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"HAPPY-GO-LUCKY LULU": MEET HER IN THE FIRST OF A NEW HUMOROUS SERIES WITHIN

# THE SCHOOLGIRL

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Incorporating  
'SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN



## THE REBEL'S RETURN— AT MIDNIGHT!

Rosa Rodworth's Most Daring  
Escapade

Read about it in this week's  
exciting long complete Cliff  
House School story

Featuring Rosa Rodworth, The Stormy Petrel Of The Fourth,  
This Fine Cliff House School Story Is Complete This Week



# Rosa goes her own way

By HILDA RICHARDS

## The Rebel

"BRAVO!"

"Topping, Mabs!"

"Do it again!"

There was quite an enthusiastic outburst of applause from the five girls collected in the music-room of Cliff House School.

While Mabel Lynn, flushed, breathless, her golden curls tossing in glistening coils about her extremely pretty face, stood on the dais and laughed.

"You like it?" she asked.

"It was topping," Barbara, Redfern, leader of the Fourth Form, applauded.

"Yes! Do go through it again, Mabs." Mabs laughed, showing her white teeth. It was a pleased laugh, a laugh which made Mabel Lynn, Cliff House's most ardent amateur actress, look most attractive.

Barbara Redfern's blue eyes lighted up with pleasure. Clara Trevely, the tousel-headed Junior Games Captain, cordially grinned.

Jemima Carstairs adjusted her monocle a little more firmly and approvingly, and Leila Carroll put her hands upon her hips.

Even fat Bessie Bunter looked impressed.

"Yes, rather, you girls! You know that was as good as I could have done it," she said now. "D-do it again, Mabs."

"Well, if you really want me to—"

Mabs temporised. They all did. At all times Mabs was worth watching, but in this she excelled herself. It was a small sketch which she had written herself, and which she had some vague idea of performing at the evening concert which

would take place after the opening of the hospital bazaar which was to be held in the grounds of Cliff House School in a fortnight's time.

It was a sketch which contained only two actors, and the one drawback to its performance at the moment was the fact that the other actor was non-existent—the other actor most certainly having to be a boy.

Mabs, in a burst of inspiration, had

**UNDER** the grim sentence of expulsion for a deed she did not commit, Rosa Rodworth, reckless Stormy Petrel of the Fourth Form at Cliff House, determines to do as she pleases while she is still at the school. And all the while her false friend, Renee Ballard, is striving to bring Rosa into fresh disgrace.

written it a little time ago, with only the vaguest of ideas as to what it should be used for.

On the dais she had been taking both parts herself—that of boy and girl.

"Well, here goes!" she said.

She started off as the boy. The boy was talking to the girl, grumbling and grouching as boys do. Every gesture, every grievance was completely natural, and though Babs & Co. had seen it all before, they stood spellbound as the performance was repeated.

So egrossed were they, indeed, that nobody saw the door behind them open. And nobody for a minute or two, at

all events, saw the face of the boy who peered into the room.

A cheery, frank and good-looking face it was, surmounted by an unruly shock of brown hair. Eyes as blue as Barbara Redfern's fastened in admiration on the gesticulating form on the dais. A flush of pleasure, of admiration stained his cheeks, and at once, like the rest of her audience, Dick Livingstone, a cousin of the wealthy and overbearing Rosa Rodworth, the stormy petrel of Cliff House's Fourth Form, became spellbound.

"Jolly, good!" he cried involuntarily. Mabs swung round with a start. And then she smiled, blushing a little. She knew Dick Livingstone of Friarale School, of course. They all knew him, all liked him and admired him.

A frank, open, honest boy, an extremely good actor himself, Dick had done much to endear himself to the hearts of the Cliff House girls.

"Why, Dick! Come in," Mabs dimpled. "Goodness, haven't you seen you for ages."

"Thanks, but I mustn't stop long," Dick said cheerily. "I'm really looking for Rosa. That's why I peeped in here—just in case she might be with you."

Then he frowned, looking quickly from one face to the other, perhaps aware of the sudden constraint which seemed to have descended. There was an instant's death-like silence.

"I say, what's the matter?" he blurted.

Babs glanced at Mabs. As if they could tell him what was the matter! When they knew how fond he was of that stormy-headed cousin of his! Obviously Dick did not know!

That Rosa, his cousin, was expelled! "Babs, what is it?" "Oh, nothing!" Babs muttered. The others, as if afraid to meet his scrutiny, turned away, really feeling guilty themselves in that moment.

"Mabs, you tell me," Dick begged. "There's nothing wrong, is there?"

Mabs bit her lip. "Oh, Dick, please!" she begged. "I can't. Ask Rosa—"

"Ahem! You see," Jimma purred, "it's—it's not exactly our business."

Dick looked wonderingly from one face to the other. Then hopelessly he shook his head. "All right, you old mystery birds! We'll leave it for Rosa, then. But wait a minute, Mabs. About this play, I say, you know, I think that's jolly good. Is it yours?"

Mabs nodded, relieved to have taken him off the track.

"Jolly, clever—rather!" Dick looked eager. "Just, in fact, the sort of thing I'm looking for. I came over to see old Rosa to tell her—I'm going to ask her advice about it. But the fact is—" Dick went on. "Well, you know my father is running a variety company—"

Mabs smiled. "Yes, of course!" "Poor old chap—isn't doing too well," Dick said, his face clouding a little. "He called upon me this morning. He's bringing his company to the Courtfield Palace in a fortnight's time, and he's an idea that as Cliff House and Friardale are such well-known schools in the district, he might stage a turn representative of both of them. It was his idea, you see," Dick went on, studying Mabs' face, "that Cliff House and Friardale should do some stunts between them—just to draw patronage from both schools. I had a notion that Rosa and I might do something together. That's why I came here, but—" The boy hesitated.

"Well, now I've seen this—" Mabs smiled. "You'd like to use it?" she guessed. "Well, yes, if you wouldn't mind."

He paused. "It would be frightfully decent of you, Mabs, and would do the old pater a end of a good turn. I know it's asking a lot—"

Mabs laughed. "For answer she caught up the script, impulsively pressing it into his hands.

"It's yours, Dick," she said. "Do what you like with it."

"Oh, Mabs, you don't mean—"

"But I do!" Mabs cried merrily. "Why not? I only wrote it in the first place for my own amusement. I never had any idea at the time of using it for anything! Do as you like with it. I—" And abruptly she stopped as the door opened and two girls appeared on the threshold. "Why, here is Rosa!" she cried.

Rosa it was—with her friend, Renee Ballard, obviously having just come in. Rosa, proud, haughty, carrying a parcel under her arm, her dark eyes fastened full upon her cousin. Dick jumped forward eagerly.

"Why, Rosa, I've been looking for you. I say, I came to see you about a show and Mabs here—" And then, aware of something in her face, of the sudden constraint in the attitude of the girls to whom he had been talking, he stopped. "But half a tick," he cried. "Before we go any further, let's clear up this funny business. Rosa, what's the matter? What's been happening?"

Rosa's lips curled. "You don't know?"

"Of course I don't know. You're not in any sort of a scrape, are you?"

"For a moment Rosa was silent, her face full of troubled bitterness. Then carelessly she shrugged.

"Well, I suppose I'd better tell you," she said. "I am. The fact of the matter is, Dick, I'm expelled!"

Dick stared. "Expelled! You? Oh rats! Don't rag—be serious!"

"But I am serious!" Rosa vented a rather unnatural laugh. "Deadly, dreadfully serious, Dick. I wonder," she added mockingly, "that even you dare to stand there talking openly to

me. Don't you know I'm the bad girl of the school? Don't you know I'm the girl who's not fit to be spoken for? Look at them—with a scornful wave of the hand towards Babs & Co.—"see how they shrink away! Afraid," she added bitterly, "of contamination—"

Babs flushed.

"Rosa—"

"No, no! Wait a minute!" Dick, white-faced, wide-eyed, was regarding his haughty cousin as though he had never heard aright. "Rosa, no!" he cried desperately. "I can't believe it!"

"But it's true, all the same," Rosy returned. "I'm expelled, I tell you. The reason," she added scoffingly, "that I haven't departed already is because my father can't be found in France, and there's nowhere to send me! Thanks to the charity of Miss Primmy, I'm allowed to stick on here, using my study and the dormitory as usual, but, apart from that, the most utter outcast who ever disgraced the school."

Dick looked overwhelmed. "Rosa, don't be an idiot! Oh heck! I can't get the hang of this! Why were you expelled?"

"Because," Rosa retorted bitterly, "I tried to give the Form a leg-up, that's why. I tried to get a film star to open their silly bazaar for them. Well, I didn't. Instead, I had a row with the film star, and just a few minutes after I left her, somebody else buzzed a stone through her window and hit her. Of course, I was blamed—give a dog a bad name! And so—"

She shrugged. Defiant the shrug, meaning to express her own indifference in the matter. Yet at that moment, despite her haughty bearing, Rosa was feeling anything but indifferent, anything but happy. She was innocent of that crime; but appearances, her reputation, were against her.

Everybody believed it of her—with the exception of Renee Ballard—and because they were all against her, the iron had entered Rosa's heart. She was



WITH sudden violence Rosa turned and flung a parcel at Dick's feet. "And there," she cried bitterly, "is a present I bought for you!" Dick flinched; he knew his cousin could not afford to spend money like this.

## 4 "Rosa Goes Her Own Way"

trying to tell herself that it did not matter—that she didn't care. But—

Dumbly Dick stared at her; from her to Babs & Co., who flushed uneasily under his scrutiny.

"Ahem!" Babs said. "Dick, excuse us—"

"Oh, no!" Rosa chipped in. "Don't go. I'm sure," she added mockingly, "that it must be such a treat for you to watch so interesting a domestic drama. But don't look so cut up about it, Dick. It doesn't matter. After all, why should you worry? I don't."

Dick gazed at her despairingly.

"That's a silly attitude to take!" he cried. "You know jolly well, Rosa, that you do care. Oh, I can see it now! I heard about your father's going abroad and leaving you with a balance in the bank. I suppose, as usual, the money's turned over to your head—"

Rosa flushed dangerously.

"Are you talking to me?"

"I am," Dick retorted. "I know what an idiot you can be when you let money turn your head. I was afraid when I heard what your father had done that something like this would happen—"

Rosa's eyes flashed.

"Dick, stop it!" she cried sharply. "I won't have you talk to me like that! Anyway," she added roughly, "what the dickens are you doing at Cliff House?"

"I came to see you."

"Yes?" Rosa's lips curled. "To lecture me, of course. And that's why I find you here—with Babs & Co. You came to see me and got as far as Mabel Lynn, and then just forgot all about me—"

"Hold on, hold on!" Dick interposed anxiously. "Don't let's have a row. Now, Rosa, listen to me. Don't go and get your silly back up for nothing. I came over to see you—you know why. I was struck with this little thing Mabs was doing—"

Rosa's red lips curled bitterly.

"And—well," Dick finished, "you see what happened? Mabs, frightfully decent, has given me the play, and I jolly well think it will be a winner!" he added, with a flush of enthusiasm. "I wanted to fix up something with you—and—well, here it is. We can do this together as easy as falling off a log!"

"When I'm expelled?" Rosa scoffed.

"Oh rats! I don't believe you will be expelled! Anyway, it's nothing to do with the school. Rosa, old girl, my pater wants us to do something—you won't let him down?" Dick pleaded desperately.

Rosa was silent. She felt every eye on her now. The appeal for a moment pierced the unreasonable, her pique against her cousin. Perhaps mentally in that moment she was aware of the difference between her own wealthy parent and the proud, struggling, just managing to keep his head above water, Ben Livingstone.

Nice chap, Uncle Ben. She had always liked him, always wished that he would take her father's offer of assistance and let him invest money in his show.

Then again she looked up. She saw the face of Mabel Lynn—Mabs gazing at her so earnestly, so wistfully. Mabs imploring her with her blue eyes to accede to Dick's request and say "Yes."

Almost in that moment Rosa felt her resistance melting. After all—

And then, looking up suddenly, she saw the face of her friend, Renee Ballard. Renee was gazing at her as if she read very well the thoughts that were going on in her mind. Renee, who

was shaking her head, whose expression suggested that she would just be giving up to Dick if she surrendered now. She stiffened.

"Rosa, won't you?" Dick pleaded. Bitingly, against the better dictates of her conscience, the answer came.

"No!"

"But, Rosa, old girl, I—I must have someone."

"Well, ask Mabel Lynn. You're so jolly thick with her."

A murmur came from the chums. Mabs flushed dangerously.

"You refuse to act the part?" she asked.

"Yes, I do!"

Mabs drew a deep breath.

"Very well," she said, and turned quietly to the boy. "Dick, I'm sorry. I don't want to upset things, but at the same time I can't see you stranded. Rosa seems to have made up her mind. If she doesn't want to help you, I will."

Dick's eyes rounded.

"Mabs, you don't mean—"

"I mean," Mabs said, with a glance at the Stormy Petrel, "that if you want me to partner you in the play, I'll do it. But first," she said, "give Rosa a chance to change her mind."

Rosa, for a second stood still, the colour in her tempestuous face coming and going. She had a momentary sensation of her own smallness. Then pride—that pride which had so often been her undoing in the past, aided by that sense of bitter wrong which had been almost part of her nature since her expulsion, rushed violently to her assistance.

"And I," she returned scornfully, "don't want a chance to change my mind, Mabel Lynn! Go on, get on with it! He's chosen you! He doesn't want to act with me. I'm expelled! I'm outside the pale! I—and she choked—side the idiot who let money turn her head! Well, get on with it. Act your play together. And I hope"—in a voice that trembled with thwarted jealousy—"that it will be a flop!"

And crash went the door, vaking the echoes and making the walls vibrate, as the Stormy Petrel flounced out. Then, while everyone stood in consternation, it opened again.

Rosa cried quiveringly, "is present I bought for you!"

And she threw the parcel she had been carrying at his feet before, with another slam, the door closed upon her again!



## Doing Their Best

STRANGE girl, Rosa Rodworth. No wonder nobody understood her, for it was doubtful if Rosa understood herself. Up in the air one moment, down in the dumps the next. A few moments of red-hot rebellion and lawlessness, tempered most astonishingly with gentleness and affection.

And yet in that outburst Rosa was more to be pitied than blamed. She had been a fool! She knew it, though not yet would she admit it. Innocent she was of the charge on which she had been expelled, but her conscience told her that had she acted differently she never would have merited the charge.

The truth of what Dick had said stung. Coming from him it hurt. From the moment he had said it, Rosa's bitter resentment had forced her to counter-attack—and Mabel Lynn had provided her with that excuse.

Quivering she was as she flung off down the passage, flouncing into her own

study. Renee Ballard more thoughtfully followed her.

"Rosa, old thing, don't upset yourself," she soothed.

Rosa gave a cry that was not unlike a sob.

"It was beastly of Dick, saying a thing like that in front of the others," Renee went on in virtuous indignation. "I'm bothered if I'd let a boy cousin of mine humiliate me like that. And then on top of it, to prefer Mabel Lynn to act with him—"

Rosa shifted restlessly. She listened, but she didn't want to listen. That wasn't true. Dick hadn't intended to humiliate her. Dick hadn't really preferred Mabel Lynn to her. But it soothed her wounded vanity, her bitter pride, to listen, little realising that this artful girl who posed as her friend was just trying to stir up trouble.

While Dick, in the music-room, shaking his head, slowly picked up the parcel. There was a wry smile at the corners of his lips.

"Silly old Rosa!" he said. He looked at the parcel, tenderly shaking his head. "I'm sorry, you girls Rosa didn't mean to cut up rusty, of course. I suppose, but being expelled, she is so touchy. But oh, my hat, what a mess she's made of her things! You don't really believe she did hurt the film star? There must be some mistake somewhere—there must!"

But though they hated to tell him so, they all felt there was no mistake. Mabs, with a wistful smile, crossed over to him.

"Dick, don't worry," she said softly. "We're all sorry about it—both for Rosa's sake and for the sake of the Form. But you don't think Primmy would have sacked Rosa unless she'd been sure?"

"But I tell you—"

And he stared, shaking his head. He read his answer in the faces before him. They believed; Primmy believed.

A rather resolute look came into his face, a gleam to his eyes.

"Well, I say again there's been a mistake," he replied stubbornly. "Oh, I can see you think I'm talking through my hat, but I know Rosa. I tell you. I don't star—she's that sort of idiot. But as for throwing a stone through her window and hurting her—no! I don't and won't believe that. I'm going to see Primmy," he added tersely.

"But, Dick, what for?"

"But Dick, without replying, went out then, leaving the six girls looking askance at each other.

Straight to Miss Primrose's study he went, knocking upon the door. The headmistress looked up in surprise as he entered.

"Why, Livingstone—"

"Miss Primrose, I'm sorry, but I had to come and see you!" Dick blurted. "I've just heard the news—about Rosa. Could you give her another chance?"

"Rosa," Miss Primrose informed him, "has had more chances than I have ever given any other girl. I am sorry that prompts your interference on her behalf, but my mind is made up. Rosa must leave this school!"

In vain Dick pleaded. Miss Primrose was not to be turned from her decision.

Hopelessly he went out, trailing back towards the Fourth Form corridor. A uniformed boy, wearing the blue-and-gold uniform of Holland's Stores, in Courtfield, grinned at him.

"Can you tell me where Miss Rodworth is to be found?" he asked. "I've got to deliver this parcel to her."

"Come with me," Dick said. He led the way. But reaching Study

No. 1, which Rosa shared with Lydia Crossendale and Freda Ferriers, he paused. The door of that apartment was open. Two other boys, evidently messengers, and a girl, were standing near the door. From inside came Rosa's voice:

"How much did you say—thirty shillings? All right, sit down. Renee, you might get my cheque-book, will you? And if you've any loose change, just give these people a tip."

Dick frowned. He went forward.

He reached the study. Rosa was there, so also was the girl he knew now for Renee Ballard, the daughter of the man with whom Mr. Rodworth was co-operating in the Continental business deal.

Renee was groping in her purse. Rosa, a smile on her face, and never a trace of that stormy passion she had exhibited only ten minutes ago in the music-room, was busily writing in her cheque-book.

She glanced up as he entered, smiled, and then, as if remembering, shot him a look of cold disdain. She went on writing.

"Rosa!" Dick cried.

"Oh, please wait till I've finished with this!" Rosa said. "Now, boy, how much for you?"

"Two pounds, please, Miss Rodworth."

"And you?"

"Two-pounds-five."

Rosa wrote the cheques. Dick blinked.

"And you, Miss Whatever-your-name-is? You're the girl from Lamonts', aren't you? You told them to alter that lace neck on the frock?"

"Yes, Miss Rodworth. The alteration is done."

"Thanks! Four-pounds-ten, isn't it?" Rosa laughed. "Well, here's the cheque. Just a tick, Dick! Where's the Holland's boy? Oh, there you are! Is that my fur? That'll be five pounds, won't it?"

"Rosa!" Dick cried.

"He stood aghast. The girl was spending a fortune! Rosa talked in pounds as he talked in shillings.

But the messengers were paid off, and Rosa, with a yawn, stretched her arms and looked with pleasure at the pile of boxes and parcels that now littered the settee.

Renee smiled.

"Your cousin wants to speak to you, Rosa."

"Eh? Oh, yes! Rosa regarded him aloofly. "Well, anything I can do for you?"

"Rosa, I want to talk to you." Dick's lips compressed as he glanced at Renee. "Alone!" he added significantly.

Rosa pouted.

"Renee is my friend!" she expostulated. "You can say whatever you have to say in front of her."

"Oh, no, no!" Renee interposed at once. "I'm sure Dick would rather see you alone. In any case," she added, "I've something else I want to do." And Renee went out.

Dick turned and faced his cousin.

"Rosa," he said quietly, "don't you think you're being rather a fool?"

Immediately a change came over Rosa. She sat up sharply.

"And don't you think," she countered madly, "that you've got a thundering cheek? Don't—"

"Rosa, wait!" And Dick, rather pale, shook his head. "Do listen to me without flaming up. I want to tell you I've been to Primmy."

"Primmy! What for?"

"To try to get you off expulsion!"

Rosa stared at him



"ROSA," Mabs panted, "you're not going out?" The Stormy Petrel turned languidly. "I certainly am!" she returned coolly, and Mabs' heart sank. So all her efforts to save Rosa had been in vain!

"Oh, Dick, you silly old chump! What did she say?"

"She said—?" Dick shook his head. "She believes, Rosa, that you did bluff the film star. But I don't. And,"

Dick said, "I'm going to try to prove it. If only I can prove it, then the expulsion would be cancelled."

Rosa laughed shortly.

"Save yourself the trouble," she advised. "Don't you think I've tried to prove it already? I tell you, Dick, it's no good. "Don't you realise," she added bitterly, "that it's Rosa Rodworth who is supposed to have done that—Rosa, the black sheep of the fold? If the real culprit herself came forward and owned up, I doubt if they'd believe her!"

Dick gazed at her despairingly.

"Oh, my hat! What a mood you're in!" he said. "Oh, I know how you must be feeling about it, but believe me, old girl, that's not the way to tackle your difficulties. In any case," he added, "you can help matters, even though you are expelled."

"And how?"

"Well, first this!" And Dick vaguely waved his arm at the pile of parcels and boxes on the settee. "You're spending an awful lot of money—"

Rosa stopped him with an irritable gesture.

"Dick, chuck it!" she cried. "It's no good. I'm sorry—sorry, I mean, for making that shindy in the music-room, but I'm not sorry for anything else I've done. And my money's my business! Pater gave it to me. He meant me to have a good time while he's away on the Continent, and I'm going to have it! Now, that's enough. And I say," she added, "you've not even looked at your present!"

Dick shook his head. Oh, hopeless, hopeless, the girl! But, to humour her,

he opened the parcel and then flushed as his eyes fell upon the gold monogrammed pigskin wallet it contained.

"Oh, Rosa, you shouldn't! This must have cost an awful lot!"

"Is that spending my money foolishly?" Rosa taunted.

"Oh, old thing! If I could only make you understand—"

"Rubbish!" Rosa cried, becoming gay and vivacious once again. "Dick, I hate quarrelling with you. There's so many things we don't see eye to eye about—and money's one of them. I've got plenty; you've got little—that's the difference, you see. But stop it now. Come down to the tuckshop. I'm starving!"

And playfully she ruffled his hair. Dick sighed hopelessly as ruefully he shook it back into place. Well, there was no help for it. As usual, he must submit to her mood. Together they went off.

They reached the tuckshop, in which half a dozen other girls were taking refreshment. Rosa laughed.

"Hallo," she cried boisterously.

"What-ho, there! Eat, drink, and be merry! Everything's on me, aunty," she called to Aunty Jones, the tuckshop keeper. Give everybody what they want, and let little Rosa foot the bill. Renee here—no? I say, Dick," she cried, "that just reminds me. I've bought two stalls for the Courtfield Theatre to-night. Coming?"

The boy shook his head.

"Don't be silly," he said frankly.

"How the dickens can I go to a theatre? Why, the show doesn't start till half-past eight, and that's after locking-up time. If you mean breaking bounds—"

Rosa laughed triumphantly.

"But I don't mean breaking bounds," she replied. "You forget, Dick, that

I'm expelled. Perhaps," she added coolly, "it's not the ideal thing to be expelled, but as far as I'm concerned it certainly has advantages. No rules and no routine for little Rosa. I'm just here as a sort of paying guest, you see, a jolly old law all unto myself."

"In short, you're playing the giddy ox," Dick said. "And what's Primmy say about it?"

"Who cares for Primmy? What can she say?" Rosa laughed. "As far as she's concerned I'm just a passenger in the school. I'm expelled. Come on, Dick, be a sport. I don't want to waste the ticket. You can slip out after all-over."

"Thanks, but I'm not yearning for expulsion," he replied.

"Afraid?" Rosa sneered.

"Well, if that's your idea of funkiness, yes!" Dick said with a shrug. "Personally I regard it as just not being a silly ass! Can we get out of this place? It's getting full."

More and more girls had been coming in as they talked, and more were following after them. Rosa laughed.

"Right-ho!" she said. "I say, Aunt, how much is all that?"

"Twenty-two shillings, Miss Rodworth."

"So little?" Rosa's brows went up. Then she frowned. "Oh, bother it, she cried. "I spent all my spare cash in Courtfield. Aunt, sorry," she cried.

"Can't let you have it until to-morrow. I'm going to the bank then and I'll cash a cheque."

Aunt Jones compressed her lips. "It's against the rules, Miss Rodworth, to give the girls credit."

"Is it?" Rosa laughed ripplingly.

"Well, don't let that worry you, Aunt. You forget that I'm above the rules at the moment. Just chalk it up!"

And with a cool nod she quitted the shop, linking her arm in that of her cousin's.

He looked apprehensive.

"Oh, goodness, Rosa, I wish you wouldn't spend—"

"Now—stop it," Rosa warned. "Not over that ground again, Dick. You're a dear really, and I do like you, but when you start lecturing I just can't bear you. And there's Renee," she exclaimed as she spotted her study mate coming towards her. "Dick, last chance! Are you coming to the theatre to-night?"

"No!"

"Right! Then I'll ask Renee. She's a sport, anyway."

And Rosa flew off, while Dick, with a frown, made his way slowly back into the school to say good-bye to Babs & Co. He shook his head. Mad Rosa! Hot-headed Rosa! No wonder, he thought bitterly, she was always in a mess.

Dick was shaken. He was disturbed. He had had no idea until he arrived at Cliff House that afternoon that things were as bad as they were.

Rosa expelled! What would his uncle Lionel say when he got to know about that? Yet Rosa didn't seem to mind. Rosa just didn't care!

He frowned a little. Rosa had to be made to care. If ever a girl were heading for disaster, then that girl was his own cousin. If only he could bring it home to Rosa! If only he could make her see where her foolish extravagances might lead her!

"Hallo, Dick, penny for them," a voice broke in upon his thoughts.

He started and, looking up, flushed a little. Mabel Lynn, issuing from the schoolhouse, stood in front of him.

"You look worried," Mabs said.

"Can I do anything to help, Dick?"

"If only you could," he said ruefully. "Well, try me."

Dick paused. More intently he gazed at Mabel Lynn. A sudden thought occurred to him.

"It's Rosa," he said glumly.

"Oh!" The smile disappeared momentarily from Mabs' face.

"Oh, Mabs, if you only would help me," Dick cried. "I'm sure you could do a lot! But this money Rosa's spending—"

"—I've got an awful feeling that if she goes on as she is at the moment, there's going to be a crash even worse than her expulsion. Mabs, Rosa likes you—deep down in her heart. She might listen to you where she wouldn't listen to me. She needs somebody to take an interest in her—to be a real friend to her! A decent girl, Mabs, like you! Give it a trial, Mabs—for my sake!"

Entreatingly he looked at her—desperately almost. Mabs paused, knowing full well his affection for his scapegrace cousin, admiring him for his concern.

She had, it seemed, no choice in the matter. She would have felt small and mean to have refused him in that moment, whatever her hopes of ultimate success might be. She nodded.

"All right, Dick, I'll do my best!"

"Oh, Mabs, you're a brick!"

Together they strolled to the gates. The boy looked a little happier now. He caught her hand as they parted.

"Mabs, I—!" He never was able to thank you," he whispered. "And neither will Rosa when she comes to her senses. But try, old girl! Do please try!"

He gulped. "Well, I must go now," he added briskly. "I'll be back as early as I can to-morrow morning. Keep an eye on her, Mabs."

Again Mabs smiled. Rather thoughtfully she retraced her steps. Herculean indeed the task that lay before her. But she did not shrink from it. Now her first movement, obviously, was to make friends with Rosa. To Study No. 1 she went.

Rosa was there. She had two theatre tickets in her hand. She was offering one to Renee Ballard, who was shaking her head. As Mabs went in, she heard her:

"Oh, come on, Renee, be a sport. You don't want me to waste the ticket, do you?"

"I'm sorry, Rosa, but I tell you I've already seen the play—in London," Renee said. "I'd come like a shot otherwise, of course." And then she paused as Mabs came into the room.

"Oh, hallo!" she cried.

"Hallo!" Mabs replied. "Rosa—"

Rosa looked round quickly.

"Oh! What is it?"

"I just want to talk to you."

"Indeed?" Rosa's eyebrows went up. Renee looked at Mabs.

"You want to be alone?" she asked.

"Well, if you wouldn't mind," Mabs said.

"Oh, not at all!" Renee shrugged.

"See you later, Rosa."

And Renee, with a beaming smile, floated off. Strange how that smile changed when she had closed the door of Study No. 1 behind her! Curiously the look which replaced it; triumphant the expression which showed on her features.

She was still smiling when she pushed open the door of the prefects' room, and, looking round quickly to see that it was unoccupied, crossed to the telephone.

She asked for a Courtfield number.

"Hallo! Is that Mrs. Dickson? Renee speaking."

"Oh, Renee!" came a silky voice.

"Yes, my dear?"

"Mrs. Dickson, listen!" Renee whispered tensely. "Rosa Rodworth—the girl I told you about—will be at the Courtfield Theatre to-night. She's got No. 12 stall in Row A."

"Yes?" the voice came interrogatively. "You remember the little stunt we fixed up when I saw you last? Well, that's what I want you to do to-night. Get hold of her and put the proposition to her; you know how to do it. You'll get money out of her, and there'll be another twenty from my father if you succeed."

A soft, delighted chuckle was the reply.

"Leave it to me, my dear! Anything else?"

"No; that's all. I'll see you to-morrow at the usual time and the usual place. Good-bye now!"

She put the receiver down; she went out, the smile of crafty cunning still on her face. Meantime, in Study No. 1 Mabs was facing the Stormy Petrel of the Fourth.

"Rosa," Mabs said quietly, "I've just been having a talk with Dick."

Rosa flushed.

"Well?"

"Rosa, you know he thinks a lot of you."

Rosa shifted restlessly.

"Ah!—and he did ask me if I'd have a chat with you," Mabs went on haltingly.

"About what?"

"Well, about you—" Rother it! It was difficult to say, but Mabs did not shrink. "Rosa, you know that Dick has faith in you. You know, before you suddenly came into possession of this money, that you were one of the most popular girls in the Form. Dick believed in you, too. Mabs went on—" that is not too late even now to draw back, old thing. Oh, please don't think I'm lecturing!" she added, as she saw the storm-clouds gathering upon Rosa's face. "But do think it over, Rosa, before something else happens."

"All right!" Rosa laughed. "Well, thanks for your interest. It's good to feel, at least, that one of you doesn't think I'm all pitch, though I have been spattered with a tar-brush."

She stopped as the door opened and Renee Ballard returned, darting a quick glance at the two.

Hesitantly she stepped back.

"Oh, sorry! I thought you would have finished."

"We have," Mabs said. "Well, thanks, Rosa!" she cried and quitted the room, leaving Renee in possession again. She looked curiously at her chum.

"Thoughtful!" she commented. "What does she want?"

Rosa pouted.

"Well, she's been talking to Dick—" She paused. "Renee, am I being a fool?"

"Mabs been saying something?" the other asked quickly.

Rosa nodded.

"I see!" Renee smiled. "And you, of course, allowed yourself to be persuaded?" she asked scornfully.

The other flushed.

"By a girl," Renee went on contemptuously, "who caused a row between you and your cousin this afternoon? Oh, Rosa, are you so blind?"

Rosa went crimson.

"Blind? What do you mean?"

"Mean? Well, isn't it clear?" Renee laughed. "Dick and Mabs between them are just twisting you round their little fingers. They're just playing with you. And you're letting them do it."

"They want you to reform, don't they; to be a good little goody, like themselves? They're just conspiring to unsettle you; to make you, Rosa Rodworth,

go their way. And you the girl with money! You the girl who's never shown yourself afraid of a single thing! You the girl I've always admired because I thought you had pluck! They've expelled you! They've practically sent you to Coventry—and just because they're jealous of the good time you're having! And now, like a good girl, you're going to repay good for evil—"

"Oh, stop!" Rosa cried savagely.

And, to Renee's amusement, she flounced out, slamming the door after her.

Renee laughed quietly. She flattered herself she knew how to handle the Stormy Petrel of the Fourth.



### An Expelled Girl's Folly

"HALLO! Hallo!" muttered Clara Trevlyn. "Who's this?" And Clara blinked; while Babs and Mabs, who stood with her on the steps of the School House, enjoying a breath of fresh air while waiting for call-over bell to ring, stared.

For up the drive, driven by a liveried chauffeur, was gliding an expensive-looking car.

"Late for a visitor," Babs commented, frowning a little. "Somebody arrived from the station, I expect. I know the car; it belongs to the Courtfield Garage. And don't they charge something for its hire! But, I say," she added, as the car drew nearer, "there's no one in it, except the chauffeur. He can't be calling for anyone at this hour, surely!"

The car had stopped now. With interest the trio watched as the chauffeur stepped down. He looked round rather uncertainly, and, spotting the three, made his way towards them; he halted, touching his cap.

Babs smiled.

"You want someone?" she asked.

"Yes, miss—a young lady named Rodworth. She ordered the car for a quarter to eight."

The three blinked, and then, remembering Rosa's conversation in the tuck-shop, they looked quickly at each other. Then Rosa had brazenly announced that she was going to the theatre; that she, beyond reach of Cliff House law, was going to please herself.

But even Rosa could never have had the cool effrontery to order a car to take her on a bonds-breaking expedition.

"She said," the man went on, "that she wanted the car for the theatre."

"Oh, my hat!"

"The silly idiot!"

Well, that was nerve, if you like! Babs and Clara hardly knew in that moment whether to be admiring or condemnatory. But Mabs winced a little; she had had such hope after that conversation with Rosa. Had Rosa so soon repented of her promise to think things over?

Unseen by Babs and Clara, she slipped away; up the stairs she went.

She reached Study No. 1, flung the door open—and then she pulled up with a gasp.

"Rosa!" she cried in a stifled voice. Rosa was there. But what a transformation! Renee was with her—admiring, smiling.

In a beautiful frock Rosa stood in front of the mirror; her hair had been freshly done, and glittering ornaments shone in its black tresses; a long necklace of imitation pearls dangled from her neck, and on her wrists were flashing bracelets.

"Rosa!" Mabs faltered. "Rosa, you're not going out?"

Rosa flushed.

"Well, I am!"

"But you said—"

"Oh, that," Rosa said loftily—but she was careful to avoid meeting Mabs' gaze—"is all over! I say, Renee, is my hair all right?"

"But, Rosa, listen!" Mabs begged.

"Rosa, please! Don't be mad!"

Rosa flung round. She stared at Mabs in resentful fury. Then quickly one hand shot out. Mabs, in the act of stepping forward, found herself staggering against the settee. The door slammed and Rosa had gone.

Like a queen she strolled down the passage, pausing at the steps to flash a lowering look at the astounded Babs and Clara, and then stepped regally across the intervening space to the car. Babs and Clara gazed at each other dazedly.

"Oh, my hat! The giddy idiot!" Clara gasped. "I say—"

"Rosa!" came a voice from behind them.

And both girls jumped. For there, rustling towards the entrance, was Miss Primrose herself.

"Rosa," she cried, "where are you going?"

But Rosa was entering the car then. She saw Miss Primrose and hurriedly whispered some words to the driver before bolting into the car. Miss Primrose stood frozen.

"Rosa, how dare—"

But the car had turned. Rosa, rather grim, was leaning back among the cushions.

Blow Primmy! Blow all of them! They couldn't do anything to her—she expelled! All the same, she was breathing a little heavily as the car bowed on! It wanted some nerve to defy Primmy like that!

And Mabs—Oh, bother Mabs!

The car bowed on. Rosa set her lips. Strangely enough, she felt no sense of joy, of elation in her escapade. She was a fool—no, she wasn't! Why shouldn't she have a good time? Why shouldn't she obey the rules and the routine? Blow them!

In half an hour the Grand Theatre was reached. Rosa, pleasantly conscious of the admiration of the crowd, sauntered into the foyer.

Loftily she bought a programme, was shown to her place by one of the attendants, and sank down into a seat in Row A, by the side of an extremely richly dressed woman.

Rosa paused at sight of her, attracted and warmed at once by the kindly smile she gave her.

"Good-evening, my dear!" she said.

"Good-evening!" Rosa replied.

"You are sitting by me? I am so glad!" The woman ran an approving eye over her. "I like your frock," she said critically. "Paris?"

Rosa flushed. The frock, as it happened, wasn't from Paris. It was, in fact, a copy of a model which she had bought at Holland's Stores.

"Well, no, but it's a model," she answered proudly.

"I really thought it was from Paris," the woman smiled. "It reminded me of the one I bought myself—at the Galleries last year. I remember I paid a hundred guineas, and never before have I had such a bargain! But now—" She sighed. "Ah, such rich things are not for me. Since the count died—the count was my husband, you know—I have rather had to watch my p's and q's."

Rosa thrilled. Colour stained her

cheeks. She felt at once excited, on top of the world. This woman was the wife of a count—a count!

From that moment Rosa fell under Mrs. Dickson's spell. Mrs. Dickson, primed by Renee Ballard, meant that she should.

Her husband, she said, had died on the Riviera last year, having suffered heavy financial reverses before his death, and had left her almost penniless.

Because of that she was forced to live in a very middle-class district in Courtfield, and as countesses would hardly be welcomed in that district, she was now living under her mother's name—which was Dickson.

But she liked Rosa, she said. She liked any girl who was so obviously of good breeding; who had such exquisite taste; who so obviously knew how to dress.

Rosa was flattered. She was meant to be flattered. From that moment Mrs. Dickson had far, far more interest for Rosa Rodworth than the show on the stage.

It was in the second interval that, realising she had raised Rosa to a pitch of adulation, Mrs. Dickson carefully dropped her little bombshell.

"Yes, my dear, I find it very hard to accept the life I am leading now," she said. "But I have great hope that things will soon change. I have a little capital, but not enough. You see, I have certain ideas—ideas about dress, and so about people, about etiquette, and so on. For some time I have been working on the idea of starting up as a sort of society adviser in London. The only thing, as I say, is that I have not sufficient capital at the moment. I am sure there is a heap of money in it—aren't you?"

Rosa, dimly following the idea, agreed.

"I have a really splendid offer of an office in London," the woman said.

"A very nice place. The unfortunate part is that I must close at once with the offer, otherwise the agents responsible will hand it to another customer. It is annoying at such a time to be short of a beggarly twenty pounds or so. But—well, there you are. If I knew where to borrow the money, I would do so like a shot and return it in six months' time, with a hundred per cent interest."

Rosa gulped.

"Oh, Mrs. Dickson—"

"Yes, my dear?"

"I wonder if—"

And Rosa flushed, feeling in her admiration of this woman rather like one who is asking for a loan instead of offering it. "I wonder," she asked eagerly, "if—if you would mind me lending you the money?"

"You? Oh, no, my dear, I couldn't think of it."

"But I'd like to!" Rosa pleaded.

"Well, as you are so pressing," Mrs. Dickson murmured. "Of course," she added, "it is a good investment. I really do mean it—at I say. Trust me, you shall receive your loan back multiplied by two. You are sure you mean this, my dear?"

"Yes, yes," Rosa said. For a real countess she would have doubled the sum. "I'll let you have a cheque."

"A cheque?" The woman frowned a little. "Oh, how tiresome!" she said. "Do you know, I hate changing cheques. Such a lot of fuss and bother. I wonder if you would let me have it in cash instead?"

Eagerly the gullible Rosa promised. The very first thing next morning,

she said eagerly, she would go to the bank, and feeling more than ever under the woman's spell, was surprised to find that the show had come to an end.

With her self-esteem immensely enhanced, and feeling, somehow, that she had a crow over every other girl in Cliff House—for what other girl was privileged to number a rare countess among her friends?—the delighted Rosa stepped into her car outside, gave the fascinating widow a lift as far as her own home, and then drove on to Cliff House School. The clock tower was chiming midnight when she reached the school gates.

"Thanks—you may drop me here!" she said loftily to the chauffeur. "Tell your people to let me have a bill for the hire of the car, and I'll send them a cheque, including ten shillings for yourself. Good-night!"

"Good-night, miss!" Rosa grinned. Hesitantly she stood in front of the gates. Cliff House, silent, shuttered, loomed vaguely in front of her. With a mischievous twinkle in her eyes, she reached out her hand and pulled the bell.

"Clang, clang, clang!" it echoed in Piper's lodge.

A minute's silence. Rosa pulled again.

"Clang, clang, clang!" Lights went up, the night-capped head of Piper peered wrathfully through the window. He glared.

"Which I says it's a cruel shame waking a hard-working man in the middle of his sleep! Who is it?"

"Come and open the gates!" Rosa said.

"Which I says——" But Rosa cut short that flow of eloquence with a vicious tug, which almost split Piper's eardrums, and all but destroyed the bell at the same time.

Fuming Piper came out. Haughtily Rosa strode past him. Up the drive she walked, reached Cliff House, and pulled the bell with a force that sent the echoes ringing.

Miss Bullivant, in a perfectly furious frame of mind, came to the door.

"Rosa, you! How dare——"

"Let me in, please," Rosa said coolly.

"I have never heard such colossal impudence!"

But Rosa, reflecting she might just as well be in for a penny as a pound, shrugged.

"Where have you been?"

"Oh, out!" Rosa answered flippantly.

"But I'm tired now. Good-night, Miss Bullivant!"

She strode on. Staggered, and considerably bad-tempered, Miss Bullivant locked up again.

Noisily Rosa clumped up the stairs, entered the Fourth Form dormitory, switched on the light. Heads raised, eyes blinked.

"My hat, what's the time?"

"Rosa!"

"Come look at the get-up!" Leila Carroll whistled.

"Where've you been?"

Rosa laughed.

"I've been out," she said, "enjoying myself, with a very, very aristocratic friend!"

"But how did you get in?" Barbara Redfern asked.

"Oh, I knocked up Piper and the Bull!"

"And what did the Bull say?"

"What the dickens could she say?" Rosa returned contentedly.

The Fourth Form stared. The impudence, the cool nerve of the girl! Rosa, lounging elegantly, sat on the

edge of her bed, peeling off her long gloves.

"Ripping evening—ripping show!" she murmured. "And such fun! I met a woman—a countess, if you please! We had no end of a time together! Er—what was that you said, Barbara?"

"I said," Babs replied, with a warning look, "that it was about time you were in bed. If you don't want to sleep, we do!"

"Really?"

"Yes, really! And as captain," Babs steadily went on, "I'm responsible for law and order in this room. I order you to put that light out right away!"

The expression on Rosa's face changed.

"And you think," she asked bitterly, "that I shall take notice?"

"And you certainly," put in a quiet voice at the door, "will take notice of it, Rosa! Barbara, you may get back to bed!"

With a start Rosa spun round. Miss Primrose, accompanied by Miss Bullivant—Miss Bullivant having brought her upon the scene—stood in the doorway. Rosa blinked.

"Oh crumbs!"

"Rosa," Miss Primrose said, in a harsh voice, "I intend to see that you do not disturb these girls and the school further! I gave you the privilege of sharing this dormitory while you remained here. I granted that privilege would not abuse it! While you remain with your Form fellows you will do as they do——"

"Even though," Rosa asked, "I'm expelled?"

"Even though!" Miss Primrose replied. "If you still persist in refusing, Rosa, you will compel me to detain you in solitary confinement. Now go to bed!"

And Rosa, brought by that threat to the realisation of the precariousness of her position, surlily complied.



### Tricking a Trickster

RATHER bad-tempered, after her humiliation and her late night, was Rosa Rodworth next morning. For once, she did not take breakfast with the rest—hateful to face the sly glances of the Form!

She took a turn in the quad. Almost the first girl she met when breakfast was over, however, was Mabel Lynn.

"Rosa, a letter for you," Mabs said.

Rosa took it, flushing a little as she caught the other's glance. With a muttered "Thanks!" she turned away.

The letter was from her father. It was a short note, penned in an hotel in Paris. It read:

"Hope everything is going well, little girl. I shall be at this address until the seventeenth, so if you or Miss Primrose, or anyone else want me, please write here.

"Love,

"FATHER."

Just that. But Rosa put the letter in her pocket. Not for this she knew it was she going to give Primmy his address. Primmy was just dying to know where her father was, and once she discovered that, Cliff House would say good-bye to Rosa Rodworth!

Despite her set-back and her humiliations, Rosa was not going to leave Cliff House until the last possible moment.

Modily she stalked up to Sturdy No. 1. She scowled as she found that apartment untenanted. Where was Renee? she thought peevishly.

Renee at that moment was in Friardale woods. She was talking to the woman whom Rosa would have been very surprised indeed to recognise as her friend, the bogus countess of yesterday evening.

"And she'll do it?" Renee asked, with a chuckle. "Of course! That fool would fall to anyone with a title! Keep up the glamour, Mrs. Dickson. When she brings the money—well, you know what to do. Scoot! I think I've got her all right now. "How much did you say Rosa promised you, by the way?"

There was a stile near them. A boyish figure suddenly appeared, and then drew back, unseen by Mrs. Dickson or Renee.

"She promised me twenty pounds," Mrs. Dickson said.

Renee chuckled.

"That'll about clear her out," she said. "I've been keeping a check on her bank account. What time did Rosa promise you the money?"

"Oh, during the morning."

"Good! I'll see that she brings it. You're still living at the same place?"

"Yes."

The boy who had paused, who had overheard at least one snatch of that conversation, straightened up. The woman and the girl moved away.

"Mrs. Dickson!" Dick Livingstone breathed.

With dazed eyes he looked after the woman, and what a thrill suddenly possessed him! For he knew her—oh, too well did Dick Livingstone know Mrs. Dickson, once the crook and friend of crooks, who just a short year ago had almost succeeded in ruining his own father.

Mrs. Dickson had been Mr. Livingstone's secretary then. Mrs. Dickson had cleared out after a tour in the Midlands, taking all the show's available cash with her.

Only the nervous condition of his father, who hated fuss and bother, and above all his aversion to appearing in a law court, had saved Mrs. Dickson from appearing in court.

Now here she was again, and unless his ears deceived him, Rosa, his own cousin, had promised her a sum of money.

Dick struggled with the impulse to run after the two. He had not recognised the girl, as it happened. Renee Ballard had stood with her back towards him, but Dick felt that he would know her voice if ever he heard it again. The two had disappeared now, however.

Hurriedly he went on. He reached the gates of Cliff House School, and then:

"Mabs!" he cried delightedly.

For there was Mabs, in company with Clara Trevely, just coming out of the tuckshop.

"Well, I shall want you for the practice game," Clara was saying. "We bully off at twelve. I've got to get two more members of her back towards him, but Dick felt that he would know her voice if ever he heard it again. The two had disappeared now, however. Hurriedly he went on. He reached the gates of Cliff House School, and then:

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promised to hand over a sum of money to her this morning."

Mabs started.

"Mabs, whatever happens Rosa must not hand over that money," Dick said tensely. "I happen to know that the woman is a crook. She's kidded Rosa somehow, and Rosa, like a fool, has fallen for it. Wait a minute, Mabs. I've also been making some inquiries. I've seen my pater again. He's had a letter from Rosa's gov'nor. Rosa's father has asked him to find out what she's doing with the money he deposited in the bank for her."

Mabs looked startled.

"Apparently he put fifty pounds to her account," Dick went on. "Well, if she's been spending at the rate I saw her spending yesterday, she must have pretty well run through it. And those cheques she handed out yesterday—they can't be cashed until to-day. Supposing, Mabs, that Rosa draws this twenty quid, and then her creditors find that they can't get their own money from the bank?"

Mabs flinched. She looked at him wide-eyed. Not very often did Mabs bother herself with financial questions, but she knew enough to realise that such an event would put Rosa in an almost criminal position. Rosa, reckless, heedless, had taken no stock of what she had in the bank.

"So, Mabs, whatever happens, she must be stopped," Dick said. "Where is she?"

But Rosa, when they went to look for her, was not to be found. As a matter of fact, Rosa had gone to the bank. There, at that very moment she was writing a cheque for twenty-five pounds. Twenty for Mrs. Dickson and five for her own personal use. With a flourish she put her signature to it, languidly crossed the floor, and handed it over to her clerk.

The clerk picked up the slip, looked at it and looked at her.

"Will you excuse me a moment," he said. "I'll have to see the manager."

Rosa sniffed. Nonchalantly she rested one elbow on the counter. In a few moments the clerk was back.

"I'm sorry, Miss Rodworth, but there are only twenty-one pounds and a few shillings in your account," he said. "Which means that I cannot cash this cheque in its present form."

Rosa reddened.

"Well, my father will send more," she said.

"I'm sorry," the clerk said firmly, "but until it arrives we cannot allow you to overdraw your account. If you wish, you can draw the twenty-one pounds, leaving the few odd shillings to keep the account open."

Rosa compressed her lips. With fiery face she took the cheque. She altered it, received her twenty-one pounds, and, fuming with indignation—that a measly bank clerk should have spoken to her like that!—hurried to the post office. There she sent a wire to her father.

"Bank says there is no more money in my account. Will you send some to-day. Urgent.—ROSA."

That done, she felt better. The check of it, indeed! No money in her account—when all she had to do was to wire off like that. Well, her father wouldn't let her down. She had only to ask to receive.

In a considerably ruffled frame of mind she quitted the post office. Rather ostentatiously, so that everyone should see, she stuffed the wad of notes into her handbag when she got into the street, and then she started as she heard a faint voice.

"Hallo, Rosa! My hat, what wealth!"

"Renee!" Rosa cried delightedly.

"Thought I'd dodge out for a wee bit of early shopping, as this is a whole holiday," Renee said. "Going far?"

"Well, yes. I've got to go to a woman I met last night—"

And then, while Renee stared in admiration, she related with pride her encounter with the bogus countess at the Grand Theatre.

"And oh, Renee, you would have loved her," she breathed. "She was so awfully good-looking, so splendidly dressed, and not an ounce of side to her. And a real

assets to two shillings. But that didn't matter. In a few hours again she would be rich!"

She reached Cliff House. Up to Study No. 1 they rushed. Carefully Rosa pulled out the twenty pounds and searched for an envelope. She was in the act of putting the notes in the envelope when Mabs came in.

"Oh, Rosa—"

Rosa glared.

"Well, what do you want?"



**MABS'** feet slipped on the wet plank, and with a wild cry she plunged into the stream. Rosa, seeing it all, chuckled. That might teach Mabs to mind her own business!

countess, mind you! I'm on my way to her now. Will you come?"

Renee slyly consented. But she knew, having just left the precious countess, that they would not find her in. Even Mrs. Dickson had not expected Rosa to keep her promise so early.

Rosa was dashed.

"Well, we'll have to come back again," she said.

"Can't we just go and have a coffee or something?"

But Rosa, for once, shook her head. She was anxious to get back. She wanted to write to her father, explaining more fully her demand for the money she had wired for. At Renee's suggestion they got a taxi, and bowed back to Cliff House.

Just before they reached it Renee said calmly:

"Oh, Rosa, old thing you won't forget that I paid out ten shillings in tip for you yesterday. And there's half-a-crown you owe me from the previous day. I wouldn't ask you if I knew you weren't flush, but the fact of the matter is, I'm rather broke!"

Rosa laughed, though she looked a little anxious, remembering that until the money from her father arrived she had only one pound of her own money.

The payment to Renee left her with seven and sixpence. The fare and a tip to the taxi-driver reduced her

"I've just seen Dick," Mabs said. "He came to see you. But he's had to go back now. He—he told me about Mrs. Dickson—"

Rosa frowned.

"What does he know about Mrs. Dickson?"

"Just this," Mabs replied, "that she's nothing but a swindler. And if you're taking that money to her, Rosa—"

Rosa's face flamed.

"Is this a joke?" she asked dangerously.

"It's not a joke," Mabs replied seriously.

"Then," Rosa said between her teeth, "I don't believe it! Oh, I'm sorry! I know you think you're doing good, but please do leave me alone! I'm not a fool! I know a decent woman when I see one, and Mrs. Dickson is true blue!"

"But Rosa, you haven't known her for five minutes!"

"And you," Rosa retorted, "don't know her at all. Please don't interfere, Mabs! And tell Dick to mind his own business!"

"But Rosa! Oh, why are you being so silly?"

"Who's being silly?" Rosa's eyes flashed. Then she flew up. "Look here, I don't want to lose my temper, but I won't—I won't, do you hear—"

allow you to insult my friends! My hat, I never heard of such cheek: Will you get—"

Mabs shook her head. Her eyes were gleaming now. But she left the study. No sense then in provoking Rosa's temper. But she had promised Dick. If Rosa parted with that twenty pounds, then Rosa would be in dreadful trouble. But how to stop her? How? Mabs felt desperate. Then she had a sudden idea.

"Renee! Supposing she asked Renee's help? Renee was Rosa's friend. Renee seemed to have more power over Rosa than anyone else. Mabs wondered why she had not thought of that idea before.

Hurriedly she sought out Renee, finding her in the school library.

"Hallo, Mabs, you look sort of urgent! Want me?"

"Yes, Renee. About Rosa. Will you do something for me?"

"Why, of course. Anything within reason, old thing. What is it?"

And Mabs explained—just as much as she dared. Renee nodded understandingly.

"Well, I'll do my best, of course, but knowing Rosa—I'm making no promises. I'll go and see her now, shall I?"

"Please!"

Renee rose. Mabs, with a sigh of thankfulness, followed more slowly. Almost without realizing in what direction her steps were taking her, she at last reached the Fourth Form corridor, and, hearing voices in Study No. 1, instinctively paused. And then she started. It was Renee Ballard's voice she heard.

"And Mabel Lynn—well, Mabs has got the idea you're being swindled," she said. "She really had the colossal cheek to ask me to stop you going."

Mabs jumped. Was that Renee Ballard—Renee—whom the whole Form liked, the girl whom she trusted!

"Well, I'm going," Rosa snapped. "And I'm going now. Dash it all, I'm not a kid to be talked over. And if Mabel Lynn wants to know where I've gone, you can jolly well tell her. Give me the envelope, Renee. I'll be back for dinner."

Mabs started back. Her mind was whirling. "Renee—Rosa! And then the door opened and Rosa came out.

She glared at sight of Mabs.

"My hat, you still here!"

"Rosa, please listen," Mabs begged desperately.

For answer Rosa brushed past her, hastening her steps. Mabs ran after her.

"Rosa!"

Rosa ran.

Mabs set her teeth. The foot! The foot!

But she had given her promise. Rosa, for Dick's sake, for her father's sake, for the sake of her future honour, had got to be stopped at all costs. If she—Mabs—did not do her utmost now, she would be failing in her duty to Dick: The impulsive Rosa had got to be stopped!

Desperately she ran. But Rosa had a start. She was half-way down the drive. On she sped. She reached the gates with a hundred yards to spare, viciously slaming them to as she went out. The gates "locked" automatically, and there was five minutes' wait while Piper, the porter, grumblingly unlocked them.

Then off again. Which way now? Rosa would take the short cut through the woods, Mabs guessed. And Rosa had. Very hurriedly she was speeding—

—over the way.

Perhaps, knowing Mabs' purpose, she feared she would follow—and she was

really angry with Mabs now. Rosa had a great faith in herself as a judge of character, and Mabs had annoyed her by her insinuations against Mrs. Dickson. She flew.

Until, reaching the plank bridge which spanned the stream, she almost met with disaster. The stream, owing to recent rains, was wide and swollen—in the middle it was a good two feet deep.

The bridge, a single plank, rested somewhat shakily upon two ancient and battered sawn-off tree stumps, which were not too safe at the best of times. There was a treacherous wet patch in the middle, along which Rosa went giddily skidding, and only by a desperate effort in the nick of time regained her balance.

She was gasping when she reached the other side. And then she paused. What was that? Footsteps skidding through the wood?

Mabel Lynn!

Rather grimly Rosa chuckled. Instead of running on then, she halted. What an end to Mabs' chase if she fell foul of the slippery patch on the bridge, as she had done! That would teach her to try to interfere in her business!

With a half-smile, she crouched among some bushes, hearing footsteps swiftly approaching.

Presently she saw bobbing through the wood the golden curls of Mabel Lynn, she sensed as Mabs reached the foot-bridge. Without even a glance, Mabs stepped upon it; half a dozen hurried paces she raced along it, then—

"Oh!" shrieked Mabs.

For too late she saw. Her feet went shooting from under her. Desperately Mabs flung out her arms—to catch at the empty air. Then—

"Gasping, Mabs was flung—not on to her knees, but sideways into the two feet of water.

Rosa stood up and chuckled.

And then she realised the seriousness of Mabs' plight. Mabs was standing up now, almost up to her waist in water. Desperately she clutched at the crazy bridge, tried to haul herself up, only to fall back with another cry.

Rosa, watching, suffered a sudden revulsion of feeling. Oh, hang it! No; this was too bad—too thick! Whatever Mabs deserved she couldn't leave her floundering like that. A red flush of Mabs deserved, she couldn't leave her cheeks.

"Hold on!" she cried.

"Rosa, don't! The bridge—it's giving way!"

But Rosa didn't care. Boldly she stepped upon the bridge; it rocked beneath her feet. Inch by inch she shuffled to the middle of the stream, stretched out a hand to help Mabs, and then—

"Look out!" shrieked Mabs.

But the mischief was done. One terrific shriek Rosa gave, and then went in headlong.

"Both it!" she hooted. "Now look what I've done! I'm drenched—drenched, I tell you!"

"And what about me?" Mabs asked.

"Well, if you hadn't followed me this would never have happened! Ouch! Come on, let's get out of this!"

"You're still going to see Mrs. Dickson?"

"Yes, I am!"

No question dumber back to the bank. No objection of pursuing the objective; the only thing they could do was to go back to Cliff House and change.

Rosa walked in sullen silence; Mabs, with the dawning of an idea in her mind, hurried. She left Rosa half-way through the woods, rushed into Cliff House, and

up to the dormitory; in five minutes she was changed.

And then—

"Oh goodness! Could she work it?"

But she had to—she must! Rosa, she presumed, would go to Mrs. Dickson immediately she made herself presentable again. A desperate idea was in Mabs' mind, but it was an idea which she meant to try out—which might succeed.

Out of her trunk she took the small case in which she carried her amateur theatricals, quickly ran through its contents, then closed the case again. She was emerging from the dormitory, when Rosa—wet, limp, bedraggled—came in.

"You!" she scowled, as Mabs dived past her.

Mabs smiled. Now she hurried out of the school again. Luck was with her. In the road she caught a bus. Now, what was the address she had overheard? She hoped to goodness Mrs. Dickson had not got a maid. In that event, her scheme would be ruined. Hope rose within her, however, as Mrs. Dickson opened the door to her.

She peered suspiciously.

"Oh, are you Mrs. Dickson?" Mabs asked.

"I am, my dear. What can I do for you? Will you come in?"

"It—is in connection with Rosa Rod—"

"Rosa?" Mabs said, carried her in a friend of hers. You had an appointment with Rosa this morning, hadn't you?"

"Yes, that is true; I am expecting her now."

"Well, I'm sorry," Mabs said carefully, keeping within the bounds of truth, "but I've got a message for you. Rosa has had an accident," she said; "nothing serious. Could you go along to the town hall in Courtfield?"

"Why, yes, of course!" Mrs. Dickson lost no time. "But I can hardly conduct my business with Rosa in the public street." She frowned. "Will she come back here with me?"

"Of course—when you meet her!"

"And you—will you come, too?"

"Oh, Mrs. Dickson, do you mind? I—I'd rather stop and wait for you both," Mabs said. "That is, if you don't mind. Perhaps I—I can make you a cup of tea, or something," she said vaguely, her heart drumming in her chest.

"Yes, yes," the woman considered. Mabs had summed her up aright. Anxious to get hold of that money, she was willing to do anything. It did not occur to her that she was being fooled by a mere schoolgirl. Mrs. Dickson, in her career, had fooled so many other people that it never occurred to her that she might be a victim herself.

Besides, there was just that right air of awkwardness and innocence about Mabel Lynn to suggest that the girl was something of a fool—as all Rosa Rodworth's friends must be, Mrs. Dickson privately told herself.

"Very well, I will go at once," she said.

She went upstairs. Mabs threw an anxious look down the street. How long would Rosa be—ten minutes? If she caught the next bus, there would be about a quarter of an hour. Mabs reckoned; and it would take Mrs. Dickson all that time to reach the town hall.

Buck up, Mrs. Dickson!

But Mrs. Dickson, with the golden bait dangling in front of her, was bucking up. Two minutes, and she was down again. She showed Mabs into the kitchen, explained where everything was, and went out. Mabs waited until she had turned the corner of the street, then quickly the lid of her case flew up.

Her eyes gleamed.

In the bed-room she found some of the

woman's clothes. She'd need them. Then she got to work to make up her face in front of the glass—a rapid and desperate business.

Ten minutes later she stood back, gazing at herself in the mirror.

"Not bad," she told herself. "If I keep away from the window." And then—

"Mabs' heart leapt. She went to the door. Rosa stood there, smiling.

"Good-morning!"

"Good-morning, my dear!" Mabs anxiously hoped she had got the right note.

Apparently she had. Rosa smiled. "Can I come in?" she asked.

"Yes, my dear. But you won't keep me long, will you?" the false Mrs. Dickson asked. "I have a very, very important appointment." And that was true, for Mabs was thinking of the hockey match. "Have you brought it?" she asked anxiously.

Rosa had. Without question she handed over the wad of notes. Mabs carefully counted them.

"Thank you, Rosa. I will, of course, send you the receipt," she said. "Do call and see me some time when I'm less busy."

It was easier than she had thought. Rosa, completely satisfied, though thinking privately that her friend the countess was in rather a hurry, went off.

Immediately she had gone Mabs took off her make-up, hung Mrs. Dickson's borrowed clothes in the cupboard again, and, thrilling, went back to Cliff House. Rosa's money in her possession. Racing up the corridor, she almost bumped into Renee Ballard.

"Hallo, hallo! What's the hurry?"

Renee asked.

"Nothing," Mabs replied.

She threw a rather scornful glance at the girl, and rushed on into Study No. 4. Babs, seated alone there, jumped up as she entered.

"Mabs!"

"Babs, shut the door—quickly!" Mabs gasped. "I've got to hide this."

And while Babs blinked, she poured out the story.

"The bureau will be safest, don't you think?"

"Yes, but my hat—"

"I tell you the woman was a swindler," Mabs said. "But help me, Babs. Open the bureau."

Babs, in considerable mystification, opened the bureau. Mabs dumped the envelope in it.

And, outside, Renee Ballard, who had followed Mabs up the corridor, scowled.

"So," she said, between her teeth, "she got on to the game, did she? She's fooled me! Ho, ho, little Mabel Lynn! Look out for yourself, you truster!"

Then, as the door of Study No. 4 opened, she walked off quickly down the corridor.

But there was a gleam in her eyes, a sharp look on her usually attractive features which showed that her mind was working very rapidly indeed.

Renee, her friend, was out on some mysterious and unknown errand, and Rosa, for once, was feeling rather alone. She had remained in, not because she did not want to be out, but because she was expecting the wire from her father in France. So far, there was no sign of that wire.

In answer to her "Come in!" which the knock of a moment before had invited, a tall man stepped into the room.

"I am a representative of Holland's Stores," he announced. Rather grim he looked. "Yesterday, Miss Rodworth, you gave our messenger a cheque for five pounds—"

"I did," Rosa admitted.

"I am sorry to say," the man went on, "that when this cheque was presented to the bank—he laid it upon the table—they would not honour it. They said that there was no money left in your account. Indeed," he went on a little more grimly, "they told me that you had withdrawn the whole of your account this morning."

Rosa looked at him with startled eyes. Oh, goodness, she had forgotten that! Of course, of course! All those cheques she had written out yesterday were worthless now.

"I—I'm sorry," she said. "I made a slight miscalculation. But I am expecting money—a large sum—at any moment now."

"My instructions," the man announced ominously, "are not to leave this building until I have the money."

Rosa compressed her lips.

"I am sorry, but you can't have it until it arrives. Will you wait?"

The man nodded. He took a seat. Hardly had he lowered himself into it, however, than another caller arrived. This time it was the man from Lamont's.

"Miss Rodworth, I am advised by

my firm that the cheque you gave me yesterday is worthless."

"I know—I—I'm sorry," Rosa gulped.

She did not guess in that moment that her great friend, Renee Ballard, had been doing rather a lot of telephoning that morning, and that upon her aliated instructions Rosa's creditors were arriving now.

Another knock. Rosa, with a jump, crossed the floor.

This time it was the man from the garage.

Five minutes after, the representative of Weller's arrived, then a girl from the fur stores. Rosa was really scared then. In a grim-faced crowd they came in, one by one, and sat down.

"Miss Rodworth, I cannot afford to wait much longer," the man from Holland's said ominously.

"I'm sorry. Just—just another ten minutes," Rosa begged, with a desperate glance out of the window.

"My firm is expecting me back by four," the man from Weller's said.

"Oh, please, do wait!" Rosa begged.

Only by an effort did she refrain from wringing her hands. Half-past three! What had happened to her father? When would that wire come?

At last the man from Holland's rose.

"This has gone far enough!" he snapped. "Miss Rodworth, I am going to see your headmistress. If I obtain no satisfaction from her, I am going to consult my firm's solicitors."

"No, no, no! Please!" Rosa panted. She almost pushed him back into his seat. Feverishly she fluttered to the window, and then she almost shouted;

for crossing the quad was the telegraph-boy.

In her frenzy she flung the window open.

"Is that for me?" she cried.



UTTER dismay filled Rosa as she read the telegram. Her father was away—unable to send her any money! And she wanted it at once—at once!



## Seconds of Suspense

"MISS RODWORTH!"  
Rosa looked up with a start.  
It was afternoon. Outside, the scratch tear were disporting themselves.

"Miss Rodworth?" the boy asked. "Yes, yes!" Rosa almost fainted with relief. "Hurry, please!" She slammed the window down. But now she was in possession of her faculties again the dreadful terror of that last half-hour had gone. She stared proudly at her creditors.

"Well, here we are! I'm sorry you've been inconvenienced, but you shall all have your money now—with interest," Rosa said loftily, and called "Come in!" as the telegraph-boy entered. "Here," she said, "is the wire from my father which I was expecting!"

Leisurely she slit the envelope open, with a proud and supercilious glance round, drew out the contents.

There was silence while she scanned the wire. And then—

It was as if an icy hand had clutched Rosa's heart.

For the wire was not from her father, but her father's secretary. And it said:

"Regret cannot make advance. Mr. Rodworth away—not returning for a week.

"FRANKSTON."



### The Girl She Called Friend

THE world seemed to stand still for Rosa Rodworth, her body to be stricken with a sudden terrible paralysis. Again, unbelievably, she stared at the hideous message which confronted her.

She would have no money—for a week at least!

And then she became aware of the face that faced her. The man from Holland, who had risen angrily to his feet. No need for her to tell them the news she had received. The whiteness, the drawn expression on her haggard face, made it apparent. She faced them, all desperately.

"I—I'm sorry," she gulped. "There's been some mistake."

"So it seems," the Holland's man sniffed. "But the mistake, young lady, is on your part for issuing worthless cheques. I am sorry, but I shall have to take action in this matter. I shall write to your headmistress at once. Good-day, Miss Rodworth."

A cry came from Rosa.

"No, no, please," she panted. "Listen to me. Won't you please give me time—"

Before she could say more, there was a tap on the door and it opened. Mabel Lynn came in. Behind were Barbara Redfern and Clara Trevlyn.

"Rosa!" Mabs said.

Rosa stared.

"You!" she cried. "You—at this moment! Oh, please, please, go away!"

"Rosa," Mabs said seriously, "wait a minute. I'm not going away! I heard that these people were here, and I came to help you."

Rosa stared incredulously.

"You—help—me?" the Stormy Petrel whispered.

"I've been trying to all along," Mabs said. "You wouldn't believe me this morning when I told you that Mrs. Dickson was a swindler. I tried to stop you from handing over that twenty pounds to her."

Rosa groaned. How she wished now that she had that twenty pounds! She looked utterly wretched, utterly crumpled.

"And so," Mabs went on, "I played a trick upon you, Rosa. For your own sake I posed as Mrs. Dickson when you called. It was not Mrs. Dickson to whom you handed that money—it was me!"

"Mabs, honour bright?"

"Honour bright!" Mabs said.

"Then—then—" Rosa gasped. "Oh, Mabs! I—I'll never cease to be grateful! You bricked! You bricked! Mabs, please let me have it. Where is it?"

"It's in my study." In one bound Rosa was across the room. She threw a triumphant glance at the creditors.

"Well, if you want your money, come along," she cried.

Mabs, leading, flung open the door of the study and crossed to the bureau. She found the bulky envelope and passed it to Rosa. Rosa laughed shakily.

"Oh, Mabs, thanks—thanks!" she

stared dully at the blank sheets of paper which littered the floor at her feet.

So far from saving the Stormy Petrel, she had only made matters worse than ever.

But who had stolen those twenty pounds?

RENEE BALLARD, however, could have answered that question. For at that moment Renee Ballard was handing that sum to Mrs. Dickson in Courtfield.

"You made a mess of the job," she said. "Thank your lucky stars that I happened to get on to Mabel Lynn's little trick and nip it in the bud. But here's the money. Your cue now is to clear out."

"Yes, my dear. I leave by the train which goes in five minutes."

And Mrs. Dickson, with a pleased smile, pocketed the notes. While Renee, with a chuckle expressive of the deepest satisfaction, strolled leisurely back towards Cliff House, there to be met by news of the latest sensation.

And what a sensation that was! For everybody knew that Rosa's reign as the richest girl in the school had come to an end.

Her creditors had gone after seeing Miss Primrose—Miss Primrose who had forced them to take back the articles which Rosa had purchased yesterday, and who had paid the rest of their bills out of her own pocket—simply to avoid the affair being made public.

Renee smiled again. There was a strange light in her eyes as she hurried to Study No. 1.

The door opened. Rosa, red-eyed, biting her lip, stood there. Renee went in. She put a sympathetic arm about the stormy one's shoulders.

"Rosa! I've heard," she said. "What awful beastly luck! Rosa, old kid, I'm dreadfully sorry," she added feelingly.

Rosa shrugged bitterly.

"Well, what did you expect! My luck's just dead out!"

"Rosa, don't talk like that. Of course, I know it—the whole school knows it. And Mabel Lynn—"

Rosa's eyes flamed.

"It was a beastly trick to play," Renee said. "But never mind, old thing. Rich or poor, you've still got one friend—one who'll stand by you whatever happens. Rosa, I mean that," she added quietly.

And Rosa, weak, helpless in that moment, crushed by her humiliation, afraid of the storms she had raised, all her better instincts warring with her most stormy impulses, looked up and gulped.

"Oh—Renee!" she cried brokenly, and, letting herself go, burst into the flood of tears which she had tried so long to stem.

While Renee Ballard shook her head like a loving mother who comforts her naughty child. But her expression was strange, her eyes a-shine, and she was thinking, in strange contrast to her actions:

"The fool! The little fool! I've not finished with her yet! I've got the idiot expelled. I've made her a pauper at this school, just as my father is ruining hers on the Continent. But that isn't enough! Not yet—not yet! Not until I get her sent to prison will I rest!"

And she patted Rosa's head. "There, old thing," she crooned. "Don't cry now. Everything's going to come out all right, and I'm going to help you!"

LED on to fresh folly by her false friend, Renee Ballard, Rosa Rodworth gets deeper and deeper into disgrace at Cliff House. And then, when all seems lost—but read for yourselves what happens to the "Stormy Petrel" in next Saturday's brilliant long complete Cliff House School story, the title of which is:



By HILDA RICHARDS

cried. "I'll never be out of your debt for this. Twenty pounds!" she laughed gleefully. "Here you are. I can pay you all now." She tore the envelope open, drew forth the bundle which it contained.

And then she stared. Mabs, Babs, Clara—everyone stared. For the bundle was—

Just sheets of ordinary paper, cut to the size of one-pound notes!

"Mabs!" Rosa choked.

Mabs' jaw dropped.

"Oh, my hat! Somebody's been playing a trick!"

"A trick!" Rosa spun round. Her cheeks were flaming now, her eyes burning. "A trick, yes!" she cried bitterly. "And whose trick, Mabel Lynn? Yours! So this is your idea of a joke, is it? What a fool I was to believe you—what a fool!"

"But the money—" the man from Holland's put in.

"Hang your money!" Rosa flared. "Do what you like! I—and then the bitter tears of anger starting to her eyes, she distractedly pushed her way to the doorway and bolted through it.

In the study there was dead silence. Mabs, with face as white as a sheet,

## Thrilling Desert Island Drama, Featuring Betty Barton & Co. of Morcove School Fame



# Morcove Marooned!

### FOR NEW READERS.

**BETTY BARTON & Co.**, of Morcove School, together with members of Grangemoor, are on their way home from Africa by air-liner, when they have to make a forced landing on a tiny island. With them is a mysterious girl named

**MURIEL**, who has jumped by parachute from another plane. She tells Betty & Co. that she was escaping from people who had kidnapped her. The leader of the kidnapers is a man named

**DULIP KHAN**, an Indian ruler and tyrant. Later, his yacht anchors near the island, and the chums realize that he is going to attempt to recapture Muriel.

Dave and Betty are taken prisoners by Khan's party; he intends to hold them as hostages. They are taken to his yacht.

(Now read on.)

### Their Prison on the Sea

**T**HE throb of the boat's small engine must have been heard by someone keeping this last watch of the night on board Dulip Khan's palatial yacht.

A voice suddenly whined a hailing cry from the great ship. To Betty and Dave that cry in the darkness seemed all the more eerie because it was so foreign sounding.

Then a lantern's light could be seen bobbing along as a man carried it a-dangle whilst going from one deck to another. A feeble gleam it gave, observable at very little distance—and very likely there was a reason for such a sparing use of lights.

The only light burning on this powerful little motor-boat was a half-masked one in the engine pit, serving to illumine the compass and various controls, upon which the Indian who was navigating her had to keep an eye.

He steered the motor-boat alongside her parent vessel with fine skill, and for Betty and Dave it was like being put aboard a liner from a tender, so smoothly was everything done.

Instead of having to scramble up a dangling rope ladder, they stepped out of the gently rocking boat on to a railed flight of steps. The man with the lan-

tern, a turbaned Indian, had even come to the bottom of the steps to light the way for all who were coming aboard.

Betty had only the woman in front of her whilst mounting; behind Betty, as she knew, came one of the two Hindus who were Dave's guards. During the brief journey out from the island she and Dave had been sternly ordered to stop talking; now, of course, they were to be set apart.

No sooner was she at a standstill on the yacht's deck than she looked round in the darkness for Dave. He had been keeping his eyes upon her as she went before him. Once again there was his calm smile to lighten her, and she hoped that her eyes were returning him a comforting look.

A sudden sharp word from the woman into whose charge she had been given warned Betty to pay attention—to follow into a narrow, covered-in passage serving deck cabins.

Betty quite expected to be taken below, to be locked away in some dark place—such as a spare luggage hold,

## By MARJORIE STANTON

unfit to receive anyone, except a prisoner whose conditions were to be the severest.

But half-way along the door-lined passage her conductress suddenly checked, and next moment Betty was being told:

"In here, you!"

The woman had opened a cabin door. Whilst with one hand she treated Betty to a vicious thrust, with the other hand she clicked on some lights.

The cabin was revealed to Betty as a most luxurious one; it was small, of course, but its furnishings were in keeping with the lovely woodwork of the walls and the various costly fittings.

"You're being given this cabin," snapped the woman, after crossing over to close the brass-rimmed porthole, "because it is next door to mine—and I want you near me, my girl! Yes"—she cruelly smiled—"even though you are at sea now, and the best you could do for yourself would be to jump overboard—for the sharks to get!"

Betty found herself standing mute and still to take a good look at the woman. Strange creature, if ever there were! She did not speak English as a foreigner who had been taught to speak it very well; she spoke as fluently as if that were her mother tongue; but the brilliant light now revealed her face to be Eastern in feature.

It was only a sallow complexion that saved her from looking like a daughter of India; she had the black eyes and the jet-black hair of a Hindu woman, and her figure was smaskish.

"I don't know if you are hungry; but if you are, you'll wait!" She was withdrawing into the alleyway as she said this. "I want some sleep after being about all night."

Slam!

The cabin door was pulled shut, and then a key could be heard making the small but strong lock secure.

Somehow Betty was more inclined to laugh than to sigh as she gave a lift and fall of the shoulders; and this first feeling of relief—a stoical idea that things were not so bad—was next moment strengthened by the knowledge that Dave had been given a cabin on this side of the ship.

His cabin door came in for the same violent slamming that Betty's had received; then, after some native jabber in the passage between the two Hindus and the woman, a third door closed.

Betty darted close to that wall which separated her cabin from Dave's; softly—very softly—she knuckled the shiny panelling.

An answering tap, tap, tap! came to her through the thin mahogany partition, and she could tell that Dave was doing his best to signal encouragingly.

"Wait just a bit," he seemed to be telling her, "and maybe I'll bring off something."

Nor would she allow cold reason to put a check upon her rising spirits. Sitting down to ponder the position in all its hopelessness would do no good. So how about a bath? If only one could!

She tried the inner door that was on the other side of the cabin and found that it would open; the clicking on of a light and—

"Oh, what a treat for the eyes! What luxury again! A tiled bath-room; a shower, a wash-basin with mirror above it, soaps in variety!"

"And I'm one of Morcove's castaways that hasn't had any soap to use for days!" Betty laughed to herself.

She ran water from plated taps into the bath, threw in a couple of handfuls of bathsalts, and was soon revelling in what would have been called at school "a lovely deep one."

She returned in due course to the cabin, feeling "full of beans." She whistled a tune; just as she might have done in Study No. 12 at Morcove before "break" on a Saturday morning. Of course, she was thinking, if one wanted to look on the dark side, then the prospect must seem absolutely foul!

That fiend Dulip Khan could use her and Dave as pawns in the game. He had threatened to do that, and already, perhaps, his ultimatum had been received at the Morcove camp on the island.

"Two members of your party are in my hands—have been placed on board my yacht for safe custody," Betty could imagine the facts being proudly boasted. "If you wish the girl and the boy to be sent back to your camp unharmed, then you know what to do to secure their release!"

And twenty-four hours as the time-limit! Between now and this time to-morrow those at the camp with whom the decision rested must—decide!

Acceptance under duress, and Khan, after all, would have succeeded in his vendetta, sworn long ago against Muriel's father. That poor girl would not see home and parents again.

On the other hand, a refusal to negotiate such a wicked bargain, would mean—no release for her, Betty, and Dave!

"Well, my belief it's the sort of offer that a simple man would refuse," ran Betty's mind. "I'm sure, any way, they'll know on shore that Dave and I would rather not be 'swapped' for Muriel. What they'll do—try their hardest to save us without having to give up Muriel. And so Dave and I must try our hardest, too—try to manage something!"

It would be getting light outside now, so she could take a peep from the porthole. But she must switch off the cabin lamps before going to the porthole to unshutter it.

She worked the bolt-like catch which served to keep the glass of the porthole masked by a metal disc, and the next moment her eager eyes beheld the sea, coldly grey in the first glimmer of daybreak.

She unglazed the porthole, and found that its pigeon-hole size would allow her to pop her head out—but only just.

At first she could only see in one direction, owing to the awkward angle of the opened shutter. Quickly, however, she pushed it out of her way.

And then, what a laugh of real delight she gave. Finding that Dave's head was protruding from his porthole, only a few feet away from hers!

## Just a Hope

"HALLO!" Betty greeted him. "Morning, Davo!"

He grinned, not as one of his ferocious pals would have done in such circumstances, but gravely. Yet the very gravity of his grin made the situation seem to Betty all the funnier.

"I've had a lovely bath, Dave!"

"Good!" he said. "So've I."

"But isn't it jolly," she gaily submitted, "to be in such luxury! Just think how the others would envy us, if they knew!"

"Betty, I must say you're taking all this jolly well!"

"Oh, rot!"

"But that brute Khan, before he packed us off to this boat of his, took care to let you know, Betty, what his terms were to be."

"Yes; and I should worry, Dave, if I thought that the terms would be accepted. But I can't imagine Mr. and Mrs. Willoughby and the others agreeing. Can you?"

"No."

"Glad to hear you say that!" she whispered along the ship's side to him, with a smile of genuine relief. "They'll be terribly anxious about us, of course; yet they just couldn't sacrifice Muriel, ing. Can you?"

"I see it this way, Betty," his whisper came in response. "If only we could let them know that we're being held prisoners on this ship, that may make all the difference in the world! I don't suppose for a moment that Khan will tell them where we are. It's in his interests to let them think we're held by him on the island."

Betty nodded an eager: "Yes, go on!" But at this instant he and she became a little startled by a close-at-hand splash on the sea.

It was only a bucket of kitchen waste, thrown overboard by one of the few men left in charge of the vessel. Betty, as soon as she was convinced that the man was not hanging about, being aware of this "between-portholes talk" that was going on, would have resumed. Dave, however, surprised her by paying attention to potato-peelings and other scraps floating away on the waves. At last:

"You were saying, Dave?"

"Oh, yes, Betty! You see, our people on the island have got that one boat—the one Polly and Jack pinched, belonging to Khan. So if they knew we were on the waves, they'd just about have a cut at fetching us off, I reckon. They know that most of the men are ashore."

"Oh, then," Betty fumed, "can't we, Dave—can't we manage to—"

"Perhaps we can," he said, so softly that he might have been speaking only to himself. "A sunny morning I might have been able to dot-dash a message with a mirror. But—"

"Dash 'this wretched weather!' Betty suddenly raged. "If it weren't for that, the whole business might have been ended for us yesterday!"

"But the tide," Dave muttered on, ignoring her outburst. "Those potato-peelings tell me, Betty, there's a strong tide setting towards the island. I'm sure I'm right about that. A bottle message—it might. There's just a million-to-one chance—"

"Dave!" she gasped.

And, leaving him to guess her intention, she drew in her head and looked all round the cabin, eager to find something that would serve the purpose. At the same time, she was sure that Dave, in his cabin, would be getting busy.

There were several small articles in

her cabin that would remain afloat if thrown into the sea, but a tied-on message would perhaps become sopped off.

"Those bath-salts!"

She darted into the bath-room, and seized the handsome, fair-sized, cut-glass jar. Just the thing! In a moment she hid it empty, and was back in the cabin to get the message dashed off.

Writing materials were available at a small desk, fitted bracket-wise to one of the cabin walls, and quickly she seized a sheet of notepaper.

She wrote swiftly, and yet taking care to make the writing firm and bold:

"Dave and I O.K. Implore you not to give in on our account. If weather clears, might see your camp-fire from here. Dave knows dot and dash, so try signalling."

Betty might have added much more, but suddenly she heard the woman who was her gaolress coming out of her cabin.

With now-or-never haste, Betty thrust the folded note into the glass jar, clapped on the ornamental stopper, and then darted again to the porthole. A careful pause she made, to satisfy herself that the glass stopper was firm-set. Then—

"Plop! And up bobbed the jar an instant after it had fallen into the sea, for her to watch it as it seemed to start floating away in the right direction.

She remained at the porthole, for that woman had gone by in the cabin passage, wanting to speak to one of the Hindoo seamen, whose name she was calling aloud. False alarm just then. And so one might have written much more.

"Just as well, though, to have got that much off," Betty told herself. "After all, I can 'post' more messages to say the rest. Come to that, Dave and I can keep on—"

"Plop! again. And there in the sea was Dave's bottle message, drifting along by hers, away from the vessel.

There was some tide or ocean current setting towards the island. Yet—oh, how very slowly the two glass jars were drifting! By a merciful chance, they might be cast up by the waves that forever lapped the island's shore. But, to serve their urgent purpose, they must come to rest upon the foam-laced beach before this day was spent.

After dark there would be little hope of their being seen by any of the castaways, for there would be no ransacking along the shore by night in search of driftwood for the fire. And to-morrow, at dawn, the time-limit would expire!

Betty looked out of her porthole again for Dave, and found him on the watch for her.

"What did you write?" she whispered along to him, more guardedly than ever, feeling sure that the woman as well as the seaman were more liable to overhear now.

"Oh, lots!" he quickly answered. "Tell you later, if I get the chance, an idea of mine—"

Bang!

A revolver-shot, fired by someone on deck, and the bullet itself had made the tiniest splash just by one of those drifting jars.

Betty's heart had given only its first leap of alarm when a second shot was fired.

After observing where the bullet entered the sea—between the two jars, and very close to Dave's—she looked aside at him in great alarm. He went on watching the jars.

Then came bang after bang—rapid, angry firing by the half-breed woman. For she it was who, infuriated by a

udden sight of the floating jars, was trying to destroy first one, and then the other, with a smashing bullet. Betty and Dave could hear her raging voice.

She must have reloaded, for again a rapid bang, bang, bang! rang in their ears, whilst they saw a succession of spitting splashes.

But she was missing every time, and suddenly Betty shot—

Betty herself could change from acute suspense to great amusement. At the next miss she sent up a mocking:

"Hurrah!"

"Yes; another outer!" Dave commented. "I wonder what our range-master at Grangemoor would think of such shooting?"

Bang! went the revolver once more—and for the last time. Scarcely had the sound of the shot—a wider miss than ever—died away than the woman was coming off the open deck into the cabin-way, her step a stamping one, her voice torrenting abuse. She was mad with Betty and Dave, mad with the seamen, and mad with herself.

Into Betty's cabin the infuriated woman burst next moment, looking ready to fly at her girl prisoner.

"You little wretch, you! That's what you do in return for my giving you this cabin with all its comforts! All right, my girl! You shall pay for your artfulness during the day, and so shall that boy! I'll work the pair of you until you drop!"

"Sorry!" Betty deliberately checked the woman. "But I don't call it artfulness to try to—"

"Hold your tongue, or I shall hit you!"

"You may be able to hit me; but you couldn't hit those jars, anyway!"

"Silence, I tell you! Now come with me!"

The woman stood by in the narrow doorway to let Betty pass out, then gripped her by the arm to take her to a very commodious saloon. An Indian, in a white drill suit and turban, was present, evidently one of the yacht's stewards.

He had laid the cloth for breakfast at the upper end of a long table, and there Betty was given a side seat, the woman proudly occupying what was, perhaps, Dulip Khan's own seat at the head of the table when he dined in company.

Towards the half-breed the Hindu was faultlessly polite, and Betty guessed that this meant power delegated to the woman by Khan. Perhaps, in some strange way that occurs in the East, they were distantly related?

That the Indian steward was only disdainful of Betty did not trouble her in the least. She found herself being given only some ship's biscuit and tea, whilst the woman was served with one native course after another—a lengthy, varied breakfast.

But this tantalising discrepancy was being made, Betty knew, to the woman's own order, to minister to her love of being spiteful. Unfair to blame the native steward!

Dave was not brought in, and this was something which really did distress Betty. She wondered how he was faring. One thing was certain—he was too good a fellow at being able to "bite on the bullet" not to be able to bite the very hardest ship's biscuit, with a contented look.

She did not see him again until half an hour later. By that time she had been put to swabbing one of the decks—a menial task intended to be all the more humiliating because there were Indians to pass and re-pass and see her wielding the mop.

Two of the very few who were on

board—as a skeleton crew, so to speak—she saw of a sudden taking Dave below. He and she exchanged stoical smiles from a few yards apart on the open deck.

Then he descended with his two guards into those depths where, she could imagine, there was all the machinery, the boiler-room, and a coal-bunker or two.

Soon afterwards she heard the metallic clang of a shovel sliding into coal which was being fetched forwards on an iron-floored bunker. Poor Dave, if that were his job! Dust and heat and exhausting labour, and all the time—what his thoughts must be!

His guards came up, leaving him to slog on down there. So long as the rattle and clang of his shovel went on, they would feel little need actually to watch him.

Betty, as she herself used bucketful after bucketful of water for her deck-swabbing, constantly glanced their way. Every time she did so she could see them purring away to each other in their native tongue, greatly amused at getting their work done for them—by a young Britisher, too!

Suddenly the steady clang-whang of Dave's shovel ceased. The two guards had just then been joined by other

Indians, equally idle. There were at that moment five of them chatting together, and Betty felt sure that they comprised all who were on board. The steward, at any rate, was one of them.

They all broke off their talk when Dave's shovel no longer sounded. Out of the corners of her eyes Betty could see them exchanging looks of pleasurable excitement. It was as if they had hoped for incalculations from Dave, a refusal to go on with the slavish task. Laughing, the two who were his guards hurried to go below, and the rest followed.

A moment, this, for Betty to suffer terrible anxiety on Dave's account. Evidently the five Indians were going to have some "fun" with the lad if he had "gone on strike."

And she, in such a case—oh, was there nothing she could do? To hear him being ill-treated, and not to be able to intervene! Yet how could she, only a schoolgirl though she was, save a lad whose own schoolboy strength was no match for five grown men?

There was a brief silence that seemed ominous to Betty. Then came a booming clang! from below deck.

She did not know what it meant, only that it sounded like the closing of an iron door. Anxiety got the better of her habitual tactfulness, and she left her pail and mop—left the cruel task which the woman had warned her to desist from at her peril, and ran to the steep stairway down which the men had passed.

There was some muffled calling out now, but it did not come from Dave. He, to her utter amazement, was suddenly with her on the deck, after dashing nimbly up the iron steps.

"The woman—quick, where is she?" he panted.

"What!"

"I've got the men—locked up down there," he further staggered Betty. "Tell you later how I did it. But unless we can deal with the woman—"

"She went to her cabin," Betty whispered, quickly regaining a calmness that the crisis demanded. "Any way, the two of us can tackle her! Except that she may be armed! Oh, but we are going to chance—"

There was no time for more. Girl and lad were glancing this way and that, paying no heed to the muffled shouting from below, but thinking only of the woman, when suddenly she came rushing out of the cabin-passage.

She seemed to have eyes only for Betty—talking with Dave when there

SWIFTLY, [knowing how much was at stake, Betty sidled hand over hand down the rope to the raft. It was a daring bid to escape—a bid that must succeed!



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## BETWEEN OURSELVES

**M**Y DEAR READERS.—In this issue you will meet for the first time "Happy-Go-Lucky Lulu," and I don't think there's any doubt that you are going to love reading of her determined efforts to wake up St. Winifred's.

I shall look forward to hearing what you think of the new series in which she stars—and of the other features in *THE SCHOOLGIRL*—so do write to me when you have a few moments to spare, won't you?

I am particularly interested in your comments on Pat's four pages, and I shall welcome suggestions for any new features which you consider might add to the popularity of these pages.

As you have noticed, Pat is now publishing at the special request of hundreds of readers—an occasional crossword puzzle, and I know for a fact (though I mustn't give away any of her secrets here) that she has lots of other bright ideas "up her sleeve."

The present Cliff House School series is magnificent, don't you think? I'm sure you're longing to know what is going to happen to Rosa, now that she is in deep, though largely unmerited disgrace.

Next week's powerful complete story brings Mabel Lynn to the fore. Mabs has promised Dick Livingstone that she will try to save Rosa, and so she sets out to accomplish this difficult task—while at the same time, Renee Ballard, Rosa's false friend, is doing her very utmost to bring the *Stompy Petrol* into fresh disgrace.

Which of them will finally triumph—Mabs or Renee? Will Rosa be saved, or will Renee's scheming succeed in bringing about Rosa's final downfall?

You must not miss next Saturday's powerful complete story, the title of which is:

### "MORE RECKLESS THAN EVER."

By Hilda Richards.

All your favourite characters take part in this absorbing tale.

"Morcove Marooned!" gets more and more exciting, doesn't it? Thrilling developments crowd next Saturday's chapters, so I'm sure I needn't urge you not to miss them.

Then of course there is "The House of Bygone Days," a story which I'm sure you are all enjoying for its novelty and romance. There will be a long instalment of this fine tale in next week's issue.

I have already mentioned "Happy-Go-Lucky Lulu." Next week's complete tale is even funnier than the one which appears in this issue—so if you want a good laugh, don't miss it!

Pat's four pages of bright and breezy articles complete a really super number of your favourite paper. You'll be wise to order your copy in advance.

Your sincere friend,

YOUR EDITOR.

was still so much swabbing to be done. She dashed at Betty as if simply to send her flying; but Betty dived aside, then turned upon her, and in a moment they were struggling with each other.

If the contest had been between Betty only and the woman, the latter's superior strength must soon have told. But Dave instantly seized the woman, who then found herself being hustled back to her cabin. Dave held her arms pinioned behind her, and Betty helped a great deal to get the half-crazed virago quickly to the cabin.

"Key, Betty," Dave said, and whilst not quite letting go her hold on the woman, she got the key out of the lock on the inner side of the door.

Then they pushed the woman into her cabin with a force that sent her head-

long. Before she could recover her balance, the cabin-door was pulled to and she was under lock and key.

### So Much at Stake

**"N**OW," Dave panted. "We've got to get away. There's no boat. The ship's boats are all in use. But—"

"Lifebuoys, Dave?"

"We can do better than that," Betty's desperate suggestion was calmly answered. "Life rafts—there are several. We'll soon have one over-"

Betty ran with him to the yacht's lounge-deck. It was keeping her rather heart-in-mouth to hear the imprisoned Indians below, hammering and banging whilst they shouted. Nor was she without a thought of how the woman might contrive to smash open her locked door.

But Dave was calm—imperturbable! He spoke only about what he and Betty had to do with all possible speed.

"This bit of seating isn't a fixture, Betty. It's made to float away if the ship goes down. It turns upside-down in the water and then it's like a raft. Come on, then!"

She at one end of it and he at the other—so they dragged the seat to where it could be tipped overboard.

"That's right. Now—let her go!"

With a terrific plunging splash, flop into the sea went the ingenious contraption. Betty looked over and saw it come upside-down on the water, but that was the right way up for its emergency use!

Then Dave darted to a coil of rope. Instantly back again, he made one end fast to a rail, then flung the rope outwards so that what was left of it, uncoiled, at the end of its fall, plopped on to the raft.

"Go on, then, Betty—you first!"

With an excited laugh, over the side she went, sliding hand-under-hand down the rope. And, after all, even her dangling feet never touched the water! The raft had barely started to drift away and so the weight of those spare coils of rope served, during her swift descent, to draw it back just enough to enable her to reach it.

Dave, who was looking over the rail, smiled down upon her as if he had reckoned upon something as good as that.

"But come on, then!" Betty cried up to him.

"It's all right," he spoke down to her coolly. "Keep her alongside, Betty, by holding the rope. If—if anything happens whilst I'm away—you know what I mean—then cast off. But that woman has done nothing yet."

Then Betty lost sight of him. With all the nerve in the world, he had turned back; was staying on the yacht

for a few moments longer, she could only suppose, for some astute reason.

Close on the raft she waited, holding it close in against the ship's side by means of the rope.

"Oh, why doesn't he come along!" she fumed.

Suddenly he was head and shoulders over the rail, just above her, and he threw down a large tin of biscuits and some canned meat, and a rolled-up blanket.

"Dave!" she clapped.

"And these—catch, Betty."

They were two bottles of water. He dropped one to her, and she caught it; the other, and she caught that as well. Litre wine-bottles they were, primed to their corks.

"Hurrah!" Betty laughed. "Fancy thinking of that! But do, now, come away!"

He was no sooner beside her, on the raft, than he cast off the rope and thrust as hard as he could against the yacht's side. Betty also pressed with both hands, and the combined effort caused the raft to make quite a strong lunge away from the ship.

"I stayed to upset the works in the engine-room," he quietly smiled. "Now, if Khan and the rest should come aboard from the island, wanting to steam away—they won't be able for a bit."

"Oh, Dave!" she exclaimed again in admiration; "so if by any chance, they should have got Muriel with them—the delay might mean the saving of her after all!"

"That's what I was thinking."

"You think of everything," she said. "We've got away! And now—Oh, surely we can get back to the island? That tide which took our bottle-

messages—"

"I'm not so sure about the tide, Betty; it may have turned by now. But don't talk for a bit. Listen."

Barely had that word of advice passed his lips than there was the woman's voice to be heard, quite clearly, as she reached the open deck. Frantic cries were hers, now that she had broken out of her cabin.

Quick-wittedly, Betty knelt down, for what it was worth, started to use a hand to paddle the raft along. Dave squatted down on the other side and flicked away just as rapidly with one hand, and there was a perceptible movement of the raft—farther away from the ship.

"We shall manage!" Betty panted.

"I think she's letting out the men— as some dull clanging sounded from the heart of the yacht. "She had only to slip back a bolt or two—iron door, in case of fire." I clapped it shut upon the fellows—"

The woman was on deck again, and with her were all five Indians. Had they all lined themselves along the rail merely to shout and gesticulate, Betty would have laughed.

But she saw how the woman, most ominously, started to give orders, the men at once obeying. It was instantly evident that there was to be an immediate pursuit.

"Carry on, Betty," said Dave.

**PURSUIT, after all! How will it end—in the recapture of Dave and Betty, or in success to the chums' daring venture? You will know when you read next Saturday's vivid instalment of this great South Sea Island drama, so make sure of your copy of *THE SCHOOLGIRL* by ordering it **RIGHT AWAY.****