

School, Adventure and Mystery Stories: 4 Pages of Articles

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'SCHOOLGIRLS OWN'



**"WE'VE GOT TO
SAVE THE PONIES!"**

cries Janet Jordan, and the Cliff House chumps race to the rescue

A thrilling moment from the long complete tale of Cliff House School Inside

Brilliant Complete Tale of School and Circus-Life, Featuring the Famous Fourth Formers at Cliff House School

Janet Jordan's ORDEAL



Rivals—or Enemies?

DOESN'T it sound just too thrilling?" Barbara Redfern's blue eyes sparkled. "Ripping!" enthused Mabel Lynn excitedly.

"Oh, I am-say, you know, I am-surely love circus!" muttered plump Bessie Hunter, her fat red cheeks blooming and glowing.

Babe, Mabel and Bonnie, of Study No. 4 in the Fourth Form passage at Cliff House School, were excited in the common with everyone else in the school, juniors and seniors alike.

For a circus had come to Friarstable! Not an ordinary circus, but one made even more thrilling by the fact that it was actually owned by the father of a Cliff House girl!

Janet Jordan, starish cheer of Babe & Co., was the lucky girl whose father was proprietor of Jordan's Mammoth, Seapond-Circus! And then it was on this sunny October Saturday afternoon, Janet and a trio of her closest chums were going to the opening performance as guests of genial Mr. Jordan, world-famed proprietor of his celebrated touring circus.

And Janet's chums, needless to say, included Babe, Mabel and Bonnie; her own study mates, Marjorie Hawthorne and Tomboy Clara Torrey, and Jessica Carleton, Leila Carroll and Amy Cartwright.

"Let's see if the others are ready," laughed Babe, crossing to the door of Study No. 4.

But before she could open it, thundering footsteps were heard in the passage outside.

"Here's Clara, anyway," said Mabel

knowingly. "Always know those fairy feet."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The door burst open unceremoniously. Clara Torrey, the tomboyish sports captain, it was who came striding in, as cheery and boisterous as always.

"Hello, kiddies!" she greeted. "Listen! What do you think's happened—"

"Oh, I am-say, whose's Janet?" interrupted plump Bessie, blinking short-sightedly through her thick round spectacles.

"Yes, whose's Janet?" chorused Babe and Mabel.

Clara grinned. A mischievous twinkle came into her gray eyes.

"Janet? She's gone down to the swimming pool!"

"To the swimming pip-pool?" Bessie blinked her disappointment. "What what's she gone there for—"

"Well, perhaps to play hockey, football!" teased Clara.

"Don't rot, Clara!" Babe laughed. "What's the jolly old mystery?"

"No mystery; just a challenge!" explained the Tomboy. "It's scolding,

By
HILDA RICHARDS

Florence has challenged Janet to a two-legged race in the swimming pool. Janet's taken her on, of course, and they're just going to start. Come on, let's go and watch the fun. Janet says we'll go along to the circus afterwards!"

But Babe whistled her surprise.

"Flaw! Florence has challenged Janet! I can see her game, Clara. She's hoping to beat Janet and get the swimming capstrophy."

Clara nodded.

The forthcoming swimming match against Courtfield High School was a new event in the sporting calendar of Cliff House. Lady Luncheon, that well known and popular sportswoman, herself a keen swimmer, had suggested the contest between the two schools, and had offered to present a trophy to the winning side.

The idea had been hailed with delight, both by missusess and girls. Details had been discussed, arrangements fixed up, with the result that the first contest between the champion swimmers of the two schools was due to take place at the Friarstable Open-Air Swimming Pool on the following Saturday.

The Cliff House swimming team was not yet decided upon—but of a certainty the junior section of it would include Janet Jordan, champion swimmer of the Lower School, and Florence Blinn, of the Lower Fifth.

The contest would be divided into two groups for seniors and juniors, each with its own captain. And Janet and Florence were equals for the captaincy of the junior swimming team. This unexpected challenge from Florence was the outcome of that rivalry.

"My hat, we must certainly see the

TO captain the Cliff House swimming team was Janet Jordan's great ambition. And as the school's champion swimmer she was certain of her chance—until strife in her father's circus threatened to dash all her hopes.

"race!" Babs cried enthusiastically. "Come on, girls!"

The four chums hurried from the study and made their way along to the magnificently equipped swimming pool, which was the pride of Cliff House. Quite a crowd was there, both juniors and seniors. News of the challenge had spread, and everybody was anxious to see the result of it.

"There's Janet!" yelled Clara.

Janet saw her chums in the same moment. She waved gaily and came running along the side of the bath. Very trim and sturdy she looked in her neat blue bathing suit, on which was embroidered in gold the Cliff House crest. Her skin glowed with perfect health; those olive cheeks of hers were flushed prettily, and contrasted delightfully with her white swimming cap.

Very different she looked from the girl, similarly clad, who followed more slowly behind her.

Florence Ellison, of the Lower Fifth, was by nature sulky and snaky. Her black eyes glowered resentfully as they rested upon that slender figure in front of her.

Rivals for swimming honors Janet and Florence were; but although in Janet's case it was a friendly rivalry, Florence took it bitterly and, creating the headlines as she did, was almost strangely determined to contain the Flow Cann, captain of the Lower younger girl.

Fifth, was appointed starter. Crossed of girls lined the pool, waiting for the race to begin, eagerly discussing Florence's challenge. For, as both Florence and Janet here, a lot depended upon the result of this race.

The captain of the junior swimming team would be elected on Monday, by vote of the Lower School. Florence and Janet were the only two candidates for this honor, and the girl who was voted undoubtedly away the voting is her favor.

"Get ready!" called Flora briskly. "Start when I blow this whistle. The

race will be to the end of the bath and back again!"

Side by side the two rivals stood, poised ready to dive off.

Babs & Co., standing in the background by the springboard, watched Janet eagerly.

"Hope Janet does it!" Babs breathed.

"Hope!" asserted Clara, in what she thought was an unobtrusive. "It'll be a walk-over for her! She'll be back up this end of the bath before Florence reaches the far end!"

That was an exaggeration, of course, but that was Clara's humor. Florence Ellison, hearing those words, however, scowled blankly. A hot flush crossed her face.

But, curiously enough, her feeling of anger was not really against the Turkey, but against the slim girl who stood poised at her side. So they thought Janet Jordan would win, ah! They were all thinking that. Well, she'd show them what swimming was. She'd show them that Janet Jordan was even so clever as they thought!

But now—

Phoop! went Flora's whistle.

There was a simultaneous splash as two bodies left the water as one. Two heads bobbed into view, and then a great shout went up.

Florence leads!

That shout went to Florence's head. She knew she was leading. Keeping herself to the utmost, she was forging ahead. Her strong arms flailed the blue water with incredible speed as she skimmed down the bath. But Janet, following more slowly behind, not heeding the urgent shout to "look up," smiled quietly. The race was easy yet. Florence must be tiring herself.

Down the length of the bath they went in a number of sprays, their limbs gleaming where they broke water. Janet touched the bar a good two yards after Florence. The Fifth Former was already forging back again as Janet topped.

But now Florence was beginning to feel the strain. Her arms were working

a little less quickly; she began to feel it difficult to time her breathing. Dimly she heard the shouts.

"Janet! Janet!"

"Just look at that girl!"

"What a swimmer!"

"She's catching up now!"

"She'll win! She'll win!"

Florence dimly heard those shouts through the paddling in her ears. She tried to answer, desperate apart; she thought she was keeping ahead. But suddenly, out of the corner of her eye, she saw a glancing figure. Janet Jordan was alongside her. Janet was passing her—passing her with an ease and confidence that infuriated the almost spent Florence.

In that moment she hated Janet Jordan. Hated her, she thought viciously. In that moment she would have done anything to stop her winning.

Florence, in her moment of rage, hardly conscious of what she was doing, raised her elbows with her feet. She felt it connect with Janet's leg, heard the tiny gasp from that girl.

For a moment Janet faltered. Again Florence lurched out, then made a last desperate start.

"Look! Florence looked her!" came a shout from the side.

"No, no! It was an accident!"

Janet heard that. Clearly the on-lookers were divided in their opinion. But she, knowing the truth—knowing that Florence had tripped deliberately looked her—felt a sudden swift surge of anger sweep through her. So Florence, unable to win by fair means, was resorting to foul! Well, she wouldn't get away with it. Janet thought grimly.

Down went her head into the water. Like a darting fish she shimmered as arms and legs moving in rhythm.

Gradually she overtook the gasping Florence, to win by five yards. Harold was entreated to pull her out of the water. Cheering excitedly, Babs and Clara hailed Janet on to the side of the bath. "Good old Janet!" shouted Clara. "I said you'd win. Janet far swimming captain!"



ALMOST choked by the smoke and fumes, Babs & Co. rushed to get the ponies out, heedless of their own peril. And as they worked desperately, fearlessly, the same thought was in every mind: Who had started the fire in Jordan's Circus?

"Hear, hear!"

"We'll vote for Janet!"

Everybody was cheering Janet. No doubting her popularity. No doubt now that Janet, more than ever, was favorite for the winning captaincy. And while she stood, surrounded by her cheers, laughing and laughing happily now, a dripping figure slipped up the steps at the side of the bath.

Hardly anybody noticed Florence Ellison, dejected and crushed, her nothing jealousy dimming the sense of shame which she felt after looking her rival.

She heard the cheers for Janet, saw the triumphant Janet, and weaved.

Bitter were Florence Ellison's thoughts in that moment. No Janet had beaten her—beaten her, in spite of all her efforts!

Florence badly wanted to be something in the school—to be a somebody. She was sick of being just one of the herd in the Lower Fifth. She wanted Cliff Hesse to acclaim her; she wanted the limelight.

More bitter became Florence. The desire, a burning ambition, to do something that would bring her glory and the plaudits of the school, was strong within her. The winning of the winning captaincy was her chance to achieve that ambition. And to win it Florence, in her own twisted, unperceiving way, was prepared to go to any lengths.

Janet should not stand in her path. No one should. She'd find some means of beating that out of the Fourth Form!

Florence's black eyes burned dangerously, and Janet, as if feeling those gloowering eyes boring into her, suddenly turned.

She started at the look of hate which revealed Florence's sulky face. In that look she read a desire for vengeance. And Janet, realizing she had made a bitter enemy, for some reason, felt a chill sense of fear creeping over her!



The Danger Cry!

"DADDY!"

"Janet, my dear!"

And Janet Jordan ran forward into the arms of the jovial, blundering man who stood on the steps of a gaily painted caravan. Mr. Jordan, proprietor of Jordan's Mammoth Circus, smiled down fondly at his daughter as he hugged her in his strong arms. An imposing figure he looked, in his polished riding-boots and gleaming top hat.

"It's good to see you again!" he boomed. "Enough your friends, Janet!"

"Yes, rather! Here we are, Mr. Jordan!"

And Clara Twelfth, with her cheeks stopped laughingly forward. It was an hour after that emotional race in the Cliff House swimming pool, and Janet Jordan had arrived at her father's circus with her guests.

Thrilled and excited, Babs & Co. after greeting Mr. Jordan, looked around them at the busy scene. Already crowds were streaming Lane's field. Jordan's Circus was always a great attraction wherever it went.

"The show starts in a quarter of an hour," announced Mr. Jordan, pulling a massive gold fob from his pocket. "I'll see you to your seats and then I must leave you. Come along to my

caravan afterwards, and we'll have some tea."

With a nod to the man at the turnstile, he led the chums to a row of red plush ring-side seats.

The chums thrilled.

"Can't that be swell!" bellowed

Leila Carroll ecstatically.

But now it was time for the grand parade. Led by the ringmaster on his magnificent grey horse, all the celebrated acrobats of Jordan's Circus paraded before the yelling audience.

Excitement mounted in Janet's cheeks as she watched. She gave a delighted cry as a pretty girl remarkably like herself, came past on a daintily hopping white horse.

"She's!" she shouted.

Janet's sister, for Sheila Jordan it was, turned, smiled, and waved her arm gaily.

And then, with a suddenness that startled the Cliff House chums, something that looked like a football came bowling across the tan to land up against the ring fence with a resounding bang.

The "football" unceremoniously and there, grinning up at the chums, sprawled a grotesquely made-up little man. He seemed to be counting the stars above him, then solemnly he grovelled in the dust and held up a long score.

"Lovers, look what's fallen out of my cranium!" he shouted.

"Ha, ha, ha!" guffawed the audience.

While from Janet came a shriek of

laughter and delight.

"Joey—it's dear old Joey!"

An enormous grin seemed to split the little clown's face from ear to ear. Then, tumbling and somersaulting crazily, he followed the parade out through the curtained opening.

Janet watched him affectionately. Dear old Joey, whom she had known from babyhood. It was his wife who had named her; it was Joey the clown with whom she had romped whilst living in the circus. She must go round and see him after the show, she thought, as she settled herself down.

And what a thrilling time followed for the chums, a time that went only too quietly. Came the first thrill—Ezra, the world-famous lion-tamer, who put twelve ferocious-looking lions through their paces—and then the show ended.

"Marvelous!" Babs & Co.

applauded. "We'll have to come and see it again before it goes!"

"And now to see daddy—and Joey,"

Janet said.

Thinking a little uncertainly, they found themselves in the bright sunlight. It was as the chums were making their way through the crowds towards Mr. Jordan's caravan that a sudden shout rent the air:

"Hey, Babe!"

Janet stopped dead. Only she, of the chums there, knew the significance of that shout.

"Hey, Babe!"—the dreaded danger-cry of the circus!

It came again, louder and more urgent. Circus bands were rushing in the direction of the cry.

"Quick!" gasped Janet. "That cry means danger to the circus. Something has happened. This way—this way!"

Almost trembling now, she dashed after the circus bands. Babs and the others, not quite comprehending what it was all about, followed in her wake.

And there, reaching Big Top, they saw.

They saw a singing, singing crowd;

beard-bearing, shouts, bellowed commotion. Mr. Jordan was there, his tall top hat askew and holding above the heads of the crowd. Then—

"Look!" shouted Janet, her voice charged with horror.

For, walking upwards, swept a thick spiral of black smoke, in which was reflected the glare of leaping flames.

"Fire! Fire!"

The words spread with lightning rapidity. Now the crowd was giving back, their gait changing to shamble. Through the masses charged the circus fire brigade, playing out snake-like lengths of hose.

Now another shout:

"It's the tent next to the poster's cage!"

The chums' hearts seemed to stop.

"Oh, those darling posters!" cried

Mabel. "They'll be so frightened!"

"They'll be in danger if the fire spreads to their cage!" said Janet, a catch in her voice.

For a moment, in stark dismay, the chums stared at each other. Then, as one, they leaped forward.

"Don't panic there!" came Mr. Jordan's hoarse warning. "Bring the hose round this side! Play it between the tent and the cage! Get those posters out!"

But that was already being attended to—by Babs & Co.

While the circus bands were concentrating on the burning tent, the Cliff House chums, headed by Janet, had reached the cage. The shrill cries of the terrified animals screech their ears. Aerial waves of smoke were already filling the cage. The heat from the burning tent was blistering the point. The iron hoop of the door was hot under Janet's hand as she wrenched it back.

But heedless of the pain, she flung open the door. The poster, petrified by fear, was huddled in one corner of the big cage.

Into the cage charged Janet, followed by Babs and Clara. It was difficult work, dangerous work, getting those posters out. They lashed out with their hands, snarled and showed their teeth with terror of the smoke through which they obstinately refused to pass.

The chums were in despair. The smoke was creeping into the cage now, making their eyes smart, threatening to choke them. Then a sudden idea from Janet.

"Off with your blouses, girls!" she cried. "Wrap them round their heads so that they can't see!"

That was done in a flash. Trembling and terrified, the little animals were cooped to the door, where they were received by the willing hands of the rest of the chums and transferred some distance away to safety.

The flames were licking in at the door as Janet led out the last animal. A cheer went up. Mr. Jordan appeared on the scene, his face moist with perspiration.

"Thanks, girls!" he said huskily. "I'll never forget that."

"But, daddy," Janet faltered, "how did it start?"

A brick-red flash of anger ran up into her father's smoke-grimed cheeks.

"How did it start?" he asked thickly.

"I'll tell you, Janet. That tent was fired deliberately, fired by a man whom I thought was my friend, who has been with me since we were led together. Joey the clown!"

Janet passed a bewildered hand across her smarting eyes.

"Daddy! No, no!" she gasped. "It couldn't, it simply couldn't be Joey!"

"It was Joey!" thundered Mr.

Jordan. "I caught him myself. I tell you, Janet, for ten pins I'd hand him over to the police!"

"Oh, daddy, there must be some mistake," Joyce cried. "Surely he can explain." The tears sprang to her eyes. But her father shrugged. His face was hard.

"Yes, he's tried to explain, but it didn't convince me. I caught him in the act and that's good enough for me. He's freed!"

And, turning on his heel, he strode off.

While Janet, standing there, bit her lip.

"No, no! There was some mistake. She was sure there was. She must find Joey and get the truth from him."

Followed by her sympathetic chums, she turned and made her way to the clown's caravan.

"I speak to you, Miss Janet, I didn't do that awful thing! You know old Joey. Do you think I'd do a thing like that?"

Transcending the face that confronted Janet Jordan, as she sat in the tiny but cozy caravan home of Joey the clown.

It was a face that was still marked by its clown's makeup, but the white scarlet lips were now wrinkled in moral agony, and down the bedaubed cheeks trickled two glistening tears.

Janet felt her heart go out to him, felt her own eyes wet.

She had heard Joey's tale now. For ten minutes she had been in the caravan, her chums having left her alone with the clown.

Joey had told her everything, how he had noticed the smell of petrol as he was passing the tent; how he had rushed in, falling headlong to the floor over a trailing rope, and so smothered his clothes with the inflammable liquid; and how he had picked up that burning face, which had obviously been placed there to ignite the petrol, and here, on coming out of the tent, he had rushed straight into the arms of Mr. Jordan.

"I believe you, Joey," Janet said tenderly. She leaned across and patted the old man's heaving shoulders. "But Joey, you say it was done deliberately. Have you any idea by whom?"

The old clown looked up from under his shaggy brows.

"No, Miss Janet, I haven't," he replied, shaking his head. "But I tell you this. There's some treachery going on in this circus. Somebody is trying to ruin your father. Perhaps he hasn't told you, but at every pitch we've had lands, something queer has happened. Something that's aimed to keep people away from the circus, to frighten them! Last time, at Mirapole, it was an elephant that broke loose. Gained a real pass, that did! Then at Bevilill it was two of the lions that somehow got out of their cages."

He shook his head worriedly.

"There's treachery loose in the circus, Miss Janet, but that your father should accuse me—"

Janet's skin quivered with sudden realization. She stood up.

"Joey," she said feebly, "I'm going to see daddy again. I'm going to tell him what a mistake he's making. I'll plead with him to take you back. Wait here until I return, promise, Joey?"

The old clown took the dainty brown hand between his two gnarled ones and pressed a fervent kiss upon it.

"There you, Miss Janet," he said huskily.

Janet left the caravan, and crossed to that inhabited by her father. There

was a thicket of tinsaps through the tiny window. She heard Clara's boisterous voice, heard Helen talking to Mr. Jordan. Janet went up the steps, opened the door and entered. Instantly all conversation ceased. Every eye was turned upon her.

Janet went straight over to her father, laid a tentative hand upon his arm, a whole world of pleading in her hazel eyes.

"Daddy, I've just been across to see Joey—"

The loud snarl vanished from the circus proprietor's face like magic, leaving it stern and cold.



FURIOUSLY, Florence sprang forward. "You're trying to bribe girls to vote for you by offering them free tickets to the circus!" she blazed. Instantly there was uproar, for Janet's chums knew how unfair the accusation was.

"Janet," he said thickly, "you know it is not my wish that you associate with that—that rascal."

"But please, listen, daddy," Janet pleaded desperately. "He's told me everything. He didn't do it, you mustn't believe that of him. He was trying to save the tent after someone had found it."

Mr. Jordan's lips set in a tight line.

"Listen! All this" he snarled. "I tell you this, Janet, had it been only the tent in danger I might have found it in my heart to give him another chance. But to endanger the lives of dumb animals, you a man like that deserves no mercy."

Mr. Jordan looked round the table as he spoke, and Janet, following his eye, was horror-stricken to see the look of approval with which her chums greeted that statement.

So they, too, believed in Joey's guilt! "No," Janet said, Mr. Jordan authoritatively, "enough of this. Sit down and have your tea, and forget it."

But Janet would not be ground. "You're making a mistake," she said quietly. "I promised Joey I would come and see you and plead for him. He

is waiting for me to tell him what happens."

Mr. Jordan stood up, his face working. "Then go back and tell him this!" he cried in a vibrant voice. "If he is not out of this place, bag and baggage, within the next half-hour, I'll have him thrown out. And if, after this, you ever see or speak to him again, Janet, I'll hand him over to the police. Now go. Tell him that!"

Crimson to her humiliation, but still staunch in her faith in the old clown, Janet turned, stamping almost unseeingly down the steps of the caravan.

"You're innocent, and even though it means going against my father's wishes," here Janet's voice faltered, "I'm going to do it. I give you my word on that. Together we'll prove your innocence and bowl out the real culprit. And now, good-bye, Joey. Write me where I can find you."

And dropping a light kiss on top of the downcast head, Janet passed quickly out of the clown's caravan.

As Janet returned to her chums, a crouching figure straightened up by the tiny window of Joey the clown's caravan.

The figure was that of a Cliff House girl—Florence Elliott of the Lever Fifth.

Only by a lucky chance had Florence, having gone to the circus like many others from Cliff House, happened to be passing Mr. Jordan's caravan at the moment when the circus proprietor was hearing that heated conversation with his daughter.

Florence had heard every word through the open window. She had

heard Janet pleading on behalf of the dress; heard Mr. Jordan's throat.

And then Florence, watching from cover, had seen Janet go across to Joey's carvings; and, her cunning brain becoming busy, had maliciously followed.

Once again she had played the part of a snoot-dropper, listening to what Janet had said to the clown.

Now there was a curious smile lurking on Florence's swollen face as quickly she hurried away and mingled with the crowd which thronged the circus grounds.



Election Result



IT was a subdued little party which returned to Cliff House School that evening.

Janet Jordan was very quiet, and obviously worried. Her replies to her class's remarks had become so short that finally they had ceased speaking to her.

They were puzzled, and not a little hurt, by her attitude. It was clear to them that Janet was thinking of Joey the clown. But they found it hard to shake her belief in his innocence. How could they believe, when, from Mr. Jordan's own lips, they had heard how he had caught the clown almost red-handed, in the living of the tent.

Janet herself could guess what Babe & Co. were thinking. And because she herself was so certain that Joey had no hand in that far-up at the circus, their attitude piqued her.

"Well, here we are," said Clara, breaking the long silence, as they all trooped down the drive towards the school building. And in an effort to recognize Janet's incoherence, went on, with a grin: "How about making a speech to your supporters this evening, Janet? You'll win the swimming captaincy by yards, of course, but no harm in getting as big a majority as possible."

Janet smiled. She was very keen to win that swimming captaincy.

"Do—do you think I should do that, Babe?" she asked, appealing to the Fourth Former.

"Rather!" said Babe readily. "And we'll rally round the girls and do the cheering for you, Janet, old thing!"

The old sparkle came back into Janet's clear blue eyes.

"And I must tell the girls about daddy's promise," she said eagerly. "You know, he said he'd give free tickets for the circus to six Cliff House girls every day next week. He was awfully backed because we got those pieces out of their caps."

"Jolly nice of him, I must say!" put in Bonnie Baxter, with a beam. "I wouldn't mind gipping to the circus again myself with a free tin-ticket—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" But, as Bonnie had said, it had been nice of Mr. Jordan. Grateful for what the clown had done, offering free tickets to Cliff House girls had been his way of showing his appreciation.

Janet loved him for it. Really was a darling, but, she carefully reflected, as usual and often at times.

The news of Mr. Jordan's offer soon spread round the school. And Janet, who, prompted by Babe and Clara, had announced that she was going to make a speech in the Fourth Form Common-room, found that apartment full to overflowing when she arrived with her dress.

Although it hadn't occurred to Janet in that light, that offer couldn't have come at a better time.

Third Formers, Fourth Formers, and girls from the Lower Fifth were packed in the Common-room when Janet arrived. Batsmantic shouts greeted her.

"Good old Janet!" "Janet Jordan for swimming captain!"

"We'll vote for Janet!"

Freda Ferris, her thin, unpleasant face lit up by an exulting smile, pushed her way up to Janet.

"Get one one of those free circus tickets and rely on me to vote for you, Janet!" she said eagerly.

Janet frowned. She began to realize that some of the other meaner-natured girls might be thinking the same as Freda. She didn't want to get votes that way. That was not fair on her opponents.

"Freda," she said loudly, so that everybody could hear, "I don't want you to vote for me in that spirit. These free circus tickets have nothing to do with the election. In fact, I shan't give any away until after the election on Monday—and you," she added a little scornfully, "will not be one of the girls to get one."

Freda scowled. There were cheers, a few groans of disappointment. Janet pushed her way up to the platform and mounted it. Babe addressed the assembly, "introducing" the candidate.

Then Janet stepped forward. She cleared her throat a little nervously. But before she could begin speaking there came an interruption. The door of the Common-room burst open violently, and in strode Florence Ellison, accompanied by four or five cronies of the Lower Fifth.

Florence did not look pleased. She, also, had called a meeting that evening, but only a handful of girls had troubled to turn up.

With the result that Florence was furious. And her fury grew in even greater bounds as she beheld the packed Common-room.

Up to the platform she strode, and glared at Janet.

"You're playing a cheat's game!" Janet Jordan!" she bawled.

Immediate confusion and uproar! Janet flushed hotly. Clara Trevlyn shrieked. Babe and Maie looked angrily down at the Fifth Former. Shouts of indignation went up from the others.

"Florence—" began Janet.

"I've spotted your beastly under methods!" Florence went on furiously.

"You're trying to bribe girls to vote for you by offering them free tickets to the circus!"

More shouts. Increasing pandemonium in the Common-room.

"Bribish!" shouted Clara. "Janet just told the girls that she isn't giving away any tickets until after the election—"

"Hear, hear!"

"You've got it wrong, Florence!" The Fifth Former roared.

"A lot of difference that will make—I don't think!" she roared. "You know all the girls will vote for you, and then you'll give them the tickets afterwards—"

"Stop, Florence!" Janet stamped a foot angrily. "Oh, you're never to say a thing like that!—But if that's what you think, I'll soon show you that I want the election to be fair and above board. Girls!" she cried. "Please listen! There won't be any free tickets for anyone. I'll tell daddy not to give a free

pass to any Cliff House girl. Now, does that satisfy you, Florence?"

The two rivals stood glaring at each other. Florence was a little taken aback by Janet's words. She felt as if the wind had been taken out of her sails. But Florence had come here to make trouble, and if she couldn't make it one way, she determined to make it in another.

"I've only your word for it, Janet!" she exclaimed, with a curl of the lip.

"But anyway, I've another bone to pick with you. I want to tell the girls a thing or two. And seeing that you've taken them away from my meeting, I'll tell them here."

And Florence suddenly kept up on to the platform, pushing Janet out of the way. At the same time her cronies followed her lead, trying to push Babe & Co. aside.

"Girls—" Florence shouted. "But she was shouted down. On the platform a wild scramble was taking place. No one could push Clara out of the way like that. She promptly retaliated, and Babe and Maie and Leila and a few others, thoroughly aroused, manly backed her up.

Never had the Fourth Form Common-room known such a scene of disorder. Indignant girls were surrounding Florence and her cronies threateningly, when, without warning Dulcia Fairbrother, one of the prefects, strode quickly in.

"Girls! What is the meaning of this disgraceful scene? Silence!"

The uproar died away.

Order was restored at last. Florence and her cronies slunk from the Common-room.

And Janet, from the platform, watched them go. She saw the vindictive glance which Florence threw over her shoulder at her. And inwardly Janet was troubled.

MORNING.

The day of the election for the captaincy of the Junior swimming team!

Voting took place during the interval between morning and afternoon lessons. Babe & Co. had a busy time, making sure that every girl in the Lower School recorded her vote.

Janet was as excited as anyone. How could she be otherwise, when she had so set her heart on winning the captaincy? But it was an excitement tinged with worry and anxiety.

For that morning she had received a letter from Joey. It was a sad letter that had caused Janet much distress.

Joey's wife, who had nursed Janet as a baby, was prostrate with the shock of her husband's ignominious dismissal from the circus. She had not heard about it until her return from relatives on the Sunday. Now she was ill in bed.

"Poor, poor Ada!" Janet murmured, as she sat reading the letter again in Study No. 7, just after dinner. "And poor old Joey! I must go down to see them this evening. I'll take a few grapes and things for Ada."

Yes, she'd do anything to help the old couple in their time of misfortune. They had taken a little cottage on the outskirts of Fritvale. Joey, no doubt, had earned a little money, but it would soon go.

Clara Trevlyn hastened into the study at that moment.

"Voting's finished!" the Turnkey exclaimed. "And I'll get my booky-book if you don't wish, Janet!"

Janet put the letter away with a sigh, and smiled.

"Don't be too rash, old thing," she said.

"Class granted."

"Yes, yes."

The voice advised just that evening. Miss Frisvold, the headmistress, declared the result in Big Hall during roll-call.

Janet Jordan and Florence Kliese, the two rivals, were called up on to the platform. They stood beside Miss Frisvold's table, while below them the assembled girls waited in a fever of excitement and impatience.

"Girls!" began Miss Frisvold, adjusting her pince-nez and picking up a sheet of paper from the table.

Immediately the low murmur which had been filling Big Hall died away.

"Girls," the headmistress said again, "the result of the election for the captain of the junior swimming team is now known. By a large majority Janet Jordan, of the Fourth Form, is the winner. Here are the figures—"

But for once the Junior School forgot their awe of the figures—The next words were drowned in the great roar of cheering and clapping which threatened to lift the roof of Big Hall.

"Hoorah! Janet's captain!"

"Three cheers for Janet!"

Janet stood there on the platform, flushed and happy. She waved excitedly to the cheering girls. It was a thrilling moment for her.

And what of Florence? She turned to glance at her defeated rival. But, amazingly enough, Florence was smiling. She saw Janet's glance. For a moment her eyes gleamed with hate, contrasting inconspicuously with the smile that was on her face.

She would for dissonant cause. Janet stepped down from the platform, and was immediately surrounded by her excited chums who, in spite of the prefect's shouts for order and silence, had rushed forward.

"Chair her, girls!" shouted Clara Trevlin lustreously.

Janet, laughing, protesting, was hoisted on to willing shoulders. She was being carried in triumph from Big Hall when—

Above the noise and clamour came the sudden sound of a siren. Leader and leader it scolded, to die away on a wailing note. Instantly there was a lurch in Big Hall.

But Janet's face had gone deathly white. Frantically she struggled down to the floor. Babe was gazing at her blankly.

"The circus siren!" gasped Janet, her hand open wide with alarm. "Something's happening at daddy's circus—they only sound that siren when danger threatens!"

In that dramatic moment she was consciousness that fire at the circus on Saturday. She was remembering Joey's warning:

"Somebody is trying to ruin your father!"

What had happened this time?

Frenzied and apprehensive, Janet went rushing out of Big Hall and out of the school, running wildly in the direction of Lane's field!

The three chums, with a start, managed to catch up with her.

"I don't know, but it must be something dreadful!" Janet gasped.

They had almost reached Lane's field now. To-night was descending over the countryside. Flares and lights glimmered from the circus. There was the glare of mechanical organs, and mingling with it an ominous sound.

The shrieks of terrified people!

The chums raced on. They reached the entrance to Lane's field, and then suddenly Babe stopped.

"Look! Who's that?"

They all saw. A short figure was crawling through a gap in the hedge which bordered the field. For a fleeting moment they caught a glimpse of the figure's face.

"It's Joey the clown!" said Clara.

Janet felt her heart give a leap. Joey the clown, it had been. Now he was racing across the field, making for a little wood beyond Lane's field.

Babe's lips tightened.

"Looks as if he's been up to some mean mischief!" she said grimly. "Come on, girls!"

Babe and Mabel and Clara went plunging on into the field. Those frightened yells still came from somewhere at the far side. They caught a glimpse of swaying crowds amid some of the side-shows.

But Janet did not follow her chums. Suddenly she changed her direction and went pelting in pursuit of Joey the clown, who even then was disappearing into that little wood.

Her heart beat madly. There was a tense, agonised expression on her face. What had Joey been doing? Why had he been acting in that suspicious manner?

Had her father been right about the

old clown? She must catch up to him—ask him what had been happening.

Janet plunged into the shadows of the wood, and, abruptly, came to a halt. Ahead of her she heard voices—Joey's voice and another.

And then, peering through the dark, she saw two figures. There was Joey, talking to a girl whom Janet had never seen before. The girl's voice, angry and threatening, reached Janet's ears as she stood irresolutely by the vast girth of a towering oak.

"Joey, don't be a fool! If it's money you want—"

"I want no money from you!" came the clown's angry retort.

"Here's ten pounds! Take it, and there's more coming to you if you'll only clear out of the district and say nothing!"

A wave of excitement swept through Janet as she stood there listening. "This girl offering Joey money! What did it all mean?"

Joey's voice again:

"I want none of your crooked money! I know who you are—I know what your game is now, and—"

Then the girl, more threatening now, but with a trace of fear in her tone which she could not completely conceal:

"You know nothing that you can prove, you fool! But everybody believes in your guilt, and needs, if he likes, can easily persuade Mr. Jordan to put the police on you even now!"

Joey flinched. His face went a shade whiter. But his eyes were fearless.

"I won't do it!" he said. "If I run away, then everybody will believe I'm guilty! Tell your uncle to keep his money. One of these days he'll make a slip, and I'm going to show him up when that time comes, to show him up for the treacherous scoundrel he is!"

Janet saw the girl suddenly tense.



The Girl Without Mercy

"JANET! Wait for us, Janet! What do you think's happened?"

Janet Jordan, still reeling, glanced over her shoulder, and saw Babe, Mabel, and Clara racing after her.

EVEN as the old clown stumbled and fell, Beatrice snatched up a stick. Her intention was obvious—but Janet had seen everything. With an angry cry of "Stop!" she rushed forward.

Her face a mask of baffled rage, she sprang forward. She seized the old clown by the shoulder, gave him a violent push; and he, unprepared for it, staggered back, caught his head against an upturning tree-root, and thudded heavily to the ground.

Janet's hands clenched. Then a cry came to her lips as she saw the girl, apparently beside herself with rage, stoop quickly, and grab one of the many pieces of fallen branches which littered the ground hereabouts. She caught it in her shoulder, would have brought it down viciously upon the inert man as he lay. But before that arm could descend, Janet, springing forward, seized it from behind.

"The girl gave a little cry of pain as the wood was dragged roughly from her eye."

"You beast!" Janet panted. "How dare you bully Joey like that?"

"For a moment the girl eyed her, too amazed to speak. And then she gave a short, snorting laugh.

"Keep your hands off me, you!" she snapped. "What's it to you? This man is a scoundrel, and deserves all he gets! He's been making trouble at Jordan's Circus—not for the first time—"

"That's a cruel lie!" broke in Janet hotly.

The girl glared at her.

"You know nothing about it. I advise you not to interfere. I know all about this. I'm Beatrice Dailey, and my uncle is ringmaster at the circus."

Janet looked surprised, and then smiled grimly.

"And it," she began hotly, "as—"

The words died on her lips. Just as she had been about to reveal her identity to the new Joey, who had now come to his feet, bravely shaking his head and putting his fingers to his lips.

"And I," she finished lamely, "believe Joey to be innocent! And I'm going to help him to prove it!"

For a moment Beatrice Dailey gazed at her.

"You're interfering in something that doesn't concern you," she hinted. "Take care, or you'll live to regret it!"

And, with a final glance at Janet, she turned on her heel and vanished into the dark.

For a moment Janet looked after her, puzzled and suspicious, then walked on a quiet, smiling smile came at her elbow:

"Thank you, Miss Janet! That was mighty nice of you! But you must be careful. I can't have you worrying yourself on my account—"

"Oh, nonsense!" laughed Janet. And then she became deadly serious. "But, Joey, what's all this about? What's been happening at the circus?"

Old Joey looked at her quietly for a moment, then drew a little nearer.

"I've been feeling things out," he said mysteriously. "I know now who's the snake in the grass in your father's circus. It's that girl's uncle, Leon Dailey, the ringmaster!"

Janet looked at him keenly.

"Joey, are you sure? Dailey's my father's right-hand man—one of his most trusted friends—"

"I'm dead sure," said Joey grimly. "I can't prove anything, of course, but I've been watching the circus in secret. And, not half an hour ago, I saw him, with my own eyes, hit Tucker, the elephant, and set frighten him into a stampede. That's what all the trouble was about just now. It was another attempt to frighten people away from the circus."

He passed, looking at Janet severely. "That girl—Dailey's niece—knows I saw everything. That's why she came chasing after me, and tried to frighten

me away from here. She even offered me money to go!"

"I know," put in Janet quietly. "I heard everything. You were wonderful, Joey." Her voice softened, grew tender. Her eyes were misty as she gazed at the old clown. Oh, why couldn't her father have been here to have heard that conversation? Then surely he would have known the old clown's faithfulness, his loyalty to the circus which had discarded him, which had thrown him out after all these years.

"Joey," went on Janet thoughtfully, "we've got to unmask this Dailey between us. You hang with us on the circus. But be careful, she cautioned, "don't let anyone else see you. Otherwise, they'll hatch up more trouble, and pin the blame on to you. Meanwhile, I'll try to find out things, too. That girl didn't recognize me—she obviously doesn't know who I am. She doesn't even know that I'm a Cliff House girl, as I haven't got my uniform on. That's to our advantage. I must make sure she and her uncle don't know who I am, too, since they do—"

She passed. Joey nodded understandingly. He knew what would happen if Beatrice Dailey found out who Janet was. She would at once tell her uncle, the treacherous ringmaster, who, knowing of Mr. Jordan's warning to his daughter not to help Joey, would then use that knowledge as a lever to get the clown put in prison, thus removing from his path the one man whom he had come to love.

"But now I must get along to the circus," Janet said anxiously. "Oh, I hope nobody has been hurt—"

Joey looked silent.

"Ah, Miss Janet, 'twill be a bad thing for the circus if anything like that has happened," he said gravely.

A few more words and Janet slipped away. Back to the circus she hurried, to find, to her relief, that the danger had been averted by the possession of mind of the elephant's Indian keeper, and that Tucker was now quiet again.

Half a Co. by their attitude, had shown that they disapproved of what she was doing. Clara, on their way back from the circus, had said so with her usual bluntness. And even Hagar, usually so shrill and far-seeing, had agreed with Clara.

Janet's messages were suddenly interrupted by a bang on the door. It opened, and Stella Stone, captain of the school, looked in.

Stella was easily the most popular girl at Cliff House, universally liked for her cheerfulness and good-nature. A little while back it had been feared that the school was to lose her. She had won an exam which entitled her to the post of assistant in Sir Abraham Whittier, at his private use. Unfortunately—although Cliff House had been glad in one way—a sudden illness had prevented Sir Abraham taking a long cruise. During his absence Stella was to remain at Cliff House.

"Hello, Janet," she said cheerfully.

"All alone?" Janet jumped up, smiling.

"Yes, Stella," she replied. "Congratulations on getting the swimming captaincy!" Stella said, coming into the room. "I've just received the list of the Courtfield swimming team," she added smilingly, handing Janet an envelope. "After you've looked at it perhaps you'll put it on the notice board in Big Hall."

She turned to the door.

"And—oh, by the way, don't forget to let me have your list before you go to bed. I must send it off some time tonight to Courtfield."

"All right, Stella. I'll bring it to you soon," said Janet.

And Stella, with a nod went out, closing the door behind her.

Thrilled and eager once more, Janet opened the envelope and drew from it the slip of paper it contained. Quickly she ran her eyes down the list, nodding approvingly at the names which met her eyes.

The first three she knew—good swimmers, all of them. And then—

She started, staring at the list again. That fourth name. It seemed to swim before her eyes.

Beatrice Dailey!

For a moment Janet stood staring, then sank heavily back into the arm-chair.

Beatrice Dailey at Courtfield High School! And, worse than that, actually a member of the swimming team which was to compete against Cliff House for the Larches Cup on Saturday!

Janet felt almost sick.

"She'll see me!" she muttered.

"Recognize me! She'll see my name as well as I! She'll be introduced to me on Saturday, and then—"

Janet gasped again; hit her lip in dismay.

Only too well did she know what would happen then. Beatrice, vindictive, already dishing her, would use that knowledge to get Joey out of the way. Their game to unmask the schemers in the circus would come to naught.

Janet clenched her hands. Nervelessly she rose, pacing feverishly to and fro across the floor.

She dared not meet the girl. Beatrice must never know that she was Janet Jordan.

Then—then how could she appear in the swimming gala between Cliff House and Covert's High School?

Janet felt frantic. Her mind seemed to be whirling. Only that evening she had won the swimming capstancy; was that coveted honor which she had been so keen to attain.

And now must she abandon it in despair?

But if she appeared in the gala, if she met Beatrice Bailey, then it would be the end of everything for poor old Joey.

Oh, was any girl ever faced by such a horrendous problem?

And then, even as Janet stood there, trying to make up her mind, the door opened abruptly and without warning a girl walked in. It was Florence Kilman.

"So you've got the capstancy, eh, Janet?" she began pleasantly. "You're crowing over me, aren't you? But now I'm going to do some crowing."

Janet, an astonished look on her pretty olive face, stared wonderingly at the intruder.

"Florence, what are you talking about? Why are you so happy about my winning? It was a fair fight—"

"Oh, cut that stuff out!" Florence broke in roughly. "I know what you're up to. You're helping that old rascal of a coach, aren't you?"

"Florence!" Janet almost shouted, but now her cheeks were pale.

But Florence, not heeding the inter-
ruptions, went on impudently.

"Oh, yes, I know all about it. I overheard that conversation of yours with the clown. You're helping him and you don't want your father to know. If he finds out he'll have him sent to prison. He'll know how you've been sent to prison. Well!"—Florence stepped forward, drawing her distorted face close to Janet's—"well, he's going to know!" she almost hissed. "And I'm going to tell him—"

"Florence—no! No, you mustn't do that—" Janet cut Janet tragically.

"Master!" Janet Florence snarled, and grinned. "Well, perhaps that depends on you."

"On me?"

"Yes, yes! I'll keep your guilty secret provided—Florence's smile was cunning—providing you resign that swimming capstancy to-night in my favor!"

For a moment Janet could scarcely credit her hearing. It seemed impossible that any girl could be so mean and mercenary as to make such a threat—sure such a decision.

"Florence—no, you can't mean what you're saying—"

"Of course I mean it," the other girl sneered. "Do you think I've come along here just to play the fool?"

Janet went white.

"You want me to resign the capstancy," she stammered.

"In my favor!" snarled Florence. "And you'd better hurry up and decide which it's going to be—that or," and she grinned, adding with a malicious grin, "a free woods to your father."

There was only one way Janet could decide, and she knew it. She had already made up her mind. Whatever happened, Joey and his ailing wife should not suffer.

There was only one compromise she wanted to make. She, Janet Jordan, must bear the brunt, not Cliff House. If she allowed Florence to take over the capstancy and field a weak team she

would be letting down the school. That must not happen.

"Florence," she said quietly, though her eyes were hard as steel, "there's one thing I want to ask you. If I resign the capstancy in your favour, will you play the team I shall give you?"

"Florence shrugged carelessly.

"Anything to oblige, sweetheart," she returned. "But it must be me—and not little Janet Jordan—who leads them, wherever they are."

Janet could not trust herself to words just then. She nodded and turned to the table. Soaking pen and paper she wrote down the names she had already mentally decided on. They represented the best swimmers in the Lower School.

Florence took the paper without speaking and crossed to the door. There she paused to glance back at Janet. A triumphant smile touched her lips, then, with a mocking laugh, she had gone.

It was not often that Janet gave way to tears.

But outside the study, on the floor of the corridor, lay some torn scraps of paper. They were the remains of Janet's list—torn to shreds by Florence. For Florence had ideas of her own about a swimming team, as Cliff House was to discover.

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Babe quitted the Common-room, just before luncheon, and slipped along to Study No. 7. She knew Janet would be there alone.

Janet was, as Janet pale and weary after a sleepless night. "Janet already stunned by the knowledge of Florence's actions—the knowledge that she had been played false. A steady scene with Florence herself had left her dusky and upset, but no better off.

She gave a wistful little smile as Babe entered, which touched the Form captain's heart.

"Janet," said Babe sadly, "Janet, old thing, you've got something on your mind. I know you must have a good reason for resigning that capstancy. Won't you tell me what it is? You know I'm your friend. You know I'll help you if I can. Won't you please tell me?"

Very pleading, very tender, were her blue eyes as they dwelt upon the girl before her.

For a moment Janet gazed at her.

Not Babe to give away a secret! And she felt she must confide in someone—the maid. The strain was becoming unbearable.

"Babe," she said, with sudden decision. "I'll tell you what—but you must promise me first to tell no one."

"Why, Janet, of course I promise!" said the Form captain seriously.

"Now, what is it?"

And then Janet told her everything—of her father's threat to put the police on Joey if he discovered that she, Janet, was having anything to do with the clown. Of what Joey had discovered about Beatrice Bailey and her nasty uncle; of how she wouldn't rest contented until she had smashed their villainy.

And she told Babe, too, of Florence's crafty bargain; coming on top of her horrifying discovery that Beatrice Bailey was included in the Courtfield swimming team.

"And so, Babe," she added, "you do see, don't you? It's utterly impossible for me to appear in the gala—at least, if Joey is not cleared by Saturday."

Babe nodded, her keen brain busy: "Janet," she said quietly, after a pause. "I'm glad you've told me. I'm going to help you. We'll work together to find the real villain in the swim, and if we do it by Saturday, and we find a way to get you back into the swimming team, will you appear in the gala?"

Janet's hand grew shaky.

"Babe, you're a brick!" she said huskily. "With you to help me, we'll have Joey's name cleared in no time. And as for swimming in the gala—that's all one of my greatest ambitions."

Babe laughed.

"Then that's settled. We'll go along to see Joey after luncheon, then I can hear his side of the story—"

But even as she spoke there came a tap at the door, and Midge Stevens' cheeky face peered in.

"Nice to see you, Janet. It's just come."

Wonderingly, Janet took the folded note which the Third Form had handed her. She opened it. And then her face grew excited.

"Babe! It's from Joey!" she exclaimed. "Read it."

And Babe, taking the sheet of paper, read this message:

"Meet me at 7 o'clock to-night, at Moss End Cottage, Farnfield. Some thing important to show you."

"Joey."



A Message from the Clown

TWO staggering shocks hit Cliff House the following morning and left it gasping.

Each took the form of an announcement placed to the notice board.

The first proclaimed the simple fact that Janet Jordan had resigned the swimming capstancy, which had been taken over by Florence Kilman. The second, and more staggering, was a list of names composing the swimming team, signed by Florence herself.

For that list contained the names of five of the worst swimmers in the Lower Fifth—all poor crooners of Florence!

Babe & Co., standing in front of the notice board in Big Hall, stared at it incredulously.

"Boy's jolly!" gasped Babe.

"Fine joke if they appear on Saturday!" snarled Clara. "The joke will be on Cliff House then!"

The school fumed. The school method. But the school could do nothing about it. Florence was swimming captain, and Florence's word was law.

More and more furious became the girls. But now their fury went into new channels. It was all Janet Jordan's fault. If Janet hadn't resigned, this wouldn't have happened.

"She ought to be sent to Coventry!" said Ledia Crossendale, feeling this was a good excuse to get a dig at Janet.

And, curiously enough, Lydia received a great deal of support in that statement.

"Clear, hear?"

"She's let the Form down!"

But Babe, standing alone, felt worried.

She, too, was a little nettled at Janet's attitude. She, too, was thinking what a lasso Saturday's gala would be for Cliff House if Florence's team represented the school.

But Babe, shrewd and far-thinking, realized that Janet must have some strong reason for her actions. Somebody had got to see Janet. And she was going to be that one.

Unseen by the rest of the Fourth,

"Meet me at 7 o'clock to-night, at Moss End Cottage, Farnfield. Some thing important to show you."

"Joey."

Babe looked at Janet, her eyes shining.

"And that means me, too," she said.

"I'm coming with you, Janet!"



Tucker's Little Trick

"MISS JANET, so you've come!"

It was Joey the clown who spoke. He stood at the door of the little cottage he had rented for his wife and himself on the outskirts of Friedlake.

Joey's face was drawn, pinched, and worried. He spoke softly, as though fearing that his words would carry to the fever-haunted sleep in the little room above the porch.

But his eyes lit up as they saw the girl who stood in the open doorway. Janet smiled back.

"Of course I came, Joey. How is your wife?"

"A little better, Miss Janet, thank you. But she's still worried, poor lam."

He started as there came a little movement from behind Janet.

"Who's that?" he said sharply.

Janet turned with a light laugh.

"Another cousin by your name, Joey. A staunch friend of mine, who wants to help you. Come in, Babe—I think you've met dear old Joey before?"

Barbara Redden stepped into the tiny living-room of the picturesque old colored cottage. It was late afternoon, growing dusk, and the chairs had not out from Cliff Hoxon immediately after tea, in response to that urgent and insistent message which the old clown had sent.

"Now, Joey," said Janet, seating herself on the old-fashioned sofa, "what's all the mystery? Found anything else out?" she asked eagerly.

"Ay, I have that!" Joey's face set grimly. "I went waiting round the circus early this morning, before even anybody was awit there. I asked among the ashes of that burnt tent, thinking there might possibly be some clue as to who fired it."

He paused, while Janet looked at him expectantly.

"And you found something?" she breathed.

"For answer, Joey drew from the pocket of his shabby tweed coat a folded handkerchief, which he proceeded very slowly to unwrap. The two girls watched fascinatedly.

"This is what I found!"

And against the white background of that handkerchief, something flashed and glittered in the glow of the candle that stood on the table.

The girls gasped.

"A tri-pin!" Babe exclaimed.

"But where is it?" asked Janet excitedly.

"That tri-pin," said Joey slowly, "belongs to Leon Dailey, the ringmaster in your father's circus. It was right in the middle of the ashes of that burnt tent, and I've got my own idea how it got there."

"You mean he must have dropped it?" Janet breathed.

Joey nodded.

"Yes, when he was doing his dirty work!" Joey answered grimly.

Babe, watching keenly, could not

help being impressed by the clown's attitude. This was the first time she had really seen him face to face; the first time she had had an opportunity of hearing his version of the accusations that had been made against him, and Babe was a shrewd judge of character.

Already Babe found her distrust of Joey waning. Those eyes of his; that kindly wrinkled face—at you, he was genuine! Nothing shady or underhand about Joey, she decided; he was faithful and loyal.

And, deciding that she was ready— anxious—to help him, in that moment she felt a surge of admiration for the way Janet had stood by him.

"But that tri-pin is hardly definite proof against this man you mention," she put in keenly.

"No, you're right there," Joey said gloomily. "That's why I sent for Miss Janet here—to see if she could think of some way of turning it against that scoundrel of a ringmaster!"

But Janet was on her feet, looking excited.

"I'm glad you did send for me, Joey. I've got an idea, Babe; we're going to see daddy right now."

Janet rumin her father seriously in his caravan at the circus.

"Daddy, I've got something to show you," she said. "And I want you to do something for me. Have you ever seen this before?"

And she held out her hand, on the palm of which glinted that tri-pin Joey had found.

Mr. Jordan recognized it immediately.

"Why, that belongs to Dailey!" he said, in surprise. "He was saying only today that he'd lost it. Where did you find it, Janet?"

But Janet did not answer that question.

"Daddy," she said, with a seriousness that made Mr. Jordan glance at her sharply, "this is what I want you to do. Will you send for Mr. Dailey—ask him to come here? Say you want to see him."

"But I don't," said Mr. Jordan, in bewilderment.

"No, but I do. Please, daddy!" Janet begged earnestly.

Mr. Jordan shrugged.

"Very well, if you insist—"

He went to the door of the caravan, put out his head, and shouted:

"Hey, Fred! Ask Dailey to step this way!"

Janet turned to Babe, who stood behind her, and raised her eyebrows significantly. Babe nodded.

"Daddy," went on Janet, as her father came back into the caravan "when I'm speaking to Mr. Dailey, I want you to watch his face—watch his reactions to what I have to say."

Mr. Jordan looked even more puzzled.

"What to all this?" he began irritably.

But before he could complete the sentence there came a tap at the door, and in walked Leon Dailey, the merry, dark-mounted ringmaster, immaculate as ever.

"You wanted me, Mr. Jordan?"

"It was Janet who answered."

"Oh, Mr. Dailey," she said sweetly, "it was I who wanted you. I think I've got something belonging to you."

Dailey's dark eyes narrowed. He glanced curiously at the girls. Janet stepped forward. A little dramatically, she held up the glittering tri-pin.

"Mr. Dailey, do you recognize this?"

The ringmaster stared. Then a pleased smile crossed his thin lips.

"Why, Miss Janet, my pin!" he exclaimed, stretching out a hand for it. "But where did you find it?"

Janet stared at him steadily. Her eyes were hard, steady now; her lips compressed.

"It was found, Mr. Dailey," she said, slowly and deliberately, "in the ashes of that tent which was burnt to the ground the other day."

They were all watching the ringmaster's face now, even Mr. Jordan feeling something unusual in the atmosphere.

And certainly Dailey's face was a picture of feigning emotion. For as Janet's words he staggered back a pace. His narrow face took on a sickly, greenish hue. His mouth twitched. He looked hunted, a picture of guilt.

"I—I—that is, how on earth did it get there?" he stammered hoarsely, glaring at Janet. And then, stepping forward, he roughly snatched the tri-pin from her grasp. "Thank you," he said curtly, and turned, fairly red from the caravans.

Janet waited until his steps had died away, and then, her face triumphant, she turned to her father, who stood there, gazing incredulously at the door through which Dailey had vanished.

"Well, daddy, what do you make of that?"

"Gosh, kiddie, he had the look of a guilty man! He seemed fairly frightened. But, Janet, what are you getting at? What is this mystery?" he asked.

Janet eyed him steadily.

"It's no mystery," she replied evenly. "Nothing at all, except that you've been making a terrible mistake. There is the man who is trying to ruin your circus!"

"Janet," he explained hoarsely, "what are you saying?"

"I'm saying that Joey is innocent, and that Dailey is the traitor in the circus!"

Mr. Jordan sank back into a chair. Janet went across to him; looked him straight in the eyes.

"Daddy," she said firmly, "I am telling you the truth. You must believe me. You've done Joey a great wrong— No; please let me finish. If ever anyone is loyal to you and the circus, it's Joey. Ask Babe here. She'll tell you. She believes in Joey now."

"Yes, Mr. Jordan; I'm convinced Joey is true blue!" Babe almost whispered.

Now the circus proprietor rose to his feet. His expression was grim and forbidding.

"Dailey! Dailey—oh! Janet, my dear, I can't really believe this about him; but—well, I'm going to get at the facts. And if he is a traitor, I'll swing the truth out of him if I have to force the words out of his throat!"

The circus proprietor began striding across the caravan.

"Daddy, where are you going?"

"To see Dailey—"

"No!" exclaimed Janet, laying a restraining hand on her father's arm. "Don't let him know that we suspect him. We haven't any conclusive proof yet. Just watch him. Forwarned is forewarned, daddy, and you'll be able to catch him in the act at the right time."

And emphatically Mr. Jordan agreed. Under Janet's persuasion, backed up by Babe, he began to realize what a mistake he had made in accusing Joey the clown of those diabolical acts in the circus.

"Kiddie, you've been right, and I've been wrong—a blind old fool!" he confessed. "I was just mad to believe Joey! But where is he now? What is he

doing? He must come back to the circus—if he will, after the way I've treated him. Janet!"

Janet's face was glowing with happiness. She smiled across at Babe. Babe smiled back.

"I know where Joey is, daddy," Janet replied eagerly. "But don't you think it would be better not to have him back in the circus just yet awhile? That would put Bailey on his guard—tell him we're finding out things. Oh, daddy, just come along and see Joey! let him know that all is forgiven, and that you'll take him back as soon as ever this business is cleared up."

Mr. Jordan looked at his daughter fondly.

"You're right, Janet. I'll do just that."

And so it came about. Mr. Jordan went along to see Joey. The faithful old clown was cleared, his innocence proved—if not in actual fact, at least in Mr. Jordan's eyes. Once more he became a member of the Jordan Circus. But so that Bailey should suspect nothing, the clown would not return at once, but continue to play a watching game, waiting for the moment when they could pounce upon the ringmaster and throw him up for the black-hearted villain he was. With Janet and Babe returned joyfully to Cliff House.

"We've done it!" exclaimed Babe. "We've cleared Joey! Now you're coming to hear, Janet, old thing. Beatrice Bailey can do nothing to hurt you or the old clown." She pressed Janet's arm affectionately. "And now you'll be able to turn out for the Cliff House swimming team!"

"Oh, it's wonderful, Babe!" Then abruptly Janet broke off. A groan came to her lips. "But, Babe, you've forgotten! How can I turn out? Florence is captain. She's chosen the team."

"And she hasn't chosen you—oh? Babe? (blue eyes twinkled in the darkness.) "Janet, old thing, I rather think Florence is due for a shock. The captain's not standing for her or her team. We've not having her make a laughing-stock of Cliff House!" Babe laughed. "Don't you worry, Janet. You'll be swimming in the gala—and you'll be captain, too!"

AND BARBARA BOSTON was a true prophet.

The following day proved it. Babe had known which way the wind was blowing. Babe had known that Florence Ellison had overstepped the mark, and was assuredly heading for a fall.

That fall came with a crash, and Babe herself had a lot to do with bringing it about.

Babe, indeed, was the leader of the agitators in the Fourth.

"We don't want Florence Ellison as our swimming captain!" was their cry.

It spread through the junior school. Ellison had had her chance—and what had she done? Thrown it away; merely crossed the school to nothing again by choosing a team that didn't stand an earthly chance of winning the contest.

By a unanimous vote Florence was forced to resign from the coveted position which she had won by trickery.

There remained the problem as to who was to take her place. And that was where Barbara Boston again became busy.

At Babe's suggestion a meeting was held in the Fourth Form Comrades-room, and was attended by the whole of the Lower School. They had met. Babe told them, to decide on a new



WATCHING from her cubicle, Janet saw the ringmaster take the envelope from Beatrice. And instantly, Janet realized that she must somehow secure that letter—if Joey the clown were to be saved.

swimming captain, but before nominations were made, she would like to tell them that Janet Jordan was again available.

"Janet," Babe pointed out, "has already secured your wholehearted approval and votes. She desires to be swimming captain more than anybody else in Cliff House."

With your approval, she has declared her willingness to stand for the captaincy again. For the sake of a friend of hers, she was forced to resign after first winning the captaincy. But everything's all right now. Janet wants to swim for Cliff House on Saturday, and I'm sure we all want her to lead us to victory."

Amusement, and then a great roar of excited enthusiasm.

"Janet!"

"Good old Janet!"

"We want Janet for the swimming captaincy!"

Unanimously Janet was re-elected. And straightway she chose her team—one worthy to represent Cliff House— one that would assuredly bring honour, if not victory, to the old school. And like the true little sportsman she was, Janet included in that team Florence Ellison.

"Because," as she smilingly said, "personal prejudices must not interfere with sport. Florence is one of the best swimmers in the school—so Florence appears in the team. I only hope she will forget past differences, and do her very best for us."

OH, LOOK AT THE WATER!

"Isn't it a lovely blue?"

The open-air swimming-pool at Friarville looked a glorious picture in the afternoon sunshine. England was enjoying a blessed spell of sunny weather, and Cliff House and Court-

field High School had come prepared this Saturday afternoon to enjoy the excitement and the thrills of this much-looked-forward-to swimming gala.

Mothers and fathers there were in plenty. Most of the Friarville Boys' School had turned out to witness the contest, too.

Also, there was a large sprinkling of people from the circus. For Mr. Jordan, proud of the fact that his daughter was captaining the Cliff House team, had invited them all along with him. And one other from the circus there was with him—not a human, but Tanker, the elephant, gaily decorated with the blue-and-gold Cliff House colours. Tanker, of course, meant that he was, was not actually at the side of the pool, but in the great enclosure at the back, thoroughly enjoying himself, and accompanied by hosts of avid and admiring children.

Babe & Co. had just arrived at the pool, with a group of others from the school. They had joined up with Janet Jordan and her team, who, before changing into their bathing costumes, were grouped at the side of the pool, gazing at the sparkling blue water.

"Gee, I feel as fit as a fiddle!" Clara Trevelyan said enthusiastically. "We'll show those Coast-fiddlers what Cliff House can do. What say you, Janet?"

Janet laughed happily.

"Rather! And now let's go and change."

The contest was fixed to start at two-thirty. Awee went the Cliff House team towards their cubicles. There were six girls in the team—Janet herself, Clara Trevelyan, Joan Cartwright, and Phyllis Howell (from the Fourth); Florence Ellison and Joan Carson from the Lower Fifth. A good, strong team. Janet had chosen well and wisely.

She went into her cubicle. It was

right at the end of the row, letting out into the enclosure where Tucker stood in all his dignifiedness. There was no actual roof to the cubicles, which stretched along one side of the pool. But some feet above was a domed glass roof which protected the cubicles, and, conforming right round the pool, formed a roof for the spectators' seats on the other side, leaving the pool itself in the centre, uncovered.

Janet laughed excitedly as she changed. A thrill shot through her as she pulled on her trim bathing suit—like, with the Cliff House crest embroidered on it in gold.

"Well—how?" she chuckled.

A murmur of voices interrupted her thoughts, drew her up with a jerk. Surely she knew those voices! Leon Dailey's and that of his niece Beatrice.

She turned. Unconsciously listened. The man was speaking:

"That letter from Raper and Cross. Where is it?"

Janet's body stiffened. Raper and Cross! Goodness, that was the name of her father's biggest and most successful creditor in the cinema business! What was Dailey, representative of Jordan's Cinema, doing with a letter from these scoundrels? Suddenly she singled. Light seemed to flash upon her suddenly. Was it possible that this was the reason behind Dailey's conduct? Oh, goodness! Was he having looked deliberately to ruin her father's cinema as that—

Again a voice interrupted her thoughts—Beatrice's this time:

"Yes! I've got it, uncle. I daren't leave it in my clothes in the cubicle. It was too risky with other girls running in and out, and if anybody saw that letter it would mean game for you for a certainty!"

In the cubicle Janet stood listening, her eyes wide, her cheeks flushed with a terrible anger against this process.

So that was the game, was it—to ruin her father! To ruin his cinema by staying these scoundrels, and so frightening people away. But that letter! If she could only get it—oh only she could see where Dailey was putting it!

Foatantly she looked round. No time for her to rush out of the cubicle and return to the enclosure. In any case, Dailey might see her. And then—

Oh, goodness, she'd got it! The bench! Standing on that, she could see over the top of the cubicle. But she must be careful; wasn't let them see her.

On to the bench she leapt, raised her head cautiously over the top. Now she could see them. Dailey, neighbours in ringmaster's outfit, Beatrice in her swimming costume, with a bathing wrap in the Courtfield colours about her shoulders.

And just in time. Even as Janet watched, she saw Dailey putting a white envelope into the side pocket of his black jacket. Another moment, and the two swimmers parted.

Quickly Janet jumped to the floor of her cubicle. Dailey had that incriminating letter on him—the letter that would conclusively prove Joey's innocence and his own guilt. She must get it—must! But how?

She opened the door of her cubicle an inch or two and peered out. She saw Dailey swaggering up to where her father sat in the front row of the spectators, next to Miss Priorson. She saw him sit down, smiling faintly at Mr. Jordan.

And there was Beatrice, now standing at the side of the pool with the

other Courtfield girls. In a few moments now the contest would begin. Oh, how, how was she to get that letter? If she waited until afterwards, Dailey would have time to dispose of it. Now was her only chance.

Suddenly, from the field behind the cubicles, she heard a burst of childish laughter. Tucker was up to his tricks again, she thought dazedly.

Tucker!

My goodness, who hadn't she thought of! Tucker and his tricks—those favourite ones of his—

Almost wild in her excitement now, Janet picked up her bathing wrap, tied it around her slim waist, and fairly hurled herself out of the cubicle. Round to the field at the back she darted. There was Tucker, for the moment unattended, one huge foot stucked in a staple in the ground. Tucker knew Janet; extended his long trunk towards her.

Janet worked with feverish fingers. Quickly she unlocked the padlocked staple, drew the chain of the elephant's leg. Then, heaving Tucker by the trunk, she gently urged him forward.

Tucker, as docile as a kitten, followed. Through the entrance between two rows of cubicles she took him, and right on to the marble edge of the pool.

People cheered as she appeared, leading the elephant, thinking this was part of the fun. Mr. Jordan and Leon Dailey looked surprised. But Janet, her nerves tingling, did not heed the excitement.

"Come on, Tucker!" she urged.

Straight to where Dailey and her father were seated she led the elephant.

"Hey, Janet, what's the idea?" she grinned the cinema proprietor, as the elephant, recognizing him, knelt in obedience, bringing another laugh and another cheer from the spectators.

"Just a trick, daddy!" Janet said, smiling lightly, as Tucker rose lumberingly on his feet again. "Now watch me!"

She turned to the elephant, whispered to him:

"Find it, Tucker! Find it, boy!"



EAGERLY, joyfully, little Lucy Dempsey, half niece to Cliff House—looking forward to days of friendship and happiness. And then—disaster! She found herself scowled and disapproved—an outcast! There it was that Clara Frewin, golden-haired Tomboy of the Fourth, stepped herself a friend in need—reporting her own ambitions for the sake of the same girl. And about their drama, the friendship!

In the grand long complex story, by Miss Edwards, which appears in next Saturday's

SCHOOLGIRL

For a moment the elephant hesitated; Janet's heart was in her throat. She got an agonizing sensation of dimming. Oh, goodness, wasn't it going to work! After all—

Then Tucker's enormous ears flapped. He looked at Dailey. His long trunk rose, curled upwards and outwards. Like a snake it darted forward—straight into the ringmaster's pocket.

There came a pain-stricken yell from Dailey.

"Why, you—!" he roared.

But the damage was done, then. Out came Tucker's trunk again, holding aloft a white envelope.

"Give me that!" Dailey shouted, heaving himself forward.

But Tucker, as if disappointed with his "tag," tumbled his trunk aside, flinging the letter contemptuously away. He flattered in the grille behind. Janet sprang forward. But before she could catch it, it had floated down into the pool, resting on the surface.

Janet flung off her wrap and leapt forward. She must get that letter.

But there was another girl with the same idea—and that girl was Beatrice Dailey, who had been watching the scene in horrified amazement.

Two bodies hit the water in one. Two little figures fairly leaped through the waves.

The spectators, peered, never guessing what drama lay behind the incident, cheered what they thought was simply "skydiving" on the part of the girls.

But there was nothing playful about those two figures cutting through the water. Janet wanted that letter; Beatrice wanted it.

But Janet, with a burst of speed that brought forth a roar of applause, got there first. Her knees were flung out, grabby that white envelope, and then, with a powerful thrust of her legs, went surging across the pool to the other side, leaving Beatrice, her face distorted with fear, yards behind her.

Janet clambered out. Nimbly dodging the furious and frantic Dailey, who sprang to intercept her, she dashed to her father's side and thrust the letter into his hand.

"Read that, daddy!" she gasped excitedly. "There's the proof we wanted!"

Mr. Jordan, his face a study of bewildered questions, drank the letter from the dripping envelope and scanned it. And then his brow grew thunderous.

"Dailey, you scoundrel! So it was you!" he roared.

He beckoned to two blue-uniformed constables, who had been specially drafted there to control the crowds.

"Arrest that man!" he commanded sternly.

AFTER all that terrific excitement, the swimming contest between Cliff House and Courtfield became almost an anti-climax.

Dailey, of course, was taken off, and with him went his niece. Courtfield were one short, but were able to bring in a substitute.

Force and grueling was the contest that followed. But Cliff House deservedly won a narrow and thrilling victory, and Janet Jordan, with the cup held aloft, was cheered by her jubilant schoolfellows.

While in the background, her father stood, smiling proudly, his hand resting on the shoulder of a straggled-headed man who had come forward after Dailey's vanishing—Joey the clown, happy once more, thanks to the sterling efforts of Janet Jordan.

At the Mercy of the Hurricane . . . The Morcove Chums' Grave Peril on the Island of No Escape



FOR NEW READERS:

EDDY BARKTON & Co., of Morcove School, together with members of Greenstone, 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 followed by parachute from another plane. She tells Barty & Co. that she was escaping from people who had kidnapped her. The leader of the kidnapers is a man named

BULLY KLAN, an Indian ruler and tyrant. Later, his yacht anchors near the island, and the chance arises that he is going to attempt to recapture Muriel.

Members of the Morcove party disguise themselves as members of Klan and go aboard the yacht, from which they attempt a wireless S.O.S. Attempting to leave the yacht, however, they find their boat has gone!

(Not read on.)

By MARJORIE STANTON

straining eyes made out the boat drifting not fifty yards away as the night-bounded sea, this sorrowfully diminished the tragic sense of disaster.

The boat was adrift like that because, during some sudden attack upon Jimmy by those two men, it had become unmoored. The rope, Pam remembered, had been lightly fastened, so as to ensure a quick casting-off at the right moment.

Oh had those two Indians, after dealing with Jimmy—two of them on to one—deliberately cast the boat adrift!

The dark-faced pair had already turned round to look up the gangway steps as Pam, with her father and mother and Airman Somersfield, descended.

The ship's cream-painted side seemed to lessen the darkness, and the Indians' looks could be read—wanton, questioning looks.

Yet Pam's father, relying still upon the diagnoses and his fluent Hindustani, spoke down to the couple as if only annoyed. It was the same ordering tone which he had used once before to-night, when he let it be known that all the men in charge of the yacht were to mind their own business.

One of the Hindus mimicked an answer. Not a word of it could Pam or her mother understand, but they felt sure the man was trying to accuse himself and his companions. Mr. Willoughby cut in, addressing remarks to the pair of them that took resentful effect.

They came meekly, one behind the other, up the gangway, and Pam witnessed aside to let them writhen past. A few moments more, and there was the dying-away patter of their naked feet on the yacht's deck.

Then Mr. Willoughby whispered

round to Pam and her mother and the airman.

"Nothing's happened except that those two men thought they ought to give an eye to the boat. Jimmy must have seen them coming down—two of them—so he slipped the rope off."

"Without being seen?" Pam (referred, under her breath, "Then—then he's still in the boat.")

"Oh! Quick now!"

Pam's saucer eyes were all for the boat as she followed her father down. So far as she could make out in the darkness, it was still simply drifting every moment farther away.

Nothing was to be seen of Jimmy; but, then, he would do his best to keep out of sight, expecting some of the Hindus sailors to be spying from the yacht's deck.

Suddenly Pam was gently pushed aside by the airman, who evidently wanted to get close behind her father to whisper a suggestion.

"Jimmy won't dare to start up the engine," she caught the whisper that passed. "Let me swim out to the boat. Those Hindus chaps know by now that we want to go ashore again for urgent reasons."

"Yes, that's all right," Pam heard her father whisper back to Airman Somersfield. "Shucks, though!"

"Oh, one must take a chance now and then!"

Pam heard that said, and a shudder went through her. Involuntarily she was shutting her eyes tight, as if that could save her from seeing a vision of the thing that he was resolved to do for all their sakes. And then—

Splash!

She opened her eyes again as that sound came from the water. She thought it meant that the airman had already dived in as quietly as possible. But he was still here on the gangway.

"Oh, Pam!" she heard her mother saying, while the two men did something with lightning speed at water level. "A rope! Jimmy, a wonderful three!"

"And I," Pam thought, "never saw him do it!"

But she saw him now, in the little launch, hauling in just as rapidly as his end of the rope as her father and the stevedores were hauling from the gangway.

With a swift jerk, the launch came back to the steps. Less than two seconds later Pam herself was being helped into the rocking boat by Jimmy.

Then her mother was re-embarked, and it only remained for dad and the stevedores to jump aboard, and they were off!

Off and away, all five of them, safely escaped after the daring enterprise!

The motor throbbled into life. Stevedores began to fall back from either side of the boat's sharp bows into the sea—a persistent hiss, with, that!

Glances seemed to beam, that!

As for a sudden wild shouting from the yacht's deck, that was a sound only to be looked at, now that Khan had been beaten once again!

Back in the Dawn!

"**H**URRAH! Here they come!"

"Yes! Hurrah!"

"But are they all there? Can you see?"

"Yes. Every one of them. Hip-hip!"

"And so, perhaps, they have done all they went out to do! If they have—oh, how splendid!"

"Yes, wather, hai Jaro! Great wether!"

Dawnlight was creeping back to the ocean-girl island upon which Morocco & Co. were marooned.

It was a dull dawning, the sky still overcast and the sea slate-coloured. But the small launch, for which Betty and those three of hers had been on the look-out this last half-hour, had a powerful engine.

Within a few seconds of their first sighting the boat in such a bad light she was much nearer, sending spray to right and left as she streaked for the shore.

And so, as quickly as this, the eight watchers were able to tell that she held her full load of adroitest of spirits.

"Gorjoo!" shrieked that Jesty wop, Naazoo; and she started to dance about at the water's edge, but suddenly thought of something better to do.

"Hekoo, hokooer as soon as my land, and a special hokooer, too, don't forget! Ooo, I must go and see about hoo-queek!"

Away she ran, clanking over the stings with, oo drook, a fine idea of her own importance in regard to the camp's cooking arrangements. But meantime Polly Linton was probably speaking a true word in just when she most courteously remarked:

"Goes to get watter in advance!"

"Girls—I say, doesn't the weather seem to you queerer than ever this morning?" came Betty's lively cry.

"The sea—I don't know; it looks—dunno!"

"As smooth as glass—and all the better, if you ask me!" Bunny Trevor sparkled. "The boat—how easily she is able to come in! Look at her now!"

"Oh, yes, it's fine for her!" Betty heartily agreed, never for an instant recovering her gaze from the incoming launch. "But I'm just wondering whether there isn't something about—something, yet not to their wather!"

"I don't see how it could become worse than what we've been having!" Polly grimaced. And then, at the top of her voice, whilst gaily waving: "Pam! Jimmy!"

It became an affectionate chattering of these two names: "Pam! Jimmy!" over and over again.

Naturally enough, all these jesters who were waiting for the launch to detach its oar by gently prodding at the water's edge, felt tremendously proud of those two charms being on board.

Such a daring exploit it was that had taken the motor-boat out to sea less than two hours ago, when dark night was still upon the wide coasts. And yet had Pam, of Morocco, and Grangooon's sturdy Jimmy Chooah, had been only too glad to find themselves needed for the adventure.

Now the pair of them were waving to their friends on shore, but only so if this were a return from a mere pleasure-trip. Neither Pam nor Jimmy was inclined to be demonstrative.

Willing hands helped to haul the boat like clear of the water, so that Pam, like others in the boat, had an easy jump—out on to dry shingle. But Pam, standing up to make that jump, was promptly taken about the knees by Betty and lifted off. Another moment and Morocco's "little lady of Swandale" was being "abashed" as well as observed.

Betty and Polly were giving Pam each a shoulder, hunching away with her over the loose shingle to the heart of the makeshift camp.

Bunny and others surged around, making all the noise which their forms was accustomed to create at school, after a "win." And to this din—so strange in such a place as an island somewhere in the Gulf of Guinea—was added the cheering of Jimmy by merely admiring yells of his.

Jack was prevented by his lameness from supplying a shoulder. But the lameness did not affect Jack's vocal contribution to the general rejoicing.

Tom and Daro were the pair who chaired Jimmy; and Jack, hobbling behind, supplied the very effective imitation of a military band. "Ruh, Berrahia!" was the air, and there was Tubbo, suddenly singing lustily in time with the "band."

"And now, Pam—tell us all about it!"

That was Betty, as soon as she and Polly had discarded their particular bewitch of the boat.

"Yes, Pam—quick, quick!" clamoured Naazoo. "Or are you dying for—this?"

And a brown hand offered Pam a bully-buff tin, containing something liquid and steaming.

The contents may have been coffee, or, again, it might have been some stew left over from yesterday to which Naazoo had been helping herself in the last minute or two. Pam, at any rate, gave an "I'd rather wait" smile which created shrieks of laughter.

And now the three grown-ups came up from the boat.

To make it quite clear that he no longer wished to be mistaken for a Hindu, Alrnan Somersfield was wearing his turban at an absurdly rakish angle.

"Don't forget," said Mr. Somersfield, as he joined the rest at the camp.

"There's a box of ship's rye-bis in the boat that may come in useful."

"What, rye-bis?"

"Bekoo—horay, we can have a fireworks display to-night to celebrate!"

"Can we, young lady?" grinned Alrnan Somersfield. "Sorry, but I think we'd better keep them for signalling, if by any chance we should spot a ship by her lights, passing a long way off some night or other. They were in a

locker in the wireless-room, and as I helped myself to them."

"Splendid!"

"Not that we are likely to be necessary," sneezed Jeegoo. Pam's father joyfully rejoined. "After the message that Mr. Somersfield was able to get off, by Khan's wireless, we may expect to be taken off—oh, some time to-day even!"

"Hip, hip, hip!" Jack vociferated; and then, as another general "Hurrah!" started, Tom whipped off Alrnan Somersfield's turban to wave it as if it had been a hat. But it was undone by now, and he got rather wadded up in it.

"Weather permitting, I ought to add," Mr. Willoughby qualified the chances of an early rescue. "Mr. Somersfield took a look at the glass whilst on board the yacht."

"And I never saw a barograph lower," the stevedore admitted over his shoulder—for he had started to go away to that far he had started to hold the two first captured in the night. "Ribbon the instrument was broken, or else it's going to be something like the end of the world before the day is out!"

Pam's father turned to accompany his friend to the stevedore, and then Mrs. Willoughby hurried away, pushing for that other hunchment where Mrs. Caroo was guarding the half-breed woman.

The juniors could guess what the next step was to be—to release all three prisoners at once. They would have their borrowed clothing returned to them, and would then be told to "beat it" back to Khan's occupation.

So there was no surprise when, ten minutes later, Somerjee Khan and the two Indian sailors were seen making a hurried departure. The motor-boat was not put at their disposal, although it had been their to come round from the other side of the island during the night.

They had got to "log it" now, and the women, at any rate, was in a boiling rage over this last humiliation.

Betty and others who watched the departure noticed that Somerjee carried the two Hindus to walk behind her most severely, and that was a sign of the paltry price which had, in the last few hours, suffered such a well-deserved rebuff.

When the Morocco postaways could, figuratively speaking, sit down to breakfast, as Bunny said, there was peace if there was not plenty! To take stock of the situation was to feel that "Yest Morocco" had not only kept the flag flying; it had even started to win all along the line.

These three prisoners, when released, had been told of the daring use that had been made of Khan's wireless on his painted patch. The Somerjee woman would feel bound to report this to him, and Morocco's feeling was that that would give him something to think about.

"In fact," Betty felt anxious enough to continue, "I shouldn't wonder if he decides to come out altogether!"

"If he's got any sense at all, he will," Jack said, nibbling his ration of biscuits. "Chap's wretched—poor and hard! And he ought to know it."

The grown-ups, who had much to debate amongst themselves, were not unhelpful of what had just been said. Several of them nodded and smiled, implying that that really was the position in a nutshell.

The girls had been served with salvaged coffee in an aluminium cup—almost the only one it had been possible to retrieve from the wrecked plane, where it lay in the shallows, quite smashed to bits by now.

The cup had to be passed round, and, of course, Polly, as Naamur's stern monitor, had to see that the dusky one never "cheated" by taking more than the regulation number of sips.

Now it was quite Madge's turn for a second drink; but when Judy offered the coffee there was a half-aloud shake of the head, implying: "No more, thanks!"

Madge, just then, was studying Marisol's thoughtful face.

"Penny, Marisol!"

"What am I thinking?" that girl returned, starting to smile. "Well, simply that it's too wonderful for words. How you have managed, time after time, to save me from being kidnapped—I've been an awful nuisance—"

"Nonsense!" scoffed Polly. "And after you with the coffee, kid"—to Naamur.

"Oh, but I have?" Marisol earnestly insisted. "Ever since we came to the island! My parents—if ever I do get back to them—"

"There's no 'if' about it, my dear." Pam's mother now joined in the jentery conversation. "We were holding our own, even before we got that R.O.S. sent off."

"Then all I can say is—" Marisol throatily exclaimed. "I—I— But I just don't know how to put it. All I know is I was everything to you. I might have been on the way to India in Khan's yacht, to be kept there out of revenge against dad. And instead—"

"Not such a bad life, is it?" Bunsey sparkled, drawing from Naamur a shrill.

"Judy might better see boarding-school, my old boy! But only so you can go on getting enough to eat!"

"Now, then! Come on, chaps!" Jack called his Congressman pals.

"Fall in for fatigue! Corporal Tubby—cookhouse, you!"

"Parade! And the cookhouse!" said Burns.

"His, ha, ha!"

But by making the absence of this amenity was a reproach that could no longer be levelled against Fort Morocco. As many girls as boys there were, joyfully working away to get some sort of a slouch crested where the dwindling provisions could be better kept, and the slender meals prepared.

It was this ambitious task a jolly working party was fast completing, when a shout went up.

"Look, all of you—look! There goes the only boat Khan has been left with! Out to the yacht!"

Betty and Polly, just then returning with armfuls of rot palm-leaves required for stanching the shock, dropped their loads and ran to where they could get a wider view of the sea.

Above the tops of some tall, veiled palms growing close to the beach they saw the boat. She was a mile distant, going slowly, and, it appeared, rather heavily over the calm water.

"What's happened?" Betty cried. "Oh, Polly, does that mean they're all going on board to sail away?"

"We shall soon know, if she returns to take off more of them. Three trips, I reckon, she'd have to make."

And those three trips the boat did make during the next two hours. After her second run to the yacht and back again, there was a lengthy pause in her activities, causing Morocco a good deal of suspense. It then looked as if the boat were under orders to remain at the beach, serving a certain number of Khan's following who were to stay behind.



LASHED by wind and rain, the chums fought to bring the drifting boat back to the beach. It was a desperate battle with the hurricane—but Morocco meant to win!

But suddenly there was the boat again, going out on its perilous errand.

They could not see her go alongside, for again to-day the great yacht was out of sight, although lying only a couple of miles or so off the island. This time, however, the launch did not come back, and presently those who were still keeping an eager look-out were moved to fresh shouts of excitement.

The yacht herself was to be seen at last, going as she had left her anchorage. Going by now on a course that had brought her just a little nearer to where she would be altogether gone.

Keening away!

And so, perhaps, Morocco & Co. could now doubly rejoice.

Marisol was finally moved, and they had the whole island to themselves.

Out of the Storm!

OR was the steaming away of the yacht only a cunning ruse?

Had Khan, after all, left a certain number of his people still ashore on the island, under orders to go into hiding, and strike when they got the chance?

It was a possibility which the cast-away did not fail to reckon with.

For the first half-hour after the lovely cream-painted vessel had left herself be seen, slowly steaming by, that likelihood of victory put a shock upon the jubilation.

Then the alarm and a couple of the boys who had been away from camp on vigilance work, turned up with information that disposed of all surmises.

Those three boats could not coach for it that every man in Khan's service had been re-embarked, for the number originally landed had never been known to the castaways. But, watching from deep cover on the other

side of the island, Mr. Somersfield and his two lady had seen one womanish figure in the third boatload. Betwixt Khan!

Who else could it have been, since she, Khan's half-sister, was the only woman belonging to his following? And, since it was certain that she had not been secretly left behind, proof that every man of them really had left seemed to be established, for that woman had been Khan's trusted agent in regard to the repeated attempts to kidnap Marisol.

"So now, Marisol," Betty's rejoicing voice hailed that once-threatened girl, "while the whole camp gave vent to rejoicing, 'you'll be able to go about with us when we go—wherever we like.'"

"Yes, wather, Marisol dear! Great relief—what!"

"Behave, what no diggings, we can have postcards now," Naamur chaffed, before Marisol could let words loose out the joy to her looks. "We can go on expeditions, and knock down tons and tons of coconuts!"

"Meantime," chuckled Betty, "what about finishing off the cookhouse?"

"Good idea!" Judy soberly nodded. "We may need all the shelter we can get it—"

And there she broke off, first to pay startled attention to the sea, and then to look up to the sky.

A few of those who were with Judy put an end to the sharp pause which she had created. They also were feeling similarly startled—a little awed, even—because of much that had happened, in the twinkling of an eye, to give warning of one of Nature's dramatic changes.

There was a sudden ruffling of shallow water that had been as smooth as glass. Their own garments were a flutter in the puff of wind which had come at last after hours of dead calm. It went by them and set the brilliant foliage of the island's trees rustling harshly.

A moment more and the juniors could see the taller palms leaning to a second and stronger gust, their broad leaves clashing loudly.

Then, looking out to sea again, the half-dozen felt as if pitch-black night were falling upon them hours before its time.

Where the inky sky was darkest a water-spout was forming. Against that black pall they saw a patch of grey smoke, in a moment or so, the shape of an upright funnel, which came whirling on across the troubled sea.

Fascinated, they would have continued to watch the phenomenon, but now a terrific blast of wind almost carried them off their feet.

Something far worse than a mere storm had taken the island in its stride.

Loudly though many of the girls yelled out in alarm that was more or less genuine, their excited cries were hardly audible above the wind's own shriekings as it reached the island's timber. Immediately too, there was the roaring crack, crack of trees breaking off short at their stems.

In a kind of eerie twilight Betty and those others were vaguely aware of frightful havoc taking place behind the beach, white sea-wrack lying upon the shingle was caught up and carried inland, so that the air seemed to be full of flying missiles.

They started to run—no, rather, let themselves be half-blown—up the bank to where the pump shaft was catching the full fury of the blast. And as they floundered along they had streamers of blown seaweed flailing there, and dry sand doing its best to blind them.

At the camp all the shelters which had cost so much labour were being blown to bits.

That new "cockhouse" it had been one of the first things to go. The chimney was scattering itself in burning fragments, and with great violence of

mind Dave and others were doing their best to intercept and stamp out flaming brands that were in danger of reaching the undergrowth behind the beach.

"Good!" Polly yested, cowering between Betty and Muriel. "Mr. Scorerfeld's 'one of the world's girls'!"

"With a vengeance!" Betty breathlessly responded. "Here"—as the wind in its ever-increasing fury simply took her off her feet—"this is a bit too—"

"Heady!" was the faintly heard squeal from Paula, who found herself, like Betty, thrown down and unable to stand up again. "Oh! My gracious! Terrible!"

"Bekas, and we don't look out, we're will be no island left!"

At that instant Betty had a sudden alarming thought for those two boats which, captured from Kian, had remained Morocco's proud possessions. They were at the water's edge, or had been, up to a minute ago.

Above all the half-lively of the turchak she yelled to Polly and Muriel, who, doubled down and staggering in the wind, were helping her up.

"The boats, girls!"

"Great goodness, yes!" Polly yelled. "Save those, if we can't save anything else. Come on, back then—all of us!"

And back they struggled, fighting their way an inch at a time against the tearing wind, with eyes half-shut to avoid flying sand and spume.

The typhoon-like wind had not come sweeping across the ocean without leaving the surface—in calm, just now—violently agitated. When the danger got back to the water's edge there was raging surf for them to see, all peasy white in the appalling gloom.

And those two boats—only just in time were the jiggers who had dashed to save them. The whipped-up sea had already swirled them about. A few seconds later, and nothing could have been done.

They would have been swamped, called away, shattered.

But the chance, by taking a chance, soon had had—some of one boat, and some the other.

Facing the roaring wind, and up to their thighs in frothy, overlapping waves, they fought the tempest for those prizes which rightly belonged to Morocco.

The boats had been of vital service already. To save them now might be an achievement for which, ere long, they would be thanked beyond words.

For one early fact was present in the minds of all whilst this desperate struggling to land in the boats went on. The storm, as violent as it was sudden, was going to affect the chance of an early rescue.

Even a ship which rode out the storm might have to wait days before it could land a boat. Worse still, there was the evil which the tropical storm spelled to shipping.

And suddenly, tragically proving how well this anxiety was justified, they saw a vessel—in distress!

They had managed at last to drag the tiny launch beyond reach of the fast-encroaching surf, and were taking a moment to recover lost breath. And there—precious sight for all of them to see—was a ship at last; the first to be sighted, apart from Kian's grand yacht, since they had been castaway upon the island.

A sailing ship she was, showing two bare masts, whilst a third, broken off short, was dragging at her side, a mass of tangled rigging and torn canvas.

A dark ship upon a sea as dark as this, and with the sky at its liveliest above her. That had she looked into view, as phantom-like as the Flying Dutchman of the fable, riding the storm-stricken seas.

And presently, when old and young alike were watching her drifting nearer, nearer, all experienced a vague horror that was not entirely due to a sense of impending disaster.

Scarcely the ship seemed to be a suspicious one—mysterious. At last she was so close in that her tilted decks could be scanned, and not a sign of life did they reveal.

Was there indeed no soul aboard her now, that nothing was being done in an attempt to avert a total loss?

Lifelike-looking, completely at the mercy of wind and wave, she was the weird spectacle of a once fine vessel, now abandoned—spred in drive ashore, and so become only so many rotting timbers on the island's lonely beach.

Polly's voice spoke above the surge of the in-drawing breakers:

"What's it mean? Why isn't there anyone at board?"

Dave, standing near, looking out to sea through the another of spray, shook his head.

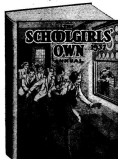
"Goodness knows; But we'll soon find 'em."

And the Morocco girls, clattering round, knew what he meant. As soon as the mystery ship was ashore they were to go aboard, and then—

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