

3 COMPLETE STORIES AND OTHER FINE FEATURES WITHIN

# The Schoolgirl

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Every Saturday  
INCORPORATING  
SCHOOLDAYS

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## TING GIVES THE ALARM!

An incident from this week's long complete Cliff House School Story—"THE GIRL WHO CAME BETWEEN"

**BEGINNING a New Series of Long Complete Stories Featuring  
Barbara Redfern & Co. of Cliff House School**

# The GIRL who Came Between



By  
**HILDA RICHARDS**



## A Storm in a Teacup

"WELL, I'm ready," Mabel Lynn announced briskly, drawing on her gloves. "And you're ready, Bessie! But where's that duffer Babs?"

And she looked at the door of Study No. 4 in the Fourth Form passage at Cliff House School, as if expecting that to supply the answer.

Bessie Bunter, renowned as the fattest and the hungriest girl at Cliff House, did not reply. Fully dressed she was, but she seemed to have no eyes and no ears for anyone or anything except the pathetic little brown bundle which lay curled up in a basket in front of the fire.

The brown bundle was her pet, Ting-aling, a Pekingese of quite considerable fame, to which Bessie was as greatly attached as she was to her study chums, Barbara Redfern and Mabel Lynn.

"Oh crumbs!" she muttered now. "You dud-don't think he's gig-going to die, Mabs?"

"Of course not, goose! He's just got a chill!"

"But his eyes," Bessie distressfully replied. "Oh dud-dear, I dud-don't like the way he looks at me. And his nose, Mabs—it's so hot. And he's shivering again—just as he was lul-last night!"

Quite a quiver there was in Bessie's reed-like voice. And more than a hint of tears on the eyelids behind her thick-lensed glasses, without which she was almost helpless.

Rather like an anxious hen hovering over an ailing chicken Bessie appeared at that moment, as she stooped over the basket in which Ting-aling was huddled, looking up at her with a pair

of brown, shoe-button eyes that expressed mingled sorrow and affection.

Very precious indeed was Ting-aling to Bessie Bunter, and, what was more, Ting-aling knew that. The look on his little face at that moment would have melted a heart of stone.

No doubt about it, Ting-aling was not his usual self. Bessie, always ready to assume the role of tragedy queen, believed the worst. The slightest ailment from which Ting-aling ever suffered was immediately magnified into a sinister disease of the most



**T**HIS is Mabel Lynn, otherwise Mabs, about whom you will read in this new series of Cliff House stories. Mabel belongs to the Fourth Form and shares Study 4 with Barbara Redfern, her best chum, and Bessie Bunter. Mabs and Babs have always been such inseparables that a rift in their friendship is all the more surprising and grievous. And it is all caused by one girl—a girl who has her own ends to gain!

gigantic proportions by his fond mistress, though probably it was nothing more serious than a cold or a "snuffle."

Bessie forgot what the rest of the school always remembered, however—that Ting-aling, if he was a dog, was the most intelligent little animal in the Pets' House, and was, to boot, a superb actor.

Almost human in his understanding of humans was Ting-aling, and positively uncanny in his comprehension of his mistress' simple character. No artful child ever had the same power to twist a doting mother round its little finger as Ting-aling had to coil his mistress in his dainty silken paw.

Sadly now he looked at her, listlessly but forgivingly extended one feeble paw, showing a pink slip of tongue at one corner of his mouth at the same time. Bessie felt her heart breaking.

"Oh, Mum-Mabs, l!-look at him! Ting!" she cried. "Ting, old chap! Ting, my lovely old angel—"

Ting snuffled and sniffed.

"Don't worry, old Bessiekins," Mabs said. "Shush now, don't cry! The little imp will be as right as rain as soon as the vet has given him a dose of medicine. But where is Babs?"

"Oh crumbs, you know, we'd better hurry!" Bessie said frantically. "Sus-supposing he dud-dies in my arms?"

Mabs smothered an inward smile. She cocked a glance at Ting again. Ting saw it. If he knew Bessie, he also knew Mabs, and he knew that it was of no earthly use putting on airs with her. Did he understand or was it just an accident that one brown eye artfully closed?

Mabs shook her head disapprovingly, whereat Ting assumed his most innocent expression once more. Mabs, at least, did not share Bessie's worry, though, of course, it was only right to be sympathetic when Bessie herself was so terribly upset.

Truth to tell, Mabs was more concerned about Babs' mysterious absence than about Ting-aling. Where had the girl gone? She had not seen Babs since dinner.

Mabs was rather anxious. For Holland's Stores in Courtfield closed at

six o'clock. In the window of Holland's Stores was a simply marvellous cherry-coloured taffeta evening gown, which Mabs had had her eye on for quite a time.

She had arranged that afternoon, after depositing Ting-a-ling with the Friar-dale vet, to go on with Babs to Courtfield just to have another look at it and try it on, and if it suited her, to buy it out of the remittance she had received from her detective cousin, Austin Lynn, that morning.

In the matter of choosing clothes for herself, however, Mabs, singularly talented in other directions, was hesitant, but she placed an almost pathetic reliance upon Babs' instinct.

Babs had that uncanny knack of knowing at once whether a thing suited or did not suit her; she valued beyond price Babs' judgment. Tempted as she was by the model in Holland's, she would sooner have thought of buying herself a car than of buying the frock without Babs to advise her.

And Babs had promised—that morning—to come to Holland's Stores with her. They were going with Bessie, who

was to deposit Ting-a-ling at the Friar-dale vet's on the way.

But where was Babs? Time was growing short.

"Oh bother!" Mabs said, rather impatiently, and then looked alertly as a step sounded outside the door. But her face fell next moment when the door opened and in came the unpopular Sarah Harrigan, the duty prefect for the day.

"Is Barbara here?" she asked; and then, spotting Ting-a-ling, frowned. "Bessie, who brought that dog into this room?"

"Oh crumbs! I dud-don't know! I wouldn't dud-dream of bringing a dog into school," Bessie stammered flusteredly. "Not even if he is dying, you know! Is—is there a dog in the room?"

And she stared round in any direction by that of Ting-a-ling's, while Sarah frowned ferociously.

"Dud did you bring a dog into the study, Mabs?"

Sarah's eyes glinted.

"Bessie, don't try to be a bigger idiot than you really are: You know perfectly well that you brought the dog

into the school, because it's your own dog. Bringing dogs into the school is against the rules!"

"Oh crumbs! I—I fuf-forgot!" Bessie gasped.

"Then take fifty lines to help your memory!" Sarah snapped. "And take another fifty for bringing that animal into school without permission. Meantime, get it out of here as soon as you can. Mabel, please tell Barbara Redfern when you see her that as I am coming off duty at seven o'clock to-night, I shall want the Junior School impositions by six!"

"Yes!" muttered Mabs.

The door slammed behind Sarah. Mabs exasperatedly glanced at the clock. Bessie, with an expression of extreme indignation, picked up Ting-a-ling and cuddled him.

"Diddums want his little mummy, then?" she asked fondly. "Did nasty horrid prefect want my little Ting to be turned out? Blow Sarah Harrigan!" she exclaimed valiantly. "Don't you take any notice of her, Ting. She's just a horrid old cat!" And then she swept round with a guilty jump as the door opened again. "Oh, really, Sarah, it wasn't me who said that!" she yelped. And, when she beheld the newcomer was not Sarah but Barbara Redfern herself: "Oh, really, Babs, you might have told me it was you!"

Babs smiled. Mabs, however, clicked her tongue.

"Goodness, what a time you've been!" she exclaimed. "And why haven't you got your coat and hat on? The next bus goes in ten minutes, and if we don't catch that we shall be late at the stores!"

Babs paused. She glanced quickly at her chum.

"I'm sorry, Mabs!"

"That's all right. But buck up and get ready, old thing!"

"I mean, I—I'm sorry I can't come," Babs said.

"Eh?"

"I can't come!"

Babs shook her chestnut curls.

"But—but why? What's up, Babs?"

"Well, I—I've just had this from my father." And Babs held up a letter.

There's a new girl coming to the school to-day—the daughter of an old friend of his; girl named Clarice Dyson."

"Well?" Mabs questioned.

"And—daddy's written to ask me if I'll make a point of meeting her when she arrives. You see, she's only coming here for a short time—a sort of temporary scholar while her father is abroad. I suppose daddy feels some responsibility for her, because it was he who suggested that her father should park her at Cliff House until he came back."

"Mabs' face fell.

"Then—then you won't be coming to Courtfield?"

"I'm sorry, old thing! Can't we leave it?"

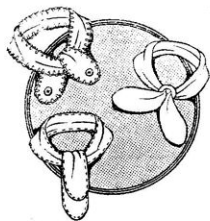
"Yes. But, look here, you know, I can't leave Ting!" Bessie broke out, in alarm.

"But how can we leave it?"

Mabs looked perturbed.

Perhaps it was natural in the circumstances, for Mabs had been in fear and trembling, ever since she had seen that frock in Courtfield, that it might be snapped up before she had saved sufficient money to purchase it. She had been looking forward with such eager anticipation to the trip, too; it wasn't every day that one saw a frock like the cherry-coloured taffeta

"Supposing the thing's gone?" she



## ALL THE SAME— YET DIFFERENT

These three collars can be made from one pattern. It's the decorative stitching that makes the difference.

ARE you one of those girls who always think collars are the most difficult things in dress-making? There's the curve to the inner side of the neckline, and the two ends must match, and—

Yes, I know, they have many problems. But these collars I have designed for you just haven't!

The three are made from a straight strip of material, and, although the three all look different, actually they are all made from exactly the same pattern.

To make one of these pretty collars you'll require a strip of material measuring only 24 in. by 3 in. That's little enough, isn't it? So I hope you'll decide to make all three, then you can ring the changes on your frock.

### NO CUTTING OUT

There's no cutting out or shaping required to these collars, you will be thrilled to know, only the ends have to be rounded off.

Then for the top style you must button-hole-stitch all round the strip of material in any brightly coloured silk or wool.

Complete the trimming with two bright buttons, one at each end.

The collar underneath would look better in double material, I think. The shape is just the same as for the first, but in sewing you must turn in the raw edges all the way round.

A running-stitch is all the sewing required—and it's the trimming, too!

The all-white collar is simplicity itself, also.

Use double material for this one, too, please. Place the two pieces

together—wrong side outwards—and then running-stitch around. Turn inside out, and press.

### THREE WAYS TO WEAR THEM

Now you can look at the picture again and decide which way you'll wear your collar.

The top one has the ends looped and crossed.

The second one has the ends folded stock-wise, so that you can pin a brooch or mascot on the front.

The all-white one has the ends simply pulled through a white bone curtain ring.

And so you have a variety of three collars in one.

### COLOUR HARMONY

If you have a particular frock in mind when making these collars you must remember to choose embroidery wool or silk that will either harmonise or contrast with that frock.

For example, even if you may have a length of purple wool I wouldn't like to see the collar embroidered with this, if it is to be worn over a yellow or brown frock.

Red wool or navy always looks well with a navy frock.

Green trimming looks its best with a green or brown frock. And the all-white collar would look charming on a simple black, brown, or navy frock.

And remember you'll only require half a yard of some really inexpensive material to make all three. Then by wearing them in turn—you'll give the impression of having three frocks to everyone else's one!



**FEELING** suddenly very lonely and out of it all, Mabs slipped from the tuckshop. She could not bear to see Babs so friendly with Clarice—when she knew what Clarice was really like!

asked apprehensively. "Oh, no, Babs! We shan't be all that long away."

But Babs bit her lip. "Well, daddy has made rather a point of my meeting her. And—and she'll be rather new and strange, you know. She's quite a nice girl, really. You'll like her ever so. Do you mind very much, Mabs?"

Mabs did mind, very much. Mabs had worked herself up to a crescendo of excitement about that frock. Nothing else in the wide world mattered to Mabs at the moment except the frock, and she had been so relying on Babs to help her make up her mind.

She stared in dismay for a moment at her apologetic leader, then bit her lip. Not as a rule was Mabs unreasonable, but her disappointment was heavy. She just couldn't help herself from bursting out:

"Well, if you don't want to come, of course—"

"Oh, Mabs you know it's not that! I—I'd love to come!"

"Then why not?" Mabs asked. "Clarice Dyson won't pine away till you come back, will she? Still, if you prefer to put her before me—"

Rash words. Angry words. Mabs realised it as soon as they left her lips. She coloured furiously at her own unfairness, but the very fact that she had put herself in the wrong only added to her sense of injury and stiffened her pride.

Babs looked quite startled.

"But, Mabs—"

"Anyway, I'm going!" Mabs replied. "I'm not going to risk that frock being snatched up before I've tried it on. I wouldn't have waited if I'd known!"

she added. "We've almost lost the bus as it is. Bessie, are you ready?"

"Y-yes, of course. But Babs—"

"Oh, please, Bessie—" Babs broke out.

"But—"

"Oh, come on!" Mabs cried. "We've wasted enough time. Bye-bye, Babs!" she added, with a little constraint.

"Bye-bye, old thing!" Babs returned. But she sighed a little as Mabs went out, followed by the fluttering Bessie, anxious for the safety of her pet.

Poor Mabs! How impetuous she could be at times! It was rather rough on her, of course, and, really, she would dearly have loved to go with her best of chums.

But she could hardly ignore her father's wish. Not often was it that Mr. Redfern asked any favour of her, and he had been so insistent in his letter that she should meet Clarice Dyson.

It must have been two years ago since she had met Clarice, pretty, carefree, and careless; irresistibly appealing, but rather a handful, for all that. She wondered if the interim had wrought many changes in her character.

She gathered, reading between the lines of her father's letter, that it had not.

Aubrey Dyson, her father's oldest friend, was apparently a bit worried about her. An urgent business call had taken him abroad for an engagement that was likely to last several weeks. He had been worried about leaving Clarice to her own devices until Mr. Redfern had suggested that Cliff House would be an excellent establishment in which she might remain until his return.

Apparently, Mr. Redfern, having

made that suggestion, felt some responsibility in the matter, and was now looking to Babs to make things easy for the new arrival.

Well, that was all right. But it worried Babs just a little that she should have had to disappoint Mabs to carry out her father's wish.

Still, if Mabs bought the frock, everything would be all sunshine and serenity again. Mabs was incapable of keeping up a paddy for any length of time, especially with her.

With another sigh, Babs sat down. She wondered whether she should trip down to the gates to welcome the new arrival; and then, remembering she had lines to get off, took a seat by the window—a point of vantage which gave her a full view of the gates and anyone who came through them.

Rather wearily she drew ink, paper, and pen towards her; but before she had started, a knock came at the door.

"Hallo, Babs, all alone?" Jemima Carstairs cheerfully asked. "Pushing the old pen, and all that—what? 'Scuse the intrusion, old Spartan, but Primmy sent me along with a merry old message that she'd like to see you."

"Oh!" Babs said. "In her study?"

"Where else, forsooth?" Jemima grinned amiably. "In the old sanctum itself. Better stagger along, old thing."

"Thanks!"

And Babs rose, rather wondering. Straight to Miss Prinrose's study she went, and, after receiving the headmistress' kindly "Come in!" to her knock, pushed the door open.

"Babs!" a delighted voice assailed her at once.

Babs started. A girl had turned from the headmistress' desk to meet her—

girl uncommonly pretty, who turned now, with flushed face and sparkling blue eyes, to the leader of the Fourth.

Babs stared, and then stared again.

"Why, Clarice?" she joyfully cried.

"So you've come!"

"Clarry, to you!" Clarice Dyson smiled.

"Clarry to all my friends! Well, well! It is you, then, Babs!

Gracious me, haven't you grown! You know, I've been dying to meet you—just dying!" she added gleefully, and, impulsively stepping forward, took both Babs' hands in hers, and shook them with such delighted heartiness that Babs gasped for breath.

"Well, well! Pleased to see me?"

"Oh, awfully!"

"Jolly, isn't it?" Clarice gurgled.

"I say, isn't this a lovely school? You know, I'd no idea when poppa said he was going to send me to Cliff House that it was such a fine place as this!

Gee-whiz! I bet you have jolly good times here—eh, Babs? And I'm going to have one, too!"

"Rather!" If I like it ever so much, I'm going to ask poppa, when he comes back, to let me stay! Won't that be jolly?"

Babs laughed again. The same old Clarice! Warmly impetuous, just sweeping gaily through life, and carrying, it seemed, everyone else with her on her bubbling current!

A bit of a harum-scarum, her father had said in his letter; a bit of a wild one. But she was just utterly irresistible; just like a lovely breath of fresh air. The affection that Babs had formed for her those two years ago welled upmost at once.

"Well," Miss Primrose smiled, "once you've conquered your exuberance, Clarice, I would like to speak to Barbara. I'm pleased," she added, "to see that you're such friends. Clarice, would you mind waiting in the room next door while I speak to Barbara. Just for a few minutes. Barbara will join you later."

Clarice laughed. With a gay wave of a gloved hand to Babs, she went out. The door of the waiting-room next door opened and closed.

"Well, Barbara," Miss Primrose coughed, "I gather that you know all about Clarice."

"Yes, Miss Primrose."

"I understand that your father is her father's friend—that it is upon his recommendation that she has come here. She is, as you may know, only with us until the end of the term, her father deeming it best that she should be in safe hands until his return. I have had a long telephone conversation with Mr. Dyson, Barbara, and I must admit that I feel just the faintest of qualms. I gather that Clarice does not take kindly to discipline."

Babs stared a little.

"She is an impetuous girl," Miss Primrose went on. "Quite nice, but not—"

"Barbara, it is not my policy, as you know, to form any opinion of any girl's character until it is proved. She requires, I gather, quite a good deal of looking after, and—well, since she will only be with us a short while, I have decided, as you are her friend, to put her into your study. Now, won't you mind that?"

"Good gracious, of course not!" Babs replied, but she did transiently reflect that four would be rather a crush.

"And—and I do not like to ask this of you, Barbara, but I have promised her father. He is very anxious to have a report of her during her stay at the school—not merely a scholastic report, but a report of her private conduct. I gather he has some plan in mind for her."

"As far as lessons are concerned it will be easy, of course, to discover of what she is capable, but not of her character. That is a matter rather beyond my jurisdiction. Barbara, I am relying upon you, as her friend, and as captain of the Fourth. I am not asking you to sneak—I believe that is the word you use—but I am asking you to help Mr. Dyson and myself in this matter, understanding, of course, that whatever you tell me will be treated in the strictest confidence. I want you, if you will, to keep a more than usually careful eye upon Clarice, and report her conduct to me whenever I ask for it."

"Yes, Miss Primrose," Babs said uncomfortably. "But does Clarice know this?"

"Good gracious, of course not! Haven't I said, Barbara, that this is strictly confidential?"

But Clarice that moment did know it. Probably it did not occur to Miss Primrose that Clarice, in the next room, might be listening. It certainly did not dawn upon her that the walls separating the study from that room were so thin that any conversation conducted in an ordinary tone could be heard quite plainly.

Clarice at that moment was hearing quite plainly, and if the expression on her face was anything to go by, she was not enjoying what she heard.

For in contrast to the cheery, easy, carefree expression she had presented to Barbara but a few minutes before, her features had undergone a rather startling change.

The big eyes had narrowed a little. The pretty lips compressed. There was cunning where before there had been a whole-hearted and open frankness. There was vindictiveness in the eyes which had seemed so incapable of any malice. And Clarice was muttering:

"Give a report of me, will you, Babs? Thanks for that tip, anyway. Mean to curb my untamable spirit, do you? Right-ho! I haven't come to Cliff House to knuckle under to you, and play the good little girlie. I've come to have a jolly good time, and I'm going to have a jolly good time! I didn't want to come! It was your father who suggested that I should come! And for that I owe you one—and a big one!"

She started as she heard the door of the next room open, composed herself, and stared up eagerly, the old happily carefree look on her face once more. When Babs came in she simply rushed at her.

"Oh, Babs, Babs!" she cried. "I say, isn't it grand—isn't it just too great for words!" She laughed merrily. "Come on, old thing—come and show me the sights, and introduce me to the girls. I'm just dying to get to know Cliff House!"



Such a Pity!

"Oh, jolly good!"

"You're a sport, Clarry!"

"Have another ginger-beer?"

Mabel Lynn and Bessie

Bunter, entering the gates of Cliff House, paused, staring surprisedly towards the door of the tuckshop, through which sounds of revelry and many voices, recognisable as belonging to girls of the Fourth Form, floated out.

"A feed!" Bessie murmured ecstatically. "Somebody must be standing a fuf-feed!"

Her eyes brightened, her face shone

happily. Ting-a-ling, still in her arms, looked up perkily at her fat face, and the glazed still more perkily towards the tuckshop.

Bessie had taken her pet to the vet, but though the vet had assured her that no harm would come to Ting-a-ling if he were kept warm and well-nourished and comfortable, his anxious mistress' anxiety was by no means allayed.

Mabs had been to the stores in Court-field—had rushed there just, in fact, as the shop was closing. The rather bulky box she carried, bearing the name of Holland's Stores, showed that she had made her purchase.

She was still doubtful; not half as elated about her purchase as she would have been had Babs been with her. But she had it now, and was anxious to get into the school and to try it on for Babs' approval.

"Oh, come on, Bessie!" she enjoined.

"But it's a feed!" Bessie objected.

"Well, you've got to put Ting-a-ling in his kennel."

"No, I'm not!" Bessie's eyes gleamed. "I'm jolly well not going to put him in his kennel," she said. "You heard what the vet said—he's got to be jolly well looked after. It's all right for Piper and Mr. Merryweather to look after him when he's well, but when the poor darling's ill, then he wants his mistress—which is me!" Bessie asserted defiantly. "Don't you, Ting, old boy!"

Ting, for answer, pathetically licked her hand.

"And so," Bessie announced, "Sarah or no Sarah, I'm jolly well going to keep him warm in the basket in front of the fire."

"But you know that's not allowed!" Mabs objected.

"Well, who cares?" Bessie asked, with naughty disdain. "Who jolly well cares? Besides, if he's seen you can always say you brought him into the study, Mabs."

"Oh, can I?" Mabs smiled.

"Well, you don't expect me to be doing lines and looking after Ting-a-ling at the same time, do you?" Bessie asked indignantly. "But I s-say, who's in the tuckshop? That was Babs' voice I heard."

Mabs puzzled again. She, too, had heard Babs' voice—or rather, Babs' laugh, ringing out in merry peal.

She frowned a little, for she did so earnestly want Babs to herself then. She wanted Babs to come with her to the dormitory, to help her try on the frock, and give her opinion of it. Not until Babs had approved it would Mabs feel satisfied.

"Oh, come on, let's see what's on!" she cried.

Bessie needed no second bidding. She propped her cycle against the wall, hastily took off her coat and hat and dumped them over the handlebars, and plunged into the tuckshop. Mabs followed a second later, after divesting herself of her outdoor things.

The tuckshop was crowded with girls, all in merry good humour, all eating, or sipping lemonade or orangeade from glasses. A hail from the counter reached her ears.

"Mabs! Mabs, this way!"

And there was Babs waving gaily to her.

"Hallo!" Mabs face broke into a smile. "What the merry dickens is all this about?" she asked. "Somebody come into a fortune?"

"No; only Clarry standing treat."

"Clarry? Mabs asked questioningly.

"Me! Clarice Dyson put in, with a grin, and stood before Mabs. "I say, you're Mabel Lynn, aren't you?" she asked eagerly. "Babs has been telling

me about you. And Bessie! Gracious me! I recognised you without even hearing your name," Clarice laughed. "Well, order up, girls! Eat, drink, and be merry. This is my treat."

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Oh crumbs! I sus-say, that's nunnice of you," stuttered Bessie. "Can I have a dozen cream puffs—just to start with, you know? I'm so faint with hunger that I'm sure I'm going to elapse."

"Collapse, chump!" laughed Babs. "Well, Mabs, get the dress?"

"Yes, rather!" Mabs rodded eagerly. "I'll have ginger-beer, please," she said. "But, I say, Babs, when will you be finished here? I'm dying for you to see it!"

"Oh, when Clarry's finished!" Babs replied. "Can't leave her just now. Mind you don't get that box crushed," she added warningly, as Rosa Rodworth brushed against it.

Mabs caught up the box anxiously, snatching it to her. She did not notice, in her concern for her precious frock, that Clarice was standing immediately behind her, and her elbow, catching that girl, gave her quite a sharp jab in the ribs. Mabs turned round with a gasp. "Oh, sorry!"

And she stopped there, blinking in sudden surprise at the strange expression which crossed Clarice's face. But in a moment it had gone.

"My fault!" Clarice said, with a laugh. "Oh gracious me! What a crowd! Here, let's get into a corner. Make way there, Babs!" she added, with a familiarity that made Mabs feel faintly astonished. "I say, Mabs, I'm in your study."

"Our study?" Mabs' eyes opened. "But I thought—"

"Babs asked for me to be put in. Didn't you, Babs?" Clarice went on affectionately. "Babs and I are old friends, you know—met donkey's years ago! Babs is taking me under her wing—showing me round, and all that. I do hope we're all going to be good pals together."

Mabs found herself mumbling something in response. She glanced at Babs. Babs, apparently, was unconscious that anything untoward was afoot.

Perhaps it was that sudden hateful look she had surprised on the face of this girl; but quite suddenly and definitely Mabs decided, in spite of her generosity and her roo-ready smile, she did not like Clarice Dyson.

Or perhaps it was that way in which she seemed to have appropriated Babs. Her every gesture and action signalled that she had a proprietary interest in her chum.

Mabs knew a little resentment. Perhaps, loving Babs as she did, just a tiny pang of jealousy shot through her.

"Well, I—I hope so, too," she found herself haltingly saying. "But"—and again she looked at Babs—"Babs, I—I suppose you couldn't come along now?" she asked wistfully.

"Oh gracious! No, not yet!" Clarice immediately pouted. "Let's keep the fun going. Babs, have another lemonade!"

"Oh goodness! No, thanks."  
"Please—just one!" Clarice urged. "Just to keep me company. Two more lemonades, please!" she called over the counter.

"And one here," Tomboy Clara Trevlyn put in. "Still feeling equal to it, Clarry?"

"Yes, rather! Go on! Have just what you want."

Mabs felt faintly nauseated. She, at least, was not deceived by the show of ostentation. She felt suddenly in the

background—out of it—sorry now that she had come in.

Clarry, as if reading her thoughts, deliberately panned Babs in the corner and stood studiously interposed between her and Mabs, cutting them off from each other. A little flush of anger came into Mabs' cheeks.

"I say—" she murmured.  
"And, of course," Clarry said eagerly, "you'll have to show me your sketch book, Babs. Your father said what lovely sketches you do; just like a real artist."

Was it accident, or was it design, that she suddenly lifted her foot, kicking the precious cardboard box which Mabs was so desperately trying to save from being crushed?

Mabs shook her head. She was angry with herself for the feeling which came to her. But she couldn't stand it, she felt. She did not understand this. Babs surely was not intending to slight her.

But Babs had very definitely turned down that journey to Courtfield. Babs now, seemingly dazzled by this girl, had actually put her in Study No. 4; had more or less refused to go with her to the dormitory. Babs must know she was dying to try on the frock. Well, bother Babs!

No—no, she didn't mean that!  
"Babs, I'll see you later," she said in a small voice.

"And, you know, I do a bit of sketching myself," Clarry said loudly—just as if, indeed, she had sensed Mabs had addressed a remark to Babs and wished to drown it, which she did most effectively.

Mabs bit her lip. Very quietly she went out of the tuckshop, feeling rather lonely and rather futilely annoyed with herself.

Clarice turned in apparent surprise.

"Why—Hallo! Your friend seems peevish. She's gone, Babs."

"Who—Mabs?"

"Why, yes!"

"But—"

In a moment Babs was on her feet. "Oh, don't worry!" Clarry said easily. "I don't blame her, you know. It is rather a crush in here, isn't it? And she was so frightfully anxious about that dress. Sit down and finish the drink, Babs. As I was saying—"

But Babs was not finishing her drink. She was looking anxiously across the heads of the girls in the shop. Mabs—it was not like Mabs to go off without saying a word to her. Not for worlds would Babs have hurt her friend. She turned.

"Excuse me!" she said.

Clarice pouted.

"But, Babs, where are you going?"

"Oh, just—just to talk to Mabs! I'll see you in the study," she cried hastily. She left Clarice with a transient scowl on her face and rushed out.

Mabs, walking ahead more quickly than usual, was at that moment in the act of disappearing into the School House. Babs shouted.

"Mabs!"

But Mabs, if she heard—she didn't—did not turn; she disappeared.

"Oh, my hat! The chump's in a huff!" Babs thought, and fairly raced.

But by the time she caught up with her Mabs was entering the dormitory; she turned with a start as she felt Babs' hand upon her shoulder.

"Mabs, you old cuckoo—"

"Why—why—" And Mabs crimsoned. Something seemed to come into her throat, choking her utterance. "Oh, Babs," she said, "I—I thought— I thought—" And then, rapidly changing the subject she put the box down



"If you'd only come with me, I should never have bought the frock," Mabs panted. "But you preferred to stay with Clarice! Oh, go away—go away!"

upon the bed. "I—I've got the dress," she announced in a thin voice.

"Oh, I say, that's topping!" Babs enthused, but, all the same, she glanced at her chum quickly. "But why did you walk out of the tuckshop, old thing, without telling me you were going?"

"But I did; only that girl—Clarice, I mean—was talking so loudly that I couldn't make you hear," Mabs said, averting her face.

Babs gazed at her keenly. "Mabs, don't you like Clarice?"

"Oh, she's all right!" Mabs returned without enthusiasm. "Would you like to see the frock, Babs?"

"Yes, please. But—" Babs paused. "No, Mabs, wait a minute," she cried. "Don't let's go on like this. I'm sorry about not going with you this afternoon."

"Oh, that's all right!"

"And—and you don't still feel ratty about it?"

"No," Mabs said uncomfortably. "I couldn't help it," Babs said gently. "Mabs, you do understand, don't you?"

"Y-yes," Mabs answered, in an unconvinced voice. "But—" She stopped there, biting her lip rather as if she was on the point of saying more, and thought better of it. Instead, she began to unwrap the box.

Babs sat on the bed. She eyed her chum queerly—with just the faintest quail. Silly old Mabs! she thought affectionately. Of course, she had been disappointed about her not going. Still—

"Oh, I say!" she cried, as Mabs lifted the frock. "What a scrumptious thing, Mabs! But cherry—" She put her head on one side. "Rather a new departure for you, isn't it, Mabs?"

Mabs smiled tremulously. "Well, I thought it would be a change," she replied. "I'm getting rather tired of light things. But help me put it on, Babs."

All trembling eagerness she was again in the excitement of the new frock. How it rustled as she lifted it over her golden head! What a really gorgeous thing it was, to be sure! With its tiny little necklet, and its voluminous skirt which reached below her ankles.

But what an effort it was to get into it, to be sure, and how Babs toiled at the row of tiny taffeta-covered buttons at the back, by which the frock was fastened!

It was on at last, however, and Mabs, brushing and combing her hair, turned with eager expectancy, flinging out her arms.

"Well, Babs, what do you think?"

Babs smiled. "It's a lovely frock, Mabs—really lovely!"

"Yes; but, Babs, how do you think I look in it?" Mabs gazed at her anxiously.

"Well, it is rather a departure—"

"You mean?" Mabs asked. "No, Babs, don't fence. Tell me the truth. Tell me candidly. What do you think?"

Babs shook her head. "Well, I don't know." She looked again. "The colour's lovely, but it's hardly your style, Mabs. You shouldn't wear dark colours, you know—not with your fair hair and complexion. The very richness of the frock takes away your own colouring. Now, if it had been pale blue, or eau-de-nil—"

Mabs bit her lips. "Yes?" she asked, in a stifled voice. "Mind you, it is a lovely frock!" Babs repeated reflectively. "Still, you are asking for my frank opinion, aren't you? I like it—as a frock—immensely. You'll have to let it out at the waist,

though; it's too frightfully tight. And if I were you I'd have it shortened just a little for you to dance in it. You know what happens to full-length skirts on the dance floor, especially if your partner happens to be a bit clumsy. But I say—" Alarmedly she jumped up. "Mabs, old thing, you—you're not crying!"

"No," Mabs replied fiercely. "Oh, please, Babs, don't fuss!"

Babs stood still, eyeing her chum in open-mouthed amazement.

Mabs was crying, but they were tears of vexation and disappointment. She had asked for Babs' criticism; she had got it. But, being very, very human, Mabs had wanted Babs' criticism to be her own. She had been so eagerly excited about that dress! So anxious, so enthusiastic! She felt now that she hated it.

"Mabs—" "Please—" Mabs cried.

"But, Mabs, old thing, it isn't like you!"

"No?" Mabs flung round. She hated herself for what she said, but some little demon possessing her then poured the words from her lips. "And it's not like you!" she cried bitterly. "If you'd only come to help me choose it, I should never have bought it! But, no; instead you preferred to hang behind and wait for this Dyson girl!" she cried, her chest heaving. "Oh, Babs, go away—go away!"

"But Mabs—Mabs, look here—" "No, no, I won't!" Mabs cried wretchedly. "I won't! You want Clarice Dyson, Babs—you go to her! No, I don't like her—I don't! I never will, so there!" she added with sudden passion. "She's a mischief-maker! She's just coming between us!"

"Mabs!" Babs cried in horror. "Oh, heavens, what was the matter with her? But she couldn't help herself."

"I—I thought—I thought—" Mabs rushed on—"I thought, Babs, that you always looked upon me as your best friend! I know you don't—now she's come! Why must she be in our study? Aren't there plenty of other studies with vacancies? We've been such a happy little party, and now—now—" Oh, Babs, do go—please, please do go!" she added wildly.

The look on Babs' face was stricken— incredulous. She, too, felt shaken in that moment. This Mabs—her Mabs—giving way to this burst of uncontrollable temper!

Something welled up from her heart, and she felt suddenly choky in her throat. She turned.

Hopeless—hopeless to reason with one in this mood. Later on, when Mabs had cooled down—

She left the dormitory. Mabs stood quiet and still, watching her go. Oh, horrors—horrors! What had she done? What a mad-headed, spiteful little fool she was!

"Babs!" Her voice cried out, and her heart cried with it.

But the door closed.

One faltering step Mabs took. Then, as a sudden surging wave of wretchedness swept over her, she flung herself on the bed. For a minute—two minutes—she lay there, the cherry taffeta carelessly crumpled beneath her weight, her shoulders heaving with great sobs.

She had quarrelled with Babs! Had quarrelled with the dearest friend on earth! These two, who had never had anything except the slightest of tiffs, were estranged!

And all her silly fault! The fault of the maddest frock! She hated it now—hated it!

She rose. With trembling fingers she fumbled at the back of her neck for the catch which held the floral necklet together. She couldn't find it.

In a sudden access of futility she tore it loose. Then breathlessly she tore it off. Pop, pop, pop! And three of the dainty little taffeta-covered buttons fell to the floor.

Well, she didn't care—she didn't care! It was the frock which had come between her and Babs—the frock and that awful new girl!

But she did care—and knew that she cared! It broke her heart to realise that she was in such a mood.

She must make it up to Babs. Oh, Babs!

Hurriedly she folded the frock, still telling herself she didn't care that she crumpled it savagely into the box. What a fool I am, she thought, even as she was doing it. But that provoking imp of frustration still ruled her actions.

She heedlessly hurled the box into her locker, and then breathlessly quitted the dormitory. Where was Babs?

Biting her lip, she hurried down into the Fourth Form corridor.

A girl was just in the act of entering Study No. 4. Mabs saw no more than the hem of her skirt as it whisked round the doorpost, and hurried her steps.

Babs—it was Babs—must be. A little cry came to her lips:

"Babs—Babs, old thing—" She reached the door. She flung it open. And then she stopped, staring at what she saw. The girl who had entered the study was not Babs. It was the new girl, Clarice Dyson.

And the new girl—

In one startled glance Mabs took it all in. Apparently Bessie Bunter had been true to her threat. With the break-up of the party in the tuckshop she had defiantly reinstated Ting-a-ling in Study No. 4.

His basket, with its woollen blanket, lay in front of the fire, but Ting-a-ling himself, taking advantage of his mistress' absence, or possibly because the fire was too hot, had removed himself from it, and was lying, pug-nose between silken paws, near the door.

Unfortunately for Ting, he lay in direct line with the door, and Clarice, stumbling over him at first drew back with a sharp gasp of alarm, as Ting, yelping, leapt to his feet, and then, in a sudden vicious outburst of temper, lifted her foot and kicked.

"Thud!"

"Yowp!" yelled Ting-a-ling.

Mabs saw it all, and for a moment stood appalled. Passionately fond of all animals was Mabel Lynn, but perhaps more passionately fond of little Ting than of any other animal on earth—except her own pet cat in the Pets' House.

Appalled, outraged, that show of cruel spite forced her into arms at once.

"You bully!" she bit out.

Clarice swung round as if she had been shot.

"Oh, you!" she said disdainfully.

"Who are you calling names?"

"I'm calling you names," Mabs said deliberately, and her anger flared. "I saw you kick that dog!"

"I didn't kick the dog—I stumbled over it. And anyway, Clarice flamed out, 'What business is it of yours?'"

"It's the business of any decent-minded girl to put a stop to that sort of thing," Mabs told her contemptuously.

"Really?" the other sneered. "And you're the decent-minded little one, are you?"

you?" she asked. "Well, what of it? It's my study, isn't it? Yes, it is, as well as yours. If I don't want beastly little tripehounds like that crawling about the floor, I've a right to kick it out—and I will kick it! And don't," she added, suddenly boiling up into fury, "you start telling me what to do!"

Mabs stiffened. Her eyes narrowed. "If you're going to share this study—"

"I am!" Clarice sneered. "And I'm going to be jolly comfortable in it while I'm sharing it—so hear that! You don't like that idea, do you?" she added mockingly. "Think I can't see it? You thought you had your little Babs all to yourself—till I came! And you don't like me because you think I'm going to push your nose out of joint and upset the family party!"

Mabs quivered. "Mabs is my friend—"  
"Babs is my friend, you mean!" Clarice's lip curled. "Oh, I know! You think you're everything to her, don't you—but you wait! Babs is—"  
And then suddenly her face changed. The transformation which came into it quite startled Mabs. "Mabs," she said, with sudden wistfulness, "don't let's quarrel like this! I know you're fond of Babs, but so am I. Let her be a friend to both of us!"

And to Mabs' stupefaction, she extended a hand. Mabs blinked. Not until, however, she saw that Barbara had entered the study with Bessie Bunter, did the reason for that sudden change of front dawn upon her.

And then, meeting the question in Babs' eyes, she bit her lip.



### The Parting of the Ways

**C**OULD she have taken the hand that was so treacherously extended? Certainly, Mabs could not. Disgust mingled with anger for this two-faced girl.

"Why, you—you—"  
"Mabs!" Babs cried in horror. "Mabs!"

"Yes, Mabs," Clarice said falsely. "Mabs, please do listen. I want to be friends, just for Babs' sake. Mabs, old thing—"

Mabs quivered. "You—you hypocrite!"  
"Oh crumbs! Oh, I sus-say—"  
Bessie stutted in dismay. "I sus-say, Mum-Mabs old thing—"

Clarice bit her lip. She looked appealingly at Babs.

"Babs, please—you speak to her," she said sighingly. "I don't know what's the matter with her. I'm sure, but—but she's got some idea that I'm against her. And I'm not—you know that, don't you, Babs? Mabs, darling—"

But Mabs felt if she remained any longer she would scream. She couldn't bear it—she couldn't! Such hypocrisy—and that stricken look on Babs' face, the stupefaction upon Bessie's!

What a position this girl had manoeuvred her into! But she wasn't going to knuckle under!

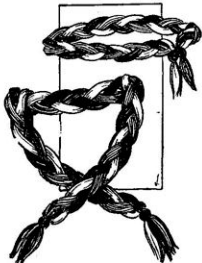
"Clarice," she said, between her teeth, "don't be more of a hypocrite than you can help! I wouldn't," she added bitterly, "be friends with you if you were the last girl on earth!"

## HAT-BAND AND BELT—TO MATCH

Trimmings can "make" even the simplest outfit. Try these easy ones for hat and frock.

**I** KNOW you all love plaiting. Even you who find needlework a bore, and much prefer games and gym, won't be able to resist making this original hatband and neck trimming for a frock.

The hat-band trimming consists of different-coloured wools—just as many as you like—plaited together. Then if you have enough oddments, make a multi-hued tassel as a finishing touch.



If you haven't enough for the tassels, just knot the ends together with that careless carelessness which is always so attractive.

### SO EASY!

Now, if you are really proud of the way you've made the hat-band, you simply must try the neck-trimming for a frock.

Do it in just the same way as the band, measuring it around the neck of your frock as you plait.

Fasten off with tassels so that they hang prettily together.

Which all sounds so terribly easy, you may wish there was something else you could make in the same way.

### ONCE MORE

So what about trying your hand at a belt for your frock?

You'll want more wool for this, but I'm sure there are tons of oddments at home that you can make use of.

Plait these as before, and finish off with tassels as big as you can make, so that the belt will tie in a bow, and the ends look really decorative.

Wear the trimming on your winter frock—and it will see you smartly through to the warmer days—which won't be so very long in coming now.

Fearlessly she looked the other in the face, her lips curling in contempt.

"I don't," she added, "know what your game is, or why you are playing it, but I think Babs ought to know here and now what sort of a girl you are! Babs—"

"Mabs, no!" Babs cried. "Don't say it! Oh, goodness gracious! What on earth has come over you?"

Mabs compressed her lips. "Nothing," she answered bitterly, "has come over me. I'm sorry for what happened in the dormitory. It's not that, Babs, so don't think it. It's something that's happened since."

"Bib-but what?" asked Bessie. "Oh dud-dear, you know—"

"Oh, bother, Mabs! Come on, make it up, whatever it is!" Babs urged. "Clarry wants to be friends, don't you, Clarry?"

"Nothing," Clarry said sighingly, "would make me happier! Mabs, dear—"

But Mabs, with a lift of the shoulders, turned away.

"Thank you! Shall we have tea?"

"But—"

"I'll go and get the water," Mabs volunteered.

She picked up the kettle. With rather a white, strained face she went out.

Unhappily Bessie blinked; then, hardly knowing what to do, she picked up Ting-a-ling. Immediately there came a yelp from the little animal.

"Yowp!"

"Oh crumbs!" Bessie choked. "Ting," Bessie gasped apprehensively.

"Yowp!" yelped Ting-a-ling again. And this time there was no acting upon his part. For Ting-a-ling was really hurt. Ting was only a tiny bundle, all said and done, and that spiteful foot, viciously implanted between his ribs, had raised a bruise. The spot was decidedly tender.

Very entreatingly he looked up. Then, as Bessie hugged him, he yelped again.

Bessie was frantic at once. What was the matter with Ting? Was this some new and alarming symptom of his mysterious illness? She looked at Babs.

"Oh, Babs, what—what's the matter with him?"

But Babs did not reply. Rather worriedly she was at the cupboard, reaching down for the tea. Clarice, a frown on her face, stood by the window, looking into the quad.

"Wuff!" said Ting-a-ling plaintively. "Wuff!"

And he sniffed, plainly indicating that he was uncomfortable and wanted to be put down.

The door opened. Mabs, with the kettle in her hand, came into the room. Ting yelped again.

"Oh crumbs!" Bessie choked. "Ting, Ting! What is it, precious? Tell your old mistress, then! Oh dud-dear, you know, I believe he's hurt!" she cried.

"He cries every time I touch him here. Mabs, what's the matter with him?"

"Ask Clarice!" Mabs replied grimly. Babs started.

"Why ask Clarice?" she demanded.

"Bessie," Mabs replied contemptuously, "it was Clarice who kicked him! I saw it. That was what we were quarrelling about."

"What?"

"Mabs!"

"Oh! Oh!" Clarice sprang round, looking utterly horrified. "Oh, Mabs!" she cried, her voice vibrant with reproach. "How could you! Babs,



please, you mustn't, you can't believe that! I came into the study, and the dog was sprawling about. It's true I tripped over him, but I didn't kick him. As if I would!"

"Mabs!" Babs said quietly.

"Well?"

"That's hardly fair, is it?"

Mabs flushed crimson.

"It's the truth," she said bitingly, "and she jolly well knows it. Bessie, put Ting in the basket, and get on with these muffins, there's a dear."

Babs bit her lip. Clarice looked at her, shaking her head with patient resignation, and a pleading look from

her eyes which said as plainly as anything:

"Never mind, Babs, don't make a row about it. Let her get on with it."

And Babs, with a gulp, but wondering wretchedly what had come over her friend, nodded.

"Well, let—let's have tea," she suggested.

Tea they had. But what a grim meal it was. Ting, in the basket, snuffled with difficulty as he licked his bruises.

Mabs, watching him, felt the food choking her.

Babs didn't understand. Babs, she knew, was trying not to believe she had

told a horrible fib. But Babs was more than half convinced that she had told that fib.

She couldn't stand it—she couldn't! She'd rush out of the room!

But she wouldn't—no! That would be practically an admission of defeat. That would be playing into her enemy's hands. She'd rather die than let this smiling-faced hypocrite feel that she'd had the laugh of her!

Babs ate slowly, shaking her head a little. Bessie, between gulps, blinked first at Mabs, then woefully at Babs, sparing an anxious glance now and then for Ting-a-ling.

Only Clarice, of the four, enjoyed that meal, and she enjoyed it only for the situation her callous-hearted mischief had created.

"Oh, goodness!" she burst out presently. "Aren't we cheerful? Someone say something! But no! Let me do the talking. Babs! I say, Babs—"

"Yes?" Babs replied.

"There's a dance on to-night—in Courtfield. Lydia Crossendale told me about it. And—and—" Clarry laughed. "You like dancing, don't you?"

"Love it!"

"Well, then, here's a little surprise for you." And delightedly Clarry fished two tickets from her tunic pocket and planked them gaily on the table.

"Tickets for two, Babs—you and I! It's going to be a ripping affair, Lydia tells me, with lovely prizes for the best dancers. It'll be grand if we win one of them," she added, with a quick look at the downbeat head of Mabs.

Babs smiled a little.

"It would be grand, yes, rather. But unfortunately, Clarry, we can't go."

"Oh, why not?" Clarice pouted.

"Because," Babs gently explained, glancing at the tickets, "this dance doesn't start till eight o'clock. By that time gates will be locked, and every girl within bounds. It's against the rules, you see, to go out after gates."

"Well, gracious me, you're not going to let that worry you?" Clarice laughed. "We can break out of dorm, can't we? Other girls do it, I've heard."

Babs frowned.

"Clarry!" she said firmly. "No!" But Clarice Dyson frowned. Not she to take no for an answer. Clarice had bought those tickets on her way to the school this afternoon. In accordance with that programme of having a good time while she was at Cliff House, she meant to go.

She didn't care a button whether Babs came or not, really, but there were very special reasons why she should give Babs no opportunity of reporting her to Miss Primrose, and she hoped, by inducing Babs to get enthusiastic about the dance, that she would break bounds with her. Which meant, naturally, that Babs could hardly report her offence without reporting herself.

"Oh well," she said, with a sigh, and pocketed the tickets again. "Mustn't break the old rules, I suppose. But it is a pity, isn't it? Life is full of disappointments," she added, with a laugh.

"Babs, will you excuse me for a few moments?"

"Of course!"

Clarice smiled. She rose and went out. Mabs shifted a little. She looked up, meeting Babs' gaze, then coloured. Babs, for some reason, coloured, too. They ate on in silence.

Ting-a-ling, in the basket, gave an uneasy whine.

But Clarice had not gone far. She stopped when she reached the door of Study No. 1, which housed the wealthy Lydia Crossendale, the scab of the



## AWAY WITH STAINS!

Even the most stubborn stain will generally respond to treatment. But it must be the right one!

don't go and use currant bread like someone I knew once did!)

**BLACKLEAD STAINS** do sometimes appear on carpets, however careful one is. A mixture of fuller's earth and water should be made and smeared over the stains. Allow it to dry thoroughly, and then brush off. Off will come stain and all!

**HOT-WATER-MARK STAINS** always look rather terrifying, don't they? But how frequently they are made. A carelessly laid down teacup will ruin the best oak tray, and a hot plate will mark a polished table. Or so it seems.

Even these can be removed—with perseverance and linseed oil.

Rub the mark well with a cloth dipped in the oil, and keep on until it has vanished. (If the mark is very bad, you may need to keep this treatment up for a day or two—but the mark will go eventually.) Afterwards polish well with furniture cream—and resolve never to let it happen again!

**TEA STAINS** respond wonderfully to powdered borax being rubbed into them and then boiling water poured through.

**PAINT STAINS** will vanish after an application of turpentine.

**EGG STAINS** must be washed out in COLD water. If the article is placed into boiling water the egg stains will become fixed.

**COFFEE STAINS** should be treated by pouring boiling water through the stain from a height. If this does not prove sufficient, try rubbing gently with a little glycerine. The stained part should then be washed in warm water.

**STAINS** on precious clothes that can't be treated with boiling water for fear of spoiling should have pure benzine or petrol applied in a circular movement, working inwards towards the stain. And I needn't add the precaution about using this away from a fire or flame, need I?

**INK STAINS** are always appearing where they're not wanted, aren't they? On blouse sleeves, tablecloths, and carpets. Next time you feel like "tutting" in fury at one, don't! Just try rubbing the soiled part immediately with a juicy tomato.

If you haven't a tomato handy, wash the stain in hot milk.

**FRUIT STAINS** have a nasty habit of appearing on clean-tablecloth day, haven't they?

Next time there's plum pie for dinner, and this happens near your plate, pile a little salt over the stain and rub gently. The stain will not completely disappear, but it will not be visible after the cloth has been washed.

**IRON-MOULD STAIN** is one of the most unpopular, for it looks so impossible to remove somehow. But over a cup or basin containing boiling water and a little salts of lemon is applied to the stain.

**OIL STAINS** on precious carpets can be quickly removed. Cover the mark with a piece of thick brown paper or blotting-paper. Then apply a warm—not hot, please—iron over this. The grease will be absorbed in the paper, you'll find, and no trace of the stain will be left.

**GREASE STAINS** on the kitchen floor are quite frequent. But how they soil floorcloths if it is washed up immediately! Next time this happens when you are around pour a little cold water over the grease. It will immediately harden, and then all you have to do is to scrape it up with a kitchen knife.

Much better than having to destroy a grease-laden cloth, isn't it?

**SMOKE STAINS** on wallpaper are quite frequent, particularly if the house is rather an old one. These can be removed by gentle rubbing with a piece of stale bread. (But

Fourth, and Rosa Rodworth and Freda Ferriers. The three of them were at tea.

"Oh, hallo, Clarry!" Lydia beamed. "Come in, old sport. Just talking about you."

"Nothing nasty, I hope," Clarry laughed.

"No, rather not! But sit down—have some tea, or have you had it? We were just wondering how you were getting on with that paragon of all the virtues, Barbara Redfern! You know," Lydia added thoughtfully, "you don't seem her sort—not to me, anyway."

"Oh, but Babs is my friend," Clarry said mockingly.

"Really?" Lydia grinned.

"At least," Clarry laughed, "she thinks she is. But don't talk about her. I came to see you about something else really. I don't know if you are aware of it, but there's a dance on in Court-field."

Lydia glanced at Rosa, and Rosa glanced at Lydia. They both burst out laughing.

"I don't see anything that's funny in that," Clarry voiced.

"No, but we do. You see, we've booked tickets. But we only booked two. Now Freda's suddenly found a burning ambition to come, too. But a little friend of Barbara's," Lydia added admonishingly, "shouldn't know anything about such wicked things as dances, which mean breaking bounds after lights out, and all those sort of criminal offences! You don't mean to say, Clarry, that you were really thinking of going?"

"I was," Clarry answered calmly. "I came along to see if one of you would like to go with me, as I've booked a couple of tickets. I didn't know the ropes, you see, when I bought them, and I rather hoped to kid Barbara into coming. Still, if Freda hasn't got a ticket—"

"Oh, goodness, you mean I can have your spare one?" Freda asked.

"There it is!" And Clarry, placing it upon the table, laughed. "O.K., then, we all go there, do we? Leave you to see to the rest, Lydia," she added gaily. "You know the ropes. Bye-bye, till bedtime."

She went out, a laugh on her lips, her cheeks flushed. Back to Study No. 4 she tripped, to find Babs and Mabs and Bessie in the act of clearing the table for prep.

She beamed.

"Oh, I say, do let me help!"

Babs smiled.

"Oh, there's nothing to do, Clarry!"

"But I insist," Clarry said eagerly.

"After all, I am a member of this study, aren't I? Share the joys and share the toil—that's what I say! Please—tell me where to put things. Babs. Oh, sorry, Mabs," she added disarmingly, as, apparently, in eagerness to collect the tea-things from the table, she stepped back upon the golden-haired one's toe.

Mabs winced, but though anger flashed within her, she said nothing. That had not been an accident, she knew.

The table was cleared at last. Rather lugubriously, books were brought out; pens and papers spread upon the table. Study No. 4's was not a large table. It was hardly large enough for three of them to work together, especially as Bessie Bunter took up such a large space. Bessie was inclined to grumble, indeed.

"You know, I think one of us ought to do our prep in another study," she said aggrievedly. "Look here, Clarry, I don't mind your going. Peggy Preston and Phyllis Howell have a study

to themselves now, you know, since Margot Lantham moved back into No. 10 with Diana Royston-Clarke, and there's only two in Study No. 2. Supposing you try one of those?"

"Oh, Bessie!"—Clarry frowned—"don't you want me?"

"Well—"

"I—I'm so happy here, you know. Suppose," Clarry suggested, "you go?"

But Bessie was up in arms at that. Leave her own study!

"No jolly fear!" she said.

"Well, Mabs, then," Clarry suggested, with a hint of malice in her tone. "I am sure Mabs would be very happy somewhere else, wouldn't you, Mabs?"

"Now, Clarry, please!" Barbara begged anxiously, and looked warningly at Mabs.

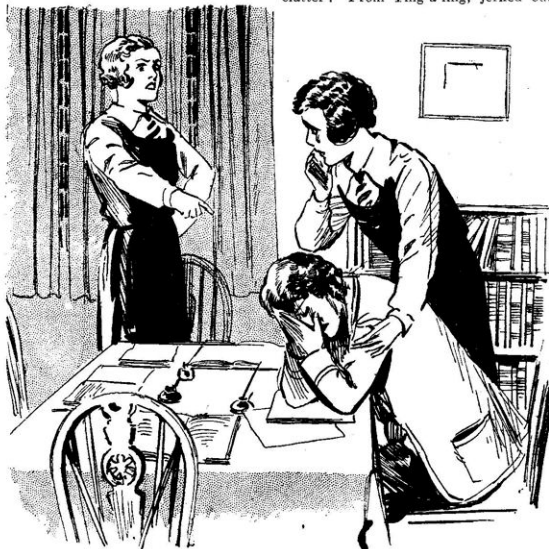
But she said nothing, though she frowned a little.

To herself Clarry chuckled. She cocked a speculatively mischievous eye towards Bessie Bunter, who was breathing laboriously, with her tongue in her cheek, as she endeavoured to draw a circle.

She noted with glee that directly beneath Bessie was Ting-a-ling, now peacefully asleep in his basket, and making queer sighing little noises as he breathed.

This time it was the left arm which slid along the table, slowly creeping towards the pile of books which stood at Bessie's elbow. The elbow touched them now.

One quick shove. Clatter, clatter, clatter! From Ting-a-ling, jerked out



BABS ran to Clarry's side as that girl buried her face in her hands. But Mabs looked scornful. "Can't you see she's just shamming!" she exclaimed bitterly. But she knew that Barbara did not believe her.

But Mabs gave no evidence that she had even heard.

The four sat down to prep. It was notable that Clarry bagged the best seat on the warmest side of the table, with her back to the fire.

A spark of malice came into her eyes as she began to write. With a sly glance towards Babs, who concentrated upon English, she slid her elbow along the surface of the table, knocking one of Mabs' books on the floor.

She started in pretended alarm.

"Oh, goodness! What was that?"

"My book!" Mabs said, with a steely glance.

"Oh, gracious me! I wish you wouldn't throw your books about like that, Mabs! Look! You've made me make a blot!"

Again Mabs flamed at her witheringly, scornfully, her lips compressed. But again she was determined not to be provoked. Down went her head once more.

Babs looked up. She saw that little passage of arms, and her face clouded.

of slumber with a devastating start, went up a fiendish yelp.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bessie. And up she jumped, flinging a furious blink at the author of the mischief. "Ting! Oh, kik-crums! He's nun-nearly buried in books! Clarry!"

Clarry blinked.

"Why, Bessie dear, I didn't do that!" "But you dud-did, you know! You must have! Oh dud-dear! Ting! Ting!" And she picked up her dog, terrified and hurt. "Ting! Ting! Oh, mum-my hat!"

Too late, she tried to conceal Ting as the study door opened. Sarah Harrigan, her sallow face dark as a thundercloud, looked in.

"Why—?" she began, and her eyes started. "Bessie!" she exclaimed.

"Oh crumbs! Oh dud-dear! Oh, rur-really, you know, Sarah, I—I'm not here!" Bessie stutted. "It's not me, you know; and if you think I've got Ting-a-ling, in here you're mistaken, because Ting is in his kennel—that is to

say, I—I dud-don't know how he got here—"

Sarah's face was savage. She strode into the study.

"Bessie," she rapped, "I thought I told you not to bring that dog into the school!"

"Oh, dud-did you, now?" Bessie tittered feebly.

"I am not," Sarah went on, "in the habit of giving orders twice! You will take that animal out at once, Bessie!"

"Y-yes, of course! That is exactly what I was going to do!" Bessie stammered. "I was only saying to Mabs as you came in—"

"And afterwards," Sarah announced, with a steely glint in her eyes, "you will report to Miss Primrose!"

Bessie's face fell.

"Bib-but, I say—"

"Obey!"

"Oh, rur-really, you know, I was ju-just going!"

And Bessie, with one apprehensive blink, sidled out of the study, backing warily as she passed the enraged prefect.

Sarah scowled. She threw a dark glance round the study and went out. Clarice sighed.

"Poor old Bessie! I suppose she'll get into awful trouble! And she might really have killed poor little Ting-aling, showing that pile of books on top of him!"

"She might?" Mabs asked tensely.

"Why, yes! Didn't you see?"

"I did see—yes! I saw every move!" Mabs' lips curled contemptuously.

"And, of course—with heavy sarcasm—you had nothing to do with it, Clarice Dyson!"

"I? But what—"

"Oh, goodness, Mabs, don't start again!" Babs put in apprehensively.

"But I'm going to start!" Mabs stood up, with flashing eyes. "Babs, I'm sick of this—sick of it!" she cried, flinging her ruler on the table. "You didn't see! I did! That awful little mischief-maker deliberately pushed those books on Ting-aling!"

"I didn't!"

Babs looked quite careworn.

"Mabs! Oh, great goodness, Mabs, what are you saying? Clarry—"

"Babs, I didn't!" Clarice cried indignantly. "It's a lie—a lie! She's trying to bully me again! She—"

And then quite suddenly, amazing even Mabs, she broke down and burst into a paroxysm of tears. "It—it's not fair!" she sobbed. "Mabs hates me! She's jealous because you're my friend! Oh, I wish I had never come to this school! I wish I—"

I were dead!"

"Clarry!" cried Babs.

Mabs bit her lip.

"What a sham! What a fraud she was! And Babs couldn't see it—Babs, that usually most astute of girls!"

Rage, futile, overwhelming, filled Mabs suddenly. She could not help, as Babs dismally rushed to Clarry's side, bursting out:

"Oh, for goodness' sake, let her alone, Babe! Can't you see she's just pulling your leg?"

Babs did not reply. But, as she encircled Clarice's heaving shoulders with one protective arm, she looked reproachfully, almost angrily, at Mabs.

And Mabs, biting her lip, went white. She said no more then. She was afraid to say more, but quietly, and in disgust, she gathered her books and strode towards the door.

Babs, turning from the sobbing girl, spun round.

"Mabs, where are you going?"

"There was no reply. The door closed quietly. Mabs, her heart full to overflowing, had gone!"



## Behind Their Backs

"Oh dud-dear!" Wearily, forlornly, Bessie Bunter floundered down the headmistress' corridor.

Poor Bessie! Her heart was very sad and very, very troubled. Bessie had put Ting-aling back in his kennel, but Bessie wasn't satisfied. All the anxiety of a mother for her child filled Bessie

## THE DAYS OF LONG AGO

The world went very well then, they say.

When Queen Victoria first held sway.

When Ma's and Pa's were quaintly gowned

And sedately strolled on a croquet ground.

Of course there were no cycles then, And no girl had a fountain pen.

No schoolgirl spoke a slangy word, But just was seen and never heard.

My word! My hat! Now, girls, just think of that!

The world, they say, was then all right,

But how it was it beats me quite.

A hockey ground girls never knew, Their tennis bats were all askew;

No bobs or shingles met the gaze, A schoolgirl's hair grew long those days.

Until she came to twenty-one, And then she did it in a bun!

My word! What fun! She must have looked a "one"!

The world, they say, went very well then,

But in the year of eighteen-ten

A schoolgirl had no kind of sport— She must have been a funny sort!

Yet I confess when once I saw The painting of great grandmamma,

About my age, demure, discreet, I wished that I looked half so sweet!

Ah, yes! That's true! And so I think would you!

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Bessie licked her lips. "This afternoon, Bessie, Sarah caught you with Ting-aling in Study No. 4. She ordered you to take the animal out."

"Yes, and I did, you know!" Bessie said eagerly.

"But," Miss Primrose added, "you brought him back!"

Bessie blinked.

"Wait, I—dud-didn't, really, you know," she stammered. "It wasn't me, Miss Primrose. That is, it was me, you know, but I forgot—I sus-suffer with loss of memory sometimes!"

"Bessie!"

"Oh, dud-dear! Or perhaps I was walking in my sleep!" Bessie added agitatedly.

"Bessie!" Miss Primrose's frown was thunderous. "Please cease to prevaricate, you foolish girl!"

"But—"

"When a prefect gives an order it must be obeyed," Miss Primrose went on. "In order to impress that on your mind, Bessie, you will be detained during the next half-holiday. But wait—I have not finished yet!"—as Bessie, with a sigh of relief, turned rapidly towards the door.

"Oh dud-dear! Y-yes, Miss Primrose!"

"In future, Bessie, you will refrain from bringing your pet into the school without permission. I must warn you now that the very next time it happens I shall send Ting-aling away!"

"Y-yes!" stammered Bessie.

She left the study in the depth of despair. Detained! She didn't mind that so much. But Ting—

"It's not fair!" Bessie burst out again.

It wasn't fair! Didn't they know Ting might die? Didn't they know that he could never get well again if deprived of his mistress' constant and loving care?

Bessie's eyes gleamed. Her lips set grimly. Well, blow Miss Primrose! Bother Sarah Harrigan! She was going to look after Ting-aling, and in spite of them she would bring him into the school. How else was she to look after him?

And he wouldn't be caught next time, Bessie vowed. She'd jolly well see to that! He wouldn't have been caught this time if it hadn't been for that Clarice. She had pushed those books on him!

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wouldn't care, would you, if Ting was sent away?"

"Bessie!" cried Babs.  
"Well, I'm going," Bessie announced. "I'm jolly well going, so there! I'll do my prep somewhere else, Babs!"

"But, Bessie—" Babs cried, in alarm. "Oh, good gracious! Look here, you old duffer!"

But Bessie, for once, was on her dignity. No longer did Bessie look upon Clarice Dyson with favour. One had only to make disparaging remarks about her pet to make Bessie an enemy for life. Clarice had done more than that. She had not only hurt Ting-aling, she had buried him in an avalanche of books; she had brought her—Bessie—into disfavour with the headmistress.

Quite wrathful was Bessie as, striding into the study, she snatched up her books.

"Bessie, you chump!" Babs cried. But Bessie, even though she was on the point of tears, was adamant. She fairly rushed to the door, slammed it after her, and bolted along the passage.

Babs bit her lip. Oh, goodness, what a mess everything was all at once! First Babs, now Bessie! She glanced quickly at Clarice, whose face was overshadowed by a false frown.

"Clarice, you—you didn't knock those books off the table?"

"Of course not!" Clarice replied. "She did it herself!"

"Well, it's not like Bessie—"

"Oh, really, Babs, you're not blaming me?" Clarice looked hurt. "Babs," she added, "don't you think it would be just as well if I went out of this study? I seem to have brought nothing but trouble between you and your friends!"

But Babs did not reply to that. In a moment she had repented her remark. It was not Clarice's fault. She had promised Primmy, anyway, that she would keep her in her study. But oh, these wretched misunderstandings! It was nice of Clarice to make such a sporting offer. Could Mabs be so hostile towards such a girl?

"No, it's sweet of you. But no, Clarice. It will soon blow over!"

Clarice smiled slyly. Not if she knew it. It was it soon going to blow over! Having set the wheels of discord revolving in Study No. 4, she was going to see that they kept revolving. It pleased her malicious sense of humour to have brought about this disruption.

She did not like Mabs. Bessie she considered a fat duffer, who occupied far too much space in the study she was sharing. And it was lovely to be able to twist Babs round her little finger like this. Clarice, really, was enjoying herself.

"Well, that's that!" she laughed, as she threw down her pen. "What next, Babs?"

"Call-over," Babs said. "The bell will go in ten minutes. But—oh, bother it! Clarice, do excuse me! I must find Mabs!"

Clarice smiled sympathetically. Babs got up and went out. Having no idea where Mabs was, however, she did not go off in the direction of Study No. 10.

She tripped off the other way, in the direction of the Fourth Form Common-room. Clarice hesitated a moment, pulling a wry face as she looked after her. And then, remembering the dance, rose with the intention of having a further chat with Lydia Crossendale.

She had reached the door—was about to step into the passage—when the door of Study No. 10, farther along, opened. She heard Mabs' voice.

"Thanks, awfully, Diaua! I'll call for my books later, if you don't mind."

Quick as thought, Clarice drew back. A sudden mischievous idea entered her head. She guessed that Mabs would come along here. Like lightning, she turned the key in the lock and listened. Yes, here was Mabs. She could hear her footsteps. They were pausing outside the door. Clarice cleared her throat.

"Oh, Babs," she said, addressing space, "I don't think you ought to say that, you know! After all, it's only natural—"

Mabs, outside, paused.

"But it's not natural—no, it's not!" The voice was that of Babs. Babs speaking vibrantly, quivering with rage. "Mabs is just a jealous little cat. She's shown herself to be the most hateful thing since you came. She might have been upset about her frock—but well—that's no reason why she should go for you like that, is it? You know, Clarice, I always loved Mabs till you came. I feel to-day that I hate her!"

Babs! That was Babs! The eyes of Mabs, listening, almost started from her head. Babs, her loyal friend, speaking like that about her—to her enemy! But there was no doubt about it.

## FIVE MINUTES' FUN

CHEMIST: "Well, how did the moth balls work I sold you? Have you killed any moths?"

MR. BROWN: "No, I tried all day yesterday, but I couldn't hit one of them!"

UNCLE: "Well, how do you like school, Lucie?"

LUCIE: "Er—shut, uncle!"

The two old gentlemen had met again after some years.

"Oh, hallo, Bob!" cried one. "Any improvements lately in your town?"

"Why, I left there a year ago!" replied the other.

"I know," said the first, "but any other improvements?"

MAISIE: "Oh, how could you tell teacher that no one helped you with your home-work? You know your daddy helped you!"

BETTY: "Oh, no he didn't. I helped him!"

BASIL: "How can I make a sixpence go a long way?"

BERTHA: "Oh, drop it down a drain!"

TRAVELLER: "I am travelling in pipe-lighters, sir. Can you give me an order?"

MANAGER (quickly): "Oh, yes. Be off, and shut that door behind you!"

It did not occur to Mabs that Clarice, among her other accomplishments, numbered that of an expert mimic. It did not dawn upon her that the study, except for Clarice, was absolutely vacant, and that Babs at that moment, instead of being in Study No. 4, was

in Sarah Harrigan's study, having been called to that apartment by the prefect to go through the impositions. She remained tense with dismay.

Babs!

"Oh, I don't think I should feel like that about it, Babs!" Clarice said in her natural voice. But she was grinning as she looked at the door, having heard very plainly the quick intake of breath that came from outside. "After all—"

"Well, don't let's talk about her," Babs' voice answered. "The less I hear of Mabs the better I shall like it. Yes, and the less I see of her, too!" the voice added. "I only wish to goodness she'd clear out of this study!"

Mabs gulped. Babs! Babs! For a moment she stared at the door, in two minds as to whether to burst in and confront the two.

Babs didn't mean to overhear, of course. But how Babs must hate her! How her opinion must have changed in the space of a few short hours! Humiliated, crushed, feeling perilously on the point of tears, Mabs turned away.

Babs—that Babs could be such a traitor! That she could run her down so behind her back! Was Babs so blissfully infatuated with Clarice, then, that she was willing to turn down her best friends?

Not until call-over did she see Babs; that was when, arm-in-arm with Clarice, she strolled into Big Hall. Clarice was laughing; she held Babs' arm very closely; and Lydia Crossendale, who saw them, grinned. But Mabs turned white. She felt, when she found Babs' eyes upon her, that she wanted to break away and run.

"Why, Mabs," Babs said, "where have you been? I—I've been looking for you all the evening."

Mabs bit her lip.

Her frame stiffened.

"Mabs!" the captain went on, with a sudden change in her voice.

Mabs averted her head.

"Oh, what's the matter with you, you goose?" Barbara cried. "Here, Mabs! I say, Mabs—"

She put her hand on the other's arm, resting it there while she looked with incredulous, puzzled eyes into the white face.

Mabs quivered. For a moment she fought an impulse to burst into tears. Then very deliberately she took hold of Babs' wrist; very gently, but with a firmness there was no mistaking, she disengaged Babs' hand. It was Babs' turn to look horrified.

"Mabs!"

"Please," Mabs said, looking directly in front of her, "would you mind, Barbara, not speaking to me?" It broke her heart to say it, but say it she must. "I don't like friends who run me down behind my back."

And at that moment Miss Charmant came in.



Unlucky for Bessie

THE most dismayed, confused, and horror-stricken girl in Cliff House was Barbara Redfern when call-over ended.

What had come over Mabs?

She couldn't understand it. Surely the silly chump hadn't taken her jealous resentment to these lengths. Never—never before in her life—had Mabs treated her like that, spoken to her like that.

Is Your Name Among These

# HILDA RICHARDS' REPLIES?



**Phyllis (Acton, Middlesex).**—The colours of Cliff House School are royal blue and gold. You would be in the lower division of the Second Form. Ivy Finch would probably be your chum.

**Admirer of Babs and Jimma (Westbury).**—You would be in the Second Form at Cliff House, and perhaps next term you would go up into the Third. You sound to me as if you are most like Jean Cartwright—are you Scottish? Anyhow your tastes are the same as hers.

**Margaret (Birmingham).**—You, too, would be in Cliff House's Second Form. Juno sends a tail-wag to Joey, and says she would like to have a game with Tam—just a quiet game. She likes cats. Would you trust her with your Tam?

**Daphne (Hounslow).**—So pleased to hear from you again. Hope you enjoy the "School Friend Annual" and the latest Cliff House stories in **THE SCHOOLGIRL**. Enclose a stamped, addressed envelope next time, and I will write you personally again.

**Cornelia (Transvaal, South Africa).**—If my readers only know how much I like receiving letters from them they would never have to "pluck up courage" to write to me. You would be in the Lower Fifth at Cliff House. If you give your full address next time I will send you a personal reply by mail.

**Sandy (Australia).**—Very many thanks for your nice long letter. I enjoyed every word of it. Please write me another, just as long, soon. Thanks, too, for the lovely card with a portrait of your dog, "Spider," on it. You told me so many interesting things in your letter. I would like to have replied to them all, but space is limited here. Perhaps you'll include your address next time.

**Welsh Maid.**—So glad to get your letter and hope you will write to me again soon. You may be sure that Diana Royston-Clarke will appear again in a series, so look out for her. How is your Autograph and Photograph Album looking? Nearly full now, I hope.

**"Johnny" (Surliton, Surrey).**—Cliff House stories do appear in book form—in the "Schoolgirls' Own" Library. Watch the advertisements in **THE SCHOOLGIRL**. So sorry you have written before without receiving a reply, but space in the paper is limited. If you enclosed a stamped, addressed envelope I would reply by post without fail.

**Madge (Fron Graig).**—Space won't allow me to answer all your questions here, but if you, too, will write to me again and enclose a stamped, addressed

envelope, I will answer you fully by post. There is no official captain of the Upper Third, but Madge Stevens is "unofficial captain." Yes; you would be in the Fourth with Babs & Co. Wouldn't that be jolly?

**Moyna Stead.**—So glad you like my stories, Moyna. Write me a lovely long letter when you have time to spare, will you? Juno sends you a paw-shake.

**Lorna Lipmoy (Brisbane, Queensland).**—Thank you very much for the nice folder containing views of Brisbane. I liked it, and I especially admired the beauty of Grey Street Bridge in several of the photographs. Please write to me again.

**Lofty (Whitstable, Kent).**—Topsy, your little dog, sounds perfectly sweet. Her trick with the plate is both clever and amusing. Juno thanks her for her "Wuff-wuff" and doggy kiss, and sends her a bark of applause for her neat tricks—and a tail-wag!

**Hilda (Manchester).**—Babs & Co. belong to the Linnet Patrol. Do write and let me know how you get on in the Guides. It is a fine movement and I'm certain you'll have many happy times.

**Bunty (Ferring-by-Sea, Sussex).**—Thank you for your criticisms. I don't think you were at all "checky." I don't remember getting a letter from you last year, my dear, and I always reply to every reader who encloses a stamped, addressed envelope.

**Gloria (Central Queensland, Australia).**—As you would be in the Lower Third if you went to Cliff House, I'm afraid Miss Charmant would not be your Form-mistress. Miss Bullivant is in charge of the Lower Third.

**Edna (Gorton, Manchester).**—So glad you liked the Diana Royston-Clarke series. Ginger sounds a very clever cat. Please give him a "wuff" from Juno, and if he is not too old and dignified, a tickle from me.

**"Lanky" (Bedford, Canada).**—You certainly should be able to get the "Schoolgirls' Own" Library in Nova Scotia. To make certain of obtaining your copy, or copies, each month, it is best to give your newsdealer a standing order for one or more copies a month. Back numbers can be obtained from the Back Numbers Department, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Bear Alley, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Enclose ten cents for every book you want.

**Sunny (Farnworth, near Bolton).**—Very glad to hear that you are getting better after your long illness. Tony, your lovebird, certainly sounds as if he is pleased with his own appearance as he spends so much time kissing his own reflection in a mirror! I think birds must be vain, because parrots always call themselves "Pretty polly," don't they?

*Hilda Richards' address is c/o The Editor, THE SCHOOLGIRL, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.*

"Get the lump," Clarry said, frowning. "Oh, Babs, I hope I've not upset her!"

But Babs was not listening. She was conscious of nothing during call-over, except that amazing interview. She hardly heard her name when it was called—indeed, Miss Charmant had to call it twice.

Mabs, very pale and very upright, continued to stare straight in front of her. Only when it was over, and the Form dismissed, did Babs make an attempt to speak again.

"Mabs!" she said.

Mabs looked at her, and then, with just the tiniest toss of the head, walked right out.

"Oh, my goodness!" murmured Babs, and ran after her. "Mabs!"

But Mabs, as if she had never heard, walked right on.

Babs bit her lip. A little resentment rose within her at that. Dash it all, she thought angrily, if she had done anything to offend Mabs, Mabs ought to stand her ground and have it out!

What did she mean by "running her down behind her back"? Could it be that she had overheard those few simple remarks she had made to Clarry after she had left the study? But even the most elastic stretch of imagination could hardly have classed that as "running down." Mabs had never before shown herself so sensitive on those points.

She wanted to run after Mabs, to have it out there and then, but pride came to her aid. No; in this mood only a row could result, and a fine opportunity she would give to Lydia Crossendale and those others of her enemies in the Form to glory in an open quarrel with the girl from whom she had always been deemed inseparable.

Puzzled, still a little nettled, but with a heavy weight on her heart, Babs went up to bed.

Again Mabs, strained and white, did not look at her, did not even wish her good-night. The rift in the friendship of Babs and Mabs seemed complete.

But Clarry, seeing, chuckled gleefully to herself. That finished Mabs, she reckoned—and serve her jolly well right!

The Fourth turned in—some to sleep, some not to sleep. Rather contrary to precedent, Bessie Bunter was in bed first. Had anyone in the dormitory been watching Bessie closely that night—and, fortunately for Bessie, they were not—they would have observed, during the time she was undressing, a rather curious departure from her usual conduct.

For Bessie, contrary to her usual rule, said never a word while undressing.

In the middle of Bessie's bed was a lump, suggesting that something lay under the counterpane.

Rather anxiously Bessie gazed at that lump as she undressed. Once, amazingly, she patted it and made a strange sound with her lips; whereat the lump stirred ever so slightly, calling forth another pat—which, however, was not so much of a pat as a smack of admonishment.

And under the counterpane Ting-aling—which was the lump's identity—snuffled.

Ting-aling, rescued from the kennel between call-over and dormitory bell, had been sneaked into the Fourth Form dormitory by his fond mistress.

Bessie knew full well the punishment that would be hers if it were known that she had smuggled Ting into the dormitory; but, loving her pet as she did, and fearing that he was indeed unwell, she was prepared to risk anything for him.

Meantime, Ting was not very happy. True, the bed was soft and warm, but he would have appreciated a little more fresh air. However, he lay quiet while Bessie hastily undressed and then clambered into bed.

A few minutes passed. Ting heard the girls' voices, then Sarah's sharp "Good-night!" There was the click of the switch as the light was put out, and then all was silent.

Bessie, one plump arm round Ting, was already fast asleep, but Ting couldn't settle down; he wanted air; it was becoming much too hot and stuffy for him under the counterpane.

Slowly he wriggled from Bessie's clasp, and at last emerged outside the bed. Ah, that was much better! He curled himself in a ball.

For a moment his questioning eyes roved along the two rows of beds, each containing the sleeping form of a girl. From each bed rose a rhythmic breathing.

Ting growled sleepily and contentedly and, snuggling down at last, prepared to make a night of it.

And then—  
What was that?

In a moment all Ting's house-dog instincts asserted themselves. Up went his little head. His body stiffened.

Someone was in the dormitory—somebody was moving about in the darkness. He heard a soft mutter:

"Up, Clarry?"

"Yes, rather!" Clarry said.

Something was wrong.

Instinct told Ting-a-ling that every girl in that room should be asleep.

Certainly nobody had the right to be moving about when his mistress was enjoying such well-earned repose, and suddenly Ting, deciding that it was up to him, ran to the end of Bessie's bed, and, putting his paw up on the rail, barked.

Yowp!

From the four girls making towards the door there came startled gasps.

"My hat! Here's a dog in the dorm!" Lydia breathed.

"Yowp!" Ting-a-ling agreed.

"Where the dickens—!" and then another gasp as, suddenly, Barbara Redfern sat up. And Babs' voice rang through the darkness: "Who's there?"

Yowp! barked Ting again.

There was a pause. In that pause Babs climbed out of bed. She switched on the light. Lydia Crossendale, Rosa Rodworth, Freda Ferriers, and Clarice, all fully dressed, stood before her.

"O.K.!" Lydia said, with a sneer. "We're caught! Get back to bed, old spool-sport!"

But Babs was not looking at Lydia. She was looking at Clarry.

"Clarry—you! You were going to break bounds?"

Clarry bit her lip.

"Well?" she asked, with a flash of resentment. "Well, no, I wasn't—not exactly!"

"But you were going with Lydia."

"Only part of the way."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean—"

Clarice paused. She glanced hastily at Ting, who, assured that everything was all right, was now sitting up calmly in his mistress's arms. "But never mind!" Clarice said. "I—I'll tell you to-morrow, Babs."

Babs shook her head. Her eyes were full of mystification. She turned to Bessie:

"Bessie, why did you bring Ting-a-ling in here? You know it's forbidden."

"Yes, I know," Bessie glowered.

"But if you juj-jolly well think I'm going to see my dog die because he



"IN future Bessie, you will not share a study with anyone," Miss Primrose said sternly. "If I find you here again I shall punish you." Poor Bessie! She was the latest victim of Clarice's scheming!

wants a little warmth and comfort, you're mistaken!"

"But you know what Miss Primrose said—"

"Blow Miss Primrose!" Bessie returned indignantly. "All right! Well, get to bed, everybody!" Babs said. "Bessie, you'd better get up before rising-bell and put Ting back in his kennel. We can't do anything now."

Bessie sniffed. Babs rather worriedly climbed into bed. Lydia & Co., scowling, undressed, the light was turned out. Ting settled down to sleep again, and all was silence.

But in her own bed Clarice Dyson lay, with gleaming eyes and bitter thoughts. Ting's presence in the dorm had spoiled her of her dance—and she had been looking forward to such a jolly evening in the company of Lydia & Co. She had spent money on tickets. More than that, Babs would want to know all about it.

Well, she wasn't going to stand that—not she! Bessie Bunter had no right to bring that animal into the room. She wouldn't sleep with it in the room!

Clarice waited until she felt that everybody was asleep, and then softly tiptoed from her own bed, caught up the surprised Ting-a-ling, and, carrying him to the door, dropped him out in the cold and draughty passage. Ting-a-ling whined.

"Let me in!" he was trying to say. But nobody was awake. Clarice, with a vengeful grin, climbed into bed again.

Outside, Ting sat looking with pathetic eyes through the darkness in the direction of the door, and then, as nobody came, he ambled off to find fresh quarters for himself elsewhere.

Half an hour later—

Click! On went the lights. The girls sat up, blinking sleepily. Miss Prim-

rose, an almost frightening look upon her face, stood in the doorway.

"Bessie!" she cried.

"Eh? What? Oh crumbs! Did—did you spuss-speak to me, Miss Primrose?"

"I did," Miss Primrose's eyes gleamed. "I thought I told you, Bessie, not to bring your dog into the school!"

"Eh?" Bessie said anxiously, and her eyes went to the foot of the bed. Then she jumped violently. "Oh, mum-my hat! Sus-somebody's let him out! I mum-mean, he isn't here! That is—Oh crumbs!"

"Your dog," Miss Primrose said, "walked into my room five minutes ago, Bessie."

"Eh?"

"He jumped upon my bed."

"Oh, mum-my hat!"

"I presume," Miss Primrose said bitingly, "that you brought him into the school, otherwise he would not have been strolling about at this time of night. I will see you to-morrow, Bessie."

"Oh dud-dear!"

"Good-night!" Miss Primrose said fiercely, and went out, clicking off the lights.

Bessie still sat and blinked. She hardly realised what had happened yet, and then, when it dawned upon her in all its full horror, she paled. Ting caught—herself on the carpet once more! But how did Ting get out?

"I s-sussay, you know, who put him out?" she demanded suspiciously.

"Oh, go to sleep!" came Diana's voice.

"But I won't go to sleep! I mum-mean, somebody must have put him out," Bessie said, "because the door was shut! Who was it?"

"Well, you brought him in," said Clarice Dyson. "Perhaps you walked

in your sleep and put him out your-  
self."

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
Bessie glowered. Her heart bled for her pet now—And, oh crumbs, what on earth would she say to Miss Primrose to-morrow?

But somebody had put him out—and Bessie vowed vengeance against the unknown.

Who was she?  
That question was answered for her on the morrow. For almost the first thing she saw on the coverlet at the foot of the bed was a handkerchief. The handkerchief she recognised at once. If she had not, the initials "C. D." would have told her its owner.

"C. D." That was Clarice Dyson. Clarice had put Ting-a-ling out, then. Clarice's handkerchief must have dropped from the pocket of her pyjama coat as she snatched the little animal up.

Bessie's face became ferocious.  
"Babs! Babs! I say, where's Clarice?"

"Gone downstairs," Babs answered. Bessie eyes gleamed. She might have guessed. The cat!

She washed and dressed with a rapidity that was amazing, and, breathing vengeance, went in search of Clarry.

Stella Stone, the captain of the school, met her at the bottom of the stairs.  
She eyed the fat girl rather grimly.

"Bessie, Miss Primrose wants to see you—at once!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bessie. "About Ting?"

"About Ting," Stella confirmed. "I've just had the privilege of taking the little beggar away. Miss Primrose says that as you're so incapable of taking care of him yourself, he's going to remain with the Friardale vet for the rest of the term. But better hurry."

Bessie stood stockstill. She blinked. Ting-a-ling was taken from her! Ting, her little pet, would know Cliff House

no more until after the end of the term!

Then suddenly anger rushed up to take the place of self-pity. Blow Primmy! She'd settle with the author of all this mischief first!

Face red, eyes gleaming, she rushed into Study No. 4. Clarice Dyson, turning from the bureau, started.

"You cat!" gasped Bessie, almost in tears.

"Eh?"  
"You mum-mean thing!"  
"What on earth—?"

"You—you awful cheat!" And Bessie came into the study. "You beastly, mean, awful thing!" she got out tempestuously. "I sus-suppose you're satisfied now?"

Clarice grinned.  
"Oh, buzz off!" she cried.  
"I won't!"

"Yes, you will!" Clarice's eyes flashed. "Here, don't you come near me!" she cried, in alarm; and Bessie, beside herself, hardly knowing what she intended to do, ran round, the study table. "Don't you dare—"

But Bessie was on vengeance bent. Perhaps in that moment Bessie did look really ferocious, though to be sure she had no intention of going for Clarice.

The expression on her face was sufficient to alarm Clarice, however, burdened as she was by her guilty conscience. She raised a book.

"Look here—"  
Bessie took another step forward

And then—whiz! Clarice flung the book; but, more by luck than judgment, Bessie caught it as it spun towards her.

Hardly realising what she was doing, she hurled it back at Clarice. Unfortunately, Bessie's aim was erratic; the book flew towards the window, and a second later there was a crash and a tinkle of glass.

At the same moment Clarice staggered back, holding her head in her hands.

"Oh!" she cried.  
"Mum-my hat!"

Bessie, her first anger suddenly evaporated, glared first in doubt at the window and then bewilderingly at Clarice, reeling there as though from a blow. At the same moment there was a step in the passage.

"Bessie!" a terrifying voice rapped out.

Bessie jumped.  
"Miss Primrose!"  
"Miss Primrose!" that lady repeated, and glanced quickly at the broken window. "I heard sounds of quarrelling in this study. Gracious, Clarice, what is the matter with you?"

"Bessie—Bessie Bunter threw a book at me!" Clarice muttered. "It hit my head and glanced off through the window."

"What?"  
Bessie stammered.

"Oh crumbs, you know! I dud-didn't! I didn't dream of glancing off through the window. I mum-mean I nun-never touched her, Miss Primrose—I dud-didn't, really. She threw it first, and I threw it next! But I nun-never had the book in my hands, you know."

"Bessie!"  
"Oh dud-dear!"  
"Bessie!"

The headmistress' lips compressed. "You will leave this study—at once! This bickering, this squabbling, this—this hooliganism! Clarice is a new girl here. I want her to be treated with courtesy. She was placed in this study because I considered that she would receive that courtesy in full measure. I find you squabbling—"

Bessie scowled sulkily.  
"Well, she's a s-sneak!"

"Thank you, Bessie—no interruptions, please!" Miss Primrose said grimly. "I am extremely displeased and disappointed with you! Apparently—with bitterness—you have not yet learned the lesson of common courtesy to your schoolfellows! The privilege of your sharing a study, Bessie Bunter is granted only to girls who can behave themselves while they are in possession of them!"

"Bib-but—" Bessie blurted.  
"You," Miss Primrose went on,

"have failed to observe those rules, Bessie. I am reluctant to take this step, but I must do it for the sake of law and order in the school. In future, Bessie Bunter, you will not share a study—with anyone. You will take your meals in Hall. You will do your lessons in class, and you will start—now!" Miss Primrose added grimly. "If I catch you in this or any other study, I shall punish you!"

Bessie's lips quivered. She stared in horror at her headmistress.

"Bib-but, Miss Primrose! Oh dud-dear! You don't mean to say that—"

"I do! Stella"—to Stella Stone, who came up at that moment—"please make it your duty to see that Bessie uses no other study until orders to the contrary are given by me!"

And with that she rustled out, while Bessie stared dazedly as Stella's hand fell upon her shoulder, and Clarice, despite her outward look of misery, was at heart exulting.

She, it seemed, was scoring all along the line.

Where now was the happy trio that had inhabited Study No. 4?

## "CLARICE DYSON'S DECEIT"

A powerful complete Cliff House School story, in which the friendship of Babs and Mabs is further threatened by the scheming of the Fourth Form's new girl . . . This is

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