering when the rest of the film company, who had also heard the maid screaming, appeared on the scene, led by Theodore Cronberg himself.

The excitable film producer at first

did not notice the maid. His furious gaze was riveted on the scene of destruction.

"Sufferin' mackerels, but what's this mean?" he roared. "What—"

"It was the Green Archer," cut in June. "I'm afraid he came to carry out his threat, and this poor girl—"

She nodded to the still trembling maid, and the producer's face softened.

"Gee, that's tough!" he muttered. "She's not hurt, is she?" June shook her head, and his mood changed again. "The rascal shall pay for this!" he roared, angrily waving a newly lit cigar. "Where's that feller Raymond? Where's—"

"Here I am," said a familiar voice, and Noel Raymond made his way through the crowd of rather frightened members of the film unit.

Quietly, but efficiently, the detective took charge. First of all, he soothed the hysterical maid, then gently drew out her story. Happening to pass along the corridor, she had seen the Green Archer tearing up the film costumes. Fluckily she had rushed into the room, whereupon the mystery man had seized her.

"He—he glowed like a ghost," faltered the girl, "and I was so scared that I must have fainted."

Noel gave her a reassuring pat and smiled down at her.

"Don't worry, Nellie. It's all over

The window's been forced. Clearly the Green Archer entered and left this way. It confirms my theory that he is operating from outside."

As he spoke his gaze went to where June stood, and she caught in her breath.

Was it possible that, after all, her theory about the mystery man being a resident of the castle was wrong?

In view of her uncle's discovery, it seemed so, and yet—

"That forced window may have been a blind—to put everyone off the scent," she told herself. "Oh, I'm certain the Green Archer lives here! And if only I could get a sample of everyone's finger-prints I'd prove it."

All during the resumed rehearsal she was turning over possible plans for securing the vital prints, but it was not until tea-time that she thought of a suitable plan.

Tea was rather a chaotic meal, and the reason soon became clear. Nellie, the maid, upset by her frightening experience, had decided to leave, and so had one of the other servants.

"I'm afraid this afternoon's unhappy business has unsettled everyone," Bromley, the housekeeper's husband who was the butler, told Mr. Weatherly, the business manager. "I hope to secure additional help tomorrow. Meanwhile, I must apologise if the service at dinner is not all it should be."



"It's as I thought," announced Noel Raymond. "The window has been forced." He believed that the Green Archer was operating from outside the castle—but for once June found herself disagreeing with her famous uncle.

now," he said softly. "And you did splendidly. It was very brave of you to tackle the rascal on your own."

Then Mrs. Bromley, the plump, motherly housekeeper, was called, and she led away the shaken maid.

Noel Raymond turned to the film producer, who was still glaring at the torn costumes.

"I suggest that these costumes and all the film gear is locked up in the west wing every night," Noel said. "That part of the castle isn't in use, and there's only one entrance, so if the door's kept locked everything will be safe there."

Theodore Cronberg chewed savagely at his cigar.

"O.K. Do as you think best, but I'm not interested in how you guard the film stuff. What I want is that scoundrel caught. Sufferin' mackerels!" he flung down his cigar and trampled on it— "are we going to allow that phoney ghost to play Halifax with our film?"

Noel turned on his most soothing smile.

"Of course not, Mr. Cronberg. Don't worry; we'll track him down before very long. The first thing to do is to see how he managed to break into the castle. Ah!"

He gave a satisfied nod as he noticed that the window was open, and quickly he crossed to it, examining the catch and the wooden sill.

"It's as I thought," he announced.

June's eyes gleamed on overhearing this conversation.

"Can I be of help?" she asked. James Weatherly beamed at her.

"That is very good of you, Miss Stuart," he said. "I am sure Bromley would be very glad to avail himself of your services."

"Assuredly, sir," said the butler quickly, and he also smiled at the girl everyone knew as Carolyn Stuart. "I'm grateful to you, miss."

And so it was arranged.

Half an hour before dinner-time June went into the kitchen, and her suggestion that she should make herself responsible for laying the tables was welcomed.

Having set out the cutlery, she brought in a pile of tea-plates for the rolls which were to be served with the soup. But, instead of putting them out, she looked anxiously around, carefully closed the door leading to the kitchen, then felt in her skirt pocket.

From it she took a cardboard box filled with small paper discs.

"These will enable me to trap the Green Archer," she murmured, and with excited fingers she lifted up a disc and stuck it under one of the plates.

Will June succeed in discovering the identity of the Green Archer? Look out for surprises and thrills in next week's gripping chapters.



That Dutch Holiday of Surprises

SHIRLEY IN HIDING

SHIRLEY BLYTHE and her chums, Tess and Dick Foley, were staying in Bootedorp, in Holland, as the guests of their Dutch chum, Jan. They were intrigued by a mysterious girl named Zella van Deen, the ward of a wealthy bulb grower.

Zella asked the chums to find a tulip bowl, shaped like a clog, which was of vital importance to her. The chums found the clog, and from it learnt that Zella must visit the Castle of Flowers, the tulip-growers' club in Amsterdam.

The chums managed to secure tickets for themselves and Zella for the ball that was to be held there.

On the morning of the ball Shirley borrowed a window-cleaner's ladder to climb up to Zella's room to fetch her. But just as she stepped down into the room she heard Zella's guardian coming up the stairs.

"SHIRLEY! My guardian is coming! Hide—quick!" Zella whispered frantically, and pointed towards the wardrobe. "Hide in there!"

Shirley dived into the wardrobe. Zella closed the door upon her in desperate haste. Next second Mr. van Hagel's step sounded outside the room, his key turning in the lock.

"I bring you my waistcoat to sew for me, Zella—it will keep you busy," he said. "You have found pretty buttons for it, ja?"

Shirley could see him now through the keyhole of the wardrobe. His tall, black-clad figure reminded her of a lean spider as he stepped into the room, a gaudy fancy waistcoat dangling over his arm.

Zella ran to take it from him. "I will find my gayest buttons to sew upon it, my guardian," she said. "I will call you when it is finished."

Shirley—watching unbreathing from her hiding-place—had picked up enough Dutch during her holiday to understand what they were saying. But to her dismay Mr. van Hagel did not now depart.

He advanced farther into the room. Her heart hammered. He was walking towards the open window, frowning darkly at Frans Hofweg's ladder propped against the sill—the window cleaner's ladder by which she had made her daring invasion into this room. Why was he scowling like that? Did van Hagel suspect something?

"That Hofweg—he is a lazy idler! Where is he?" he demanded. "I pay him to clean my windows. Why is he not cleaning them?"

"He rests a little while, perhaps,

while he takes coffee," Zella said nervously.

Shirley's heart thumped in suspense. Frans Hofweg had deliberately left his ladder there, in order that she might smuggle Zella out of this house. Mr. van Hagel couldn't possibly suspect that, could he? Then why didn't he go? Why was he still hovering at that window?

Then an uneasy thought struck Shirley. Tess and Dick were hiding now behind the garden hedge, waiting for her. Undoubtedly they could see Mr. van Hagel at the window. Supposing he saw them? He would know at once that a plot was afoot!

The Dutch wardrobe that concealed her was big and roomy, but it was liberally festooned with moth-balls, and now—with the strong fumes of camphor to add to her nervous strain—Shirley wanted to sneeze!

Just one little sneeze—and there would be no taking Zella to the fancy dress ball to-night, no hope of Zella joining in the quest for the tulip bowl clue, the quest on which her happiness might depend!

Somehow, Shirley held that sneeze at bay. But still Mr. van Hagel remained at the window.

"I wish to go out in half an hour, as soon as you have sewn the buttons on my waistcoat!" he fumed at Zella. "Come—do not stand there idle! Where are the buttons you have chosen? They must be gay, ornamental—not like these stupid pearl things the maker has put on them!"

"I have just what you want, my guardian. They are glass buttons; they are the gayest blue."

"Show them to me!"

"I will find them. I have them here somewhere—" Zella began hastily.

"Show them to me now! Where are they?" And impatiently Mr. van Hagel turned away from the window. "You said they were in this wardrobe of yours!"

Shirley gave herself up for lost. She heard him striding to the wardrobe. His shadow darkened the keyhole. His hand reached to the door to open it—

And in that crucial moment Zella stopped him.

Zella Had To Attend The Fancy Dress Ball In Secret!

"They are not in there, my guardian," she said quickly. "They are in my desk—the blue buttons!"

Shirley gulped with relief for both their sakes. She knew now that Zella had done some quick thinking when she named what buttons she was going to use. She had foreseen this danger in the nick of time.

Mr. van Hagel's step moved to the desk. There was a tinkling sound as Zella drew out some glass buttons.

"Are those the best you have?" her guardian grunted. "H'm! All right. They'll have to do. Sew them on this waistcoat at once, Zella, firmly, and I will come up for it in half an hour!"

His lanky shadow moved across the room, and it was the sweetest music to Shirley's ears as she heard him lock the door on the outside and depart down the stairs.

She slipped out from the wardrobe. She seized Zella's corduroy coat and little fur cap from their hook, bundling her Dutch friend into them breathlessly.

"Quick, Zella, you go first! Down the ladder!" And she rushed her silently to the window.

No one in the house saw Zella steal softly down that ladder. No one saw Shirley follow her.

Tess and Dick, both glowing with relief, met them on the other side of the garden hedge.

"Zella—Shirley—how did you manage it?" breathed Tess, as all four sped of through the bulb field. "We thought it was all up when we saw van Hagel at the window!"

Zella described what had happened. She was in radiant spirits, her eyes sparkling, her happiness revealing a new personality in her entirely, now that she was free at last—free to pursue her quest, with the joy of having her English friends to help her.

"How long will it be before your guardian misses you, Zella?" Dick asked swiftly.

"In half an hour he will know that I have gone—but it does not matter!" Zella said. "He will not know where I have gone, and he will not know that I have gone with you. If only we can find the clue to-night, and solve the mystery of the tulip bowl, it will not matter what he knows! But first"—she drew a quick breath—"first we have to get to Amsterdam. How—"

"Jan's fixed that with a bargee friend of his," Shirley said, as the path approached the bend of the canal. "I think—yes, I'm sure—that's the barge waiting for us now."

"What's that green bushy stuff

it's loaded with? Christmas trees?" Dick said, staring.

"Trees don't have such a lovely scent. Like some wonderful Eastern perfume!" Tess exclaimed.

The barge looked like a huge green haystack nestling on the wintry water as the chums drew nearer. Its cargo consisted of herbs and spices from the Dutch East Indies, and that rich, exotic aroma came from the bales of balsam loaded on deck.

Jan's plump figure was waiting amongst those bales. He performed a step dance in his clogs when he saw that Zella was safely in the party. Then he introduced the crew and the breezy bargemaster—Kapitan Stultz, who had known Jan ever since he was a toddler.

Two minutes later the rope was cast off, and the barge was proceeding on its course to Amsterdam, with Zella and the chums triumphantly aboard.

"It's our first trip to Amsterdam, and it's lovely to be going there with you, Zella!" Shirley said excitedly. "I suppose you know it as well as we know London?"

"Yes. My brother and I, we both went to school in Amsterdam. That was before my father died." Zella added wistfully. "Before the van Hagels became our guardians."

Shirley gave her a warm look. "Supposing we run into someone who knows you, Zella?" she asked with caution.

"It will not matter, except—" Zella paused, a momentary anxiety in her eyes. "Mrs. van Hagel is there; she is staying with friends in Amsterdam. But it is a big city, and she likes only the fashionable places."

"She does not like cargo barges—not Mrs. van Hagel, no!" Jan said solemnly.

"Not even with a scented aroma like this one," grinned Dick. "Personally, I think Jan's done us proud. I'm getting a real breath of the East. I feel like a sultan sailing on the royal barge. Makes me think we ought to choose eastern rebes for our fancy dress to-night, girls!"

They debated the subject of costumes, while the barge glided on through the silvery, tranquil canals—through villages where waterways were the only streets and bridges the only crossings. The canals grew wider and more imposing, one converging into another, as they drew nearer to Amsterdam. Soon the chums could see the buildings of the city, rising tier on tier like the semi-circles of a huge amphitheatre.

The barge emerged into the open river—the gently flowing Amstel—and then smoothly it nosed its way through a narrow side-stream, flanked on either bank by superb hotels, their terraces jutting out over the water.

"Gee, it's like the pictures of Venice!" Tess said in delight. "A miniature Venice!"

Zella and Jan laughed, but they were both very proud.

"If only you could see it in summer," said Zella, "then the hotels have their own gondolas, and it is truly like Venice!"

In gay spirits, she led the chums ashore, eager to show them the sights, her own troubles and danger forgotten. They were passing the big, glass-domed station, its forecourt thronged with incoming passengers, when Shirley suddenly grabbed her arm in frantic warning.

"Zella, wait!" Desperately she drew her behind the pillar of the gate.

A tall, dark-clad figure came striding out from the station, and he was conspicuous by a gaudy waistcoat. It was Mr. van Hagel! Had he seen Zella?

A NEW DANGER

"KEEP mum, everybody! Keep out of sight!" Shirley said in a whisper to the others.

All drew back from the gateway, bunching themselves round Zella. In the next breath Mr. van Hagel stalked out through the gate.

He stopped there on the pavement, standing within a few yards of them.

He had only to turn his head and he would see the chums, and could not fail to see Zella whom they were trying to conceal. The suspense was stifling.

But Mr. van Hagel did not turn his head. He was looking straight out across the square, signalling for a taxi.

His signal was seen at last. A taxi drew up, and, in thankful relief, the chums watched him stride across to it and snap open the door. They heard him give an address to the driver in his loud, commanding voice, and then the taxi-door slammed upon him and he was gone.

"Saved!" Dick whooped. "Gee, what a relief!"

"Yes, but—but what's brought him here?" Shirley gasped.

Zella was still trembling from the shock, but her eyes were shining. "It's all right," she said. "He has only come to see Mrs. van Hagel."

"You don't think—he couldn't have suspected you were here, Zella?" Shirley jerked out.

"No, no. He is on a visit to Mrs. van Hagel and her friends. It was their address he gave to the driver," Zella said with thankfulness.



Shirley was helping Zella to choose a fancy dress costume for the ball that night when suddenly she gave a gasp. Stepping out of the lift was the last person she wished to see—Mrs. van Hagel, Zella's guardian.

Shirley gave a sigh of relief. It was impossible, of course, that Mr. van Hagel could have suspected where Zella had gone and followed her here with such uncanny accuracy. But it was the first fear that had jumped into her mind.

"Gee, we've had a narrow escape!" Tess gasped, as they walked on. "If we'd come by train, then we'd have caught the very train that Zella's guardian did, and he'd have spotted us all—probably before we left Boenderdorp. I think Jan deserves a special reward for bringing us by barge!"

"We'll treat him to lunch," Shirley said enthusiastically. "Where shall we go, Jan?"

"Heck's," said Jan and Zella, both in the same breath. And eagerly they led the way, through busy shopping streets, to a delightful, old-world square named after Holland's greatest artist—the Rembrandtplein.

Heck's—as the chums quickly discovered—was one of a chain of restaurants. But this was its principal establishment. It was enormous and cheerful, and, as Dick said, this went for everything in it. The band, the glittering gilt mirrors, its tables, and especially the meal portions.

A rosy-cheeked waitress put five large bowls of soup before them as soon as they sat down, then cheerfully she sped away, leaving a menu in Jan's hands.

"I order for us all, ja?" And Jan

pored over that menu as earnestly as he did his school exam papers.

Shirley and Tess took an equally earnest interest in the people around them, the clothes the girls were wearing, and the cheerful, red-and-gold furnishings of the restaurant, to say nothing of the fascinating clock over the door. A chic-looking waitress was pictured on the minute hand, and there were words inscribed round the face of the clock.

"The clock round cares Heck's for you," translated Dick laboriously. "It means," laughed Zella, "you can get a meal here at any hour of the clock."

The chums thoroughly enjoyed that lunch, especially Jan, whose appetite always amazed his friends from England.

"It is goot!" beamed Jan. "We can choose now a cup of tea, or coffee, or milk, or chocolate."

"Coffee for everybody, eh, girls?" said Dick. "And after that, the word is—winkles."

"Winkles—" began Tess, then gave a gasping laugh. "Oh, you mean shoes!"

"Winkels is Dutch for shop," Dick reminded her. "We want a fancy-

dress winkel where we can hire our costumes for to-night."

"Bamberger's. It is a big store. They have everything," Zella said eagerly.

The waitress brought the bill when she served the coffee. Shirley & Co. paid it, insisting on standing treat for all; and then, a few minutes later, Zella led them out of the square along wide, airy streets that were unique.

Fine city shops and hotels and museums towered up on one side only. On the other side stretched the endless canals and the big, squat barges gliding by.

Bamberger's occupied a corner all to itself by the quay. It was a huge, departmental store, six stories high, but Tess and Dick got no farther than the ground floor. They spotted the photographic department as soon as they pushed open the revolving door.

"Films! Just what we want!" Dick made a swoop for the counter.

"And I can get my camera mended here; the shutter's wonky," breathed Tess. "You and Zella go up to the fancy dresses, Shirley; we'll join you there."

"You'd better stay with them and do the interpreting, Jan, or they'll be here all night!" chuckled Shirley. "Off we go, Zella!"

She went up with Zella in the lift to the fancy-dress department, which was on the third floor. They stepped out there on to an astonishing spectacle. It was like the back-stage of a pantomime. Life-size plastic figures

stood wearing every conceivable kind of costume, and not only costumes, but animal skins, tiger heads, donkey heads, papier-mache masks of fish faces and bird faces and strikingly pretty baby faces, with rounded cheeks and dimples.

"We wear those masks in carnivals, but not in ballrooms," laughed Zella. Then her eyes grew earnest. "Tonight, Shirley, I must wear a costume that will completely disguise me. My guardian does not go to dances ever—he is too serious—but we know that he is here in Amsterdam, and I dare not take any risk. What costume can I wear that will be a safe disguise?"

"We'll have a talk with the salesgirl. Here she comes!" Shirley said eagerly.

The young salesgirl was an expert on fancy dress, and brightly helpful. She suggested a flowing Turkish dress for Zella with a most becoming yashmak—a pale blue veil as light as gossamer, yet completely impenetrable. She suggested for Shirley a Dutch boy's suit—"because you have ze sporty figure, and you are slim."

"Slim! Then I shan't look like a Dutch boy—not like our Jan, anyhow!" And Shirley laughingly followed Zella into a little, mirrored compartment to try on their costumes.

Ten minutes later they emerged for the salesgirl's inspection.

Zella, in her dainty, flowing Turkish dress, looked the picture of grace. "So interesting, so mysterious," said the salesgirl. Shirley, in her baggy, bright blue trousers, yellow clogs, tight little check jacket, and small, round cap perched on the back of her fair head. Shirley, said the salesgirl in delight, looked "so boyeesh, so cheeky!"

"Zella, ask her if she can find you another headband for your yashmak," Shirley said, as she tried to adjust Zella's veil a little more securely. "I think this one's too large for you."

The salesgirl nodded. She lifted the yashmak from Zella's head, placed it down on a chair, and went to find another.

"We mustn't take any chances of your yashmak coming off to-night—" Shirley was saying, and then her smile suddenly froze.

Over Zella's shoulder she saw the gates of the lift open and a woman step out. An immaculately dressed woman in grey fur coat and toque, whose movements were haughty, yet curiously sly.

Shirley took one look at her, and went faint with horror. That woman was Zella's guardian—Mrs. van Hagel!

AT THE BALL

"DON'T look round, Zella! Pretend you're Tess!"

Shirley had just time to breathe that warning—just enough presence of mind to whisk the yashmak back over Zella's head. Almost before the lift gates closed again, Mrs. van Hagel was busting straight towards them.

Zella saw her reflection in one of the mirrors on the wall. She gave a smothered little gasp under her veil and seemed petrified. Her own panic would have betrayed her if Shirley had not acted like lightning.

"Tess, your costume's wizard! You won't look a bit English by the time I've finished with you!" And Shirley whirled her towards the little changing compartment. "In we go!"

She opened the mirrored door and thrust Zella inside in one lightning movement. She was following her in with equal speed, but—

"O-oh!"

With a gasp, Shirley felt the floor skid from beneath her. It was those unaccustomed clogs which were her downfall. She slid crazily on the polished boards; flung out her hands wildly to save herself. One hand clutched at a plastic figure in a jester's costume. The other hand clutched at a very live figure in a grey fur coat.

Crash! Shirley landed on the floor, just in time to see the jester toppling after her, his pointed cap dealing a

playful poke at Mrs. van Hagel as he fell.

"What is this?" came a spluttering, indignant voice.

Shirley sat up on the floor and saw Mrs. van Hagel glaring down at her, her fashionable toque knocked all askew, her haughty face pink with rage.

"I'm ever so sorry! It was these clogs. I—I slipped!"

Gasping apologies, Shirley staggered to her feet.

Perhaps her Dutch boy's suit gave her a somewhat frivolous, impish look. Certainly it seemed to provoke Mrs. van Hagel even more. She was furious.

"One does not expect such clumsiness here. You should shop in the juvenile department!" she fumed, angrily straightening her hat.

"It was an accident, and I've said I'm sorry," Shirley answered.

She had recovered herself now. That little mishap had saved Zella from detection. She saw with relief that the compartment was closed now, and Zella safely concealed behind its door.

In the same instant she was aware of a curious change in Mrs. van Hagel's expression. Her anger was suppressed; her gaze was fixed upon her with a sudden sharp intenseness.

"I am sorry. I did not understand," she said in an odd tone. "You are a foreign girl? English, I think?"

"Yes," Shirley answered meekly. "My friend's waiting for me, if you'll excuse me." And she escaped unobtrusively, and joined Zella in the changing compartment.

She knew what that subtle change meant. Mrs. van Hagel had recognised her! Mrs. van Hagel had seen her only once before, on the boat coming over from England, but she had recognised her now as the English girl to whom Zella had given those mysterious windmill postcards.

"You've saved me, Shirley!" Zella whispered, squeezing her friend's hand convulsively. "Listen! I think she's going now."

Shirley nodded, yet her eyes were still uneasy as she heard Mrs. van Hagel speaking to the salesgirl:

"Is my costume ready? It was promised for this afternoon at two without fail. The name is—"

"Mrs. van Hagel? Your costume is here, madam; it is waiting for you."

There was the rustle of a parcel, then departing footsteps and the sound of Mrs. van Hagel descending in the lift.

She had gone.

No sooner had Shirley and Zella stepped out of their cubicle than the lift ascended again. This time it brought Tess and Dick and Jan.

"Gee, you look sweet in that Turkish costume, Zella! And doesn't Shirley look a nib in that Dutch boy's suit!" Tess exclaimed in ecstasies.

"You two couldn't have chosen better, even if I'd been here to help—"

"These costumes won't do!" Shirley interrupted uneasily. "We'll have to wear something different. And we'll have to disguise ourselves—not only Zella, but all of us!"

"Why?" Dick said, astonished.

"You don't know who's just been up here. I thought you might have seen her in the lift, but I suppose she didn't get out on your floor," breathed Shirley.

"It was Mrs. van Hagel!"

"Wh-what?" gasped Tess in dismay.

"D'you mean—d'you mean she saw Zella?"

"Not to recognise her." And Shirley gave a swift account of what had happened. "But the point is—she saw me and recognised me. And if she sees us again, when we're all together, we aren't let her recognise any of us, or she'll guess who the third girl is. Van Hagel will have told her by now that Zella's missing."

"Yes, but why should there be any danger of Mrs. van Hagel bumping into us again?" began Tess.

"We'll be at the dance to-night—"

She paused, with a start. "Gee, what was Mrs. van Hagel doing up here?"

"Collecting a fancy-dress cos-

tume," Shirley said carefully. "Of course, there must be lots of dances going on in Amsterdam to-night, and she may not be going where we're going. Only—you see what I mean, don't you? Can't take any chances!"

"No fear!" agreed Dick, exchanging uneasy looks with the others. "Then what shall we wear?"

It was Jan who shrewdly suggested dominoes—those loose cloaks, worn with half-masks, that clad some of the plastic figures. They would make perfect disguises.

"Jan's right!" breathed Shirley.

And, to the surprise of the salesgirl, she exchanged her own costume and Zella's, and all five hired bright purple dominoes.

They changed that evening aboard the barge. Jan's friend, the skipper, generously gave up his cabin to the girls. And Dick and Jan dressed in the crew's cabin, and had a taxi waiting on the quay by the time the girls were ready.

Cloaked and masked and in jubilant spirits, they bowled off through the brilliantly lit streets of Amsterdam to the Bloemen Kasteel—the Castle of Flowers.

It was the headquarters of the tulip growers, so it could be expected to be decorative; but its beauty now, on the night of the ball, held Shirley and Tess and Zella spellbound. The great marble vestibule was one enchanting sea of flowers, their colours gorgeously defined by concealed lights.

Shirley gave up their tickets at the reception table, including that precious ticket they had secured at such pains for Zella. And the smiling master of ceremonies asked their names.

Shirley was ready for that question.

"The Five Dominoes," she answered.

In a stentorian voice the M.C. announced across the crowded vestibule:

"Ze Five Dominoes!"

The chums pressed their way in through the gaily dressed throngs. They were seething with excitement. They could see the huge gilt ballroom, and the orchestra in the minstrel's gallery struck up the first waltz.

"Now, Zella, to find the tulip bowl clue!" Shirley said, with bated breath. "We've a wonderful chance before the place gets too crowded. Where shall we start?"

"Up these stairs first. Let's explore the galleries," urged Dick eagerly.

"Wait, Dick!" Jan tugged him back by his cloak as he was making for the staircase. "Here is my momma and poppa and their party just arrived."

The M.C.'s voice boomed out as Jan spoke:

"Mr. and Mrs. de Voort and company!" he announced in Dutch.

All the chums turned, their eyes laughing through their masks, and started across the vestibule to meet Jan's family.

"Momma, we is here!" Jan was calling.

And then two more figures came in through the front entrance. A sleek, haughty woman in a beautiful pompadour dress, leaning on the arm of a tall man in sombre black, relieved by a gaudy waistcoat.

Shirley took one look at them through the slits of her mask, and her heart hammered with dismay.

She saw them even before she heard their names boomed out in Dutch by the M.C.:

"Mr. and Mrs. van Hagel!"

Zella's guardians were both here! Would they discover Zella? Would they see through her disguise? Mr. van Hagel would be instantly suspicious, thought Shirley, if he discovered that she and her chums were here with an extra girl in their party!

Had he already recognised Jan—heard him speaking to his parents?

More exciting chapters of this grand story in next Friday's **GIRLS' CRYSTAL**.

JOY—The Girl With a 100 Voices



TRICKING HYPATIA

"FUN?" said Hypatia to her younger cousin, Joy Oliver. "That is all you think of: merriment, jollity, gaiety. Does no serious thought ever cross your mind?"

She adjusted her glasses, and gazed reprovingly at Joy. Joy, trying to chew a piece of toffee behind her hand, sighed. Cousin Hypatia was a bore; worse than a bore, she was a pain in the neck.

"Serious?" said Joy, tucking the toffee into her cheek. "Right at this moment, I'm plunged in misery and gloom. Just think. The holidays, and I've got to swot at Latin, French, algebra!"

She regarded her cousin Hypatia, frowning; for Hypatia, learned, with a long nose that prodded into even the darkest corners of knowledge, was a swot and, in Joy's opinion, just about the dullest specimen of a schoolgirl she had ever known, even allowing for the fact that Hypatia was in the Upper Sixth.

Joy and Hypatia were sharing a compartment on the fast-moving train that was taking them both to Morden Cottage, Hypatia's home, where Joy was to spend her holidays.

Holidays! That's what they were called; but so far as Joy could see she might have been better off at school. Just because she had had a bad report, she had to spend the holidays swotting—under Hypatia's watchful eye.

"It is a waste of time repining," said Hypatia. "If you had studied assiduously, extra tuition would not be necessary. Here is a Latin grammar. Do you know what I am going to do with it?"

"Throw it out of the window?" hazarded Joy humorously.

"Throw it out of the window?" gasped Hypatia. "Certainly not! What I intend doing with this book is to mark a declension for you to learn."

Joy gave her a dark, warning look. "Now listen, Hypy—"

"My name is Hypatia. The 'y' is sounded as in 'high'."

"As in hi-tiddy-ty-hi-ti?"

Hypatia compressed her lips, opened the Latin grammar and thrust it at Joy. Then she herself settled back to read Thucydides, which to Joy was just Greek.

Joy opened the Latin grammar, scowled at it—and then used it to

conceal a folded comic which she smuggled from her inside pocket.

But for once she could not concentrate on fun. She was thinking of her ruined holiday.

Latin? Who wanted to learn Latin? She didn't. What Joy wanted to do was to get an audition for the B.B.C. All she needed was opportunity—apart from her parents' permission.

Joy's gift was ventriloquism, and she could imitate almost any voice with truly wonderful realism.

Joy, wondering if she could make use of ventriloquism now, glanced up idly, and then leaped up, and pointed out of the window.

"Hi-hi, Hypatia, look!" she cried. "Look, Hypy—a circus!"

Hypatia looked out of the window. In a large field beside the railway line there were tents in great number, and an array of lorries and caravans. In amongst this gay, colourful assembly could be seen horses, an elephant, men in bright uniform, and throngs of people.

"A circus—and the train's slowing down!" Joy said excitedly. "Oh Hypy, let's get out at this station."

Hypatia's eyebrows shot up. She gasped aloud:

"Get out? But—but our destination is another six or seven stations along the line. Certainly not, Joy!"

And then, as Hypatia looked out of the window, saying something about circuses in the time of the Emperor Claudius, Joy gave a sharp squeal practically in her ear.

"Aunt Jemima—was that her I saw in the corridor?"

"My mother—on the train?" said Hypatia, drawing back her head. "It is possible, Joy, but extremely improbable. When we parted from her on the railway station, she made no mention of advancing her time of departure—"

Joy was already in the corridor, looking up and down; but she did not expect to see Aunt Jemima. Indeed, if Joy had seen her she would have been astounded.

But Hypatia heard her—at least, she heard what she took to be her mother speaking.

"Hypatia," came Aunt Jemima's voice—none the less shrill because the words came from Joy's mouth.

"Oh, yes, mama!" called Hypatia. "Don't leave your seat, dear."

"Very well, mama."

"I want you and Joy to get off the

train at this next station. We are going to the circus. Please gather your things, and Joy's, too."

"If you say so, mama," responded Hypatia in surprise. But she was a model daughter—although in Joy's opinion more of a waxwork dummy than a model.

Joy rushed back into the compartment, her eyes shining.

"Hypatia, we're going to the circus. Quick—get the things together. The train's slowing."

Hypatia was on her feet, still looking perplexed.

"I must speak to mother," she gasped. "I can't understand—"

"Hurry Hypatia! Hurry! You go out first."

Joy was ventriloquising again, and that settled it. Hypatia, with her Greek books, Latin readers, papers, and coats, scrambled out on the platform as the train came to a stop in the station.

JOY IN A JAM

JOY was delighted. Not only was she half-way, figuratively, to the circus, but also she had proved once again how well she could ventriloquise and mimic voices.

Aunt Jemima's voice was not easy to imitate; but Hypatia had not suspected the trick. She did not even now have the slightest doubt that the voice was genuine, though she was baffled by her mother's being on the train.

In the booking hall of the station, Hypatia put down her hand luggage, and knit her ponderous brow.

"I fancied I heard mama call again," she said.

"Just a fancy," said Joy.

"Hypatia!" someone called. And the voice that called was Aunt Jemima's!

"There!" said Hypatia. "That was mama's voice. She is on the platform."

Joy stood as though stunned. She just couldn't believe it. Hypatia had been startled when she had heard her mother's voice the first time; but her surprise had been mild indeed compared with Joy's now. If Joy had heard one of the weighing machines address her by name she would not have been more surprised.

"It might be an echo," she murmured feebly, bewildered.

No. 1 OF AN AMUSING NEW SERIES, FEATURING
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"Echo? Absurd! Don't you under- the elementary scientific principle governing the phenomenon of sonic impulse?"

Dazedly Joy hurried to the door of the booking office and looked along the platform. The thought came to her that there might be another mimic at work. It was impossible that Aunt Jemima could have been on the train. Aunt Jemima would have found their compartment at once; she would not have stayed there alone, even supposing that she had boarded the train herself after saying good-bye to them.

But Joy looked out from the booking-office door, and nearly collapsed. For there on the platform was Aunt Jemima, talking to her friend, Mrs. Gink. Aunt Jemima had been on the train, and evidently she had travelled in the company of her friend.

"I can't believe it," Aunt Jemima was saying. "The only feasible explanation of their leaving the train is that Joy ran away, and Hypatia pursued her. If that is the case, Joy shall be severely punished."

"Ah, yes, Hypatia would do nothing wrong," agreed Mrs. Gink.

"Indeed not," Aunt Jemima agreed proudly.

Joy pulled herself together. She was in a tight jam now. She could not imagine what would be the consequences when Hypatia explained what had happened—or what she thought had happened. For Joy seemed to remember that Mrs. Gink had heard about her talent as a ventriloquist! And this was no time for putting two and two together.

She bobbed her head into the booking hall.

"Hypatia!" Joy called, imitating Aunt Jemima's voice once more. "Hurry on and get the tickets."

"Yes, mama," Hypatia answered, as she obediently hurried out to the bus park.

As she went, Joy turned back to the platform. Somehow, she had to delay Aunt Jemima and her friend, Mrs. Gink. Standing back against a weighing machine as they came near, Joy seized a chance to help their conversation.

"I was saying," resumed Aunt Jemima, "that Hypatia is a wonderful girl!"

The voice that came sounded like Mrs. Gink's, but it was Joy's.

"Barrow girl!"

"Barrow girl?" cried Aunt Jemima, pulling up. "Why on earth should I call her a barrow girl? Are you being offensive, Mrs. Gink?"

"I didn't say barrow girl," said Mrs. Gink.

Joy moved from hiding as they passed her, hoping their attention had been diverted as they argued, and that she herself would be able to race on ahead and catch the bus. But Joy's luck was out.

Mrs. Gink suddenly turned and saw her.

"Why, there is Joy!" she cried. Aunt Jemima wheeled.

"Joy! What is the meaning of this? Why did you alight from the train at this station?"

Joy put on her meekest expression. "We're going to the circus, aunt."

"The—the circus? Hypatia has never been to a circus in her life. Ridiculous! It is more likely that you played truant, and she pursued you."

"It's an awfully good circus, I think," said Joy meekly. "Hypatia did mention something about an educational turn."

"Educational? Ah, that may account for it!" exclaimed Aunt Jemima. "If it is something likely to improve the mind—"

"Why don't you go?" Mrs. Gink asked her.

Joy jumped in dismay. This was the last thing she wanted.

"A splendid idea, Mrs. Gink," approved Aunt Jemima. "Let us both go to this circus. If Hypatia thinks it may be elevating, then I value her judgment."

"Oh dear!" groaned Joy.

"Hurry and tell Hypatia we are coming," commanded Aunt Jemima. "But—but—" protested Joy uneasily. "I—er—"

"We shall follow you by the next bus, or even by the same, bus if we are in time to catch it," said Aunt Jemima. "Come, Mrs. Gink."

She drew back, however, as a large dog trotted by with its owner towards the footbridge.

"Gave me a shock," she muttered. "I detest big dogs."

"They are frequently savage," Mrs. Gink agreed.

They turned and walked on; but Joy loitered. This was a truly fearful moment. What on earth could she do to delay them? If they caught up with Hypatia, they would hear about the supposed instructions, which would immediately be cancelled. And what was even worse, they would guess who was the culprit.

Joy particularly wanted to keep the secret of her ventriloquism. The success with Hypatia proved how valuable it would be to her; it would be as a key that could unlock the door to freedom.

But it did not seem to be a great deal of help to her now. Imitating Hypatia's voice might delay Aunt Jemima and Mrs. Gink, but not stop them.

If only she could get on her way to the circus, and leave them to follow—if only she could actually arrive at the circus, then once there she might be able to hide. But at least she would be there to watch the show.

And then, as she saw Aunt Jemima and her friend walking to the station exit, a brilliant idea came to her. Behind her, the large log, quite far away, had given a deep-throated bark.

Joy ran forward lightly, and when she was a yard or so from her aunt, she snarled.

It was one of her best, most realistic imitations. It was guaranteed to make anyone leap in the air and dodge.

"Gr-r-r-r!"

Aunt Jemima started and jumped. Mrs. Gink squealed.

"Into the waiting room, quick!" gasped Joy.

The waiting room was only a few yards ahead and, without looking round, Aunt Jemima and her friend darted into it.

Outside, Joy loitered for a moment. "Gr-r-r-r! Gr-r-r-r!" she continued to growl most realistically.

"Hold the door," panted Aunt Jemima. "Joy—run!"

"I'll meet you at the circus, aunt."

"Yes, yes—go there immediately," shouted Aunt Jemima through the door. "And call the stationmaster. This dog may be mad!"

"Gr-r-r-r!" Joy gave a final growl and then went dancing down the now deserted platform.

She was free; she had a comfortable lead over Aunt Jemima, and that lead seemed even greater when, outside the station, she saw a bus with a large notice on its side, **CIRCUS**.

Into the bus she climbed, highly elated, gleeful, happy.

Five minutes later the circus came into view, colourful, glamorous, noisy, encircled by side-shows, stalls and all the fun of the fair.

And along the road behind her, in a hired car from the station, came Aunt Jemima and Mrs. Gink.

FUN AT THE CIRCUS

HYPATIA looked about her anxiously for Joy. She did not like circuses. The atmosphere did not appeal to her, but she supposed that there was probably some very good reason indeed for her mother's suggesting she should come here.

There was noise, and bustle, and shouting. She had bought tickets for herself and Joy, and now stood anxiously watching.

She had almost given up hope of seeing her cousin when Joy suddenly came into view, breathless and excited.

"Have you seen the lions, Hypatia?" cried Joy. "They're terrific. And there's a simply wonderful elephant—really amazing. And the clowns, too—"

"I suppose you haven't seen mama?" asked Hypatia, dismissing the circus animals with a wave of the hand.

"Well, yes, as a matter of fact I have. She's with Mrs. Gink."

"Oh! Then she's really coming here? Good!"

But Joy looked behind her warily, with growing anxiety.

What was going to happen? What dread disaster must she expect? How was she going to get out of this jam? Joy couldn't for the life of her think. Aunt Jemima would confront Hypatia, and each would accuse the other of having thought of this idea.

There seemed to Joy only one way of actually staying at the circus—and that was losing herself. In her present desperation she had even thought of taking part in the competition that was being organised to discover a clown.

Not far away, a queue of youngsters, and even some grown-ups, were lining up outside the entrance to one of the tents, and Joy looked at them musingly. If only she dared. They were all being dressed in simple clown garments and then, with grease paints slapped on their faces, sent into the ring. It would be funny enough for everyone, and the best ones would be given a small prize.

However, just to keep the numbers within limits, there was a simple quiz first; those who answered the simple question were passed through, and others barred.

But Joy knew that though it would be fun, it was one thing she just wouldn't be able to get away with.

"Well, come on, Joy—I suppose that is the queue we must join," said Hypatia.

Joy hardly heard her, however, for she saw Aunt Jemima in the distance. Her heart almost stopped beating; for she could see storm and trouble ahead—and no circus, either.

And then, as Hypatia moved forward towards the queue, a whizzing idea came to Joy.

"Hypatia, how would you like to earn a hundred pounds?"

"A hundred pounds? When—where?"

"You can answer quiz questions—almost anything."

"I have never yet heard a quiz question I couldn't answer," said Hypatia smugly. "In fact—"

"Then join that queue," urged Joy. "Go on, hurry!" She spoke in a gruff masculine voice, which seemed to come from behind Hypatia—for Joy was ventriloquising again.

"There you are, miss! You've got a brainy face—go and earn a hundred pound prize! Join the competition queue!"

Hypatia blushed. She had indeed a clever face; most people with keen observation noticed it.

"A hundred pounds? Good gracious, I mustn't miss this," said Hypatia.

She strode forward, and as she went to join the queue she heard her mother's voice:

"Hypatia, dear, just a quick warning. Don't tell Mrs. Gink that I suggested coming to the circus. I'd rather she didn't know."

Hypatia looked round, but could see nothing of her mother, which was not surprising, for Joy—the girl with a 100 voices—had been ventriloquising again.

"Where is mother?" asked the surprised Hypatia.

"Oh, just round the corner," said Joy. "Buck up and get into the queue."

Hypatia obeyed, and fortunately she did not see pasted above the doorway of the tent the large notice which read **"AMATEUR CLOWN CONTEST"**; nor did she notice the clown who stood just inside the tent,

(Please turn to the back page.)

The Merry-makers' Island College



THE JIGSAW MESSAGE

"OPEN up, there!" cried pretty, blue-eyed Sally Warner, rapping smartly on the chalet door. "Make it snappy! Your escort awaits!"

"Forward, the fencing Felton!" roared Johnny Briggs.

And he made a playful but clumsy lunge towards Don Weston with the fencing foil he carried.

Instinctively Don leapt back. It was unfortunate that he should come into contact with the chalet door just as it swung open. Heavily sprawling, he landed at the feet of the girl who had opened it and grinned up at her.

"Sorry, Janet!" he said, with a chuckle. "I don't usually enter a chalet this way. Just blame that chump Johnny!"

"He needs a couple of hours' hard practice with you, Janet, to take some of the bounce out of him!" chuckled Fay Manners, the fourth member of the party known as the Merry-makers.

"Ready yet, old thing?" It was half-holiday at the International College, on Waloorie Island, in Australia, where the chums were students. And they were in cheery mood, eager to press on with their latest enthusiasm, fencing, at which Janet Felton was an expert.

But even greater than that was their desire to cheer up Janet and chase her unhappiness away. For she had recently heard of the death of her grandfather, her only relative, of whom she was very fond—news which had caused her a great deal of grief.

The chums had been deeply sympathetic, but determinedly cheerful, and because of their tactful kindness Janet had begun to recover from the first bitter blow. She had agreed, at first disinterestedly, but later with eager zest, to Sally's request that she should teach the four chums fencing. And Johnny's clumsy but sublimely confident efforts had brought the smiles back again to her pretty face.

But there was no smile there this afternoon. Sally stared, shocked and puzzled, at the pale, drawn face, at the dark, shadowed eyes and at the white, quivering lips. But, tactfully, she made no comment.

"Shall we go over to the gym and wait for you there, Janet?" she asked quietly. "We don't want to rush you if you're not ready—"

"Ready!" There was an unsteady note in Janet's voice as she echoed that word. "Sorry, Sally—all of you—but I shan't be coming over to the gym. Not—not this afternoon or—or ever again. You see"—she fought to keep control of her voice—"I'm leav-

ing the college—almost at—at once! I—I've got to get a job. I—I'm penniless!"

For a moment the chums stared, appalled by what Janet had said, yet unable to take it in. Janet—penniless! She must be joking. Why, everyone knew that her grandfather had paid her fees at college; that he, a rich man, had repeatedly stated that she should inherit all his wealth!

"Janet—Janet dear," said Sally tenderly, "I don't understand—"

"Neither do I, Sally!" Janet choked. "I—I only wish I did. All I can tell you is that a short while ago I received a letter, telling me that granddad had left all his property to his housekeeper, Mrs. Grimwade. That for me there was nothing! Nothing! Wait, though!" she added, with a little laugh that was more of a sob. "That's not true! I—I had this—"

She pointed to a small cardboard box which lay on her chair.

"Mrs. Grimwade sent it on—said in her letter that granddad had asked her to send it to me as—a little memento. There's a letter from him, too. It—it's a jigsaw puzzle."

Had Janet said it was a live snake, she could not have startled the chums more. Incredulously they stared at her, from her to the box.

"You—you mean it's a very valuable one, I suppose?" asked Johnny. Janet gave another choked laugh.

"Oh, Johnny, that's terribly—terribly funny!" she blurted. "Granddad had heaps of jigsaws—he was an enthusiast. Some of them cost quite a lot of money. But this—this is just an old cardboard thing he seems to have cut out himself." And then suddenly all pretence at keeping up a brave front before the chums vanished.

With a sob, she flung herself into a chair and buried her face in her hands.

"It—it's not just the money!" she choked through her tears. "Really, it's not—though it means I'll be parted from the only friends I have. It—it's wondering why granddad did this to me—why he should have treated me in this way when we always loved each other so much!"

Sally's heart twisted with pity as

By DAPHNE GRAYSON

she heard the choked words. Fay looked very near to tears herself, while Don and Johnny stood helpless and uncomfortable.

"I—I can't help wondering whether I hurt him in some way!" cried Janet pathetically. "Whether he felt I should have gone to him when he was taken ill. But I didn't know—I wasn't told— Oh, if only I could know why, he did this I—I could bear it more!"

"There must be some explanation," Sally said bewilderedly. "Janet, doesn't your grandfather say anything in his letter?"

"Read it—for yourself," invited Janet, gesturing towards the chair. "Just a few lines—telling me exactly nothing."

Looking even more puzzled, Sally picked up the letter. True, there were only a few lines, written in a shaky, obviously falling hand.

"Mrs. Grimwade has promised to send this on to you," it stated. "A strange puzzle—but don't let it beat you, Janet."

That was all. But to Sally there was something queer about it—and did she imagine it, or were the words "strange puzzle" and "Don't let it beat you" faintly emphasised?

"Janet," she said quickly, "have you put the puzzle together yet?" "No, Sally," Janet said dully. "I should probably have tucked it away in one of my cases and forgotten it. You're a jigsaw enthusiast," she added, with a rather twisted smile.

"Why don't you take it over to your chalet and work it out? I—I have rather a lot to do."

The chums recognised in that the faintest hint that Janet would like to be alone. But the suggestion suited Sally perfectly. For some reason a little tingle of excitement was beginning to creep through her.

Supposing Janet was wrong—supposing there was something valuable about this puzzle—cheap and crude though it appeared to be?

"Yes, I'll do that," she said briskly. "Fay, perhaps you'd like to help me. I know you two boys aren't interested. Supposing you go and work off your surplus energy on the tennis court?"

And, with a sympathetic glance at Janet, who was listlessly folding clothes and flinging them into an open trunk, she swept her chums from the chalet.

A few minutes later Sally's dark head and Fay's fair one were bent in intense concentration over the small

This Week Sally & Co.
Solve A Mystery Jig-Saw
Puzzle.

table in their chalet. The puzzle on which Sally had previously been working was pushed aside. Piece by piece, the puzzle began to take shape.

The picture was a highly coloured, glossy affair, obviously cut from a magazine and mounted on a thin piece of white cardboard—a piece of cardboard that had already been used for making notes, or something, to judge from the odd pen and ink marks on it.

As the picture grew, Sally and Fay saw what it was. A picture taken in Sydney's Taronga Park, showing a number of delightful, furry possums hanging by their long tails from a gum-tree, and surveying the world upside-down. It bore a caption: "NATURE IN REVERSE." And, faintly but unmistakably, the word "reverse" was underlined.

"Fay!" cried Sally, as a great light seemed to flash suddenly in her mind. "I was sure—Oh, goodness, fetch the boys! We must let them in on this—quickly!"

Without questioning, Fay darted to the door of the chalet, almost bumping into Don and Johnny, who were just mounting the veranda.

"Whoa!" called Don, steadying her. "What's the rush?"

With Fay and Johnny he looked in the doorway, at Sally bending over the puzzle. He stared in surprise as he saw her slip a sheet of paper under the jigsaw, and with none too steady fingers deftly turn the whole thing face downwards on the table.

And, as she removed the paper, a squeal of excitement left her lips. "Look!" she cried ecstatically. "Just look!"

Almost tumbling over each other in their eagerness, her three chums charged forward, staring. And then their own faces lit up. For there, in the same shaky handwriting as in the letter, it said:

"This is the Last Will and Testament of John Felton—"

"Mr. Felton's will!" gasped Johnny. "But why—what—"

"Read it!" gasped Sally. "Oh, the clever old man!"

Clever it was. For those few lines revealed that John Felton, on his lonely ranch, had, during his last illness, been kept a prisoner by his housekeeper and her rascally husband—had been tricked into signing a will in her favour. By chance he had found this out, and, in a last desperate effort to put right a terrible injustice, had hit upon this novel means of ensuring that his granddaughter inherited what was rightfully hers.

"And the joke of it is," declared Don, "that the Grimwades posted this to Janet, no doubt feeling they were humouring an old man in his last feeble wish. Sally—I say, where are you off to?"

"To tell Janet, of course!" cried Sally radiantly. "Come on, Fay! This can't wait! Stand by the puzzle, boys!"

Together she and Fay dashed off to Janet's chalet. With only a perfunctory thump on the door, they rushed into the chalet.

"Janet!" cried Sally to the figure bending over the travelling case. "Stop packing, old thing! You're not leaving college! We've finished the jigsaw puzzle—and it puts everything all right!"

"Your grandfather tricked those rascals—" began Fay exuberantly. And there she stopped, both she and Sally recoiling with startled gasps as the figure stood up, swung round. It was not Janet, but a thin, hard-faced woman, in whose pale eyes was a queer, startled look.

"The jigsaw nuzzle?" she queried in a low, vibrant voice. "Yes, what about it? You have discovered something? Tell me—"

There was something about her that instantly aroused misgivings in Sally. She backed towards the door.

"Oh—er—it's nothing!" she stammered. "J—just something that might interest Janet. But where is Janet?" she added.

The woman's eyes narrowed. A peculiar smile twisted her thin lips.

"Janet has left college," she replied. "Pity she couldn't find time to say good-bye to all her friends—"

"Gone?" Sally and Fay exchanged frantic glances. "But where?"

"To the airport," replied the woman coolly. "She is catching a plane to Sydney, on her way to Kooloomba—"

"Kooloomba!" echoed Fay, almost stupidly. "Her grandfather's ranch?"

"My ranch, if you please!" the woman said ironically. "I, you see, am Mrs. Grimwade! Now, if you'll excuse me—"

And very pointedly she turned her back on the two stupefied girls.

JOHNNY BLUNDERS

FOR a moment longer the two girls stood immovable, stunned by this sudden turn of events.

"Sally—" began Fay frantically.

A warning pressure on her hand from Sally stopped her. For, though Mrs. Grimwade had her back turned to the chums, there was an alert look about her which told Sally she was listening intently for any comment they might make. With a slight jerk of her head, she motioned Fay outside. "Bikes—quickly!" she said tersely. "We must try to get hold of Janet before she leaves. There's not a moment to lose—"

Even as she spoke, she and Fay were hurrying towards the cycle-sheds. It was as they wheeled their bikes out that Sally remembered the puzzle. That was valuable property now—terribly valuable! Whatever happened, it must be kept safe until it could be handed over to Janet.

Defying all the rules, she and Fay mounted their bicycles and rode swiftly round to their chalet. Johnny, they were thankful to see, was lounging on the veranda. His eyes widened as he saw his two girl chums cycling up.

"What the dickens—" he began. "No time to explain," said Sally urgently. "Listen, Johnny! Put that jigsaw in the box and keep it somewhere safely until we get back. We'll tell you all about it then."

And, without waiting for Johnny to argue, they whizzed up the drive and out of the gates. Never before had Sally and Fay ridden so frantically. They felt weak and tremble when finally they almost fell off their machines at the airport.

A plane was waiting on the tarmac, the passengers just entering it. A quick inquiry of the air hostess told them that Janet was not yet aboard.

Relieved, the two girls sank down on a near-by seat, where they could watch the gates of the airfield and the embarking passengers. But though they waited and waited, there was no sign of Janet.

And suddenly Sally sat upright, a horrible suspicion flooding through her.

Had they put too much faith in Mrs. Grimwade's statement. Shouldn't they have made a few more inquiries before dashing off blindly for the airport? There hadn't been much time, of course; but supposing—just supposing it was some trick to prevent them seeing Janet?

With apprehension growing in her, Sally, with a word to Fay to keep watching, darted off to the reception

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hall. And there, a few moments later, her worst fears were realised. There was no booking in the name of Janet Felton—no booking for Mrs. Grimwade, either. They had been tricked!

Fay's horror was as great as Sally's when she was told of her girl chum's discovery. Grim-faced, filled with anger at themselves for having fallen so easily for Mrs. Grimwade's trick, and with a nervous dread that something might have gone wrong during their absence, they turned back towards college.

And then, on their way through Sarneville, fuming impatiently at a road block, Fay suddenly gave a shout.

"Sally—look! In that taxi! It's Janet!"

Sally jerked up; looked across the road. Janet it was, all her cases piled around her, her pale face sad and forlorn.

With reckless disregard of life and limb, ignoring the infuriated shouts of other road users, Sally spun across the road, planted herself firmly in front of the taxi just as it was about to move off.

"Sorry," she said to the angry driver, "but this is important!"

"Sally!" came Janet's choked voice. "Oh, I am so glad I've been able to see you, to—say good-bye!" she said huskily. "You see," she added, before Sally could speak, "I—I've been awfully lucky. Mrs. Grimwade has been very good to me. She—she has arranged for my passage to South Africa, has—has even arranged a post there for me as a nursery governess. Please," she added hastily, unable to keep up her pretence of happiness any longer—"please let me go now! I—I can't bear it—"

Sally did not answer, but her actions made Janet speechless. A quick word to the driver, the surreptitious passing of a coin, and Sally's and Fay's bicycles were secured at the back of the taxi. And, before Janet realised what was happening, they had reversed; were on their way back to college.

"Sally," she said frantically, "I don't understand! I shall miss the ferry—my job—"

"Your job is to come back to college, grab that jigsaw puzzle, and take it to a lawyer as soon as you possibly can," said Sally tersely.

And then, as Janet's eyes grew wide with wonder, she told her of the discovery of the will.

"Oh, it's wonderful—wonderful!" Janet almost sobbed. "You don't know what it means to me to know that granddad wasn't upset with me. That's greater news even than knowing I shall inherit—"

"I'm glad, Janet," said Sally gently. "But just the same, I shan't be happy until I get my hands on that puzzle again. Good! Here we are."

The three girls leapt out of the taxi before it drew to a halt. With a brief word to the driver, they peited across to the girls' chalets. A gasp of relief came to Sally's lips as she saw Johnny lounging on the veranda, as if he had not moved since she left, though this time Don was beside him.

"Where's the fire?" called Don lazily, as the three red-faced girls peited up.

"Sally ignored that levity. "Johnny, the jigsaw!" she gasped. "You kept it safe?"

The three girls only realised how tensed-up they had been when Johnny gave a lazy nod.

"All serene!" he smiled. "No need to get in such a lather about it. As a matter of fact, Janet, I handed it over to that friend of yours—the one who was with you in your chalet. She said you'd decided to take it straight away to a lawyer in Sarneville—"

He stopped short as he saw the ashen pallor of Janet's face.

"Friend!" said Sally. "Oh, Johnny, you—you couldn't know! But you've given the puzzle to Mrs. Grimwade!"

EVERYTHING SEEMS LOST

JOHNNY'S jaw fell slackly at Sally's words. He stared almost stupidly at his chums, then suddenly his eyes glinted with anger.

"The cunning trickster!" he said explosively. "My gosh, Janet, I wouldn't have had this happen for anything! But after seeing the two of you together—well, gee, I thought you two were great friends!"

"It would be simpler to make friends with a rattlesnake!" said Janet bitterly. "But, Johnny, don't feel badly about it. It wasn't your fault. How could you know?"

"Johnny"—there was a gleam of hope in Sally's eyes as she spoke—"how long ago did you hand over the puzzle? There may yet be a chance that we can find Mrs. Grimwade—that she hasn't yet destroyed it."

"Ten minutes—quarter of an hour," replied Johnny frowningly. "Gosh," he added, his face lighting up, "there's only two ways to get off the island! Airplane or ferry. And she can't have got to either yet."

"What's more, you've got a taxi waiting," said Don to the three girls. "Just what we want—"

"What are we waiting for?" asked Fay excitedly. "Come on!"

The chums needed no urging. They raced across the campus to where the taxi was waiting on the main drive. In a matter of seconds Don and Johnny had whipped off the bicycles, concealed them behind the thick wattle hedge, while Sally, Fay, and Janet explained to the taxi-driver.

"And step on it!" ordered Johnny tersely, as the driver, reversing, swung off up the drive. "We'll try the ferry first—there's no plane leaving for half an hour or so."

The driver, perhaps becoming infected by the excitement that gripped his passengers, stepped on it, whizzing up the drive at a speed that would have earned him a severe reprimand from the college authorities had they seen him.

Obviously, his excitement overran his caution. For, with no more than a perfunctory hoot, he swung out of the gates into the usually deserted road outside. But to-day it was not deserted, for a small green car, which Sally vaguely remembered having seen when they returned from Sarneville with Janet, shot forward at the same time as the taxi emerged.

There was a shout, a shriek, a screeching of brakes, a grinding sound, and a horrible jolt which jerked the chums in a confused heap to the floor of the taxi.

Half-stunned, they sorted themselves out, wondering sickeningly whether the occupant of the green car had been hurt. But even as they hoisted themselves upright to see, there came a shout of excitement from Johnny.

"Look! Gosh, it's her! That woman—the Grim person—"

Mrs. Grimwade, plainly shaken by the impact of the collision, glanced in terror towards the chums.

Like a flash she whipped up something from the seat beside her; leapt out of her car. Then, with a hunted glance around, she sped through the college gates and down the drive again.

"After her!" shouted Don. "She's got the jigsaw puzzle!" cried Janet elatedly. "Oh, don't let her get away—"

"She won't!" promised Johnny. "I'll see to that!"

He pounded forward, his chums on his heels. Eyes glowing, elation filling them, they surged after the woman. She could not get away—she couldn't! And she had the puzzle in her hand. For all her trickery, Janet and the chums had won in the end!

Only a few yards separated Johnny and Mrs. Grimwade now. She took one desperate look round, and then, with a suddenness which took the chums completely by surprise, she swerved aside through a gap in the shrubbery.

"Round the other side, Johnny! Head, her off!" shouted Sally. "We

And there she broke off, a strangled cry of alarm coming from her lips.

"No!" she cried. "Oh, no! Don't Johnny—"

It was too late! Once again Mrs.

Grimwade had outsmarted them—and this time she had won the last trick.

For on the other side of the shrubbery stood an incinerator, in which the gardeners had been burning garden rubbish. And on top of that fiercely burning rubbish Mrs. Grimwade, with a fierce, triumphant thrust, had placed the cardboard box containing the puzzle.

As the chums reached it, lifted the lid, Janet gave a choking cry of despair. For all that remained of the puzzle, of John Felton's will, was a heap of charred ashes!

WEARY, sick at heart, the chums, with Janet, sat on the veranda of Sally's chalet. They were almost too tired to talk; worn out, physically and mentally.

There had been the stunning shock of knowing that all Janet's hopes had been completely dashed, that she would never now be able to claim her rightful heritage!

There had been all the wearisome business about the collision between

chums in the least. But since Janet was facing up so bravely to things, it would have been unkind to have vetoed her suggestion.

Slowly Sally rose from her chair, entered the chalet, and disinterestedly picked up the red box containing her puzzle. With her thoughts far away, she tipped it out on to the table; began to shuffle the pieces around.

And then—suddenly she stiffened, stared in utter incredulity, her blue eyes wide and disbelieving.

"It—it can't be true!" she muttered. "It can't—and yet— Oh golly, it is—it is!"

Half-laughing, half-crying, she turned to the others, who had started up from their chairs in alarm, imagining this was some delayed reaction from the car accident.

"Oh, Johnny! Dear old blundering Johnny!" she cried. "You deserve to be hung around with medals—given all sorts of honours—"

"Sally, are you all right?" asked Don worriedly.

"Of course I'm all right!" laughed Sally. "Everything's all right! Don't



In horrified dismay the three girls stared at Johnny. Unwittingly he had blundered; had given the precious jigsaw puzzle to Janet's enemy.

the two cars, with Mrs. Grimwade finally being taken to the sanatorium with a badly bruised arm—where, the chums learnt, she was to spend the night.

But they cared nothing for Mrs. Grimwade and her hurts. Nothing that had happened to her bore any relation to the great hurt she had inflicted on Janet.

"If only we could do something—" muttered Sally.

Janet gave a little sigh. "I'm afraid there's nothing to be done now—except to forget the whole thing."

"But—"

"At least I know now that I did nothing to offend grandfather," Janet went on. "I—I shall have to leave here, but I want to try to accept things philosophically."

She tried to smile.

"Sally, do you realise that when Johnny cleared up my jigsaw puzzle—momentarily her voice faltered—"he also cleared up yours as well? That terribly difficult one you've been working on for days and days now. It's such a shame, when you had only a few more pieces to put in!"

"Eh? Gosh, so I did!" admitted Johnny. "Sorry, Sally—"

"It doesn't matter, old thing," said Sally dully.

"So," continued Janet, "supposing we try to put it together again? I can't leave here to-night now—in any case, my plans will have to be altered. So come on, everyone! At least it will give us something better to do than think about my troubles!"

The idea did not appeal to the

you realise what's happened? Look—look at this!"

She gestured towards the table. "Johnny cleared up the puzzles—but he cleared them up into the wrong boxes. He put mine into Janet's box! Mine was the one Mrs. Grimwade took—mine was the one she burnt! And, Janet, here's yours—with the will intact!"

IT took several weeks for all the legal aspects of the case to be cleared up, but from the start Janet had been assured that her claim to the estate of her grandfather was indisputable, and that the Grimwades faced a prison sentence for their trickery.

"So, thanks to all your efforts and to Johnny's mistake," said the glowing Janet, "everything is going to be all right. I'll be able to stay on at college. We'll have a bumper picnic to celebrate—and, Sally, how would you like a really super jigsaw just as a little token of my thanks?"

Sally laughingly pulled a face. "Thanks a lot, Janet—but I think I've had enough of jigsaws for quite a long time. But if you'd like to carry on with our fencing lessons we'd be awfully pleased."

A request after Janet's own heart—and one to which she willingly and eagerly agreed!

(End of this week's story.)

There will be another grand complete story featuring the Merry-makers in next Friday's **GIRLS' CRYSTAL**. Make certain of your copy by ordering it now.

THE WORST BOY AT THE CO-ED SCHOOL

(Continued from page 401.)

was overdue in reporting to Miss Chuffleigh and the matron.

Miss Chuffleigh, known throughout the school as "Choo-choo," greeted Paddy in her usual fussy and rather irritable manner. She commented on the fact that Paddy would have to work extra hard during the coming half of the term to make up for the work she had missed.

Paddy left her, grimaced, and went along to see matron, where the reception was more cheerful.

It did not take her long after that to pin up a note announcing the meeting that evening; then, as it was nearly six, she hurried up to Study B again to join Jo.

"Paddy, I've just met Jimmy," said Jo. "I sort of explained. He'll back you up, too, although he's not sure of all the other boys, but—"

"Good old Jimmy!" said Paddy warmly. "But what, Jo?"

"Frankly, Paddy," said Jo, "neither Jimmy nor the others think Conrad will turn up. You see," she added quickly, "they don't think he'll have the nerve to take—to take advantage of your promise."

Paddy hesitated, started to speak, changed her mind, and smiled.

"Let's get down to the stables, Jo," she said cheerfully. "We'll take things as they come. The team's the important thing, anyway!"

They went down through Girls

Side and out into the open, making their way towards the school harness-room, where the junior team always held their meetings. The door was open, and Jimmy Court's voice, raised, reached their ears.

"Ron, you shouldn't have done that. Not really fair to Paddy!"

Paddy and Jo appeared in the doorway. A hush fell over the gathering of boys and girls there seated in a circle on upturned buckets. One quick glance showed Paddy that Vincent Conrad was not present, and it was six o'clock. She looked at Ron Bullton, who, frowning, was facing Jimmy Court.

"Hallo everyone!" said Paddy cheerily, and took her seat on an upturned bucket. "What's not fair to me, Jimmy? 'Fraid I overheard the remark!"

Jimmy ruffled his fair hair in some embarrassment.

"Paddy, none of us think Vincent Conrad will turn up, anyway."

"Why not?" asked Paddy quietly.

"For two reasons!" It was Ron Bullton who broke in rather truculently. "Paddy, he's played one of his rotten tricks on you. It's pretty clear now. He's keen on riding. He wanted to be in this team. Right! Then I bet he planned the whole affair this afternoon!"

Paddy stared blankly at him.

"Ron, you're talking in riddles! I don't get it!"

"It is clear, yes," put in Isabella Rocco, the dark, beautiful South American girl. "He scares your horse, then stops it! He gets your grati-

tude, and gets the promise out of you to be in the team, yes!"

Paddy started. Such a possibility had not entered her mind for one moment. And immediately she found she could not accept it. No, it had not happened like that at all.

"And just to clinch matters," growled Ron Bullton, "I left a note in his study telling him we're wise to his rotten trick, and that if he has the nerve to show his face he'll get slung out on his neck!"

Someone murmured approval. The others were silent.

Paddy's eyes sparkled rather dangerously. Jimmy saw it.

"May sound a bit rough after your promise, Paddy," he said hastily, "but Ron was only thinking of you. I'm jolly sure. Look! Let's forget about it and start the big, shall we?"

"Agreed," grunted Ron Bullton. "It's past six already, and as that Outsider won't be turning up—"

"But," a voice broke in from the open doorway "that Outsider is turning up! In fact, he's here!"

Paddy stared. The others whirled in amazement.

In the doorway, leaning against the post, a twisted, half-mocking grin on his lips, stood Vincent Conrad. He straightened; looked at Paddy. The grin went. He eyed her straightly.

"I've kept a promise, Paddy Dare," he said. "What about you?"

Now will come the first clash! Paddy wants to give the Outsider a chance—but will the others allow her to do so? Be sure to read next week's chapters of this grand new school story.

JOY—THE GIRL WITH A 100 VOICES

(Continued from page 416.)

holding out a clown's hat to a giggling girl competitor.

Convinced she was entering an intelligence test, Hypatia opened the Greek book she had with her, and began to read it in order to pass the time.

Joy, slipping behind a caravan so as to keep an eye open for Hypatia's mother and Mrs. Gink, laughed delightedly as she peeped round the corner and saw the tall, studious Hypatia solemnly reading Greek, as if she were waiting to pass an important exam, instead of going in for an amateur clown competition.

The queue moved up and Hypatia moved with it. The clown chuckled as she passed through the doorway, still reading. He thought her studious pose was an amusing bit of play-acting.

"You look promising," he declared. "But let's see if you can answer the preliminary quiz."

"Messrs. Padgem and Potham and Pichme went to the river to bathe; Padgem and Potham were drowned. Who do you think was saved?"

"Pinch me," said Hypatia, who had never failed an intelligence test yet. "Owowowow!" she suddenly yelped, as a smiling girl trapeze artist on her right pinched her arm.

"Anything to oblige—pass on, please!" said the girl.

Hypatia, crimson and indignant, passed on, and immediately had a cloak flung round her, and white paint slapped on her face. A bright ginger wig was fixed on, and she was given a red eye and green ears. She only spoke once, and then, having her mouth smeared with paint, she did not try again.

It occurred to her, for she was no fool, that a mistake must have been made—unless this might be a part of the intelligence test.

Joy watched her enter the tent, and then hurried to greet Aunt Jemima and Mrs. Gink.

She saw them just outside the pay

desk, and dashed to greet them as they bought their tickets.

"Joy! Good gracious—where is Hypatia?" asked her aunt.

"She's gone for a test," said Joy.

"What kind of test?"

"A quiz—a sort of intelligence test," said Joy.

"Good gracious—no wonder she came here," said Aunt Jemima. "She will certainly win it. What a triumph. Dear me, I am indeed a proud mother."

Into the crowded tent they went. The band was playing, youngsters were cheering. The professional clowns had already made their exit, and now the ring-master rode in on a white horse.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he shouted. "We open this performance with something original and startlingly new. Amateur clowns! Opportunity has knocked for these happy people. Circus clowns at last! Just what they've always wanted to be. A real chance to be themselves—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hoorah!"

Into the circus arena suddenly came a yelling mob, and in the centre, carried along by the throng, was purple-robed Hypatia. She fell full length and was picked up.

"Oh, how ridiculous—how absurd! Look at that comic creature with the red wig and white face!" giggled Aunt Jemima.

Joy recognised her.

"Hypatia!" she called. "Ooooo!"

"H-Hypatia!" gasped Aunt Jemima weakly. "It cannot be."

"It certainly is. Give her a big hand," cheered Joy. "She's a scream. She's terrific."

Aunt Jemima went pale, and then coloured.

"Well, really—what—how amazing! But—but—"

It was astounding; it was incredible—but true! For five minutes the clowns jumped and sprang; Hypatia, trying to escape, collided with everyone, dropped her wig, picked it up and put it back the wrong way, and behaved in a riotously funny manner without meaning to.

The ring-master suddenly crossed over to her and held up her hand.

"The winner!" he shouted. "The funniest of the lot. And here is your prize. A funny face to amuse your friends—a mask with a magnificent moustache and moving eyebrows!"

"Hoorah!" cheered Joy. "Our Hypatia has won. Hoorah!"

She was delighted, and Aunt Jemima, smiling feebly, said that Hypatia had always been good at anything she put her mind to.

Joy had never enjoyed a circus more, and Aunt Jemima and Mrs. Gink enjoyed it, too. Hypatia, red-faced after removing the grease paint, seemed a little sullen, but the congratulations of others sitting nearby eased the sting a little.

"Whatever made you think of it?" Mrs. Gink asked her.

Before Hypatia could open her mouth to speak, Joy broke in—quickly. She wanted to prevent any awkward situations which might crop up now that everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves.

It was a moment's inspiration. As a matter of fact, she thought that the quiz was a serious one with lots of difficult questions, explained Joy. "However, it was good fun. And what a grand circus. I'm going to love this holiday with you and Hypatia, Aunt Jemima."

Hypatia said nothing; but she could not have denied that she had enjoyed the circus—yes, and some of the clowning, too. It was as though a new world had opened to her.

Joy side-glanced at her cousin now and again, and surprised a smile on her face—a smile which she hastily suppressed when she saw Joy's grin.

Joy leaned towards her.

"You wait and see," she whispered, her eyes dancing. "We're going to have a lot of fun together, Hypatia."

And provided Joy was in good voice at the right moment, so they would.

(End of this week's story.)

More fun and merriment with Joy, the ventriloquist, in another amusing story next week.