

"OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS": Four Pages of Articles Inside

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Incorporating
"SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN"



**AT THE
HEIGHT OF THE
STORM—**

**DISASTER BEFALLS THE
TOMBOY**

One of many dramatic incidents
from the brilliant long complete
Cliff House School story in this
issue

Lucy Learns The Truth . . . Brilliant Long Complete Cliff House School Story



The Sister She SCORNED

Injustice

"CLARA TREVELYAN!"
 "Oh? Yes, Grace?"
 "You are forgetting. Take fifty lines!"

In the Fourth Form class-room at Cliff House School, there was a murmur. It was a murmur which expressed indignation and resentment. Though Clara Trevelyan was in the bad books of most of her Form fellows at that moment, many were the sympathetic glances they toward her.

Clara's eyes flashed with dangerous light. For the moment it seemed that she was on the point of making a hot retort, but catching the warning glance of Barbara Redding, her friend, and captain of the Fourth Form, she bit her lip.

But it was next instantly obvious to everybody in that class-room that Grace Havers Campbell, the prefect in charge of the class at that moment, was making a show of it to Clara. This was the third batch of lines which had rewarded trivial offences which had rewarded in the ordinary way—over Miss Reddick, the acid mathematics mistress, would never have imposed.

"Clara, you are scratching your nose," rapped Grace again.

Clara's chest heaved.
 "You will take another fifty lines!"
 "Thanks!" Clara said bitterly.

"And another fifty for answering me back!"

"Making," Clara muttered, "three hundred in all. I suppose you know that I can't possibly do those!"

"You can do them well enough if you cut out your hockey practice this afternoon," came back Grace's tart retort. "Now get on with your work."

Clara clenched her hands. Her cheeks

if you had a sister—a sister you loved and admired—who had been little short of an idol to you since you could first remember—how would you feel if you suddenly found she had been deceiving you; found she was really a contemptible sneak? That was what happened to little Lucy Campbell in her first week at Cliff House. What drama this situation brought about you will read in this powerful complete story

By

HILDA RICHARDS

were red. That square throat, so indicative of the red-hot meeting with which she was meeting, came to her chin. Now she knew! Now she understood!

Grace had got it in for her. Grace was deliberately going out of her way to punish her. Very probably Grace hoped to send her into saying or doing something desperate. And why? Because then Clara could not practice for the senior eleven, from which Grace's own great, Audrey Dashwood Venter, had been dropped.

For another reason, too. And that reason was Grace's own personal dislike of Clara Trevelyan. Clara, who had interfered in her plans, who, by championing her little cousin, Lucy of the Third Form, had upset all her calculations.

But again Clara said nothing. Again she bit her lip the hot retort that rose to

her lips. Barbara Redding, however, rose.

"Grace—"
 "Sit down!" rapped Grace.
 "As captain of this Form," Baba said readily, "I have a right to protest, Grace. You know very well Clara cannot cut out her hockey."

Grace glared. There was a murmur.
 "If Clara cuts out hockey practice, then she loses her place in the first team," Baba went on.

"Clara," Grace sneered, "should think of that! She lost it last week, didn't she? If she doesn't want to lose it again, then she should behave herself."

"Clara is behaving herself," Baba spitefully retorted. "She's done nothing for which she should have been punished at all."

"Hear, hear!" came from Mabel Logan.

"Well said!" supported Jessica Cairns.

Grace's face turned crimson.

"Barbara, are you daring to dictate to me?"

"I am not. At the same time, it is my duty—"

"Then take a hundred lines, and jolly well sit down!" Grace boomed. "And everybody else here, be quiet!" she flared, glaring round. "Clara, you will do those lines, hockey practice or no hockey practice!"

Clara rose to her feet. Her face was white now.

"Very well," she said. "But you mustn't mind if I report the matter to Miss Reddick, will you?"

Grace looked startled.

"What has Delsin got to do with it?"

"Well, Delsin is the captain of the school eleven, isn't she?" Clara retorted. "Apart from that, Delsin is a senior prefect to you. When I tell her

I mean practice, she'll want to know the reason, and naturally I mean tell her. Through I don't imagine," Clara added slowly, "that it will come as a big surprise to her. Because here an idea by this name that you've got it in for her."

"Yes, father. The whole school can see that," came from Jane Morrett. "You ought to be jolly well advanced of yourself, Grace!"

Grace turned level. "How dare you!" Clara, sit down!" But Clara had no intention of sitting down. She had not many friends in the Form at this moment, the Form still being rather respectful because, through her championing of this prefect's sister, she had involved herself and them in a feud with the Third Form.

But the Form was still loyal. The Form felt keenly and strongly about the injustice, and there was no doubt that Clara was entitled to all these sympathy letters.

So far, at least, the Tumbler had shown admirable restraint. For the first time since Saturday Clara felt she had three behind her again.

"I'll sit down," she retorted grudgingly, "when I've said my piece. No, don't glare at me, Grace. I know exactly why you're doing this. You're mad with me because I stuck up for your sister against you, because you were afraid that she would find out what sort of girl you really were, and so turn against you!"

"Grace's face flamed. "Clara, how dare—" "It's true!" came from Rosa Redworth.

"Yes, rather!" The prefect almost panted. She looked around the class. Glowering, angry faces met her from every desk, even Bessie Baxter was glaring. It was obvious that in another moment the Form would be out of hand. Obviously, that if she were to prevent this, she had to take a strong hand.

"Clara, come here!" she cried. "What for?" "Come here!" Clara panted. Then, with a shriek, she went out.

"My sister," Grace bit out, "is nobody's business but my own. I refuse to allow you to make her an excuse to invite this Form to meeting. You will come with me."

Clara started. "Where to?" "To me," Grace bit out vindictively. "Miss Primrose, the headmistress! Barbara Redford, you will take charge of the class!"

And, while everybody stared in bewilderment, she put a hand on Clara's arm and steered her towards the door.

loyalty of hers which had landed her into so many scrapes since she had first come to Cliff House.

The Grace she knew—the jolly, high-spirited, kind-hearted girl of home and holiday—was not the Grace which Cliff House knew, and of which the Fourth Form at that moment was being treated to a very fair sample.

For, in private, at Cliff House, Grace had a poor reputation. There were not many girls who did not know that she belonged to the shady stories in the Sixth Form, who set rules and regulations at naught. It was known that she smoked, drank brandy, went to dances and late parties.

That was her own business, of course, and because Cliff House as a whole had a contempt of smoking, and Grace & Co. had been very careful to cover up their tracks, they had never yet been found out.

But it was inevitable that girls should talk among themselves. It was inevitable that stories of Grace's exploits should come to Lucy's ears.

But had Lucy been appalled by these stories? No! Lucy, loving Grace, knowing her, putting her on a pedestal which was only shared by her brother at the Fourth Form, Clara Trevelyan, had refused to listen to them.

Grace was fine. The girls who told these stories were just jealous of her because she had got such a good position in the school, reverential of her because her duties as prefect caused her to punish them.

Loyalty was a quality which was almost a passion with Lucy. It was that very loyalty, her refusal to believe them, which had put her in the black books of the Form.

And now—and again she had her moments of doubt. Now and again her conviction never did ask her if all these girls could be wrong and she the only one right. And then, catching herself in those traitorous thoughts, pulled up with a jerk.

No; of course Grace was true-blue! Grace would never desert her!

"Lucy!" Miss Blund said again. An angry red as her own hair Lucy's cheeks burned. She looked up. "Oh—oh, yes, Miss Blund!" Miss Blund nodded a little reprovingly.

"I do not know what is engaging your attention beneath that desk, but please get it away at once!" she said. "Have you finished your essay, Lucy?"

"Yes, Miss Blund!" "You have been very quick!" "Yes, yes, Miss Blund, but I've done three pages!" Lucy returned hopefully.

The mistress smiled. "I hope the speed is justified by the quality, Lucy! However, as it still wants ten minutes to break, and I cannot have you twiddling your fingers beneath the desk, there is something you can do for me. Take this book to Miss Primrose, and give it to her with my compliments, please!"

Lucy smiled. Gladly she left her seat. With the book under her arm, she made her way to Miss Primrose's study, knocked, and receiving no reply, knocked again.

Still no reply. Rather timidly Lucy opened the door. She glanced in. The room steady, bathed in the bright morning sunlight, presented a pleasant picture, and the case of books which stood on the sill, occupying practically the whole of the lower window space, caught the little girl's eye at once.

They were chrysothemums, very beautiful chrysothemums which had come from Miss Primrose's own greenhouse only that morning, and which, at this moment, were at their very best. Lucy loved flowers. Her eyes kindled.

Grinched, she could not resist a closer inspection. She stepped into the room. On the desk before Miss Primrose's empty seat she placed Miss Blund's book, and then stepped towards them.

But had luck was lying in wait for



"LUCY CAMPBELL!" Miss Blund called.

Lucy Campbell, of the Upper Third Form at Cliff House, came out of her doorway with a jerk.

That remark was inspired by a suspicion which Lucy was concealing under the cover of her desk. The suspicion was a summer holiday came, taken during the vacation on the yacht at Hyde. It showed Lucy herself, sitting on the sunny with her elder sister, Grace, seated next to her, one affectionate arm about Lucy's sturdy young shoulders.

It was Lucy's favorite picture, and one which she, out of her very fondness for her sister, found utterly irresistible.

For there was no doubt that Lucy was fond of Grace Roscoe Campbell. It was that very fondness, that sturdy

LUCY'S voice was shrill with scorn as she faced her sister. "I thought you didn't smoke—I thought you didn't do all those things the Third said you did! I—I hate you!" Grace winced. So Lucy had found out, after all!

her. In her capture over the Brown, she did not notice the rolled back edge of the carpet until, catching an unwary foot in it, she went stumbling. By the next moment a bit of ill-fortune in the world her right hand caught the vase, sweeping it from its place.

"Oh!" Lucy gasped.
And her heart stopped as she heard it fall—had! spilling its contents behind the screen, which Miss Pringle used to shelter her from the draught of the window.

In a moment Lucy had plunged towards it. Thank goodness, by a miracle the vase had remained unbroken, though the flowers lay scattered on the floor. Fortunately, she picked them up, not the vase upright, was in the act of arranging those, when—

Lucy, behind the screen, stood petrified.

The door opened, the low voice by the exit of which that it was Miss Pringle who entered the room.

Lucy gulped. For one moment guilty terror held her. She heard the headmistress' chair creak as she sat down. Yes in hand, she looked round. Well, she hadn't spotted that her flowers were missing yet. Perhaps, Lucy hopefully thought, she had only just looked in to get something, and would go out again.

Should she wait? Bound to be a cue if Miss Pringle found she had been tampering with her flowers.

She paused. And then her heart sank again. For open the panel of the door came a swift tap—tap. Miss Pringle called out: "Come in!"

There was the sound of footsteps, and Lucy's heart jumped into her throat as she heard the voice which spoke next.

"It was her sister Grace."
"I hope I am not interrupting you, Miss Pringle?"

Cautiously Lucy straightened up, peering through the slit where you saw the end of the screen joined, then she almost cried out again.

For now she saw Clara Trevlyn, her Fourth Form heroine. But what was this? Why was Grace looking her arm in that grim fashion? And why was Clara so red, so hoarse, so mutinous?

"What is it, Grace?"
"I have to report this girl," Grace said; and Lucy, watching her face through the slit, felt faintly appalled at the grimness that came into it. "Not contented, apparently, with creating the friction between the Third and the Fourth Forms, she is now deliberately attempting to start a mutiny in her own Form."

"That is not true!" Clara burst out hotly.

"All the morning," Grace calmly went on, "I have suffered nothing but insults and disobedience from her. To every form of reprimand and punishment she has replied with insolent insolence."

Lucy blinked.

She found her mouth gaping open. Was this Grace—or Lucy? That altered story she had always reported herself as being a monument of kindness, courtesy, and consideration?

Grace—making those vindictive statements against her idolized Clara?

"Clara, what have you to say?" Miss Pringle rapped.

Clara's face flamed.

"I can only deny it, Miss Pringle. I have done nothing. Grace, for some reason, has picked me out from the rest of the Form. From the moment she took over the class she has done nothing but goad me, vilify me, and punish me for trivial offences."

"Grace?" Miss Pringle immediately exclaimed.

"I have punished her, certainly," Grace said calmly. "But not, I assure you, without good reason, Miss Pringle. Clara is the most unruly, the most undisciplined girl in the class."

And then Lucy quivered. "Something like a sob broke in her throat. For the like a sob Grace's face as she said that—a sob full of vindictive hate."

Looking for her sister, affection for her heroine, fought together in a swift, desperate battle within her.

"Clara," Miss Pringle said, "I am sorry. I have given you many, many chances. I am growing rather tired of your caprices and your insolence. I thought when I punished you by detaining you last Saturday, and so preventing you from taking your place in the senior eleven, that you would have learned your lesson."

"Apparently you have not. Deliberately you created a rift in the Third Form. You have no recourse but to refer to your parents."

"But, Miss Pringle, I tell you—"
Clara burst out.

"Clara, that is enough!"
"But it isn't enough—is it?"

And the three occupants of the study jumped as the screen in the corner quivered, and Lucy, her face flushed, jumped out.

She hardly knew what she was doing. But she couldn't stand those hearing her job so unjustly treated in this way.

"Miss Pringle, please," she gasped out, "let me speak!"

Grace went as white as a sheet.
"Lucy, what—?"

"Oh, my hat! Kid—!" Clara rapped.

"Miss Pringle, you've got to listen to me!" Lucy cried. "Please! It isn't fair—it isn't fair! And, shaken by the most overpowering emotion, all at once she flung round. "Clara didn't cause trouble in the Third. If anyone caused trouble it was me, because I took up for my sister. Clara wouldn't see me talked."

Miss Pringle rose sternly.

"Very please, Miss Pringle, you can't blame Clara—you mustn't blame Clara! Clara has done nothing—"

"Lucy, will you please leave this room at once!" Miss Pringle thundered. "I will not have this show of hysterics!"

"But, Clara! Grace!" Dignity Lucy appealed to the prefect. "Grace, no—please no!" she sobbed passionately, as Miss Pringle laid a hand upon her arm. "I won't go—I won't!" Grace, you told me that you liked Clara—"

"Grace was white as the lips."
"Miss Pringle, I'm sorry. I—I must apologise for Lucy. She is—a little strong up, I think. She—she does not understand that—that as a prefect I have a duty to do. Lucy, go!" she cried sharply. "Don't make such an exhibition of yourself!"

And quickly she flung the door open; quickly pushed the quivering little one through.

And Lucy, torn by the fiercest emotions she had ever experienced in her young life, found herself staring at the patch outside.



"Now I Know the Truth!"

LUCY went back to the Form-room, to be met by a sharp glance from Miss Blund as she came in. Like a girl in a dream, she took her seat at her desk and stared unseeingly

in front of her for the rest of the lesson.

She couldn't believe it even now. Grace couldn't—wouldn't—be so spiteful, so shrill as that. Not to Clara, of all people! Hadn't Grace told her a dozen times how she admired Clara?

But now swelling back into her thoughts came memories to taunt her; those stories which had been levelled at her sister by her Form mates of the Third. Grace was a snook. Grace looked meanish. Grace did things on the sly, professed an interest in history to get her out of school when she wouldn't be out of school. Grace was in debt.

Miss Blund. No, no!

But she found herself crying that "No!" with weakening conviction. "These ten minutes were the most poignant in Lucy's young life. She was convulsed by warring emotions. All her ideals, her beliefs, seemed to have been suddenly uprooted and flung aside. For the first time, she began to ask herself—how did she love Lucy, her sister or her heroine?"

In agony she thrust the question from her. No, no! She mustn't think on those lines. There must be some explanation. Of course—of course there must. Grace was good. Grace was fine. Grace was—

"Details!" said Miss Blund. In a dream, Lucy found herself flung out with the other girls—who so studiously avoided looking at her, who coldly turned shoulders towards her. She did not notice them. She must find out—must get at the truth of all this.

She would go to see Grace.

She hurried along the passage. Before Grace's door in the Sixth Form passage she halted. What now? (Grace she felt) In the act of raising her hand to knock she checked, and just as she thought the door was open—just a little. Unconsciously peering through the crack, she saw Grace seated by the window with Connie Jackson. And again she stiffened, aware of a cold, sick wave of disillusion sweeping over her.

For Grace was smoking. Smoking! She, who was a prefect, and who punished other girls for smoking. Connie was smoking, too, in the intervals of dipping her hand into a box of chocolates which the two were sharing between them.

Again Lucy felt her head whirling as she recognized that box of chocolates. It was the box which Connie Jackson had confiscated from Dora Balfour of the Third Form that morning.

Smoking both girls' cigarettes. Eating chocolates which were virtually stolen!

Was this her sister?

"Wasn't a bad show, was it?" Connie was still asking. "You know, I think the Royal Hotel dario are the best on the lot. But, I say, did you notice the time when we cracked back to school last night?"

"No," Grace said. "What was it?"
"Ten o'clock!"

"Early birds!" Grace grinned. "Good job the Bell wasn't grizzling around. Even the would hardly believe we'd been collecting history specimens as that time in the morning. But—"
And then quickly she jerked round, instinctively, but not quickly enough, she put her cigarette behind her. "Lucy!" she said.

For Lucy, without knowing how she got there, was in the study. Lucy, her eyes wide as saucers, her flaming hair giving to her face a wax-like hue. As if the two prefects had been apparitions, she regarded them with eyes of wonder, of wounded horror.

"Lucy!" Grace cried again.
And, all in fluttering dismay, she was on her feet. In two bounds she was



across the room. But Lucy shrieked as she approached her. She jumped back. "No, no! Don't touch me!" she screamed unreasonably.

"Lucy—"
 "You?" Lucy gulped. "You—Grace—oh, her!" Her eyes fastened upon Grace. "You told me you weren't friendly with her. I—I thought you didn't smoke. I thought you didn't do all those beastly things the Third said you did. But now I know she's right. Yes, I know!" Lucy went on, her face flaming with rage.

Overwhelmed by a tide of contempt, she stared at her sister.

"Grace, aren't you ashamed of yourself!"

Grace looked her lips.
 "Lucy—kid—listen! I can explain."
 "Can you?" Lucy's eyes narrowed unaccountably.
 "You can explain last night?" she cried. "You can explain why you're smoking? You can even explain why you were spindled towards Clara this morning? Oh, I see now. I see that all those stories I've heard are true. I see now why you wanted to persuade me to go home."

Grace looked frantic.

"Lucy—"
 "You were afraid!" Lucy cried indignantly. "Afraid that I should find you out. I—I— And when wickedly nervous people meet! Uncontrollably, pitifully, she melted into tears. "I—I hate you," she cried, and blindly stumbled towards the door, blindly groped through it just as Clara Treely, accompanied by Barbara Redfern and Mabel Lynn, came along the corridor. Clara caught her.

"Lucy— What's this?"

Lucy sobbed.
 "Lucy, what is it?"
 "Oh, no. Please leave me alone!" Lucy cried wretchedly.

Clara glanced at her cheeks. Babe looked. Gently she took the little one's soft arms; weakly Clara took the other, still crying as if her heart would break. Lucy was led off down the corridor, was escorted to Study No. 7, and there gently placed in the armchair. Obviously the three chams striped her,

AUDREY suddenly pointed: "Police—man!" and abandoning the car the three seniors turned and fled, panic-stricken. Full well they knew the penalty if this escapade were ever found out at Cliff House.

trembled at the sight of her panic-stricken distress.

"Now, Lucy, hidden," Clara said softly. "what is it?"

"Oh, Grace—"
 "Clara's hands clenched.

"What's the matter with Grace?"

"I—I've fainted out," Lucy sobbed. There was silence.

"And—and— Oh, Clara, when I think of all the misery, all the pain—
 "I've brought upon you! You stuck up for me because the Third was against me—and they were right, all the time. Red-creed, she stared at them. "Clara, why didn't you tell me?" she burst out. "Why didn't you let me know? You never said a word against her."

Clara, paled.
 "Think, kiddie! How could I say anything against her?"

"But you know!"

"Yes, I—I know."

Lucy sobbed.
 "And you—you never said" she breathed. "You kept silent, fighting for me all the time, when you knew I was in the wrong. You kept silent because you didn't want to hurt me."

And, for once, the chams could do or say nothing. They could only stand helplessly by while the little one broke down again and burst into an uncontrolled procession of tears.

had so desperately tried to stare off ever since her younger sister had set foot in Cliff House School, had happened.

Tumultuous as the emotions which were at that moment tearing Lucy to pieces, no less were the emotions of these three. Grace, meanwhile, weak-willed and selfish as she might be, there was at least one redeeming virtue in her makeup, and that was her genuine affection for this little sister of hers.

It was this dreadful fear that Lucy should find her out, combined with a less selfish desire to spare her the pain of finding her out, that had lived with her all these past weeks. And now this had all happened.

The life seemed to go out of her. She drooped, her hands falling despairingly at her sides. Connie Jackson, in the corner, still smoking, frowned questioningly.

"My hat, you look steady!"

Grace did not reply. She felt ill.
 "Oh, snap out of it!" Connie said contemptuously. "Why take on like this? It had to come, didn't it? And now it's come—well, it clears the air, anyway. There's no need for you to pretend any more."

Grace turned upon her savagely.

"Oh, Connie, please be quiet!" she cried desperately. "Can't you see don't you understand? That kid thought I was something a girl should be. She whooped the ground I walked on. Now she knows, and knowing, will tell mother and father."

Connie laughed.

"Not she. She's not that sort."

"But—but she'll despise me?"

Connie scoffed.

"Oh, nonsense!" she retorted. "She'll get used to it."

"Will she? You don't know Lucy. She's sensitive. She's—"
 And Grace shuddered. "Connie, I'm scared!" she cried. "This thing's gone too far. Don't you see, now—it's all over the school! The whole school will know what we're doing. Connie. What are we to do?"

Connie eyed her contemptuously.
 "Windy!" she sneered.



Just Once More—

GRACE REEVE CAMPERHILL stood still. Her face was heavily pale, her eyes wide with horror and dismay. The thing she had dreaded, which she

Grace did not reply. She took a turn up and down the study.

Knowing Lucy's sensitive temperament, she could imagine all that she was enduring now. She had betrayed her—this little sister, who, in her own selfish way, she loved. She had spent an afternoon, which might change the whole course of the little one's life. Why had she done it? Why, oh, why, was she such a different girl at home from what she was at Cliff House?

But there was the answer—in the corner! Cassie Jackson, Audrey Verner. That awful crowd which she had "got in" with. The rest of the reply was in her own nature—weak, foolish, vain, pining for excitement which neither home nor school could give her.

Cassie laughed.
"Oh, come on! Get over it!" she said roughly again.
Grace bit her lip. She turned very still.

"I have got over it!"
"What's that good name, at all costs?" Cassie jeered. "Thank goodness for that! Now what about tonight? You know, Greta Farnham's party at Laurium. I've ordered the car from the garage in Cliff-field—in her name." Cassie added, with a laugh, "of Jenkins. That's fairly unobscure, don't you think?"

Grace faced her.
"Cassie, I'm not coming."

"What?"
"I'm not coming." Grace said, with white-faced determination. "I've finished. I'm through. I see now what a fool I have been. I tell you it's all over the school. Sooner or later, if we don't get a step to it, Primmy will get to hear of us—and what then?"

Cassie ran. There was a glitter in her eyes.
"You're through, are you? My hat! What a coward you are! For goodness' sake show some pluck!"

Grace faced her.
"I'm not a coward!"

"No! Then what's this about you're not coming! Not coming!" Cassie's face grew red. "When I've ordered the car! When Greta is expecting you! Don't be a funk, Grace!"

Grace gasped. She felt herself watering.

"But, Lucy—"
"Oh, bless Lucy! She'll never know—and if she does, it won't make any difference to her opinion of you now."

Grace winced.
"No!" she cried. "Cassie, I can't!"

"What! Just because a little slip-up has told you all! You're just frightened out of your wits. You—the leader of the set—'who laughed scornfully'—you, who's always pretended to show us the way to have a good time! My hat, look at you! Coming like a little Second Form kid who sees a cat!"

Grace turned white.
"Cassie, stop!"

"Well, are you coming?"
"No—yes!" Grace rang round.
"Oh, I don't know! I—
"Then she braved herself. "Oh, don't look at me like that! Yes, yes, I'll come, but only this once, mind—only this once! After to-night I'm through! I'm playing the fool no more!"

Cassie laughed scornfully. She had her own ideas about that.

"Then I can rely on you?"
"Yes."

Cassie went out. Grace sank down, then spring up, took a turn up and down the study, sat down again. She moved restlessly to her bureau,

folded some papers there, and then spun on her heel. She meant what she said. One more flag—just one. But after to-night—

After to-night—
Then she would try to be that sister whom Lucy loved and adored. Then she would come back. No more now in trying to hoodlum Lucy out of the school. Her scheme was to loop her here, to make it up to her, to win back that old love and confidence in herself.

Meanwhile, she felt she had to see Lucy. She went out. Instantly took her to Clara Treely's study, where Clara, busy on the lines which Grace had given her in class that morning, was working in company with Marjorie Hamblins and Janet Jordan. She looked up frigidly.

"Lucy," she said, as if guessing the perfect's mission, "isn't here. She's gone to the Third Form Commencement."

Grace didn't say "thank you." She went out, leaving Clara, with a compression of the lips, so sorry as with her task. To the Third Form Commencement she hurried. A hostile glance greeted her appearance as she pushed open the door.

At once she spotted her sister Lucy—on her feet, between little Sparo, sitting down from the other girls in a corner of the room. She had an open book in her hands, but she was not reading. Her eyes were full of poignant grief.

"Lucy," Grace cried.
Lucy looked up. She turned white.
"Lucy," Grace answered—"Lucy, will you come to my study?"

Fall in the face Lucy looked her down. Fearful and frank the gaze—but looking utterly in affection. Only a sort of cold, reproachful scorn which made Grace wince. Then, without replying, her eyes dropped to her book.

The Third Form blinked, looking at each other. What miracle was this?

"Lucy!" Grace called again.
For answer, Lucy got up. She tucked her book under her arm. Without another look at her sister, she walked across the room, closed the door, and went out.

Grace closed with.
"My hat!" Madge Stevens whispered in awe. "Did you see that! She cut her own sister!"

"And about time, too!" Fanny Tibbets sneered.

Grace turned white.

She then one bitter look at Fanny. But, for a miracle, she said nothing.

Rising her lip, she went out, and the wondering, awe-stricken silence which had descended on the Third broke into a buzz of excited speculation.



Stormy Night

NIGHT!
A strangely warm night for the latitude of the year.

Outside, an orange moon was obscured by lowering banks of scudding cloud. A faint, sultry wind was blowing in from the sea, bringing with it the monotonous murmur of churning surf over the rock-bound shore. And occasionally, too, at long intervals came a deeper, more sinister boom, its significance masked by the distance from which it came. Thunder.

In the Fourth Form dormitory girls

stirred restlessly and restlessly in their sleep. Not one was wide awake.

That one was Clara Treely.

Clara was awake for a purpose. Not, to be sure, a very desperate purpose. Clara was still thinking of those unfinished lines in her study dormitory, and Clara, desperately loath to win back the chance she had forfeited last week of playing for the winter eleven, was anxious to get them cleared out of the way so that she could devote to-morrow with an unexcused conscience.

She rose, looking along the row of beds. Every room seemed asleep. She stepped out, reaching for her clothes.

She was in the act of putting them on when a sleepy voice came from a bed a few feet away.

"Hallo! Is that you, Clara?"
The voice was that of Freda Ferrers.

"Yes, it is," Clara promised.
"What are you doing?"
"That," Clara replied, "is my business. Go to sleep!"

Freda gasped. But she watched as Clara dressed and slipped to the door. She heard her padding along the landing, lay for a moment tapping with the idea of rousing the dormitory, and so drawing attention to the Tomboy's absence. And then, deciding it was not worth it, rolled on her side and promptly went to sleep again.

While Clara, stepping along, passed a moment outside Miss Bellflower's room (listening to the sinister rattle in the distance, and then, holding her breath, padded past it).

In the Fourth Form corridor she silently lit herself into her own study, pushed her rug against the bottom of the door to shut out any betraying chink of light and sat down.

In the Third Form dormitory another girl lay awake. A very nervous, a very worried and heartbroken girl, whose red eyes shined like coals of fire upon the pillows.

That girl was Lucy Campbell.

Lucy, apart from her other worries, had toothache.

Perhaps that was not to be wondered at. One form of toothache is caused by nervous reaction, and it was that form from which Lucy was suffering now. She was quivering even as she lay in bed. The ache, so far from getting better, seemed to be growing worse.

Like her heart, which was going thud, thud, thud in her chest, seeming too heavy for the tormented little body it inhabited, so the nerve in her teeth was going thud, thud—madly, madly, incessantly.

Tom between the pain and the torment of her mind, Lucy could have wept. If she could only get rid of this toothache!

She thought of all the remedies she knew of. And then suddenly, like a flash of heavenly light, she remembered Clara Treely.

Clara had some wonderful stuff, a magic stuff she said, which had been sent to her by her brother Jack, who was out in Nigeria. Should she go to Clara and ask for some?

She would!
She rose. She limped for her dressing-gown. As she did so she blinked as the window opposite her was suddenly lit up. Lightning. And—half a minute later—an angry roar rumbled in the west.

Fanny Tibbets' voice hailed her.
"I say, where are you going?"

But Lucy did not reply. With one hand to her face, she slipped on her slippers, padded along to the Fourth Form dormitory, in the grey darkness felt her way towards Clara's bed. And then she started and stiffened. For the

sheets of the bed were flung back, the bed itself was cold. Clara was not there! Clara was a slab of alarm case to Lucy—end!

Lucy had a feeling as if she had surmised some deep and terrible secret. Nervously, with a scared glance round the dormitory, she ran to her feet. Her footsteps magically hushed, she stole back to the Third Form dormitory. But where was Clara? What, she wondered unavailingly, could she be doing out of bed at this time of night?

It was then that the thunderstorm broke.

It came from the direction of Court-field, and it broke there with alarming violence. The lightning seemed to hit as it flashed into the startled faces of the three girls in the car which came whirling down Junction Road with Connie Jackson at the wheel.

And with the lightning came the rain, in violence almost as great as the rattle-booming crashes of thunder which made the girls quiver, and seemed to shift the very earth under the wheels of the car.

Connie, in the act of turning the corner on a road that had suddenly become greasy and slippery, started by the back, gave the wheel a tug.

"Oh, look!" shrieked Grace Campbell.

"My hat, Connie!" yelled Audrey Vermer.

Desperately Connie wrenched at the wheel. But too late. Rigidly locked in a back-wheel skid, the car plunged in a blind circle. The plate-glass show front of Holland's Stores rushed to meet them, instinctively each of the girls cringed.

Crash!

Like the end of the world! A heart-stopping moment which each girl thought her last!

Splinters of glass merged with the downpour of rain. The air halted, and came abruptly—for it was the instant instant window into which they had crashed—a stiff chimney and forward without a sound, and collapsed into a prostrate, saggingly attitude across the bottom.

For one deathly instant there was silence. It was as though even the storm had paused to contemplate the damage.

Shaken, scared, the three girls sat stupefied.

It was Connie who first recovered her wits.

"Oh, Great Scott! I say, are you hurt, girls?"

Grace moaned a little.

"My arm—"

"What's the matter with your arm?"

"I don't know. A piece of glass, I think. But— Oh, good gracious, let's get out of this!" she gasped.

"Come, can you get the car back into the road?"

Connie bit her lip. Desperately she fumbled with the ignition. But something had gone wrong. The self-starter whirred, stopped. A splinter that ended in a fine curve from the engine.

"Something's gone wrong," she said.

"Oh, my goodness! But—"

"Come on!" Connie said.

Now they came alive to the greater danger—the danger of being discovered.

Fortunately for them, the street was deserted. The sound of the crash, mingling with the peal of thunder, had not attracted attention.

But any moment someone might come round the corner—and their discovery was inevitable.

"Come on," Connie gasped again.

She flung the door open. She hurried out with—

Grace gave a little moan of pain as the door hit against her arm. A piece of glass, ripping the sleeve of her coat along its length, had penetrated the skin, and the blood was flowing freely. Grace gasped.

"What a nuisance—my arm!"

"Oh, bother your arm!"

"But it's bleeding!"

Fanning and palpating, the three stopped. Grace fumbled in her pocket for a handkerchief.

Connie, with a scared glance up and down the street, began tremblingly to make a bandage of it, when suddenly there came a gasping cry from Audrey Vermer.

Round the corner, his black cap gleaming in the rain, came a figure.

"Police-man!" gasped Audrey.

A policeman it was. They saw him through the curtain screen of rain.

Connie dragged the handkerchief in her panic. Grace, her injury forgotten, started to help.

Up from the policeman went a shout.

"Stop!"

But the three did not stop. They fled!

THAT VERY CONTRASTED was Clara Trevlyn's sigh as, back in Study No. 7 at Cliff House, she wrote the last line of the monumental composition which had been given her that morning, and paused for a moment to listen to

But the chance was still open to her. Next Saturday the senior class would be playing the redoubtable Courtfield High School on Cliff House's own ground. If she practiced assiduously, if she only kept out of trouble, then her colors were assured.

Now, with this barrier to that objective removed, she felt happy. She ran, yawning a little, feeling stiff and cramped after an hour and a half of Virgil. Her head was swimming a little here that the need of concentration had vanished.

Another clap of thunder, accompanied by a flickering glow at the window, made her start. Quickly she turned out the light, removed the rag from the door, and stepped into the darkened corridor outside.

It was dark. The torrential rain hissed and pattered outside. The whole school seemed to be shuddering and quivering in the grip of the storm. Unconsciously Clara quickened her step. She reached the head of the stairs, found the banisters, and gripped herself down.

Her heart was beating a triple quicker as she reached the bottom step. The window in front of her glimmered faintly in the wall of surrounding darkness. She paused a little, gazing quickly towards Miss Ballivan's room, and as she did so the most blinding



"CLARA, were you out of bounds last night?" Lucy asked steadily. There was a short silence, then Clara said, low voiced: "No!" But Lucy had a terrible feeling that the Torrey was not telling the truth.

the crash of thunder which rolled over her head.

Well, thank goodness that was that! With the lines done, tomorrow was free. No need now to worry about practice.

She glanced a little as she thought of that prospect—of all that it would mean to her. The most bitterly chagrined girl in Cliff House last Saturday had been Clara Trevlyn, when, instead of taking her place in the senior team that visited Folkestone, she had been confined to school bounds.

Back of the whole storm came. For one ghastly second she thought the window in front of her had taken fire. She felt a sudden warmth on her face and stopped back, unconsciously blinded and dazed, crashing her arm against a marble pedestal which supported a bust of Socrates.

The pedestal rocked with the crashing peal of thunder which succeeded the flash. The bust of Socrates heeled over and smashed in fragments on the floor the noise of its splintering drowned by

the greater volume of the thunder outside. Clara jumped.

"Oh, my hat!"

She stared—no dismay, in utter confusion. But what was the matter with her arm? It was throbbing and aching just above the elbow, where she had made contact with the pointed edge of the pedestal. A dizzy sickness seemed to sweep right over her. Again she stared at the smashed bust on the floor. Oh, goodness, now there'd be a row! When it was discovered that she had smashed that bust—

Clara gasped a little. No longer was she thinking of the storm. For she saw, all at once with joyful hopefulness, what this accident was likely to mean for her. If Miss Princeton believed that the smashing of the bust were pure accident, that could not detract from the offense she had committed—of being out of bed when she was supposed to be asleep, of prowling in the school where she had no business to have her dormitory.

A gating for that—perhaps worse! And, again—Clara felt the blood racing in her head—her chance of playing in the senior chess game!

—But—

She gasped. Wait a minute. Supposing she left it exactly where it was! Might not the smashed bust be attributed to the vagaries of the storm? No one knew that she had been down here. No one could possibly suspect her. If somebody else were blamed, then, of course, she would just have to own up.

And so, holding her injured arm, which had now begun to throb violently and painfully, she slipped away towards the stairs that led to the Fourth Form dormitory.



Lucy's Great Mistake

"HELLO, Clara! Clara, wake up, my honey!"

Clara yawning blinked open sleepy eyes.

"What's the time?"

"The time! Why, make it, it's ten minutes past rising bell!" Barbara Rollins laughed. "What the dickens is the matter with you this morning? Storm upset you, or something?"

Clara sat up with a jerk, and then sank back with a gasp of pain. For the moment, feeling that injured arm of her, sore with aching pains the whole length of it.

She stared round. The Fourth Form dormitory was alive. Even Bessie Baxter, that sweet notorious of slog-guards, was in the act of washing.

"Oh, my hat!" she gasped.

"What's the matter?" asked Barbara Rollins curiously.

"Matter?"

"Well, couldn't you sleep, or something? Look at the time!"

Again Clara gasped. She did not reply. With her left hand she pulled back the covers, and, rubbing tired eyes, sat on the edge of the bed. But the storm was that and the task upon which she had been engaged in the study which were, of course, responsible for her interest this morning.

"Yecks, you look like a bear with a fat head!" Diana Reynolds-Clarke chirped.

"Oh, be quiet!" retorted Clara.

"Whoops, aren't we in a pleasant temper!"

Clara rose. She went to her wash-basin. She extended her arm, allowed

it to drop. Marjorie Handlen, concernedly watching her, bit her lip.

"Clara, what is the matter with your arm?"

"My what—?" And then Clara remembered. A flash came to her face, a guilty, tortoise flash. No, she could not answer that question. To tell Marjorie or anyone else that she was hurt meant explaining how she had hurt it, why she had hurt it—and then the whole story would be out and she would stand before Miss Princeton stark and bare where she was. She quickly shrugged.

"Well, what should be the matter with my arm?" she retorted.

Marjorie shook her head. She caught a look from Bessie. Frowning, trying desperately to make it appear that her arm was whole as usual, Clara bent over the wash basin. In agony she completed her toilet. In agony she dressed, when Joan Sheldon Charmant, fresh from an early morning run round the quad, came in.

"Eggs! I say, such excitement!" she cried.

"Oh, what?" asked Bessie.

"Well, the storm last night, you know. It blew the chimney of Piper's lodge. The poplar-tree in Miss Princeton's garden was struck by lightning, and the best of Sweeney's is no more." Joan grinned. "Apparently the curtain swept it off the pedestal during the storm. At least," she added, "that is what Primmy thinks."

There was a buzz, with everybody discussing the storm. But Clara, hearing that, heaved a sigh of relief. She was not suspected. An imperceptible wave of relief surged through her.

Why, she was safe. If only this arm—

Who was afraid, of course, to attend to it in the dormitory. But downstairs she could find salve and bandages in the little first-aid chest which Marjorie Handlen so carefully kept. It did feel numb, though—and lumpy, just like lead. She tried to bend it as she walked on, and her face turned white. Crossed, this wouldn't do! She must remember her promise that afternoon.

Taking advantage of the interest excited by Joan Charmant's news, she slipped out of the dormitory. In Study No. 7 she lifted her arm, making a face as she inspected her injury. A great black bruise was forming and to the center the flesh was badly lacerated. It looked bad.

Clara knew that she ought to have visited Mrs. Thwaites, the matron. But with all her ready knowledge that weighed her down, she darned. She found Marjorie's first-aid box, rather clumsily—for the wound was in an awkward place, and Clara was not an adept at bandaging at the best of times—she started to dress it. She was in the midst of that operation when the door opened.

A startled little face peered in.

"Clara," cried Lucy.

As if she had suddenly been stung, Clara whipped round. Startled girls for a moment stared on her features, scanning Lucy's eyes to open wide. "Who's that?"

"Oh, you, kid."

"Clara, what have you done to your arm?" Lucy cried.

"Blast! I mean—nothing. Oh, help—come in, and shut that door."

Lucy came in. She had her book under her arm—and was, in fact, on her way to the library to change it. She put it down.

"And—look the door!" Clara said.

"Don't answer if anybody comes."

"But, Clara—"

"Oh, please do as I say!" Clara cried. Lucy wonderingly obeyed. She

looked rather frightened, rather startled. But when she saw Clara's arm, her wonderment gave way to instant compassion.

"Oh, Clara, your arm. How did you do that?"

"Oh, never mind," Clara cried.

"But look at it—"

"Don't say! Rather—this bandage! I say, kid, run the witch hand!"

But when Lucy's face came a look of determination. When she looked, Lucy could be a very resolute little girl. She didn't know how Clara had come by that wound. It was obvious that Clara had no intention of telling her. Obvious, too, that she did not wish it to be generally known.

Well, that was all right as far as Lucy was concerned. Not for worlds would she have betrayed information which Clara wished to keep secret.

"Clara, let me do it for you," she said.

Clara hesitated.

"Well, could you?"

"You sit down in that armchair," Lucy cried, anxious to be of service to the girl who had done so much for her. "Clara, how it aches here. But wait a minute." And dexterously, skillfully, with an expertise that fairly surprised the Tomboy of the Fourth, she dressed the wound, bandaged it up and tenderly dragged down the sleeve of the blouse again.

"Thanks," Clara gulped. "You're a good kid, Lucy."

"But, Clara, how did it happen?"

"Oh, never mind."

Lucy regarded her strangely.

"You—you mean—"

"I mean nothing," Clara said. "Now, kiddie, don't ask questions—please, she begged."

"And—and—Clara thanked—please do me a good turn by saying nothing to anybody about this."

"Yes, Clara," Lucy said.

She went out, shaking her head. How strangely sensitive her mysterious Clara was. How had she got that awful arm? In what circumstances? The wound looked hoarse and burnt red. Lucy's little face reddened with a frown. She remembered then that Clara had not been in her bed when she had visited the dorm last night. Feeling rather worried, Lucy went to the library where Miss Wanda Bellinger, in charge, was just in the act of arranging the morning newspapers. She smiled tenderly at Lucy.

"Hallo, Lucy, come to change your book? What would you like more?"

Lucy gave her the title, and while the Chief House assistant mistress wandered off to get it, Lucy's eyes traveled incessantly over the front page of the "Courtfield Herald." Mechanically her eyes strayed to a headline:

"COURTFIELD CAR SMASH IN STORM.

POLICE SEARCH FOR THREE GIRLS."

"At one o'clock this morning—"

Lucy found herself reading. There was quite a lot to read. P. C. Robinson, apparently, had seen the abandoned car in the woods, had seen three girls in the act of getting away. One girl seemed to have hurt her arm; another girl was bandaging it.

Lucy started.

Arm! Clara's arm was injured. Clara had been absent from her dormitory about the same time as this could have occurred.

She read on, suddenly tingling with excitement.

P. C. Robinson had shouted. The girls had run away. He could not

recognize them in the sale and the darkness—he could not even be sure of their heights. But he had discovered a blond-haired, amber-eyed one of them had left behind—a handkerchief which bore the initial "C," and had a laundry mark which the police were now trying to trace.

Lacy's face drained of colour. "C" (Clara)? Almost gasping, she read on. The owner of the car—the Coastfield Garage, Ltd.—had hired it to a girl named Jenkins, of 24, Laurel Avenue, Coastfield. Inquiries at that house had elicited the information that no such girl was living there.

The car, had, therefore, been obtained under a false name.

Lacy's legs for a moment trembled beneath her. Her face became white. Clara! Clara had lost her arm. Clara had been out of school last night. Clara, so mysterious, so elusive this morning, desperately anxious to keep her injured arm a secret—could she have been one of those girls concerned in this case?

Lacy was quivering when Miss Bellington came back with her book. Like a star in a tracer she went out, her thoughts blazing. Just as she opened Study No. 2 the door opened, and Clara, looking much better, came out.

Lacy stopped.

"Hello!" Clara grinned. "But, I say, what's the matter with you?"

Lacy shook her head.

"Nothing, dear. Not—?" And Lacy passed. In agony she gazed at Clara. It wasn't her business, she told herself, but it was the very strength of her loyalty which urged her to hint the question: "Oh, Clara, were you out of bed's last night?"

She felt appalled by her own temerity as soon as she had asked it. Clara gazed at her severely.

"Why?"

"Well, were you?" Lacy asked.

A moment's pause. Again that green, almost painless, then Clara said:

"No."

But Lacy had a feeling, for the first time that she had known her, that Lucy told had lied.



"What's Wrong With Clara?"

THERE was another girl in Cliff House that morning with a bandaged arm. That girl was Grace Berrow Campbell.

And at the very moment when her younger sister was with Clara in the corridor of the Fourth Form, Grace, with a face that was pale with fright, was reading the paper.

For the third time she had perused the column in which the news of last night's happening was contained. For the third time she had almost succumbed as she thought of all those dreadful possibilities which might follow. Police-men—experts! Arrest—expulsion!

What a fool—what an utterly reckless fool she had been!

If she were found out—

She felt stifled—ready to scream at the very thought.

The door opened. Connie and Audrey, as white as herself, looked in.

"You've seen it?" Connie asked.

"Yes."

"Then say nothing. Mum's in the wood. And her goodness' sake," Connie added, "don't let anybody know that

you've done anything to your arm. Does it hurt?"

"Not much."

"You can use it?"

"Oh, yes!"

Connie gulped.

"Then that's good," she said. "We've got to stick together. Nobody knows we were out. The policeman didn't recognize us, so that's all right. If anybody asks you questions about last night, you were in bed—was? If we all stick to the same story, nothing can come out."

Audrey was shaken.

"But supposing they track us here?"

"How can they?"

"But suppose—Audrey hit her lips—supposing, for instance," she quavered, "that the garage man recognized you again?"

Connie's lips curled in scorn.

"What do you take me for—a fool?" she asked. "You don't think I want to live as Miss Jenkins without taking some precautions, do you? He'd never recognize me again. For one thing, I had my face made-up. For another thing, I was wearing spectacles, and for a third thing, the idea hardly looked at me. No, that's safe enough. The only thing which might put them on the trail here is the initial on the handkerchief."

"Miss?" gulped Grace.

"Well," Connie said, "what of that? There are a whole heap of girls in this school whose initials are 'C.' No less than eight of them in the Fifth, and then eight of them in the Fifth, and Carol, Gertrude, Cartwright, Cook, Carroll, Gertrude, and Charlotte, in the Fourth. Then Jessie Cranston, Pansy Carter, Fay Chandler, in Upper Third. That's not much of a clue—and, anyway, as profits we'll be the last to be suspected. Just keep quiet!"

Reassuring advice, but it hardly reassured Grace Campbell. She was quivering with fear. If she could only go back to yesterday—if only that dreadful thing had never happened! What would her parents say? What would Lucy think? Lacy?

A girl came to her breast. Lacy, suffering because she had found her out, must be enduring torment. She must go and see Lacy—must, from this very moment, try to make it up to her. She breathed a little easier, thinking of the refreshing atmosphere of that younger sister's company, seeing for the first time, with a quiver of longing, the true value of Connie Jackson and Audrey Dashwood Verney as friends.

A talk with Lacy would do her good, would take her out of herself.

In a corner of the school library she ran to Lucy's earth. Once more she laid her hand with a book in her hand, but now more she was not reading. She seemed to sniffle instinctively at her sister's shadow fell across her.

"Hello, Lucy!" Grace said.

"Hello!" Lacy said, frowning.

"Nice book?"

"Yes," Lacy said.

"What is it?"

For answer, Lacy showed her the cover. Grace took a seat beside her.

"Er—I've been thinking, Lacy," she said haltingly, "about—about the good time we had—you remember, Berrow-moath? Remember that time we went out in a boat together, and nearly got carried out to sea by the current?"

Lacy quivered.

"Why?" she asked.

"Well, it was jolly, wasn't it?"

"It was jolly," Lacy agreed, repeating the words like a parrot, but her little face flashed because she knew that happiness could never, never return

again. Three days were past. Their happiness, moreover wiped out with the discovery of the sort of girl her sister really was. "Oh, Grace, please don't—don't talk to me!" she cried.

Grace bit her lip. But she persisted.

"But why not?" she asked.

Lacy smiled sadly to herself.

"I—I know! But—but things are different now," she said miserably.

"Oh, bother—cheer up! Look here, kiddie, what about a stroll to the book-shop?"

Lacy shook her head.

"Don't feel hungry, eh?" Grace attempted to make her laugh light.

"But perhaps you'll feel hungry later on, kiddie. And I don't expect you've got any money, have you? Well, now, I think I've got a shilling somewhere—"

Lacy smiled out.

"Come—wait! Please! Stop it! I don't want your money!"

Grace breathed hard.

"Well, supposing we go along to my study and have some chocolates?"

"I—I don't want any chocolates," Lacy said faintly, and felt a flash of animosity as she thought of the last chocolate she had seen her sister consuming—those which had been confiscated from Daria Redburn in the company of Connie Jackson.

Grace was silent. She looked in vain for traces of the old affection. A rebuffing, a rebuffing in the stern little profile before her. With a sigh Lacy opened her book again.

"Lucy?" Grace said.

Lacy did not reply.

"Don't you think—?" Grace gulped.

"Lucy, it's a halfer to-day. Don't you think it would be ripping if we went off somewhere together?"

Lacy looked at her bitterly.

"It's a lousy reason, for instance?"

Disturbed she frowned. But she could not help it. Grace's face whitened.

"No, kid! Oh, please!" she broke out.

"Lucy, believe me, I—I've finished with all that. Won't you, Lucy?"

"Well, I can't!" Lacy said, repeating a little, "because I'm going to see the hockey practice. Clara's playing on Senior Side, you know, and I want to be there to cheer her on."

A flash of jealous hate pierced Grace's heart. Clara Trevelyan again! That girl! Clara had taken her place in the affections of this little sister of hers!

She made a great effort. At all costs she must please Lucy.

"All right, then, I—I'll come and watch the match with you," she said.

"But you don't like Clara," Lacy said defiantly.

Grace frowned.

"But I do—really!"

At which Lacy shook her head. No, she could not believe that! Remembering the scene in the Head's study previous day—

She said nothing, however.

"Lucy, you—you'd like me to come?"

"Oh, well, of course!" But Lacy frowned, amazed at herself to find what other misapprehensions she met these blood-sisters.

"When—this afternoon," Grace said hesitantly as she rose.

Lacy briefly nodded.

Grace left her then, dimly conscious of the long uphill fight she would have to get back the younger sister's confidence.

Lacy continued with her book.

While at that moment Clara, in company with Bala, Masha, Junina, and Marjorie Hankinson, was talking to

Dulcia Fairbrother on the steps of the school. Dulcia grinned mischievously.

"Well, Clara, out of disgrace? I hope. You know we want you for practice this afternoon."

Clara grinned.
"Yes, rather!" Clara said, desperately wondering if her throbbing arm were going to cease aching.

"Good enough! Because you know," Dulcia said, with a twinkle, "we shall want you for Saturday." And, with a nod, passed on, leaving Clara marble-checked with pleasure.

Assembly bell went then, and the classes trooped into Big Hall. But many an anxious eye was cast towards Clara. The Form was forgiving her for what they had described as the let-down of last Saturday. Clara really did seem to be working well, to be really trying to keep out of disgrace.

And Clara herself was determined—*if only her arm would let her!*—to give the exhibition of her class. Fortunately the boards with the Third had healed—*at least, there had been no more noise.*

The Third, as part of the Junior School, indeed, were almost as anxious as her own Form, to see Clara achieve fame. For now Clara was in the scanner, that meant they could be privileged to get games for the senior classes, a visiting game—and what else comes along at these, ranging as far afield as Canterbury and Maidstone and Chichester, to which places the Senior School's fixtures took them. Every eye was upon Clara, every hope invested in her.

If only her arm—
But the arm, as the morning wore on, did not get better. Clara nursed it carefully, desperately anxious not to have questions asked about it. It felt like lead at dinner-time, stiff, sore, and numb, now and again a sharp pain darting throughout its length. But not Clara to give in. And she couldn't relax herself without questions being asked. When the team took the field that afternoon the sea was of their number.

And only one among all the great crowd of junior schoolgirls who watched that practice guessed the reason for Clara's decided lack of sparkle and dash.

That one was Lucy Campbell. There was no doubt that Clara was miles below form. The Junior School stood appalled. They little guessed the agony under which their starkest worker, little guessed what extraordinary effort it was to her every time she lifted her stick.

Grace, by Lucy's side, earned a further measure of her younger sister's contempt by helpfully voicing an open sneer.

"Babs, Mabs, Berris, Jennina, and Lolla Carroll, who stood together in a little group, exchanged looks of deepest bewilderment and dismay. What had come over Clara? She seemed to have no power in her stick.

"Oh, my hat! I say, she's croaking up!" Joan Charmant said.

"That isn't the senior eleven form!" Lucy heard those comments and hit her lip. She felt her heart was almost broken.

It was over at last. In disappointed groups the girls stood as Clara, her face white and strained, came off the field. Dulcia Fairbrother, running across the field, caught up with her. She sped her kindly.

"Clara, what was the matter? You weren't playing up to standard at all!" Clara gulped.

"I—I'm sorry, but I—I couldn't get into my stride somehow."

"Feeling steady?" Dulcia asked kindly.

"Well, yes, a little."
"Then go and see Mrs. Thwaites. You look as if you need some sort of tonic," she said, "and don't look so out of it. There's no harm done as it happens. We'll try you out again to-morrow."

Clara gulped her consolation. Then she was confronting her Form-mates. They all wanted to know what was the matter, all fearfully concerned, except Lydia Crossendale and Freda Ferriars and a few others who, out of habit almost, pretended to scoff.

Lucy looked at her, shaking her head. Grace looked at her, a little gleam of spite in her eyes, telling herself that this was the girl who had robbed her of Lucy's affections, who was the primary cause of her downfall.

Surrounded by the crowd, Clara made her way to the junior pavilion. And quite a crowd looked in after her.

Grace Campbell passed.

"Shall we go back and have tea now, kid?"

But Lucy shook her head.

"No, no, I'm going to the pavilion."

Again Grace hit back an exclamation. But her policy was to humper Lucy in all things. And as the little one started off the rest with her. But when they reached the pavilion it was so full that they found themselves standing on the steps outside.

All the same, the remarks that floated out were unflattering.

"You played like a Second Form kid," Bess Redworth sniffed. You seemed to be afraid of the ball."

"Oh, be quiet!" snapped Clara.

"Does anything to your arm?" queried Diana Reppin-Clarke.

"What should I have done to my arm?"

"Well, look how you're pulling on your stockings for a start. And look how you qualified the ball in front of Mary Bailey's net. I was watching. You seemed afraid to lift your arms above your hip."

"Oh, go and eat cake!" sneered Clara.

"Perhaps it was because she was out last night," Freda Ferriars put in with an unpleasant chuckle.

Lucy started.

"I say—" she cried.

"Who was out?" Eleanor Scotts wanted to know.

"Clara, didn't you know? I caught her as she was leaving the dorm fully dressed. And look at her this morning, it had ten minutes after the bell went. All right, Babs. That was my toe you trod on."

"Well, be quiet!" came Barbara Redford's voice.

"But I tell you—"

And then Lydia Crossendale clipped in.

"Ah, I know, kids! Clara was one of the gang who created the commotion in Courtfield last night. I read it in the paper this morning."

There was a pause. Lucy looked quickly, apprehensively at Grace, who had given a sort of jump.

"Don't be a bigger clump than you were born," Clara's scolding retort came back.

"Well, the paper said that one of the girls hurt her arm."

Lucy trembled. They were only teasing Clara, of course. But how soon, how dreadfully, and desperately near they were to the truth!

Only she guessed that so far, that Clara's arm injury was the result of that accident! That Clara was keeping her

injury secret because of that accident and the consequent exposure might involve.

Her head was reeling suddenly. She did not notice that Grace, with sudden agitation, had stolen from her side. Fiercely she fought her way into the dressing-rooms, palpitations reached Clara. She turned, flushing scorn upon them all.

"Can't you leave her alone?" she cried. "Can't you? Can't a girl be off her own as a way without all this? As it—" and she choked,—"as if Clara had anything to do with that incident! And Clara hasn't hurt her arm, have you, Clara?"

Bess grinned.

"Well, you seem to know all about it."

"Of course I know all about it, because—because—" Lucy stammered.

"Clara and I were prowling first-aid this morning, weren't we, Clara?"

"Why not, of course we were," Clara admitted. "Now clear out, you clumps. You'll see, wait till to-morrow, then I'll show you."

She passed as from Green Cook, standing outside the door, came a sudden breathless cry.

"I say, you girls, quick! P.-c. Robinson from the Courtfield police is coming up the drive. And my word, he's talking to Grace Campbell!"



"I am the Girl!"

It was true. And never, rarely had there been a more frightened girl than Grace Bessie Campbell at that moment.

For Grace, having stolen away from the pavilion where she had been listening to the remarks of the Fourth Form, had almost jumped right into P.-c. Robinson.

For one moment the policeman paused, peering at her oddly. Grace, with a terrific effort, suppressed her fear. She gasped.

"Oh, what a start you gave me! Do—do you want anything?"

"Ay," P.-c. Robinson said, "I want Miss Fairbrother." He looked at her steadily, and Grace, forcing herself to meet his eyes, almost fainted.

"Can you tell me where she lives?"

"Oh, yes, of course! I'll take you to her," Grace said at once. "Nothing wrong, I hope?"

"Well, I'm afraid it is!"

"Oh!" Grace looked at him apprehensively. "Nothing concerning one of the girls?"

"I'm afraid it is!"

"Which one?"

"That," the constable said, "I don't know. And I don't know until I've seen your headmistress. It all depends on a girl with an injured arm," he said mysteriously, "and a handkerchief. We've traced the girl to Cliff House by the laundry mark on the handkerchief, and as initial 'C.' I reckon that'll stand for somebody like Clara or Claret, wouldn't it?"

Grace held her breath. A wave of deadly nausea seemed to sweep over her. She had forgotten the laundry mark—of course, of course! But, wait a minute—wait a minute! And fearfully, desperately her brain was racing even as she talked. That laundry mark wasn't only her property. It was on the item of every girl at Cliff House.

Now she remembered what she had

overheard in the parlour, Clara had an injured arm. Clara—why, the initial was here! Clara could be proved to have been out of her dormitory when the accident took place! Clara, for some unfathomable reason, had kept her injured arm secret.

Grace gasped as all at once the teacher's handsome boss of her own concordance entered her head. If there were going to be any scenes about this, then it was Clara who was going to be in it! She thought she saw a way of staying off her own guilt.

She felt more assured when she came to that decision. Only remained now to get Jessie and Audrey together and talk it over with them. Hardly did she get the consolation into Miss Primrose's study, and sit at once in search of her crosses. Lucy, her little face like marble, greeted her as she came out.

"Grace?"
"Well, kid?"
"What has the policeman come for?"
"Grace stopped."

"Oh, nothing—I don't know," she stammered, and bolted.

But Lucy shook her head. She was dreadfully uneasy all at once. She sensed that Clara—her heroine—was in danger.

Clara was gaily. If Clara were found out—She sneezed sick with horror. But she shouldn't be found out! Not! Not if she could help it! Somehow—the devil's know how—she would save her!

Hardly realising where her feet were taking her, she unobtrusively drifted towards Miss Primrose's study. Outside, aroused by the sound of voices, she paused.

Miss Primrose, agitated, troubled, was talking to the policeman.

"Yes, yes, of course," she was saying. "It must be looked into. If the girl's arm were injured, as you say, it will surely bear traces of the injury now. I have made inquiries of the mistress. She tells me that no girl is suffering from an injured arm at the moment, which means, of course, that the guilty girl is keeping it a secret. Once we find the girl with the injured arm, the rest should be easy. I will summon my residents. The whole school shall attend in Big Hall, and I will insist upon an arm inspection at once!"

No more did Lucy wait to hear. Her heart was drumming in her ears. Evidently she saw the danger, the exposure which awaited Clara—for Clara, of course, could not possibly fail to be trapped.

Swiftly her brain worked, anxiety, admiration for her heroine driving her on. Now—wait! And suddenly the daring, breath-taking idea was born. Dare she do it? She had to do it! To save Clara from utter disgrace.

Downstairs with a rush she flew. Holding her breath she crept up to Study No. 7 in the Fourth Form corridor. What a gulp of relief she gave when no answer rewarded her knock! Swiftly she went in, closing and locking the door behind her. Now—where was the first-aid box? She found it, opened it. With the red ink on the table she splashed her arm.

So far, so good!

Now the task. Carefully she fastened a square patch over the ink. The bandage was more difficult to arrange, but she managed it, and put the first-aid box back just as the loudest voice of the bell rang summoning the school to assembly.

Outside she joined the excited, speculative crowd of girls who were streaming towards Big Hall.

Trembling, she took her place in the ranks of the Third, which were being

shepherded into place by Mary Butler of the Sixth Form.

Miss Primrose, rather pale, was standing on her own. She said nothing as the roll was called, but it was obvious that the prefects had their instructions. A buzz arose. Miss Primrose got up.

"Every girl please be silent," she said. "The prefects have a certain duty, and they will now perform it. Proceed, please."

Again a buzz. What was this? Right ahead, at the end of the Upper Third, blinked as Mary briefly instructed her to roll up her sleeve, baring her arm. Then, so briefly, told her to put them down again. Jessie Cranston was next. Then Fay Chandler, and Lucy felt her heart throbbing in her throat as Mary passed them by and faced her.

"Sleeves up," she said tersely.

"Up—"

"Sleeves up!"

Slowly Lucy rolled up her sleeve. It was the arm without the bandage.

"The other arm, too," Mary Butler said.

"But—"

"The other!" Mary incessantly repeated.

Every eye was upon her now—as she wanted it to be. Reluctantly she rolled up the sleeve and stood there, the bandage in full view. A glint came into Mary's eyes. Immediately she bang round.

"Miss Primrose!" she cried.

At once everyone wheeled. Mary took the quivering Lucy by the wrist.

"This way!" she said.

Lucy was led out. On the dais Miss Primrose stood (and so that she looked like some forbidding giantess to the terrified eyes of the Third Formers. There was a headless absence in Mary Butler's eyes, the little one's arm.

Miss Primrose's lips grew thin.

"Thank you, Mary!" she said.

"Lucy, you may step up here. Per-

haps," she added, "you know now why this examination has been conducted. Lucy, where did you hurt your arm?"

Lucy gasped.

"I—"

"Last night," Miss Primrose went on, "there was an accident in Courtfield. A car occupied by three girls smashed into a window of Hildesheim House. One of those girls hurt her arm. She left behind her a handkerchief bearing the initial 'C.' Your initial, Lucy! Was that your handkerchief?"

The whole school hung upon the youngster's reply. Grace Campbrell, who was among the Fourth, let out a little gasp.

Lucy slowly nodded. A sigh of wonder went up.

Miss Primrose's eyes flashed.

"Who were your companions?"

Lucy shook her head.

"Lucy, I am asking you a question," Miss Primrose said sharply.

Lucy gasped.

"Well, I'm sorry, but I can't answer it," she said. "Oh, Miss Primrose, isn't it enough that you've caught me? Why bring the others into it?"

"You admit your own guilt!"

Lucy, with averted face:

"Yes!"

Again there was silence. It was broken by a strangled little cry from Grace Reeve Campbrell, who, her face deathly white, was wringing up her hair.

With horror, with dread, she was staring towards her sister. Lucy was abolishing the blame for her own misdeeds! Why!

But Grace knew—or told herself that she knew. Lucy had found out about her. Lucy, to protect her, was bravely, deliberately admitting herself with the Fifth!

Though Lucy had been hostile towards her, it was not Lucy's way to see her suffer. Not all at once could



LUCY'S sleeve was rolled up, and then the bandage came into view. There was a disgruntled gasp from those who were watching. Was it possible that Lucy Campbrell was the guilty girl? Soon they would know.

Lucy lost that loyalty for her elder sister which had always been her strongest characteristic. Not all at once, even though it had received such a setback, could she lose her affection. Lucy was doing this for her!

So Grace thought, never realizing how completely Lucy had transferred her loyalty from herself to Clara Trevlyn, never realizing that the girl she was plotting to saddle with her misdeeds was being protected by her sister!

But that was too late now. In face of Lucy's admission she could hardly accuse Clara Trevlyn!

"Then Clara suddenly burst out: "Oh, it's not! It's not! She couldn't have done it!"

"Clara?" Miss Primrose cried. "Clara, I tell you she couldn't have done it." Clara persisted. "She's too decent a little girl for that!"

"But I did—I did!" Lucy cried wildly. "Clara, please—"

Miss Primrose's eyes glimmered. She fastened a new look upon Lucy.

"Lucy, you are sure?"

"Yes, of course I'm sure—I am—I am!" Lucy persisted. "Clara doesn't know what she's talking about. Clara, please don't say any more."

Clara, persistently pleaded, thinking that Clara was on the point of coming up for her share. "I can't prove it," she cried wildly. "Parson Tibbels can prove that I was out of bed when the accident occurred. Please don't let anyone else get blamed for what I've done," she cried pleadingly.

That did it. Grace, hearing that, felt something snap suddenly in her brain. She saw the headmistress spring in someone behind the curtain. From her vantage point she saw the disconcerted P. C. Robinson.

Lucy was instant upon moving her! Lucy was suffering this degradation, this humiliation for her sake! Lucy knew that she should be standing where she stood now!

Something like a sob welled up in Grace Casperhill's throat.

She couldn't—the roadster! How could she stand there letting her sister take the blame! Already she had shaken Lucy's confidence in herself. Now was she to shatter that confidence for ever?

No! Almost without realizing what she was doing, Grace leaped herself tottering forward. As P. C. Robinson opened on the door she, white faced, her eyes burning, pushed him back.

"Stop!" she cried. "You can't—you mustn't! Lucy didn't do this!"

"Grace!" Miss Primrose cried.

"Because," Grace got out. "I—I did! Look!" And then she flung up the dress of her dress, showing her lacerated arm. She drew out her handkerchief, waving it in P. C. Robinson's face. "I was the girl the policeman saw. I need no other! I intended to say nothing, but I didn't realize that Lucy would take the blame in order to save me! I—she cried wearily, feeling the room spinning round her—"Is the girl you want?"

promise you—that I'll go straight in future!"

"And—and Clara?" Lucy whispered. Grace groaned.

"If I am ever being myself to look her in the face again, I'll heartily beg her pardon," she promised.

And she did. She did that next Saturday when Clara, flushed with triumph after scoring two goals for Cliff House against Courtland, was publicly presented with her return.

It was an unstinted apology, too. Grace made it as public an affair as possible—think, although it was a little embarrassing for Clara was, nevertheless, a courageous way of tackling a rather humiliating task.

Clara was being cheered from the locker field at the time by a crowd of triumphant Fourth Formers. Rose shook, her eyes glowing, Clara looking a picture of happiness. She had good cause for that, for she had certainly played the game of her life in a match which had been as hot as it was thrilling.

And then it was that Grace Casperhill pushed her way through the assembled girls to face Clara. "Just a moment, Clara!" she said clearly, and a hush fell on the crowd. "I—I want to congratulate you, to—say and see other thing."

And then followed one of the most sporting, unreserved apologies ever made by one girl to another. Grace tried to excuse herself over nothing. She admitted her cowardly, her plotting, her utterly contemptuous behavior, which, as she said, had threatened at one time to deprive the school team of one of its best players.

She finished by thanking Clara sincerely for the way in which she had looked after Lucy.

Clara smiled.

"Well, all's well that ends well," she said cheerily. "We've all got to make mistakes, haven't we? I'd no idea at the time that Lucy was trying to shield me, or I might have rushed forward and taken the blame myself. Still, if you're willing to let bygones be bygones," she said, "I am, too. Shall we shake?"

They shook, Grace speechless with gratitude. Never had Clara Trevlyn shown herself in a finer light. She understood then why Lucy worshipped her so.

And to all ended happily, though to be sure there were repercussions. Grace, true to the new ideal which she had turned over, refused to give Corinne and Audrey away, insisting, now she had taken the step, upon maintaining the whole league level. Of course she lost her professorship. Had not Lucy and Clara and Babs and Stella Stone and Daphn Fairbrother pleaded for her, she might have been expelled.

No longer a prefect in Grace Casperhill, but she is content. The past is finished with. So far, too, from being the disliked senior she was, she promises to become one of the most popular girls in the Sixth.

But Lucy takes no credit for having performed that miracle. She gives it all to Clara—Clara, her girl and her heroine, who stood by her through thick and thin in the shadowed days which followed her arrival at Cliff House school.

THE END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

VOICES UNKNOWN

"NUMBER, please!"

"Fifteenth RR," Mabel Lynn replied at once. It was the number of Fourth School. Mabel was staying to inquire about the boys of that school who were due to arrive for the rehearsal of the play she was producing—the play which meant so much to herself and to her father.

Instantly she waited, receiver in her ear. She could not understand why the boys had not come. It was funny, it was even, but Franklin was not her twin, after all.

A crackling in the ear-piece. . . .

And then a voice!

"That Cliff House! Are you there girl? Ah! I was cut off. Can't make out what's wrong with this line. . . ."

Mabel realized at once that she had accidentally "cut in" on another conversation. She was about to replace the receiver, with a shrug of acceptance, when a girl's voice cried.

And Mabel went white.

The unknown conversation was plotting—plotting to ruin her play! Somewhere in the school was a girl who had determined that the play should not be held!

WHO WAS IT?

Mabel did not know. She was wild! You will know directly you begin to read the dramatic long complete story by Hilda Richards in next Saturday's *SCHOOLGIRLS*. You will, with that knowledge, be able to follow the plotting and counterplotting, the wild way in which the story develops to a powerful climax! Don't miss—

AND CERTAINLY enough Grace didn't care afterwards, when Lucy had explained and had told her the real truth. It was a relief to have got it all off her mind, to have atoned, at whatever late hour, for her foolishness and treachery of the past.

"I've been a fool, a mean fool," she said. "I did you wrong, Lucy—and Clara. I didn't realize until you came to the school what a mean, what a meddling thing I was. It remained for you to show me. But if you can forgive me now, I do—I really and truly

COMPLETE
NEXT SATURDAY
By
HILDA RICHARDS



Morcove To Muriel's Rescue: Exciting Chapters of This Enthralling Desert Island Serial



FOR NEW READERS

BERTY BARTON & Co., of Morcove School, together with members of Congress, are on their way home from Africa by air-line, when they have to make a forced landing on a tiny island. With them is a mysterious and named **MURIEL**, who has jumped by parachute from another plane, the wife of Bert & Co. that she was coming from the people who had kidnapped her. The leader of the airplane is a man named

DULLY KILAN, an Indian ruler, and tyrant. Later, a strange-looking ship is driven ashore at the mercy of a huge storm. A mysterious newcomer is discovered on another plane, the wife of Bert & Co. that she was coming from the people who had kidnapped her. The leader of the airplane is a man named

(New read on)

The Only Way!

CARRY on, do we?"
"Yes—carry on!"
By voicing that hearty answer to Polly's eager question, Jack knew that he was saving her from showing nervous looks.

He could reckon himself to be quite the commander of this motor-launch in which he and his sister, with Pam and Jimmy, had set off from the island's beach only a few moments ago. But no other order but a loud "Carry on!" would have suited either of the girls, to say nothing of Jimmy.

The hazard to be run had become, all in an instant, very terrible indeed. For this was the impetuous mood of the four juniors: "Chance it—that's all!" No turning back to the shore, even though the sudden appearance of Khan's palatial yacht upon the horizon had reduced their hopes of rescuing Muriel almost to zero-point.

If the worst came in the worst—well, they would know they had done their best. Better to try and fail, than not to try at all.

Jack, now that he had taken an

excited look at the distant vessel, first sighted by his sister, got down into the engine of the launch again, and Jimmy joined him there.

The two lads were going to navigate this powerful little craft, the engine of which was running smoothly at present, anyhow. But Polly could not forget that she had seen the petrol gauge showing only three inches of spirit.

"If only we don't sink out—I don't know, Pam—we may yet be able to do some good!" she said tensely to her Murielous cousin.

They were still standing up together in the boat as she gathered speed over waves golden in the light of the setting sun. There was a ground swell, and the launch rose and dipped again at times; but the girls had acquired good "sea legs."

"I'm thinking," Pam murmured, with that severity which seldom failed her in a crisis, "the boat that we're going after may easily be the one to sink out. And if it should do, that's what we can still keep going—"

"Oh, Pam, that's the way to talk!" her cousin's class exclaimed. "I don't know why you should think it, but—"

Yes—well, it has occurred to me—that had that small boat sheered away on the beach, with sand on top of the sheet—"

"For a camouflage—yes,"
"Said it terrible stuff for getting into the works of an engine."

Pam gazed again to where, just under the sinking sun, Khan's yacht was coming in fast. Ah, how excitedly the great ocean-going steam-yacht was steaming in! And Pam realized that there would be those on deck using marine glasses!

By **MARJORIE STANTON**

Already it was known on board the Muriel that Serapion Khan was at sea in the open boat—waiting to be picked up! It was known that she, entrusted by her brother with the crazy task of kidnapping the girl, had succeeded in the end!

"Pam dear—"

"Yes, Polly?"

"Can't see any of our people back there on the island, even now," Polly murmured, watching the fast-wooding shore. "They couldn't have heard us when we all called out to them to come!"

"As your brother said just now—it can't be helped, Polly."

"Oh, no! And we know why it is. They're all still searching the woods, inland, for Muriel. And Muriel, all the while, is out there!"

A fierce expression came to Polly's eyes as she stared away to the fugitive boat once more.

"But we are gaining, Pam—we are!"

"Oh, rather!"

Khan, they noted themselves, for their pursuing boat was rushing on so fast, to remain standing meant offering a certain amount of resistance to the wind.

At the start of the chase the runaway had been two miles out from the island. She was little less than that distance from her pursuer now; but, needless to say, she was heading towards the approaching Muriel.

A matter of minutes only—what else could it be!—and that small boat and the steam-yacht would meet!

Bright as an arrow the junior's motor-boat kept after the one that had Serapion Khan, her show-away accomplice, and the kidnapped girl.

Within half a rightness, twenty, Polly saw Pam brand the speed to be, and the spray broke as it mounted away from the launch's bows.

Polly knitted through the show-moving waves they seemed to be; but the boat they chased was showing just such white splashes of spray as a sign of great speed.

And now the two girls—Jack and Jimmy—as well, when they cast a glance in that direction—saw the Miltoon much nearer in, her cream-painted sides and her brasswork all a-shimmer in the sunset light.

Samko was rolling away heavily from her furnace—a sign that she was under forced draught. Coming on for all she was worth, knowing that even at this last moment Morrove was trying—trying in her hands.

Polly and Pam heard Jack and Jimmy in talk, and they looked at each other, but said nothing themselves. Remarks not intended for the girls' ears were being exchanged by the men.

"That stowaway has a revolver!"

"I know. The woman supplied him with it, I guess. He'll use it, too, if we get near enough."

"Can't help it if he does."

"Nopes! Oh, hang! Anyway, it's easy to keep out of sight in this boat. Her hull-dock helps us there."

"And got the girls in his down."

"That's it."

A gasp, filled in by the rhythmic thrub of the engine and the sibil hiss and splash of spray. Then—

"Know what I shall do, Jimmy, if we're in time? Draw his fire first, then run in and pass him!"

"Seen them?"

"Yes! Well, be O.K. I guess—and think away as ever. Then in grab Morrov, when she's in the water. Get me!"

"I'll jump in and get her."

"Right-ho!" "Sniling, sniling," Jack suddenly began to sing loudly.

"Over the bounding main!" "Hurrah! Allahay!"

Polly not slower to Pam, as she might have done when in class at Morrove School, to be able to whisper without the Morrov-mistress knowing.

"You heard, Pam? Gosh, Pam, like that, so may do it yet!"

"I think so." And Pam was smiling her customary serene smile. Like Polly, she was thrilled with what the two boys had resolved to do.

"How's the petrol, Jack?"

"Oh, enough to get as there, any time."

Polly tried to rest satisfied with that concise answer; but, when a couple of the fateful minutes had slipped by, she shifted her position in the boat so as to be able to peer over her husband's shoulders at the gauge.

She could not see that it registered a lower level, and at first she was overjoyed. The engine was in procession that the amount of spirit already used was almost negligible.

Then an appalling possibility flashed into her mind.

"Is the gauge working?" she jerked.

"Oh, shut up, Polly-wolly! Get away!"

Her eyes gave Jimmy a searching look.

"You can't go to the gauge, Polly," he murmured. "Not—not when the boat's bounding about like this. I suppose—"

But she knew that the boat's motion should not have made the slightest difference. She slid back to her former position, close to Pam, and whispered:

"We don't even know if there was as much spirit as we thought we had, at the start. That gauge isn't acting, Pam. Oh, Polly fussed on, 'aren't we still sailing?'"

They were, better than ever now. In the hard light which came from a sun whose lower rim was almost at the watery horizon, the other motor-boat could be seen in detail now, less than a mile off. Serawie and the stowaway

were in view as to their heads and shoulders; but Marriol was out of sight.

What that might mean, her would-be rescuers could easily imagine. The poor girl must likely have lying in the bottom of the boat, unable to stir because of her hands being tied behind her.

The Sun Goes Down

POLLY pounced a clutched fast into the palm of her other hand—

"She was wanting to urge 'Pastor, pastor!' but she knows

that Jack and Jimmy were getting all they could out of their engine.

"You know, Polly," Pam suddenly exclaimed, "I believe that boat we're after has only an outboard motor, and that's no good like the engine this launch is fitted with. Why are we simply tearing up to her now, it seems to me!"

When Polly stood up again, and Pam did the same. They did not want to lose sight of that other boat for an instant even, in the trough of the sea.

"She looks to me like stopping."

Polly said, fairly scornful with excitement. "That can be the only reason why we are suddenly coming up with her so swiftly. Oh, Jack, Jimmy, she's stopping, I tell you!"

"See it?" Jack delightedly roared, while Jimmy rose up to look. "By hook, then, hoop! And the sight, how far off now!"

"Three minutes that gives us," Jimmy said, after a swift mental calculation, and Jack's exclaiming voice roused again:

"O.K. I'll hear stopping,—he meant the engine motor-boat, of course! It is making all the difference in the world to us. We'll have time, we will!"

He again concentrated upon his exciting task of keeping the launch at her very fastest speed. The steady roar of the engine must have been as music to his ears for he started to sing.

Jimmy never so boisterous, was at least full of elation now. The two girls were so intent upon watching the engine motor-boat, they scarcely had a glance

for either Jack or Jimmy. But it Polly or Pam had looked at Jimmy, there would have been his happy, happy smile in return.

There he was a merry, well-to-do man for Jack to have done beside him, while the girls, seeing to the boat's motion, marked the ever-increasing distance between one craft and the other.

"It is so, she's stopped!" Polly joyfully shouted. "And now that stowaway is standing up."

"Yes, two girls got down, there," Jack followed.

"But—"

"Polly! Both of you, down, I tell you! Make 'em, Jimmy."

That had stopped round to them.

"Got to remember that the stowaway had a revolver, he said, you had enough to be heard above the noise of the engine. 'Lie tight down.'"

A last glance took girls hung at the creasy deck before taking cover.

She were now only a few hundred yards away, and, sure enough, the stowaway was standing up.

Serawie Khan, it seemed to Polly and Pam, was desperately occupied in trying to restart the engine that had failed. Evidently, she reckoned she knew more about the working of the boat than did the stowaway.

Then the two Morroves huddled down between the launch's seating. They had barely done so, acquiring a sense of being well protected on all sides,

when they could tell that Jack was slowing to half-speed.

For a few moments more the dashing spray cascaded as a leader his, owing to the quieter thrub of the motor. Then Jack throttled down still more, and the his of the out-board sea at the launch's bows seemed to be almost the only sound.

Not one of the juniors spoke.

Then the boat so lost speed that she no longer raised any spray. Slowly, silently, she was closing in! Slowly, but with a direction that none of their fearless, chivalrous comrades.

"Stop! No answer, I warn you!"

So at last the stowaway's expected shout came to them, across the water.

"Turn back, you had better!" his head voice hoarsely warned them.

"Can't be done, mister," Jack shouted back, without abandoning that cover which he and Jimmy had obtained.

"Khan's welcome to pick you up, as well as that woman; but we won't—"

If Jack said the rest, then Polly and Pam never heard him. What they were paying heed to, was the voice of Serawie Khan, suddenly screaming wildly, not at any of them in this boat, but at the stowaway.

She must have despaired of re-starting the engine, and so she had jumped up to stare at the man for not having fired already.

Her incoherent cries were still going on when a revolver shot screeled. The bullet struck the very edge of the launch's gunwale and, glancing off, bounded away into the sea.

In their huddled-down state, the juniors felt so perfectly safe, and that first shot had sounded so very feeble, it cost them no effort to make answer with a laugh. But even if they had been in fear of what a second shot might do, they would yet have sent up that laugh.

All four of them were certain that the woman had now angrily snatched the weapon from the stowaway, considering him to be a foolhardy. And she, in her present raging state, could easily be induced to waste the ammunition.

In rapid succession came four or five wildly fired shots, not one of which did the slightest harm.

"Was it?" Jack and Polly, like the cheeky pair they were, added to the merrily laughing of Pam and Jimmy.

"Was it?"

"That's one slip gone," Jimmy next merrily muttered. "Wonder if she's got another?"

He bobbed up his head, took a swift look, and then bobbed down again. Big time for her to have taken! And for a split second his cheeks had been burnt-red.

But no shot had come at him. Instead—

"I see her—flaring the revolver away!" he gasped. "And up! Jack, does hear what I say?"

"O.K. You girls—don't you move!"

"Go on, then," they both urged him.

"Now!"

His hand flew to a control-lever, and the engine changed from a mere "idling over" to its full-speed roar.

Instantly, like a living thing let off the launch, the launch bounded ahead.

Under orders though they were not to move, Betty and Polly impulsively leapt up, and they saw how this boat of theirs rushed at the other, to deal it a crushing blow.

They had time to see Serawie and the stowaway recoiling down.

There was, too, a momentary sight of Marriol at last—lying sideways in the boat.

Then—crash!—the one boat had slammed right into the other.

Jack, steering, had made it a glancing

blow, but the impact should smash their own bones. Even so, there was a sarring shriek which went through all four junctions. Polly and Pam, although crouching down and holding on tightly, were being hurled forward. They made a scrambling recovery, to see the other boat heading over.

Smaller than the Mercove launch, she had suffered a smashing blow. Her bow where she had been struck, had cracked like an eggshell, and through the river timber water was already seeping.

As the girls realized, in this very first moment after the crash, there was an lash of water which prevented that other boat from righting herself. And, man and woman alike, by tipping the way the boat was listing, rendered a final capsize all the more likely.

Now, however, he and she managed to steady up, and they instantly staggered to the uppermost side of their boat.

The action was here been prompted by an instinctive attempt to right the damaged craft; but in less than a minute leaping, dizziness of the Mercove boat, and suddenly they made up their minds to wait!

Up leapt Jack and Jimmy then, ready to launch both of them backward. Scamper stood poised for the jump, but was daunted. The men, looking distracted at the idea of remaining on a boat that was going to sink under him, jumped wildly.

He came, with the one great board, over a yard of intervening water, landed with a crash of both heavy feet upon the Mercove boat's half-deck, and Jack met him there with a blow to the chin that toppled him backward.

Splash! went the giveaway into the sea, and Polly and Pam were aware, but only vaguely, of his falling body arms about like a cork, but recovered.

They had no time for musing how he could do for himself, as what might be done for him. Jimmy had leapt across into that sinking boat, to get Marriell! And Polly and Pam—they were leaning over their boat's side, offering outstretched hands.

Jimmy took up poor Marriell as if she were no heavier than a liddy of ten. Her hands were tied behind her. He heaved her towards the two Mercove girls—had just a moment in which to do that, and then the woman pooped upon him, striking him about the head.

He reared up, giving such a furious swing to his head and shoulders that his violent momentum took the woman off her wretched feet. Over the water—backward into the sea—splashed! again. And now there were gurgling pulls and cries from her, as well as from the floundering man.

"Marriell darling!" cried Polly and Pam.

They had got her! Together they lugged her aboard their own violently rocking boat. Polly tried to give a cheer, but her breathless voice cracked. Jack, however, was roaring to Jimmy.

"Back, man! Come on now! Hurrah! Only waiting for you, Jimmy!"

They certainly were not going to stay to see after Scamper or the upstart. Those two had each made a saving grab at their battered boat. It was half capsize, but it was not going to sink. And Klean's steam-yacht was coming; within a matter of minutes the two would be picked up.

Jimmy jumped back—a beautiful jump. Pam and Polly were already making Marriell comfortable, getting her bound under. Jack was back in the

engine-room, and now the boat went astern, "all out."

At this moment the sunset light suddenly died away. It was such a perceptible falling of the light, comparable to the turning down of a red-shaded lamp in a room, both Mercove girls raised their eyes from Marriell, to glance about.

The sun had gone down, leaving the wide sea to be washed upon by that darkness, which always, in this latitude, came so swiftly.

As a feature of the suddenly gloomy scene they saw the cramped boat, in that Scamper and the stowaway were slugging. But it was the stately Malbone which claimed and kept attention.

So close did she by now, she seemed almost linear-like, her grand decks and outside cabins standing high above the water.

White-capped waves were rolling away from either side of her as she came on, still at full speed, leaving a white wake behind her.

Only a few moments more had slipped by; the sea had shaded only a tone grayer in the last-dying light, and then the jammers heard the vessel's engine-room bell, tinkling a signal.

She was stopping to pick up the man and woman.

"Take 'em ten minutes at least to do that, won't it?" Polly chuckled. "Oh, but what does it matter how quick they may be! We're all right!"

"Back to Cold Church again!" Jack sang, meaning the desert island. "And still you're with us, Marriell!"

"You—burrh!" Polly dimmed. "Saced again, Marriell, and this really must be the very last time we shall have—"

As abruptly as that the rejoicing voice broke off, and not without reason, either.

For Polly, at this moment, knew that their own motor had stopped!

The Luck Against Them?

"**W**HERE! Oh, hang it!"
"Come down, Jack!"
"Yes, certainly!" What a thing to happen!" he

"Shouted out, she has!"
"Spirit, all gone!" Jimmy grimly

inferred.
"That's about it—yes," Jack added, tragically convinced of the fact. "Not a spot of juice left!"

He stood up in the engine-room, first peering across the darkening sea to the Malbone, and then meeting each of his companions' eyes in turn.

"It's a nice do—this!" he gritted.

"And, after all we've done, what foul luck!" Polly raged. "They'll be after us!"

"It's getting dark very fast," Jimmy said. "Give them the slip!"

"When they come sweep the sea with their lights, must I sleep?" Jack retorted. "What's the use of expecting the darkness to save us?"

"I say, we're leaking!" Pam now discovered.

"What!" Jack gasped, at sight of water washing about, an inch deep, in the bottom of the boat. "Well, if I did break her bows a bit just now—"

"Of course, it couldn't be helped," Pam nodded soothingly.

"Nothing can be helped, as I'm always saying," he sighed. "Coming in handy, is it, Jimmy?"

"Pretty well speaking in," that led was bound to report, having traced the leak. "But we can bail. And look here! We know the Malbone has no boat to lower to send after us."

"But can come after us herself, though!" Polly cried.

"She can't," Jimmy argued. "If only we can get more in towards the island, soon—how! When I mean—Jack, you get her! A vessel of that size has to be careful about her soundings!"



FASTER than the churn could hold it out, the water poured into the leaking boat. But they knew that not for a second must they cease their frantic efforts—if they were ever to see the island again.

"By heck, Jimmy, you're the one to think of that!" was Jack's comforting shout. "She doesn't draw much water; but she must be careful where she gets to, off a shore like the island's. What are they doing now?"

The Maltoon had stopped within a rope's length of the swamped boat. Now some smart work with life-lines, and thrust lifebuoys was being done. At any moment, however, and the spray would be heaved up out of the sea.

Some lights suddenly shined about the vessel, dark enough it had become already for them to be needed. Stars were flaring out brilliantly in the cloudless sky.

"Khan would leave you alone, if it were not for me," Marisol emotionally exclaimed. "Oh, it has been fine of you all—wonderful—to do so much for me once again. But I do feel—"

"Hush!" Jack suddenly shouted, from where he had got to on hands and knees, in the fore part of the launch. "I've plugged that leak—no, I haven't! It's come out again. Hang!"

"Well, that's all," Pam said. "With our hands, as there's nothing else."

Then, with desperate rapidity, all three girls started to slip the lashed-to-water-bark over the side, whilst Jack and Jimmy did their best together to try to stop the leak. For a minute there was silence, except for the feeble splash, splash, splash of water, cupped by hands back into the sea.

Then sounds came faintly from the Maltoon—such a little distance away as she was in the gathered darkness—that meant her being under way again.

The girls looked at one another in the deep gloom, but said nothing. Splash, splash, splash!—a momentary desperate bark, and yet all the while more water was coming in than was being bailed out. They knew it to be so, and yet they kept at the hand-bailing. Perhaps the help, between them, would, at least, manage to check the inflow.

"No," Jack's voice suddenly barked, as if he were exhausted. "Bad as ever. Here, Jimmy! We jolly well must have something out of the engine that will help us to bail!"

Jimmy nodded purposefully.

"Right, ho!"

There followed some tinkering sounds in the engine-pit, growing louder as the two lads kept at it there, Jack displaying a violence due to force of impatience.

Suddenly Jimmy came bounding out of the engine-pit, holding a four-square metal sheet which he and his chums had somehow succeeded in wrenching off. The girls guessed that he was going to herd it, quickly and they gazed delightedly on.

But Jimmy, after another quick look at the Maltoon, shook his head.

"No. Must use this to try to get a more on," he said, and placed himself right astern, so that he was able to use the metal sheet as a means of propulsion.

Then Jack, heaving for breath, came crawling out of the engine-pit, bringing something large with him that whanged and clattered.

It was the petrol tank. He fattened it out by some strenuous stamping; bent it into a suitable shape, then handed it to Polly.

"Carry on, Polly-wally!"

"Oh, ho!"

Next second water was gushing to go over the side at half a gallon a time. Jack, without a pause for breath, turned to do something fresh. He dived back into the engine-pit, and came back with a large spawner. Wielding this, he set about prising off a bit of the boat's ceiling. Pam saw that he needed help, and left off bailing to add her strength to his.

R-s-sip! A yard long length of plank was soon torn out of the boat. Jack gazed:

"Thanks, Pam! That's all. Now, Jimmy; you one side, me the other. Row her! Come on, old son! Got her along, somehow!"

And now there was darkness, relieved only by the starlight.

Night had blotted out the island; but there was a fire burning upon the beach—beacon-like.

Towards that welcome guiding-light they must press on like this; but as to whether such reconnaissance and givings-determination would be rewarded—that a doubt there was!

Far, close astern, was the Maltoon, steaming after them!

There was the one chance for Polly and Pam, the two best, and Marisol. Just a chance that they could win to some part of the sea to which the Maltoon dare not follow!

Every now and then one or another of the desperate five gazed, anxiously at the distant spot of firelight which marked the neighbourhood island. A little nearer—but, oh, how little! There, to glance behind was to see the Maltoon, rebelliously beaming after them, so close now that lights on deck could easily be made out. And one of these—Dulip Khan himself.

"Shall we do it?" Polly gasped out at last. "Are we going to, or not?"

"Don't ask me," her brother retorted, as if he were just about all in. "Jimmy, in the Maltoon will creep up!"

"I suppose she is."

"Hang!"

Suddenly they were caught in the dazzling glare of a searchlight.

They thought the brilliant ray had been turned upon them from the yacht; but, leaving them, it wandered about—a white rod of light, pencilling the darkness.

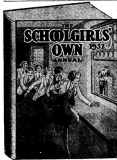
"Hallo! Jimmy exclaimed. "The Maltoon! She's put out all lights!"

"Another ship!" Jack hoarsely shouted. "See where the searchlight is coming from—right back towards the horizon!"

"Crater!" the girls heard Jimmy bawled, in great excitement. "And so the Maltoon's got the wind up!"

"British cruiser, she is!" Jack rasped. "And as we've saved! Now we really are—the whole jolly lot of us—saved at last!"

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