

ARTICLES FOR THE
UP-TO-DATE GIRL

Are You Reading **Pearl of Shiraz?** It will fascinate You

CHORUS MUSIC & WORDS of
MASKS & FACES

THE GIRLS' FAVOURITE



2^D

LOST IN THE DESERT!

A scene in JOAN INGLESANT'S
great romance of the East,
"PEARL OF SHIRAZ" — inside.

Start this Grand School and Mystery Tale Now:



The RIVALRY of MORCOVE



Tells of the mystery of the old mill near Morcove, and the strange influence it exerts over the destinies of Ethel Courtway and her staunch chum, Cyril Dudley

BY MARJORIE STANTON

The Dreamer.

FOR some little distance, Ethel picked her way towards the end of the cavern, and could feel the ground rising at every step she took. Once or twice, in years gone by, she had visited this place; but it had only been just to glance fearfully about and then hurriedly decamp, with a pleasing sensation of having perpetrated some exceedingly daring and hazardous deed.

Soon she arrived where a jagged wall of rock apparently barred all further progress, and she immediately set about to discover the whereabouts of the loose piece of rock her father had mentioned.

Faithfully following his instructions, she quickly located it, and it was with a strange thrill of expectation that she pulled it away and felt for the electric bell-push, which would summon Walter Douglas to open the secret doorway.

Her fingers searched about, and in her agitation she first missed it, but then, encountering it, she pressed with all her might.

The roar of the sea entering the cavern prevented her from hearing whether the bell rang or not, and the seconds ticking by, during which nothing happened, presented her with ample leisure to imagine that either the bell was out of order or else Mr. Douglas had quitted his retreat—or, worst still, the enemy, and not the inventor, would appear to confront her.

Suddenly a sharp, grating noise reached her ears. It came from somewhere on her left, and, gazing in that direction, she saw a thin streak of light cut into the darkness. It was shaped like the letter L, and slowly the upright stroke grew broader, and by this she knew that a door was surely opening.

Ethel had no time to marvel over the fact that such a contrivance existed in the apparently solid rock, for at that moment an anxious voice hailed her.

"Is that you, Mr. Courtway?"

"I am Mr. Courtway's daughter," she called out. "I bring a message from my father."

A dark figure flitted towards her, and a second later she was temporarily blinded by the vivid flash from an electric-torch he directed upon her face.

"Sorry," she heard him say, "but I have to take every precaution. You see, I have never met you, although your father has often mentioned you to me. Excuse me if I ask for some trifling proof of your identity."

Fortunately, Ethel wore a locket in which was enclosed a portrait of her father and mother. She slipped it off her neck, and held it out for him to gaze at.

While he was examining it, she had time to note that Walter Douglas was a kindly-looking man of about fifty, rather shabbily dressed, but with the cultured air of a student marked in every line of his delicately cut features.

"Where is your father, Miss Courtway?" he asked, handing her back the locket.

"At a place called Winchmoor Down. He is stopping with my aunt. He has met with an accident, and that is why I am here."

"Dear me! I'm sorry to hear that."

"I have much to tell you," said Ethel.

"No doubt! No doubt! Please follow me. I'm afraid it's fearfully dusty and dirty inside. The dust of ages, you know. This retreat has not been used, I fancy, since the days of the smugglers. Those old smugglers were very ingenious men. This secret door, for instance. Solid iron, you will observe, on the inside, with rocks riveted on the other side so as to be uniform with its surroundings. Quite interesting, isn't it?"

At any other time Ethel would have conjured up a fair amount of interest in this relic of the past, but at the present moment she was not at all disposed to linger over the contrivance.

Mr. Douglas, however, could never resist an opportunity of imparting information, and he held forth very eloquently on the construction of the secret door.

Ethel's brisk nature grew impatient under these leisurely proceedings, and she somewhat abruptly brought him back from his eighteenth-century ruminations.

"The men who are after your invention are back at Morcove," she told him.

Mr. Douglas gave a start, and closed the door rather precipitately.

"The scoundrels!" he muttered.

"Quite so!" said Ethel. "I have a good deal to tell you, also I must tell it quickly, and then get away from here. Have you any room where we can talk?"

Mr. Douglas nodded, and proceeded to



BEGIN HERE.

ETHEL COURTWAY is the head girl of Morcove school, and her boy friend is CYRIL DUDLEY, who once occupied the position of secretary to Ethel's father. He was dismissed in disgrace, but later saved him. Ethel learns that her father has enemies, and later discovers that the reason is that Mr. Courtway is financing an inventor, who has his workshop in a secret cave in the old mill in the locality near Morcove. Ethel, hearing a letter to the inventor, is tracked by her father's enemies, but the letter has previously been stolen from her by a spy. The three men implore her in the very cave she wishes to reach, and when the tide comes up, leave her.

(Now commence this week's instalment.)

lead her along a winding passage, cut into the solid rock.

"It would be fatal if they were to get here now," he muttered. "My invention is completed. Yes, the dream of my life is accomplished. I will show it you before you go. You are still at school, I believe? Chemistry? Are you interested in it?" He rambled on without waiting for Ethel to reply. "My invention, in reality, savours somewhat of a fluke. Years back I was experimenting with a certain metal, and I did what is done fairly often in chemistry—I found out another. I discovered that this metal, in combination with oxygen, acted upon by certain metals, developed extraordinary electrical energy. It was this way!"

Ethel, however, found more to interest her in her surroundings than these technical details, and it is to be feared that she paid little attention to the cascade flow of words that fell from her companion's lips.

This mysterious passage—how wonderful it was! She could feel they were ascending. At times there were short flights of steps that, without doubt, had been cut in the rock by human hands. Of course, it might happen that one such step might be formed by Nature, but not ten dozen or more.

Once or twice they encountered branch turnings. Ethel longed to ask questions concerning these, but she did not like to interrupt Mr. Douglas.

"And so you see, Miss Courtway," observed the inventor, "how all this will revolutionise things."

"My father says it will make your fortune," said Ethel.

"Possibly," he replied indifferently. "I believe it has a certain market value. That is, of course, nothing compared to its scientific value."

"Haven't you found it very lonely in this gloomy place?"

"Lonely? Outside my laboratory—yes; not inside. I lose all count of time there. We shall reach it very shortly now. By the way, you spoke of your father meeting with an accident. It really was an accident, I suppose? I mean whatever happened wasn't deliberately done by those men?"

"Oh, no! He walked across the ice and it gave way."

Mr. Douglas made sympathetic marmurs.

At this point he stopped short and pressed some sort of spring in the wall. Then he pushed hard, and a door grated open.

"My laboratory," he announced.

It was a large oblong cell illuminated by some electrical contrivance. In the centre was a roughly constructed table, piled with books, manuscripts, and writing materials, the latter consisting of a small bottle of ink, a couple of pens, and a diminutive piece of blotting-paper, which looked as if it had absorbed all the ink in which it was capable.

A sort of workshop-bench near the wall was covered with what looked like bits of

apparatus which wanted fitting together. There were tools of various kinds, wire, sealing-wax in abundance, and prominent among the latter a galvanic battery. About a quarter of the space was covered by a green-baize cloth, concealing something which stood some eighteen inches high.

Round the bench was a heap of strips of brass, portions of wire, chips and splinters of wood, and quite a heap of fine yellow dust, showing that the file had been actively at work.

Mr. Douglas made a gesture towards the dried portion of the bench, and Ethel knew his lips were framing the words: "My invention!" Therefore she hastily intervened with rapidly told details of her experience on the journey here from Winchmore Down.

The inventor's attention soon became absorbed in the recital, and he heard her through without the slightest slackening of interest.

At the conclusion he shrugged his shoulders and gave vent to a slight sigh.

"Ah, Miss Courtney!" he said, "While I, and such as I, dream through life, you and your like get on with the business. I envy you your pluck and daring and boundless energy. You are your father's true daughter, if I am any judge of character. And now in what way can I serve you? You doubtless wish to get in touch with your friend—to discover whether he has fallen into the clutches of those scoundrels. I had better come with you—"

"No, no!" cried Ethel. "That would be playing into their hands. The very thing they want is to entice you into the open. You must remain here to guard your invention. That, I know, would be my father's wish. I have very little fear about Cyril's safety, for he is well able to take care of himself.

"However," she continued, "he must be terribly anxious about me, and so I must seek him out at once. I intend to get away from this place by the secret exit in the mill. Then I shall go straight to my school and write to my father all that has happened. What message shall I send him from you, Mr. Douglas?"

"Tell him"—his eyes lit up—"that the invention is complete and successful in every detail. Tell him that I will remain here until I receive word from him. That is all, I think."

"And money—and food?" asked Ethel. "Ah, how practical you are, Miss Courtney!" He smiled, and his smile was singularly childlike. "My larder is very low—just a few tins of potted stuff. Thank goodness I am not blessed with a huge appetite!"

"Cyril and I will get some provisions to you to-night," Ethel assured him. "And now I will say 'au revoir.' One minute!" She paused as they shook hands. "If you'd really care to show me your invention—"

Mr. Douglas broke into a happy laugh. "Why, certainly!" he began, moving towards the bench. Then he wheeled round. "No," he muttered, "your time is too valuable to waste here. Some other time, under less trying circumstances, you shall see it. Thank you for your interest; it is very kind. Still, I think it would be wiser not to linger."

Ethel knew it caused him some disappointment to say this, and her liking for him increased in consequence. Curious, she ruminated, that so clever a man—as he undoubtedly was—should be so simple.

"I will guide you part of the way," he said.

And taking the electric torch he saw her as far as the step which led up to the trap-door in the mill. There they parted.

Laid by the Heels.

Once more Ethel stood in the old tumble-down mill.

Consulting her wrist-watch, she saw it was just about noon. She was surprised it was no later, for she seemed to have been in those dark and gloomy underground places for hours.

She tapped to the door and peeped out across the paved yard in the direction of the Bramble's habitation. All seemed perfectly

quiet, and she was about to make a dash for it when of a sudden she caught sight of two forms stealthily creeping towards where she stood.

They were bent almost double, and their faces were directed towards the cottage, as if they feared some attack from that quarter. But she knew them at once. They were the two companions of the lantern-jawed man.

Ethel shrank back into the shadow of the doorway, not that that was much use, for directly they entered the mill they would be certain to spot her. As she crouched there her hands groped for some sort of weapon, but all her fingers encountered was an old sack.

"As much use as a paper bag," she bitterly reflected.

In another moment they would be here. Ah! What was that?

The noise that suddenly broke out was indescribable. It was a medley of sound suggestive of a dog and cat fight. Indeed, it was such an amazing hubbub that Ethel half feared to gaze forth.

Then she looked.

A mass of waving arms, struggling legs, and writhing bodies met her gaze, all so mixed up together that for the moment she could not determine how many the combatants numbered. The figure of a woman hovering on the outskirts of the melee she instantly recognised as old Mrs. Bramble.

Then Ethel understood. The two men had

took advantage of his momentary distraction to smite him with such deadly precision that the fellow rolled over like a log and lay still.

"Ha!" roared old Bramble, staggering across the yard to where the sack-encased gentleman was choking and wheezing and vainly endeavouring to get free. "That's a fair, proper way to treat the likes of you!"

So saying, he gripped him by the arms, slung him off his feet, and shot him past Ethel into the mill. Then he pulled the door to, and mopped his forehead.

"'Twas you that popped that there sack over 'im—hey, young lady?" he asked.

"Yes, Mr. Bramble," replied Ethel.

He gazed at her keenly on hearing her pronounce his name.

"You're a Morcovce lassie, surely," he mumbled. Then as recognition slowly dawned, he added: "Ay, ay, we've met afore. 'Twas you and that young fellow wot called with that there cock-and-bull story, way back in November. Well—"

"Mr. Bramble! Bramble!" shrieked his wife. "T'other one be a-movin'. Come 'ee hece as once."

Mr. Bramble strode over to her side.

"Fetch a yard o' good rope, woman," he ordered, "and then get the cart ready to take 'em over to the police-station. I'll learn 'em to trespass and assault!"

Mr. Bramble darted away, and, quickly returning with about six yards of rope, her husband bound the captive so that he bore a



Suddenly a sharp, grating noise reached Ethel's ears, and she saw a thin shaft of light cut into the darkness. Slowly it grew broader, and by this she knew that a door was surely opening.

been observed by the Brambles, and the Brambles had instantly sallied forth to tackle the invaders of their territory.

With what result? Extremely difficult to say for the moment.

Bramble was big and strong, but then he was old, and besides, it was two against one, for Mrs. Bramble—Ethel now saw she was armed with a stout stick—kept her distance, and her form of assistance was to scold discordant shrieks for the police.

Ah, Bramble was down! In falling, however, he sent one of his assailants staggering backwards until he too dropped almost against the steps of the mill, a few feet from where Ethel stood.

Ethel was seized with a brilliant inspiration. She found she had not relaxed her hold of the sack. Pulling it open to the fullest extent of the string, she darted upon the man before he could regain his feet, and enveloped his head in the floppy sack. Then she pulled the string tight.

The smothered bellow of consternation from the imprisoned warrior brought hostilities to an abrupt conclusion. His companion, sprawling on the top of old Bru cast a startled backward glance, and B-

close resemblance to an Egyptian mummy. "So much for 'im," mumbled Bramble.

"Now for t' other Johnny."

With Ethel following at his heels, he entered the mill, and, seizing the other man, who had only just got free from the sack and was in a half-blinded and choking condition through its contents of dust and particles of saw, he treated him to the same kind attention.

"And now," said Bramble, turning to Ethel, "I've got a bit o' leisure to attend to you. What are you a-doin' in these parts? Your school 'as broken up, and won't be back till the twentieth. Reckon you being here's a bit funny!"

"Yes," Ethel was forced to admit, "I suppose it does seem funny. Still, as it's turned out, it's rather lucky for you I was

there—true!" shrilled Mrs. Bramble doorway.

"'Twas this girl who sack over the chap's head. I saw 'er likely enough 'twas these two afore, and not the Morcovce 'fore this young lady, when a young man, say as a furniture? She did



(Continued from previous page.)

so, and seems to me she spoke the truth, although we didn't none of us believe her, and—"

This and much more remarked Mrs. Bramble, redoubling her husband to a gloomy silence, and giving Ethel ample opportunity to consider this new turn of fortune.

The capture of these men certainly cleared the air in a most unexpected fashion; not only from her own point of view, but from the point of view of the school. Ethel was quick to grasp the fact that Mrs. Bramble ruled the roost, and her opinion that the Morcove girls were not responsible for the smashing-up of their furniture was pretty certain to nip in the bud the legal proceedings her husband had threatened to take.

But the ringleader was still at large, and while he remained free, danger still threatened. For all the polite manners of the lantern-jawed man, Ethel was well aware that his was a nature that would stick at nothing to gain his ends, and the realisation of this made her worried and anxious about Cyril's safety.

Doubtless at this very moment, and probably assisted by Maurice Thorne, he was tracking Cyril, and the consequences might well be very serious for her chum.

One Mystery Cleared.

ON a desolate stretch of snow-covered road that twisted and turned—now east, now west, but always leading back into the direction of Morcove, walked Cyril Dudley and Maurice Thorne.

Since early morning they had been on the tramp, and now their steps were lagging as they ploughed ankle-deep through the half-melted snow. They exchanged no words, but every now and again Maurice shot a nervous glance at Cyril's grim, set face, and the chill that went down Thorne's spine was not altogether due to the sharp north-east wind.

The fact was that Thorne's nerves had been badly on edge for the last hour—to be exact, ever since they had paid that visit to the little wayside station where Ethel, the previous morning, had alighted.

Neither Cyril nor Maurice, however, knew this important fact.

On inquiring at the station, the official in charge had pooh-poohed the mere notion of anyone getting out from a train that was not meant to stop there. He seemed to take a suggestion as a sort of slight on himself, and the railway he represented to himself, with Ethel's tip still jingling in his pocket, held his tongue, and Cyril and Maurice started on their journey back to Morcove no wiser than when they set out.

"She must have got out there," mumbled Maurice over and over again, hoping by constant repetition of the statement to convince his companion that Ethel's disappearance was in no way due to the machinations of his erstwhile companions.

Cyril's only reply was to glance at him with lowering brows and compressed lips, signs which Maurice construed to be extreme uneasiness on the part of himself.

"What shall we do when we get back to Morcove?" muttered Maurice, with uncomfortable curiosity.

"Wait and see!" was the ominous answer. Whereupon Maurice, too, relaxed into a gloomy silence, and in this fashion "wended their way to the way to the house."

Not a soul did they meet until "he" came in sight, and then, at the fane which led towards the sea, a solitary figure ambled along.

Cyril halted.

"Looks like a gipsy."

"Worth while"

eagerly.

Cyril hesitated.

"Yes, maybe it is," he replied. They forced their aching limbs into a brisker pace, and eventually caught up with the figure which, had they but known it, was none other than that of the man Banyard, who had given Ethel the lift in the caravan.

"So!" called out Cyril. "You don't happen to have met a young lady tramping about these parts, do you?" The man's eyes flickered with momentary excitement. For the last hour or so he and his wife had been wandering about Morcove on the look-out for strangers, with a view to putting cautious questions as to their knowledge of an individual named Thorne. No luck having attended their efforts, they had returned disconsolately to the caravan.

"Young lady?" repeated the man. "Well, someow I 'ave some sort of recollection of seeing one."

"What was she like?" cried Cyril eagerly. The man shook his head, as if in perplexity. "My wife might remember," he mumbled.

"Where is your wife?"

"In the caravan, young maister. You come along o' me. 'Tis only a step from here."

Soon the caravan came in sight, and in response to a hoarse shout from the man, Mrs. Banyard came to the door.

"Two young gents inquiring about a young lady. You seed'd her nearer than I did."

Mrs. Banyard clutched the valuable letter concealed in her dress.

"Yes, I seed'd her," she said. "I'll give you half a crown if you'll tell me."

Mrs. Banyard had a grim smile as she noted Thorne's anxiety. This was going to be a profitable business, she reckoned.

"I suppose," she said, "you don't happen to know anyone of the name o' Thorne?"

"Why, that's my name!" ejaculated Mrs. Banyard suddenly became very communicative, if not exactly very truthful.

ON SALE

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2nd.

The Schoolgirls' Own Library No. 4

THE MYSTERY GIRL of MORCOVE



A NEW AND ORIGINAL STORY OF
GHOUL MYSTERY & ADVENTURE
AT MORCOVE.

ORDER YOUR COPY AT ONCE

"A young lady, somewhere between seventeen and eighteen, stopped here this morning and rested a while," she said. "After she'd gone we found she'd left a letter behind. P'raps you'd like to have that letter?"

"Rather!" cried Cyril and Maurice together.

Mrs. Banyard produced it. "Yes, yes, I don't know," she mumbled. "It don't seem o'w seen right to me to give you her property. We're poor, we are, but we like to do the right thing."

"That's so," chimed in her husband. "We ought to keep the letter in case she comes back for it."

Maurice drew Cyril on one side. "There's some hanky-panky business going on here," he whispered. "Strikes me they didn't get hold of that letter in the way they say. A certain Thorne that we both know would pay a good round sum for the letter. Any good bargaining?"

"I don't know, I haven't too much money on me, but I don't suppose you have. If it wasn't for the fact that I want to find where Ethel has got to, I'd smash up their caravan. There's another possibility," added Cyril, with gathering wrath. "They may have forced that letter out of Ethel, or else have stolen it. I must have that letter, and I must find it."

"Collar hold of the man," suggested Maurice. "I'll stand by and help. I'm going to play the game with you, Cyril, in future. Threaten to take 'im to the police—bluff him you're in earnest."

"No need to bluff, I am in earnest," muttered Cyril. And, aiming the action to the word, he strode up to the unsuspecting Banyard and gripped him by the arm.

"If your wife doesn't give up that letter," he said sternly, "you're coming with me to the police-station."

Banyard began to wriggle, but Maurice intervening, the man subsided into muttered whines of protest.

His wife, however, darted swiftly to where their horse stood, scrambled on his back, urged it into a gallop, and sped off down the lane.

"Quick! After her!" shouted Cyril, and thrusting the man from him he and Maurice rushed in pursuit.

The horse was old, but for all that it was wanted a bit of catching. Probably Mrs. Banyard would have made good her escape had not a cart suddenly cut across her line of flight, causing the horse to shy wildly and send its rider spinning to the earth.

Cyril and Maurice came running full tilt to the scene of the catastrophe, and at that moment one of the occupants of the cart gave a cry of recognition.

"Cyril! Cyril!"

It was Ethel, for the cart was none other than Mr. Bramble's on its way back from the police-station, where the two prisoners had been deposited.

Ethel jumped down and ran over to where the woman lay in a huddled heap on the ground.

"Is she badly hurt?" she asked anxiously. "Stunned, I fancy," mumbled Maurice Thorne.

Ethel turned on Maurice in surprise. Up to that moment she had not recognised him. "You here?" she ejaculated.

"Yes, yes," said Cyril hurriedly. "I'll tell you all about it presently. I met Thorne—"

"Look here," cut in Maurice, with a sort of a gulp. "It may help matters if—if she knows that—that I'm your brother."

Ethel forgot everything in her intense amazement at this extraordinary and startling announcement.

"You—Cyril's brother?" she ejaculated. But though she addressed Maurice, she looked at Cyril.

"Yes," said Cyril slowly, "it's true, Ethel, Maurice, for once, speaks the truth!"

Maurice Thorne—Cyril's brother! Is this a new clue to the mystery that surrounds Cyril, and if so, will its discovery lead him to tell the whole of his story to Ethel? There are more surprises in store for you in next week's chapters of this enthralling school and mystery story. Don't miss them.