

FOUR MAGNIFICENT STORIES : FOUR PAGES OF ARTICLES

THE SCHOOLGIRL

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EVERY 2^D SATURDAY

Incorporating
SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN



CAUGHT—OUT OF BOUNDS

One of many dramatic incidents in this week's exciting long complete Cliff House School story

NUMBER ONE of a New and Different Cliff House School Series,
Featuring Barbara Redfern & Co.



A Schoolgirl's Scheming



TREMENDOUS the excitement over the new play which the chums of the Fourth were to produce. One and all were resolved that it should be a success—for so much was at stake. And then, suddenly, swiftly—disaster! Someone was scheming—someone was determined to smash up the play. And that someone was

Voices Unknown

"**B**OYS are late!" Mabel Lynn commented, a little anxiously.

"Oh, they'll turn up!" Barbara Redfern said confidently.

"Beauie, are those reeferes ready yet?" "Yes, rather! And aren't they prime! I'm just waiting the last one," Beanie Baxter beamed, turning a red face from the cheerful fire.

"Good!" nodded Bebe. "Clara, put the chairs round, will you? He, Jaden, you old day-dreams, don't waste those moments over that script! Marjorie, will you fill the milk-jug? Jeanine, please, do cut that cake!"

"What do?" Justina Carstairs beamed.

"Well, now, I think we're all ready," Bebe finished breathlessly.

All ready they were. Bebe's blue eyes gleamed her pleasure as she surveyed the festive scene in Study No. 4. Bright and cosy that study looked, with its array of good things on the table, the crackling fire in the hearth, and the cheerful faces of the eight girls who accepted it. It was evident that there was going to be a party.

There was! For Bebe's boy friends, Finny Richardson, Lister Gallowmole, Don Hagbery, and Douglas Gault, were coming over that afternoon from Friends School.

Not, to be sure, for the primary purpose of helping to demolish this creature

"spread." That was to be a mere prelude to the more serious purpose of the visit, which was to run through the new play that was to be launched at the end of the present term.

Major Lynn, Mabel's own famous father, who had just returned after a very successful sojourn in Hollywood, had written that play, and Major Lynn had engaged the Courtfield Theatre for its production.

So all was excitement in Study No. 4. The whole of the Cliff House cast were there—Barbara Redfern, Clara Trevilly, Marjorie Handstone, Janet Jordan, and Jeanine Carstairs comprising it. Beanie was not acting, nor, because she was producing, was Mabel Lynn, while Lucy Farrelley, the grave-faced, Quiet Mouse of the Form, was acting as general understudy.

Mabel turned restlessly from the window.

"They're ten minutes late," she said.

"Well, look at the fog," Janet Jordan protested.

"All the same, I'm worried," Mabel returned. "Bebe, do you think I ought

to phone? Something might have happened."

"Personally, I don't see any reason for worrying," Bebe declared, "but if it will ease your mind, Mabel—"

Mabel nodded. She felt she had to find out, one way or another. The play meant a great deal to Mabel. Besides, she had to think of the important guest her father was bringing—no less than John Street, the big theatrical magnate from the U.S.A., who had returned, at his invitation, to spend Christmas in England. For her father's sake, Mabel wanted to please John Street!

Without further ado she tripped towards the door.

The phone box was in the professor's room, along the Fifth Form corridor. She reached the room just as Frances Harrold, the vice-captain of the school, was coming out. As a prefect, Frances had the power to authorize the use of the phone, and she readily gave Mabel the necessary permission when she asked. Mabel stepped in and picked up the receiver.

"Number, please!" the operator said.

"Friends 808."

There was a buzz—a whirring sound. Then a voice spoke.

"Yes, you! Is that Cliff House?"

Bebe's hand (it knew what it was dealing with this time. Now, look here—)

Mabel hit her lip in vexation. She recognized at once that she had accidentally intruded into a conversation on some other line. Nothing at all to

Complete This Week

By

HILDA RICHARDS

de with her, of course. Her hand stretched out to depress the receiver rest.

And, in the act of touching it, stepped—
 "Was the conversation into which she had inadvertently cut was going on. Barring enough it was, too!"

"Well, you've a prefect in the Sixth, aren't you?" It was a man's conversational voice. "She's only a girl in the Fourth. I tell you you've got to prevent her from being at the Courtfield Theatre at any cost, and the best way to do that is to ruin the play beforehand. If there's no play, neither she nor anyone else will be there—"

The words seemed to burn themselves into Mabel's brain. Her play! Somebody plotting against her play!

"All right. Well, I'll do it!"
 A girl's voice, no less, no far away, that Mabel could not recognize it. And then, while she laughed, her own number came through, shutting off that conversation.

So disturbed was Mabel that she almost jumped when the voice of Ralph Lawrence of Friarfield's sounded, following her, in reply to her question, that James Richmond & Co. had left the school half an hour ago.

Well, that was that! The boys were on their way, all right. But—who was the man, the girl? What conspirators were plotting against the play?

Like a girl in a dream, Mabel hung the receiver on its rest. Still dazed, she went outside, only to start back with a gasp as she came out of Miss Bland's room, further along the corridor. From the shock, Mabel went reeling against the wall. A pair of fierce eyes—the eyes of Connie Jackson, the most hated prefect in Cliff House—glared into hers.

"You little idiot! Can't you look where you're going? Take fifty lines!"
 Mabel flushed.

"I'm sorry."
 "Oh, bah!" snarled Connie, and strode off. Mabel, with heightened colour, stopped on her way. What a cut Connie could be at times!

But Mabel had forgotten her before she had reached the end of the corridor. She was still thinking of that amazing conversation on the phone. She passed Miss Bland's door, and was eagerly surprised to discover that Miss Bland was not there, in spite of the fact that Connie had suggested from her study. None thoughtfully she would her way towards Study No. 4.

A battery of glances were directed at her as she came in.

"Well, Mabel, what's the news?"
 "Are they coming?"

"Well, what the diabolos are you looking so moonstruck about?"

"Was it?" Mabel pallidly smiled. "I can't make it out," she said.

"Make what out?"

And then Mabel told them. She told them word for word—and Mabel to forget even a syllable of that conversation. The girls looked at each other in amazement.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Clara Toxton.

"But who could it be?"

"That's what I'm trying to think out."

Mabel's lips compressed.

"Well, that shouldn't be hard," she said. "You're sure, Mabel, the man said she was a prefect in the Sixth?"

Well, how many prefects have we in the Sixth at the present moment? Seven. Take them one by one. Stella Stowe?

The very question was asked.

"Frances Barrett?"
 Certainly it was not Frances.

"Mary Bailey?"
 A shaking of heads. Mary might be a rough diamond, but she was too shyly honest to mix herself up in anything that involved a conspiracy.

"Then there's Lady Patricia Northampton."

They could have laughed at the thought.

"That leaves three," Mabel went on. "Doris Fairweather—obviously not her. Edwina Brookdale. Not in the same class as Stella and Doris, but not such a bad part, even if she is a bit fiery-tempered at times. The only other prefect is Connie Jackson."

Pause. They looked at each other. Certainly, if anybody in the Sixth was capable of doing a mean and underhand trick, that girl was Connie Jackson. And Mabel, pondering the name, started.

"Oh, my goodness! Mabel—"

"Well!"

"I've a wonder," Mabel breathed, "if you're right! I met Connie—in a rare old party. She had just come out of Miss Bland's room, I think, but I do remember now that when I passed Miss Bland's room, Miss Bland herself wasn't in it."

"And," Mabel said, her brows contracting, "Miss Bland's room has a telephone in it, hasn't it?"

It had! Each girl looked significantly at the other, faces lighting with excitement. Could it be true? Could it be Connie!

Slight the proof. They were all willing to admit that. Not one of them believed in jumping to rash conclusions. But Connie was branded in advance by her own bad reputation—Connie was the only possible culprit.

But Ray & Co. set for the last time in their young and adventurous lives, were on the wrong track.

The unknown conversationalist on the telephone was not Connie Jackson. It was—

Edwina Brookdale!
 Edwina was not a girl who, as a rule, had a great deal to do with. Quiet, thoughtful, but a little aloof, she had always appeared to be. They knew she had a temper—the flaming sweep of bright red hair which crowned her rather pallid face suggested that. Once or twice, not very often, they had been treated to flashes of it.

But on the whole Edwina had always shown herself to be just, impartial, not too heavy with her punishments, and preferring, for some mysterious reason, her own company to the company of her fellow prefects.

At the very moment that conversation was taking place in Study No. 4, Edwina was still on the telephone in Miss Ballflower's room—Miss Ballflower being unconsciously conversing to her in being unconsciously conversing to her in Miss Frimrose's private house. And to judge by the strained, jagged look upon her face, it was evident that conversation was proving something of an ordeal.

It was her father's voice which spoke from the other end of the wire.

"I want you to get it into your head," he was saying. "This play must not take place. I tell you I've found out that if it does take place, John Street will be present—"

Edwina breathed deeply.

"And if Street meets this girl in the Fourth Form I've been telling you about, it's all U.P.—not only with me, but with you and your cousin, Miles Marchant of Friarfield School. Now, Edwina—are you there?—listen! This John Street has been absent from England twelve years. He left England, as I told you, because he was heart-broken when he heard of the death of his daughter."

Edwina shook her head wearily. Nervously her lips twitched. She knew the story as well—an unpleasant story she felt—which had no place in her life, which her conscience dictated her to forget.



CONNIE displayed a cup badge. "I found this on the floor of my study," she said. "Does it belong to you?" Jimmy Richmond nodded. "Then that seems to prove that it was you who creamed up my papers," Connie retorted.

And until this moment Edwin had found it conveniently easy to forget. Why should she have worried about it? What did it matter to her that herself, her father, her cousin at Friarville, were living the life of decent and pretence when every comfort and luxury were theirs? And yet—how had that luxury been obtained? By breaking one man's heart and robbing a helpless baby of its birth-right—that baby, soon alarmingly, now grown to girlhood, and in the Fourth Form of the very school to which she belonged! The daughter of this John Street! her father was making such a fine show!

"And if he sees her," her father went on, "he's bound to notice her! I tell you, Edith, she's the very image of her dead mother! He just couldn't resist her. They'd talk. Talking would lead to other things. The girl was old enough to remember the circumstances of her kidnapping—that, together with the crescent-shaped birth-mark upon her shoulder would prove! Be at all sorts they must's meet. You understand?"

"Very well," Edith said lifelessly. She dropped the receiver. Haggard, heated, her expression! She took an unbidden turn up and down the room. What now? Oh, what now? It John Street discovered his daughter, he would also discover the rascality of her father—and then, what? Exposure, denunciation—the setting off of all those pleasant comforts which had made life so delicious. She would have to leave Cliff House. Miller would have to leave Friarville. Worst, hardship, poverty in place of the present life of effortless ease.

No! Edith's nails dug into the flesh of her palms. Moveless her face suddenly became. Her father's relation was the only one! The girl he had cherished and the father who mourned her as dead need never, never meet!

Edith's eyes burned with feverish indignation. She felt now that she was fighting for her life. She must strike some blow against that play. What now? The Friarville boys were coming over this afternoon, weren't they? Might be a chance to start them. A moment longer she thought, then, with sudden decision, lifted the receiver.

The operator connected her to Friarville. A few minutes later she was through to Miles Marchant.

"Miles, I want to see you—at once!" she said. "But—wait a minute—don't let anyone know you are coming! Jimmy Richmond & Co. are on their way, aren't they?"

"They left over half an hour ago," her cousin's voice told her.

"Which means," Edith gasped, "that I'll be here at any moment. O.K., Miles! When you get here go straight to my study." And she rang off, replacing the receiver with studied thoughtfulness.

you don't seem very pleased. Am I interrupting, or something?"

Babe shook her head. "Oh, no! But we were expecting someone else. We thought— Edith smiled her sympathy. "I'm sorry! The day's delayed them, of course. But, as a matter of fact, Barbara, it was about the boys I wanted to speak to you. You know I have a cousin at Friarville—Miles Marchant?"

Babe glanced at her quickly. She did know that. Everybody knew it.

Miles Marchant, prefect of the Sixth Form at Friarville, was by no means a popular character, either in his own school or at Cliff House. He was, indeed, what Jimmy Richmond described as a "bad egg."

Edith blushed. "I was just wondering if—if he were coming over," she said. "I don't want to discuss family affairs over school matters. Barbara, not—well, if he were coming I thought I'd keep you of his way. Miles and I are not friends." Her lips curled in pretended scorn. "I'm just awfully proud of him as a cousin," she added, "though he does his best to annoy me. Is he coming, Barbara?"

"Well, he certainly won't be," Babe replied.

Edith breathed relief. "Well, thank you!" she said. "Didn't mind my asking, did you? I do hope," she added, beaming, "that the play goes off all right." — And passed as there was a sudden clatter of heavy feet in the passage. "Well, thank!" she muttered hurriedly, and disappeared just as Jimmy Richmond, Donald Harvey, Douglas Curtis, and Lister Cartersville, the expected visitors from Friarville's Fourth Form, loomed up in the doorway.

"66 BETTER LATE THAN NEVER!" grinned Jimmy. "But, phoo, what a fog!" There was a mass of mist upon his well-fitting coat, and his shock of hair, never tidy, was soaking little streams of water that ran down his face.

"Like mine, we tried to take," he said. "My hat got bogged in a ditch and Harvey ran into a hedge."

"Stuff, here we are!" grinned Cartersville. "How goes it?"

They came in. The girls, their own problem momentarily forgotten, helped them off with their damp clothes. A cherry crowd indeed were Jimmy Richmond & Co. In spite of the fog, they brought into the study like a breath of fresh air.

"Nobody else came with you?" Babe questioned.

"Oh, no! Who should?"

"Well, Marjorie said, 'I thought perhaps Ralph—'"

"Oh, your cousin?" Jimmy said. "Oh, no! Ralph Lawrence is too jolly busy! You've heard, haven't you, that we've got a new temporary headmaster at Friarville? A peppery old fossil named Progressor, who runs around collecting valuable gems and digging up geologies for Beruo Agri posters, and we are— Ralph knows a bit about that sort of thing, and Fernie is keeping him busy cataloguing his collection."

"And a jolly good job he's making of it, too!" Lister Cartersville said. "But, my hat, isn't that least, Miles Marchant, jealous—?"

Babe glanced at him quickly. "Marchant?"

"Fellow in the Sixth—prefect," Cartersville explained absently. "No end of a rascal, but trying his hardest to worm himself into Fergus' good books. I

see him— But, sorry, girls! I didn't intend to bring Friarville troubles into the party—well! I say, the girls look good!" he added, his eyes sparkling.

"Look good it did! But Babe for a moment eyed him, remembering how the name of Miles Marchant had cropped up only a few moments ago. Miles Marchant—Edith's practice cousin, the boy for whom she had possessed much sympathy.

But tea was obviously the order of the moment. Laughing and chattering they all sat down. Edith, Miles Marchant, and everything else became forgotten in the enthusiastic discussion of the play and the hungry appreciation of the "spread."

Babe had everything ready. Copies of the play were issued to everyone concerned. There was a quick run through in the study as they sat around the remnant after tea. Then, at Babe's suggestion, they all rose to repair to the music-room.

Babe opened the door, stepping into the corridor. As she did so, there was a momentary stir in the further end. She caught sight for a moment of a boy's figure just disappearing round the corner.

She started.

"I say, Jimmy, suppose she came over from Friarville with you!"

Jimmy Richmond shook his head. "No; why?"

"Nothing, but—well, it's funny," Babe said, and her brow for a moment puckered in perplexity. "Perhaps I'm seeing things, but I could have sworn I saw a boy just vanishing round the corner."

"What sort of boy?"

"Well, taller than you! I didn't see his face—only his head. And I couldn't describe that to you for the life of me, except that he had dark hair."

"Oh, you must have been dreaming!" Janet Jordan laughed.

Babe shrugged. But she knew she had not been mistaken, and, reaching the end of the corridor, into which the passage leading to the Sixth Form quarters conveyed, she threw a sharp glance to right and left. But apparently there was no sign of any boy. No sign of anyone. By the time the music-room was reached she had forgotten all about the incident.

The rehearsal was soon under way. Babe threw herself into her work with whole-hearted enthusiasm, and everyone she looked her up. A most dramatic scene between Babe and Jimmy was being run through, when the door burst open.

"What's all this?" came an irate voice at the door. "My hat! I've a jolly good mind to throw you out! Can't you make less noise?"

The rehearsal came to an end with much waddering. Every eye turned towards the scolding prefect, who had just bang into the room. The prefect was Connie Jackson, a bundle of papers under her arm, and a look of bad temper upon her face.

There was a silence. Jimmy Richmond looked at Babe; and Babe, unable to speak with indignation, bit her lip. Connie glared.

"Barbara, what were you shrieking about?"

"I wasn't shrieking!" Babe spiritedly replied.

"No! Then something is wrong with my ears. Jimmy, interrupt!" "What are these boys doing here?"

Jimmy Richmond stiffened.

"We came here at Barbara's invitation."

"Oh, you did?" Connie's lips pursed. It was obvious that Connie was out to vent her bad temper on someone,



False Friend



IN the middle of a sentence Barbara Brothers broke off as a knock sounded upon the door.

"It's they!" she cried joyfully.

"Come in!"

The door opened. But it was not Jimmy Richmond & Co. who entered. It was Editha Brookdale.

"Hullo!" she said brightly. "I say,



"And Barbara, of course, had permission to irritate you?" she asked.

"Another guess. Babe felt the blood rushing into her face. It was bad enough in any circumstances to be browbeaten by Connie Jackson, but to be shown up and humiliated in front of her boy friends—

"And since when," she asked quietly, "have we had to ask permission to invite friends from Friendside School?" Connie's eyes glittered.

"Are you trying to be cheeky?" "No, but—"

"Well, take a hundred lines!" Connie snapped. "And stop this row in here!" Mabel stopped forward.

"We had permission to rehearse—"

"You had no permission to turn this place into a howling place for your boy friends' entertainment," Connie said sharply.

Jimmy Richmond checked his face; his own face reddened at that.

"Oh, I may play the game?" he murmured.

In a moment Connie had bounced upon him.

"Keep your remarks to yourself!" she retorted crushingly. "If you can't mind your own business you'd better get back to your own school! I get enough cheek from Barbara and Mabel, without having to tolerate it from outsiders!"

And conscious of having scored a victory, she turned towards the door just as it opened, and Edwina Broadside came in.

There was an instant pause. Babe & Co., wounded, angry, nothing with inward indignation—glanced at each other. Nobody answered. The three boys, instinctively having drawn together, stood still and tense, looking at their own feet—that they had made a mistake in coming to the school.

Edwina flushed her glance around the room; she looked at Babe, at Connie. Friendly she was flirting. Now, she felt, was her chance to implant in the Co. that trust they must have in her if her plans were going to succeed.

"I believe," she said to Connie. "I heard you talking as I came in."

Connie glared.

"WE'LL do our best to back you up—but we shan't come to Glee House again until you find who played that trick on me," Jimmy said rather shortly. And Babe knew then that it was up to herself and her charms to discover the mischief-maker—somehow!

"Has that anything to do with you?" "It has everything to do with me," Edwina said conversationally.

"You forget, Connie, that I am duty perfect for the day. As duty perfect," Edwina explained. "I am supposed to deal with any situation that crops up in the public rooms."

"You mean—"

"I mean," Edwina returned lightly, "that this is my business. These girls and boys are rehearsing here with full permission, and it's not your place to interfere. And it certainly isn't," Edwina added sternly, "your duty, in any shape or form, to be insulting to the guests which these girls are entertaining."

"Good old Edwina!" murmured Clara Trevillyn.

Connie spluttered.

"My hat! Are you talking to me?" "I am!" Edwina returned.

"No, please don't fly into a temper. I do not wish to argue in front of these girls and boys; but I must ask you to cancel the permission you gave to Babe, and at the same time express an apology to Richmond. If you don't do that," Edwina added cuttingly, "I shall have no alternative but to ask Miss Primrose to intervene."

Babe and Mabel could almost have cheered at that. Clara Trevillyn, in fact, did cheer. Connie pouted, glaring hate at the prefect, but realizing very clearly that Edwina, acting within her rights, had all the law on her side.

"Well?" Edwina asked.

"Oh, bother you, deal with the matter yourself!" Connie snapped.

"Thank you!" Edwina smiled.

"Barbara and Mabel, you are accused your dues," she said graciously.

"Richmond, on behalf of the school, I apologize for," Connie. Good-bye, Connie!" she called, as that girl, in a temper more flamingly pronounced than ever, bounced off. "I am afraid," Edwina sighed, "that Connie does rather forget herself at times. But

never mind. Get on with the rehearsal and— Oh, Richmond—" she added, as an afterthought.

"Yes?" the boy said eagerly.

"I wonder if, when you're finished, you'd slip along to Study No. 2 in the Sixth Form passage? I've got a rather important message I'd like you to take back to my cousin—Miss Marchant, at Friendside. Of course, I could post it," Edwina went on, "but as you're here—"

"Oh, please don't do that!" Richmond said at once. "Of course I'll take it—please do!" he added hesitatingly.

Edwina gave him a friendly nod and went out, but she pulled the door softly to behind her she smiled a crafty smile. Back she hurried to her study. A boy a little taller than herself, whose yellow complexion told of too many cigarettes, rose to meet her.

"Well?"

"O.K., Miles?" Edwina breathed.

"The coast is clear; the kids will be in the music-room for another half-hour at least. I just stepped in to see what they were doing and worked everything beautifully," she chuckled. "You needn't worry," she said. "If they do suspect anybody is interfering with their old play, it won't be you or me; it'll be Connie Jackson!"

Miles Marchant grinned.

"Good work, Edwina! This, at least, ought to start things!"

He jerked his head in a superior tool. Then, throwing away the cigarette he had been smoking, he reappeared abruptly into the corridor.

"What's ripping?" Mabel Lynn said, with a sigh of extreme satisfaction at the end of the rehearsal in the music-room. "My goodness, if we go on at this rate, we shall be ready in no time. Another rehearsal to-morrow, everybody! Say three o'clock, as it's a halter in both schools. Can you manage it, boys?"

"Bait us!" boomed Douglas Costa.

"But, my hat, we'll have to be getting back! Jimmy, don't forget you've got to see Edwin."

"I'm not. I'll cut now," Jimmy Richmond said. "Meet you all in Study No. 4!"

He sped off, feeling very happy and pleased with himself. As a very frequent visitor to Cliff House, he knew by my about. Up the Sixth Form corridor he went, peering anxiously to see-faced Sarah Harrigan, who had just emerged from her own study.

Study No. 3 was not hard to find. He knocked at the door, received an reply, and knocked again. Again no reply. He opened it, and went in.

The study was unoccupied. His eyes went to the table. There was no sign, however, of any letter.

"It's in Brown's suit," the boy thought, "though—with an anxious glance at his wrist-what?—I hope she doesn't keep me long."

He stepped into the study. Outside, the fog had lifted a little, though it was still thick. He looked about him. "Nice little room!" he admiringly appreciated, and wished, for a moment, that he had a girl to touch up his own study at Friarfield. Clark did make a piece look snug and cozy.

Edwin, a bright smile on her face, went to a few minutes later.

"Oh, Richmond! I hope I haven't kept you waiting. Here's the letter!" And smilingly Edwinia fished it from her pocket. "You'll find him here, it is as soon as you get back, won't you?"

"Yes, yes, of course!"

"Thank you!" Edwinia looked relieved. "Then I won't detain you," she said. "But, thanks awfully for doing this for me. You see, she went on instantly. "I—I'm not exactly friends with Miles at the moment. I'd rather write than say what I want to say to his face."

Jimmy nodded sympathetically. He was glad that Edwinia did not like Miles Marchant. She was such a jolly decent sort herself that it would have hurt him, somehow, to feel that she was friendly with such a cad, even though that cad was her own cousin.

He took the letter, making his way back to the Fourth Form corridor and into Study No. 4, where Don Hayburn, Lester Cattermole, and Douglas Condie had already dozed hats and coats and readless, and were waiting for him, with Babs & Co.

Jimmy, with a grin, picked up his coat and struggled into it, finging his cuff-brush round his neck. Mabel jumped for his cap. Then she stirred an explanation.

"Well! I say, Jimmy, what have you done with your badge?"

Richmond frowned. He looked at the cap. The badge which usually adorned its front was certainly there no longer.

"Well, that's funny!" he exclaimed. "I could have sworn it was there when I put it down!"

"Can't you borrow one?" Babs asked.

"Fraid not. It's a captain's badge, you see."

Babs pulled a little face. She had, for the moment, forgotten that. For, as Jimmy Richmond was captain of the Fourth Form at Friarfield, his cap badge was rather different from those worn by the rank and file, a stripe was just above the point of the shield being added to denote his importance.

"Oh, well, it must be somewhere!" she cried. "Come on, let's have a hunt round. Mabel, keep your mouth! Janet—Great Scott, who's this?"

For, without warning, a furious thump came at the door. Violently the door crashed back. Everybody jumped round, and everybody's eyes widened as they saw Connie Jackson, her face almost

crimson with rage, holding in her shaking hand a sheet of paper, from which a transparent, sticky fluid oozed and dripped.

One glare she bestowed upon them all, and then her eyes darted to Jimmy Richmond. She snatched the papers in his face.

"You spiteful wretch!" she cried. Jimmy started back.

"Look at these papers!" Connie rained. "Look at them! Rained! Rained! Somebody has poured glue over them—glue!" Her eyes were to a quivering sob. "And that wretched," she added viciously, thrusting the papers into Jimmy Richmond's face, "is you!"



When Babs & Co. Were Wrong!

TO the roots of his hair Jimmy Richmond dashed, his eyes blazing with sudden fire. His three friends edged towards him, as if to form a protecting shield between him and his accuser. Babs desperately threw herself into the breach.

"Oh, goodness! Connie, wait a minute!" she cried. "You can't just make a silly statement like that! What proof have you?"

"Proof enough!" Connie ground out, and suddenly opened the palm of her hand. "I found this," she added gaily, "on the floor of my study, and three threads the boy at Friarfield captain's badge. Does that belong to you, or doesn't it?"

A stupefied silence fell. Richmond stared at the ornament like a boy in a daze.

"Does it?" Connie rapped out.

"Well, yes."

"Thank you! Then you admit meddling up these papers?"

Jimmy flinched badly.

"I certainly admit nothing of the kind," he retorted. "I haven't been anywhere near your study."

"Not?" Connie sneered. "Then how was it Sarah Harrigan saw you skulking in the Sixth Form passage a few minutes ago? You had no intention, of course, of trying to pay me back for saying something you didn't like in the music-room? Oh, no! Well—her lips shut with a triple grimace—

you can jolly well explain all that away to Miss Princess. You're coming with me to her before you leave this school!"

Jimmy's eyes flashed. Cattermole, Hayburn, and Condie clonched their hands. Babs, biting her lip, gave one despairing glance at the boys, and, in an agony of apprehension, pushed her way towards Jimmy.

She was about to speak when there was a footstep in the passage.

"Dear me—dear me!" put in a voice at the doorway, and the mild eyes of Miss Princess glistened into the room. "What is this? You boys—and Connie!" she cried, a look of horror springing into her eyes. "There are my Third Form reports! My goodness, what has happened to them?"

"Ask him!" Connie cried gaily.

"You mean—Richmond? What has that boy to do with it?"

"Everything!" Connie cried. "He did this! No, don't interrupt, Richmond. An hour ago, I could meet you peacefully. I had occasion to ask these girls to make tea in the music-room. Although the matter was no business of his, Richmond interrupted. He checked me. A few minutes ago,"

Connie continued, "Sarah Harrigan saw him in the Sixth Form corridor. Then, when I went into my study, I found these reports with glue poured all over them, and his cap badge on the floor!"

"I deny it! I deny everything!" Jimmy burst out hotly. "And I can prove it! My cap, with its badge, was in this study at the time. It has been here ever since I entered the school. I'll even say something in the music-room, but I went to the Sixth Form passage to get a letter from Edwinia Brookdale."

"It's all right!" Miss Princess said. She looked rather agitated. "I am sorry—very sorry," she added, "that this disturbance has arisen! I think, Connie, you had better prosecute inquiries elsewhere. Meantime, you best, perhaps it would be as well if you got back to your own school!"

The boys glanced at each other. Rather green and angry those glances were. They said, as plainly as words, that they'd be jolly glad to get back to their own school, and would think twice about coming to Cliff House again. Ignoring an anxious cry from Mabel, they walked out of the study. Jimmy had snatched the pouch—was descending the steps—when Babs caught him up.

"Jimmy, the rascals! Don't forget to—er—er—"

Richmond roughly shook his head.

"I'll let you know," he said gruffly.

"Not, my hat!" Babs burst out.

"Jimmy! Jimmy didn't mean—"

"Don't Primmy!" the boy stammered, "should jolly well have said so." He stopped. "No, Babs, I'm sorry. We don't blame you, of course, but we can't very well come to this school again until this business is cleared up. We're been on the play, of course. We'll miss it so very much, but you find out who played that trick on us. Good-night!"

And went off, while Babs, biting her lip, retreated to the atmosphere of general gloom which reigned in Study No. 4. Clark, vaguely looked at the water-pipe-hunter.

"Well, here we are—completely in the soup!" she cried bitterly, "and who the diabolical one blame old Jimmy? He not wanting to come back! A fine welcome for the stranger within the gates he's had!"

Mabel gasped.

"And just," she burst out, "when we'd made such a Bying start! It's unfair! It just seems as if Connie were out to snipe the boys!"

Babs started.

"And that," she cried with sudden conviction, "is just about what has happened! Work it out! We know that some perfect is working against the play. Twice in-night Connie's showed her hand. She'd have ruined the rehearsal in the music-room if it hadn't been for Jimmy!"

"Good old Eddie!" cheered Edwinia.

"Feeling that she's worked this—"

The six regarded each other in startled silence.

"Then what are we going to do?"

"You're going," a voice out in from the doorway, "so withdraw that statement, Barbara Redfers. And at once!" And as their all froze in dismay, Miss Princess stepped into the room. She was springing with indignation. "I could not help but remark that, Barbara—is it lucky, perhaps, that I left my glasses behind and returned for them?"

Babs gasped.

"Conno," Miss Princess went on,

has been with me all the evening, nothing out again the reports which were destroyed. She left me," the headmistress added steadily, "at the same time that you left the messroom, with the report papers in her possession. That, I think, completely disposes of your attempts, Barbara, to make Connie a scapegoat for the crime the Friarstable boys must obviously committed."

Crime-convicted, Babs & Co. stood, tormented with dismay. Connie, in spite of all their theories, was not guilty. Could not possibly have been. Whose hand, then, had been responsible?

"Babs went radder than ever."

"I'm very sorry," she muttered. "We were jumped to conclusions."

"I hope," the headmistress said stiffly, "you are sincere in that. But, just to press the point home, Barbara, you will write me one hundred lines! And since," she added, to Miss Lyon's abject dismay, "this unhappy business will remain to be cleared up, I must ask you not to invite the Friarstable boys here again without my permission!"

And majestically she rustled out, leaving the chams looking, as they were feeling, crushed and humiliated.

For a long time there was silence. It was broken by Joanna's foolish sigh.

"Looks," she observed, "as if we're on the wrong track. Aparting."

"But we're not leaving!" Babs cried spiritedly. "If it wasn't Connie, it was someone else. Someone came into this study while we were conversing, took his cap-hat, and afterwards rummaged up Connie's papers. Well, it's just possible that that someone has left a clue behind—"

"They missed."

"So what?" Janet Jordan asked.

"We must search," Babs replied seriously. "Every inch of this room. And now," she added, "come on!"

Nobody felt very hopeful—not even Babs herself—still it was not Babs' way to sit down and admit herself beaten. While there was a doubt, it had to be cleared up. Willingly enough they consented. Energetically enough they searched. But it was fruitless. Not a clue, not a sign!

"Dread!"

"Babs—I am sorry, Sir-Babs!"

The excited speak came from Essie Barber. Babs busy round at once. Essie, crouching in the chair in which Jimmy Richardson's coat and cap had rested, turned with a flaming face. Between one's policy thumb and forefinger, she held something up.

"I found this," she said. "It's a cuff-link!"

Babs took it. She gave it just a cursory glance. Then quickly she turned it over, taking it under the light. The cuff-link obviously belonged to a boy. It was a gold-plated one, not very expensive, square in shape, and on one of the faces was engraved two small initials: "M. M."

"M. M.!" In a flash understanding came to Babs. She remembered then something she had forgotten said now. The figure of the boy she had seen disappearing round the angle of the Fourth Form corridor.

"Miss Marchant!" she cried. "It was an excited glance her class followed round."

"It's he!" Babs cried. "He was here! Don't you remember—the boy I told you in the corridor?"

"Oh, my dear! But who—?"

"Marchant must have come over after Jimmy Richardson," Babs decided.

"Obviously, he slipped into the school without showing himself. I don't pretend to know what my game he was playing. But, anyway, this settles it. If Miles Marchant did this, then Miles Marchant's got to toe the line and own up. And he's going to own up." Babs said grinning, "before this very night is out! I'm going to see him!"

"And I," Miss volunteered at once, "will come with you, Babs! We'll go now! We—" and then paused at a knock came on the door. "Oh heavens! Who's this?" she breathed. "Someone is!"

The door opened. The chams gazed giddily at each other, wondering if their conversation had been heard. But the face of Edwina Breakside, when she entered the room, gave no hint of that. She was looking rather preoccupied.

"Oh, Barbara, I've just heard," she exclaimed, "about Jimmy Richardson and the others. I do wish," she went on, with false fervor, "that you had sent for me. And I do so hope," she added, with a sincerity that won all their hearts, "that it will make no difference to the play."

Babs looked doubtful.

"Well, it certainly won't if we can help it!" she said.

"Fanny!" Edwina went on after a pause. "It really does seem," she went on, "as if someone is at work to make trouble between Cliff House and Friarstable, and— Oh dear, I suppose I ought not to tell you this; but—well, you didn't know, did you, that Connie had a visitor this afternoon?"

"A visitor!" Babs exclaimed.

"A boy," Edwina lied. "A boy from Friarstable. I—I heard them talking in Connie's study. Later, through the slit, I saw them in the quad. I didn't recognize the boy, of course. It did occur to me," Edwina finished artfully, "that if Connie herself didn't do it, she might have got someone else to do it for her."

Starled were the looks on everyone's faces then.

"Thank you, Edwina, for telling us!" Babs said gratefully.

"You won't say anything, of course?" Edwina asked anxiously.

"As if we would!"

And Edwina quitted the study, fully conscious of the soothing excitement she felt behind. She counted herself lucky to have arrived at the door of Study No. 4 in time to hear the conversation which had preceded her entry.

But she was still a little shaken. What a fool Miles was to have left that cuff-link case behind! Had it not been for her clever wife in volunteering suspicion on Connie, she might have been connected with Miles' presence in the school herself! All the more, though she had worried out of it, Miles was still implicated. She had to warn him—that Babs & Co. had found his cuff-link; were coming over to see him!

Ferociously she rushed off to the prefects' room to phone. The room was crowded. No good trying to phone from one of the masters' studies. There, too, would all be occupied by this time.

Edwina turned back. The public phone-box in the lane outside, she knew, was out of order. Nothing for it then, but to go to Friarstable.

Hurriedly she dashed off to the cycle-sheds, caught up her own bike, and then dropped it back into its stand, as she had a second thought. No! She didn't trust Babs & Co. They were too jolly cats! If they spotted the absence of her machine, they might put two and two together yet!

She took Connie's instead.

Two minutes later Babs and Mabs entered the cycle-sheds. They were in the act of wheezing out their machines when Babs stopped.

"I see, look, Mabs, Connie's out. Her bike's not on its rest!"

"You think—?" Mabs breathed.

"You know what Edwina said. Still



BABS suddenly noticed a white glove which lay on the table. Instantly she realized what a vital piece of evidence it was and made a dive for it. But Miles with a cry of rage, leapt to prevent her.

went off with Miles Marchant. Harry, Mabel! If only we catch them together we've got them!"

Eagerly they pedaled off into the thinning fog. Inspired by that thought, they rode swiftly. In a quarter of an hour they had reached the gates of Friarville School. There, breathlessly dismounting, they propped their cycles against the wall of the porter's lodge, dashed up the drive.

A glass case into Babe's eyes as she saw another cycle parked against the old oak on the lawn.

"Connie's!" she whispered.

Into the school they raced. Everything was very quiet. Not a soul was in sight, for the boys, like the girls at Cliff House School at this hour, were busy with evening prep.

Babe knew her way about. Unwittingly she led the way. At the door of Miles Marchant's study, right at the end of the South Park corridor, she paused.

Quickly, significantly she looked at her chain. First beyond the panels of that door came a girl's voice—no low, trembling, so agitated, that it was unrecognizable.

"Miles, I tell you, they know—"
"Oh, put a sock in it!" Miles cried contemptuously. "I'll settle them, I tell you. Now, look here—"

And his voice stopped to a husky whisper.

Babe set her lips.
Gently her hand fastened on the handle of the door.

"Now it's so nobody breathed.
And, without warning, without even knocking, Babe flung the door inward.

Crash!



The White Glove

TWO startled cries echoed as one in the sudden silence of the room.
But alas for Babe! She had reckoned without the cunning of Miles Marchant.

Very artfully a chair had been placed just behind the door. The door, flying inward, struck against it and came to a crashing stop. In that brief space of time, the plotters the other side of the room had acted.

There came the sound of a swift scurrying. Babe, turning her way in, was just in time to see another door on the opposite side of the room in the act of closing. Between her and that door, Miles Marchant, his yellow face livid, stood, his arms outstretched.

He glared at the Cliff House girls.
"What do you two want?"

But Babe did not answer. She stood, Mabel at her side, swiftly looking round the room.

It was a large room, and, being at the end of the passage, had two doors, one of which led into the passage which ran at right angles to the main corridor. It was through that door the girl had escaped.

Babe gazed dazed in the table, in the middle of which rested a girl's white suede glove. Her heart leapt as she realized its significance—the unknown caller had left that behind! Perhaps some instinct warned the boy of her intention then. His eyes fell upon the glove at the same moment. Desperately he dived towards it.

But too late! Babe's hand descended upon it just as Marchant's clashing fingers grabbed. She wrenched it away, at the same time, however, returning

her hand upon the cuff-link belonging to Miles Marchant, which she had carried in her hand. The perfect gaze a howl. Chained to the glove, he got managed to grab the link and sweep it into the fire. He gasped.

"You little thief! Give us that glove!"

But Babe deliberately stuffed the glove into her own pocket. If she had lost one shoe she had worn another. Swiftly, meaningly, she glanced at Mabel Marchant, breathing fire and fury gathered himself for a leap. In a moment Babe had decided her course of action.

"Noo!" she cried tensely.
"Look here!" called Marchant.
"Here—stop!"

But neither Babe nor Mabel were stopping. As one they leapt for the door and bounded through it. Neck and neck they raced down the corridor.

"Come back!" yelled Miles.
But only the patter-patter of footstep reached him. Triumphant, Babe and Mabel had escaped with their skin.

"O.K., Mabel!"

"Yes, rather. And you!"
Babe chuckled at, bending her head, she pressed harder on the pedals.

"Well, we've achieved something," she decided. "We know, beyond all shadow of doubt, that Marchant is in this conspiracy. We're pretty certain that Connie's in it, too—though, unfortunately, we can't prove that yet!"

Mind that got-hold, Mabel! But when we get back—"

"Yes!" Mabel breathed.
Babe did not reply at once. But in the darkness her face set grimly. She had no doubt that the identity of the girl who had escaped from Miles Marchant's study was Connie Jackson. But, having fallen into one trap, she did not mean to fall into another.

"We can't do anything," she said now, "unless we prove she's hand in glove with Miles."

"And how do we do that?" Mabel demanded.

"Simply," Babe told her, "by finding out if she has the fellow to this glove."

"Then?"

"That depends," Babe replied. "But I've got an idea, now the lesson we've got on her course, that she'll be in a blue funk. If she only agrees to drop it all and apologize to Jimmy Richardson, all well and good. If not—"

And Babe's chin squared. "Then we'll just have to rope Primmy into it. That's all."

They pedaled on, reaching Cliff House a quarter of an hour before call-over.

Edwina Brookdale came sauntering down the steps which led to prefects' quarters as they came in. She looked rather nervous, for Edwina had just been in communication with her room at Friarville and had learned, too late, of the loss of her glove.

She forced a smile, however, as she saw Babe and Mabel.

"Oh, hello! Have you two been out?" she asked lightly. "I'm dying for a breath of fresh air myself. Has the fog cleared?"

"Just a mist now," Babe replied, and passed. "Edwina," she added, "do you know anything about Connie Jackson's movements to-night? Has she been out?"

"Well, I don't know when she's been, of course, but she came in about five minutes ago. Did you want her?"

Babe shook her head. She made some vague reply, but her heart was thumping excitedly when she and Mabel reached Study No. 4, where Clara,

Janina and Janet Jordan were waiting to hear their news over an after-prep cup of Primmy's cocoa.

In a few moments all that news was told.

"So now you see," Babe cried, "we've hit it! Connie's been out; we know why—to see Miles Marchant. All we've got to do now is to prove that she's the owner of the glove."

"The chains broken with excitement. "The weak girl after call-over," Mabel counselled. "I say, Clara, pass me that cup of cocoa, there's a pet!" she spread it thoughtfully. "Now! Well a little tick, I've got the idea. Mabel!"

"Yes?"

"The Charmers's going to supper with Primmy after call-over," Babe went on. "That means her room will be empty. Suggesting you phess up one of the maids—ask Primmy, of course—taking the maid to tell Connie Jackson to go over to Primmy's private house. Connie doesn't display that. While she's away, Clara and I can do a spot of marvellous detective work in her study!"

The suggestion was a good one. Eyes lighted up. Amazed, they fell to discussing the details—over guessing, even as they perfected their plans, that a girl, apparently in the act of knocking, stood listening outside the door.

THAT GIRL was Edwina Brookdale.

And Edwina, armed with that information, raced back to her own study.

Her breath was coming faster than usual as she reached it. Carefully she closed the door. From the pocket of her coat which hung behind it, she withdrew a long, suede glove. Hastily rolling it into a ball in her hand, she took it along to Connie Jackson's study.

She knew that Connie was with Miss Primrose at the moment, but just in case she had returned unexpectedly, Edwina knocked. There was no reply.

Edwina opened the room.
A breath of relief escaped her lips as she saw that it was empty. Then her lips lightened a little as she saw Connie's hat and coat carelessly tossed over the back of a chair which stood at the head of her bed.

One swift, guilty glance she flung to the door, and then, slipping the suede glove into Connie's pocket, she dived across the rug into a chair, as that, it protruded slightly. She snatched away, as for an instant she surveyed her handiwork.

Then, a grim light in her eyes, she went out.



Not Guilty

"SUSPICIOUS!" Here the censor! Barbara Hoffman breathed.

She and Clara Trevillyn, at the end of the South Park passage, were concealed in the dark alcove near the window.

This alcove gave an uninterrupted view of the whole passage.

For several minutes they had been concealed there—quite safely, as it happened, for the alcove was in a dead end, and girls rarely came that way. Mabel had been dispatched to Miss Chatterton's room, and Mabel had already completed her part of the plan.

The door of Study No. 2 opened with quite a crash. Connie, had tempered and sulky, came out.

She had a parcel under her arm—an oblong, brown-paper parcel, which

looked as if it contained footstep paper.

"Walk till she's gone!" Babe shrieked.

Tomely they waited—not long. Connie, obviously, was in a suspicious mood. She started off along the empty corridor. Her footsteps, thudding into the carpet, flew down the stairs, and disappeared.

"O.K.!" Clara muttered. "Got the glove, Babe?"

Breathlessly Babe nodded. Together the two dashed along the corridor. With her hand beating fast, Babe pushed open the door of Connie Jackson's study, beckoning Clara to enter.

"Hurry! Get to work!" she hissed. Hardly need for that injunction, however. Clara was already at work. Swiftly she threw back the curtain, quickly stepped over to the dressing-table, and opened the first drawer. Babe, meantime, was looking at the coat carelessly flung across the chair which stood by the side of Connie's bed. And her eyes goggled.

"Clara!" she cried in a thrilled voice. "Hi!" Clara turned. Babe, her face flamingly scarlet, went forward. With fingers that almost trembled, she drew out one of Connie's pockets a white suede glove, comparing it with the one in her hand.

"The same!" Clara whispered. "We've got 'em!"

"Clara on, let's see it!" Gladly they made towards the door. But within a yard of it Babe stopped. Footsteps were heard outside, and the footsteps stopped right outside the door. Stella Stone and Lady Patricia Northcross started to talk.

"Hush!" murmured Babe anxiously. Together the two damsels stood looking at each other. Obviously they could not go out just then. But Stella and Pat seemed to be in no hurry.

Babe began to feel apprehensive. "Oh, heavens, will they never go?" she craved.

Still Stella talked on, Pat interjecting questions here and there. Then their eyes once more footstep—a pair of them this time. Both girls jumped as Stella, turning, said:

"Good-evening, Miss Princesse!"

"Princesse!" gasped Clara.

"Good—evening. Miss Princesse's voice came back. "Stella, I would like to see you later. Now, Connie, here we are—"

The blood froze in Babe's veins. "Hi!" hissed Clara.

In sudden panic they both turned. But what for? Clara, Clara, was always inclined to be clumsy when in a hurry. Turning too sharply, she caught against the edge of the carpet. Back against the table Clara reeled with a crash. At the same moment the door flew open, and Connie Jackson and Miss Princesse stood revealed.

"Barbara!" gasped Connie.

Babe and Clara froze. Miss Princesse stared.

"Barbara! Clara! What are you doing here?"

Babe forced a sickly smile. "Well, you see—" she stammered.

"Ahem! It—It was like this—" Clara, stammeringly interposed.

"We—we came to see—see Connie," Babe stammered.

"You mean," Connie corrected angrily, "that you decamped me from this study in order to come here and carry out some idiotic paper! Not, certainly for you," she added. "I met Miss Princesse half-way across the quad. What mischief have you been up to?"

Babe hit her lip. "It had been no

plan of hers to drag Miss Princesse into this again. But Connie was apparently determined to have an explanation.

"You insist," she asked, "that we talk?"

"Certainly I insist!"

"Very well!" And Babe, with a deep breath, brought the pair of gloves from behind her back, holding them in her hands. "I believe," she added, light-

ly in his study. When we went in, you flew out, leaving a glove on the table. I got that glove.

Connie's eyes narrowed.

"Go on!"

"And—and just to make sure, we came to look for the other in this study. There it is," Babe said quietly.

There was a pause. Miss Princesse frowned.



WITH furtive stealth Barbara slipped the glove into the pocket of Connie's coat. No one must ever know how she had planted this evidence on the other prefect!

ing still to give Connie a chance. "Get those are yours."

Connie stared at them. She did not start, she did not even look surprised. There was no recognition in her glance.

"And why should you believe they are mine?"

"Because," Babe said steadily, "you left one of them at Friarvale when you went over to see Miles Marchant before school."

"What?"

Miss Princesse frowned.

"Friarvale? Surely Barbara is mistaken, Connie! Did you—?"

"I did not!" Connie grated. "I haven't seen Miles for months. In any case, why should I go to see him? I hardly know him. But, wait a minute," she added, her eyes gleaming. "I think I get the hang of this! Barbara is trying to trump up some accusation against me, as she did over the damaged sports. Well!" she added, with a glare at the culprits. "Let's have it!"

Babe hit her lip. But, sure of her ground, she stuck to her guns.

"You were at Friarvale with Miles Marchant!" she cried. "Babe and I heard you. You were plotting with him to ruin our play!"

"What?"

"And you left your glove in his study," Babe went on. "I'm sorry, I didn't intend to say anything before Miss Princesse, but you've asked for it, Connie. Both Clara and I heard you

"Thank you!" Connie took up the gloves. "These do not belong to me," she said. "I have never seen them in my life. Either this is a deliberate plot to make mischief on your part, Barbara, or someone else has put that glove in this study. At what time were you at Friarvale?"

"At seven o'clock," Barbara replied boldly.

"Thank you!" Miss Princesse, Connie said. "If you have any doubts, would you mind ringing up the stationer's at Charsfield? I think you will find I was with them at that time—you, and for twenty minutes afterwards."

Clara and Babe stared dumfoundedly.

What was that?

Miss Princesse's eyes glowered a little. "I think it is only fair to tell you, Barbara, that Connie could not possibly have gone to Friarvale School during the time she was absent."

"She went, as it happens, on an errand for me to the school stationer's at Charsfield, to get a new batch of report forms in place of the ones which were defaced."

"Oh, heavens!" Clara stammered.

"It is becoming very obvious to me," Miss Princesse went on, her voice becoming angrier, "that you and your friends are deliberately going out of your way to persecute Connie. This is the second time you have made an utterly unfounded accusation against her, and I will not have it. If your

play is going to prove such a nuisance as it has already proved, I shall conceal it altogether?"

Clara's face turned white.

"As it is," Miss Farrant finished, "you will apologise to Connie, and the imposition I give you is doubled."

Babe gulped. She had never felt so small in her life. But there was no alternative.

Confused, crimson, the apology was hurried out, while Connie listened with a victorious smile upon her face. Then consolation, she said, befitting, Babe and Clara left the room.

The unknown plotter was not Connie. It was somebody else—somebody who, having learned their plans, had deliberately diverted suspicion from herself by fastening her crimes upon Connie.

BETWEEN BABS & Co. might be, but their determination that the play should go on was as unshakable as ever. Wherever the unknown traitress was, she was not going to have the laugh of them! Though she had made it practically impossible for the boys of Friarsdale to come to Cliff House School, there was no reason, Babe said, why Cliff House should not go to Friarsdale and rehearse there!

And that project, before rehearsal, was carried out. A phone call to Jimmy Richmond was all that was necessary to arrange it. Though Jimmy was still somewhat ruffled by, like his driver, was bent on the play and he agreed readily enough, that the rehearsal should take place at his own school.

And so, that afternoon, the party, disappointed by absence, Babe, hurried in the quad. Lucy Farraday, as general undertaker, was going with them, and so was Benjie Baxter, Bessie having nothing else to do. They were about to set off when Edwina Brookdale, looking very charming in a new velvet coat, adorned with blue edged buttons which at once caught Babe's eye, appeared on the scene.

"Oh, Babe!" she called with her most winning smile.

"Yes, Edwina?"

"I wonder," Edwina said, "if I might come along to Friarsdale with you. You know I'm frightfully interested in the play and I would so love to see a rehearsal now you've got it going so well—"

Gladly that assent was given. The Co. girls gazing her real intentions, were enthusiastically pleased to have her. And so, with Edwina in their midst, they set out, arriving at Friarsdale a little after three o'clock, to be welcomed by Jimmy Richmond and his friends, who had got permission to rehearse in the music adjoining the school library.

But there, unseen, Edwina slipped away. In the general excitement of the meeting her absence was not remarked. While they talked, however, she was talking, too, to Miss Marchant, her cousin. And Miss was nodding brightly.

"Oh, your share and leave the rest to me," he said.

She left him at that, slipping back to the annex to find the stage set and the rehearsal ready to commence.

"Oh, girls, I do hope you haven't missed me," she breathed. "I dropped my handkerchief in the quad and had to run back for it. I say, I like your grouping, Babe." She asked her eyes shining her admiration. "Now where do I park myself? Can I sit here, next to Bessie."

"Oh, no—rather, please do, Edwina," Bessie stammered delightedly.

She moved up, making room for the perfect Lucy Farraday, in that unobtrusive way of hers, dropped into the seat beside her. Babe, script in hand, gave the signal.

"Right! Let's go!"

Edwina watched with admiring eyes. Bessie watched, too, rather covertly, rather bored if the truth be told, for it was Bessie's private conviction that she should have been appearing in the leading role. Babe, at the best of times, was not a good listener.

Once or twice she shifted restlessly. Once or twice she half rose, thinking of the match-up outside. Friarsdale had a really splendid track. How much better, Bessie thought wildly, to be there! But, at least, Bessie had no money.

"Er, Lucy?" she murmured at last.

"Yes, Bessie?" Lucy Farraday said.

"I say, I was wondering, could you lend me a bob or two? You know I'll let you have it back as soon as ever my postal order arrives. I'm half starved, you know." Bessie went on pathetically. "If I don't—don't have something to eat, I can't—can't I shall faint. There's nothing makes me hungrier than sitting watching those silly rehearsal."

Lucy, however, shook her head.

"I'm sorry, Bessie. I've only two-pence."

"Oh, er—er—!" And Bessie relapsed into gloowering silence, making faces at Babe as she turned with a forbidding frown. She looked hastily towards Edwina.

And then to Bessie's great surprise, Edwina's hand slipped into her own. Something dropped into her palm. Bessie blinked, and then sat up with a jerk. For the something was a half-a-crown.

"Oh, I say—yes, is this for me, Edwina?"

"Yes, but don't! Don't interrupt the rehearsal!" Edwina said.

Bessie beamed. The good opinion she already had of Edwina went up a hundred per cent at once. There and then she would have burst into voluble thanks, but Edwina, putting a finger to her lips, wagged her head warningly conveying silence.

Bessie gulped. Steadily the row to her feet.

Nobody noticed, in the interest of the rehearsal, the fat figure which stole softly towards the door. Nobody noticed the door closing behind it. But Bessie, as soon as she felt the edges of the corridor beneath her feet, broke into a jubilant chuckle, and at a really surprising speed, considering her bulk, broke into a run, heading for the school innkeeper.

The stage was treated by a solitary boy when she came in, a rather tall boy whom Bessie guessed to be a waiter. She had seen him before, but in that vague, forgetful way of hers she had forgotten his name. He grinned cordially.

"Hallo, Bessie, have they let you out?"

"Yes, rather!" Bessie said. "I say, don't those cream puffs look fine?"

"Like 'em?" Miss Marchant asked, for it was he. "I've found of those, too, Bessie. Er, Fred," he added to the tall, dark keeper. "Give Miss Baxter half a dozen of those cream puffs. I'll have a couple, too."

Bessie gulped. She was in danger!

"Oh, I say—yes, that's frightfully nice—of you."

"Not at all," Miss Marchant said heartily. "Have some ginger beer?"

"Thank—thank!" stammered Bessie. Really, this boy was jolly nice, she

thought. She wished to goodness she could remember his name. Perhaps, she had been less short-sighted, she might have wondered at the peculiar gleam in his eyes. Miss chatted contentedly.

"You know, it's jolly nice to meet an intelligent girl like you, Bessie. They tell me that at Cliff House you've got an end of a collection of foreign stamps."

Bessie blinked at him enthusiastically. Her foreign stamps, such as they were, comprised anything but a prize collection, though Bessie maintained that it was one of the finest in the school. Her cheeks glowed.

"Yes, rather, you know. A lovely lot," she agreed.

"I was wondering," Miss went on, "if you'd like to see mine, you know? I've a good collection, too, but it's impossible to get any of the fellows at this school interested. You read no football and swimming, and all that sort of thing, you know."

"Oh, I'd love to," said Bessie.

"Right! Well, when you've finished your ginger beer—"

Bessie thanked it, inwardly exulting that in spite of a very friendly snarl, she still had Edwina Brookdale's half-crown intact. With Miss at her side she rolled out of the tuckshop, across the front court and into the school itself. Before a door the perfect paused.

"Er, Bessie, will you wait in here?" he asked. "I don't want you to lag up all the stairs, I'll bring the collection down to you."

Bessie nodded agreeably. Miss opened the door for her. She stepped in, blinking a little in surprise as she found herself in a most luxuriously furnished room, over the floor of which was spread a thick pile carpet.

A pleasant fire burnt in the grate, and before it, next to a glass case which contained several pieces of beautiful glassware, reposed an inviting-looking armchair. Bessie blinked at the armchair. It looked snug, inviting. Jolly nice!

She nibbled towards it, never guessing the trick which Miss had played upon her, that of showing her into Dr. Fitzgerald's own private room.

With a grunt she dropped her plump body into its inviting depths and settled herself for a comfortable browse before her unknown friend should return.

She did not see the door stealthily opening. She did not see the face of the boy which, lips writhed in a malicious grin, suddenly appeared. Nor did she see the walking-stick which was in his hand.

Slowly, slowly that walking-stick came up. Slowly it advanced, and its ferrule touched the side of the glass case. For one second it rested there. The boy who held it—Miss Marchant himself—grinned. One swift thrust he gave. The case swayed on its stand, righted itself again, and then, in response to a second, more vigorous, prod, went over with a crash.

Bessie jumped to her feet with a scream—



Garden of Shadows.

IN the annex to the library, where the rehearsal was in full swing, that crash, the terrified scream which accompanied it, came plainly to the ears of the players. And Babe, who was about to deliver her lines, jumped.

"Oh great goodness! What's that?"
"Bessie!" cried Mabel.

"Bessie!"
They all stared, and then, for the first time, they became aware of the fat girl's absence. Bessie, whom they had completely forgotten in the stress of the upheaval, who should have been sitting there.

"Help! Help!" came in lusty tones from somewhere in the school.

In a moment Mabel had jumped to her feet. In a moment she was heading for the door, while the others stood dumbly staring at each other. She turned the handle, rushed up the corridor. She saw the door of the room which was open in front of her. She leaped from that room Bessie's quarters into.

And then stared, eyes dilating with horror. For there was Bessie, standing in the center of the room, too terrified to move, staring at the splattered remains of the glass case and its contents, which spread over the floor at her feet.

"Bessie!" Mabel cried.
"Oh, Mabel! Mabel!" Bessie choked. "I don't—don't do it, you know. I don't—don't!"

And she quailed as furious feet splattered down the corridor outside, as a shadow darkened the door and Dr. Ferguson came into the room.

For one second the doctor stood there. His eyes almost popped out of his head as he saw the wreck of his precious specimen. Then his eyes fastened upon the two girls.

"You—this—!" The doctor stared at a loss for words. In utter fury he could only stand surveying the wreck. "You did this?"

"I didn't!" wailed Bessie.
"This—my precious—my precious specimen!" the doctor muttered. "Years and years of my life have I spent collecting these. Years—years—"

"He glared. "Two magnificent schoolgirls here—"
"I told you I didn't!" Bessie blurted sobbingly. "Mabel, tell him I didn't!" she cried.

There was a step in the passage. Miss Marchant, his face concerned, looked in.

"Oh, my hat! Sir, can I do anything?"

"That's him!" Bessie cried. "That's the boy! He showed me in here—he did!"

Marchant glanced at her oddly.
"I don't know," he said distinctly, "what you are talking about. The last I saw of you, Bessie Hunter, was in the kitchen."

"But you told me to wait here."
"You've been dreaming!" Miss said.

In vain Bessie stammered her story; in vain Mabel tried to explain. There was no one without the support of Miss Marchant, and Miss Marchant denied that he had had anything to do with it. The result of it came when Dr. Ferguson, completely losing his temper, ordered them out of the school.

"And since," he said thickly, "you attempt to cover your own misdeeds—by blaming the crime on to one of my boys, you may go! And please," he added graciously, "do not come near this school again!"

They went, sick at heart, leaving Jimmy Richardson & Co. in the deepest depths of dismay. When they got back they were immediately manhandled to Miss Primrose's room. Miss Primrose having been informed over the phone of all that had happened by the infuriated Dr. Ferguson. Miss Primrose was annoyed. In tight-lipped silence she listened to Mabel's explanation, to Bessie, who called upon Edwina.

"And Edwina, what is your version of this?"

"I am afraid," Edwina stated, with meek indignation, "that I entirely agree with Mabel and Bessie."

"Thank you, that will do," Miss Primrose said. "But, in the meantime, you girls, I must insist that before you set foot in Friarville again you must first come to me for permission. Perhaps Dr. Ferguson will institute inquiries on his side. You may go!"

EVERY
SCHOOLGIRL

MUST GET
ANOTHER
SCHOOLGIRL
TO READ

"THE SCHOOLGIRL"

They went, crestfallen, utterly dismayed.

Edwina shook her head sympathetically.

"Oh, goodness! I'm sorry, you girls!" she blurted.

"Thanks, Edwina, but it wasn't your fault," Mabel gasped.

She left them then. In a disgruntled group they went back to their own studies. This seemed the end of it. The end of the play, anyway. They didn't blame Dr. Ferguson. Mabel and Mabel were so far from being unaccountable as he had been, he had had good cause for his tantrums. But they did blame Miss Marchant.

"Mabel, what can we do?" Mabel asked despairingly.

Mabel set her lips.

"I don't know. But I'm going to see Jimmy Richardson about talking Miss. Perhaps we can do something up between us."

At once Mabel rose to her feet.

"Mabel, I'll come with you," she said.

"Right-o, then!" Mabel said. "But let's hurry."

They went out three and three. But as they pedaled towards Friarville they were unaware that they were being followed!

At Friarville School the first rebuff awaited the two. It was dark by the time they arrived there and rang the bell at the gates. The porter, Grimes, came out, peering at them through the railing.

"I'm sorry, Miss Redfern, but you can't go in," he said. "My orders are to admit no girls from your school whatever. Dr. Ferguson's orders."

Mabel bit her lip. But she wasn't beaten. Together she and Mabel walked into the road.

Another girl, who had ridden up on a bicycle, dismounted silently a few yards behind them, unseen, unheeded. She stood close in the darkness as Mabel spoke.

"I'm going in," she announced.

"Mabel, you wait here. It will be easier for one of us to creep into the school than two. I'll bring Jimmy out here."

And, leaving Mabel at the end of the wall which fronted the school, Mabel stealthily crept forward.

Friarville, like Cliff House, had its secret entrances and exits, and Mabel knew one of them, at least.

Somewhere ahead was the gap in the hedge which led through Dr. Ferguson's private garden, and gave admittance to the old Clinic. It was not hard to find it. In five minutes Mabel, despite the darkness, had reached it. Carefully she pressed herself through the hedge, then suddenly turned to write the road again.

What was that? She had fancied she heard a footstep.

But all was quiet. After a moment or two Mabel, reassured, went on. The greenhouses glimmered in front of her. Between two of them she leaped her way. Now she was on the path that led to the garden gate. Now—

And then Mabel jumped. For out of the potato-shed, not five yards in front of her, had stepped a figure. It was Dr. Ferguson himself!

Mabel stood stock still. She had no chance to turn and run away. Instinctively she realized that her best chance of escaping detection was by standing still—perfectly still—until one with the darkness which surrounded her. She heard the doctor muttering to himself. He reached the path, paused as if uncertain whether to go towards the gate or the greenhouses.

And then—

Mabel loosed the whites of the thing which shot past her own head. She half-turned; then she jumped as there was a sudden crash. A level of pain and surprise came from the doctor. Behind her she heard a liveliest gasp, feet thudding away. She turned.

But too late! For Dr. Ferguson had been in her direction. His hand caught her shoulder. A flashlight flashed her face.

But Mabel, with a gasp of fear, tore herself free from the doctor's grasp. Whoever had thrown the missile which had obviously hit him, it was obvious that she, Mabel, would be blamed! And what could she say? How to justify her presence here?

Mabel passed her. She went crawling back towards the hedge. The doctor's voice bawled:

"Girl—girl! Wherever you are, come back!"

But Mabel flew on.

WHILE MISS—

Mabel, waiting anxiously at the corner, was startled by a sudden rattle; a commotion; a sound of a heavy body hurtling itself through the hedge. And then in front of her, footsteps—quick, agitated footsteps.

A dark shadow, moving like the wind, leapt down upon her.

"Mabel—" began Mabel.

And then, with a gasp, she reeled back; for the fleeing figure, unconscious of her presence in the dark, came rushing right into her.

Even in that bewildered moment Mabel knew that it was not Mabel. Instinctively she caught at her; instinctively grabbed something—something which came away in her hand. Then, realising the other had hung her aside and went scampering on, leaving Mabel dazed and staring.

And then—

Another crash. A shout in Dr. Ferguson's voice. More running footsteps. Mabel looked up in the fog.

"Mabel—quick! Back to Cliff House!" she cried. "Something dreadful has happened! If Dr. Ferguson catches us here now we're done!"

And both girls ran for their bicycles, mounted, and rode furiously off.



"That's the Girl!"

SCRATCH, scratch, scratch! Two pens scraped industriously in the silence of Study No. 4, in the Fourth Floor passage of Cliff House School. These pens belonged to Mabel Lynn and Barbara Reddon, working rather belatedly on their prep.

But the minds of the two girls were not on their task. Mabel's eyes, fretful and worried, lifted from her work occasionally to gaze at Edna.

Babe, biting her lip, was staring towards the window.

"If he did recognize me, it's all U.P!" she said. "But I'm trying to believe he didn't. He only saw me for a moment. He—"

And she jumped.

"Mabel, was that a car?" she breathed.

With laughing hearts they glanced towards the window, peering into the darkness of the quad below.

A car it was. No need to guess to whom it belonged. For even as they watched, a familiar figure stepped from it. Babe's face turned pale.

"Dr. Fergussan!" she breathed.

They returned to their prep, worried and anxious. Industriously their pens scraped; five, ten, fifteen minutes passed. Then suddenly there was a commotion in the corridor.

"Let us look in this study!" the doctor's voice boomed out.

"But I assure you—I assure you, Dr. Fergussan, that you are making a mistake!" Miss Primrose's voice.

"We'll see!"

The door of Study No. 2 opened. Voices again. Mabel and Babe, looking dry lips, looked at each other.

"Not here!" the doctor's voice rapped.

"Miss Primrose, may I see the girls in this room?"

"You may, certainly!" Miss Primrose replied frigidly. "See any girl you like. But I tell you—"

The door of Study No. 3 opened. Babe jumped.

"Oh, my hat! Our turn next! Mabel—"

And then she jumped. Far, without warning the door opened. And there,

his eyes glinting behind his spectacles, stood Dr. Fergussan himself. One jump he gave, one angry shout escaped his lips. He pointed a quivering finger towards Babe!

"And there," he roared, "she is! That is the girl, Miss Primrose!"

USTERS to deny. Dada to try to explain. In the Head's study, five minutes later, Babe found herself cornered. Nothing for it then but to tell the truth. She told it!

"But I thought her in the act!" the doctor stormed.

"Babe, did you actually throw the missile?" Miss Primrose asked.

"No!" Babe said.

"But I tell you she did!" the doctor stormed. "The girl is lying!"

"My girls," Miss Primrose replied coldly, "are not in the habit of telling me lies, Dr. Fergussan. Especially this girl, whom I have never had cause to doubt yet. I think," she added, "it would be better if you withdraw and allowed me to deal with this!"

He glared.

"Very well! Very well, madam! Since you are so utterly incapable of keeping the girls in your charge in order, I will put this school out of bounds to my boys!"

"And I," Miss Primrose frigidly informed him, "will certainly see that no girl of mine ever goes to your school again!"

The doctor stormed off. Babe, richer by a donation, was allowed to go, after further questioning. But half an hour later, when the "out of bounds" notice went up on the board, there was general dismay throughout the school. Friends and Cliff House, such good friends, were enemies now!

"But who was it?" Mabel cried excitedly. "It was a girl—I saw her! She crashed into me, and—"

Then suddenly she paused. Something she had forgotten until this moment occurred to her. Very slowly she plunged her hand into her pocket; very slowly brought forth something—a round glass button, edged with lace. "Babe, this is what she left in my hand as she rushed away!"

Babe almost jumped.

"You're sure!"

"Yes!"

With lowered eyes Babe stared at it. For she recognized it! Only one girl in the school had buttons like that upon her coat! And that girl—

Edwina Brookdale!

No, no! It couldn't be true!

But Babe found herself trembling. Was it? Back into the past her mind was rushing. Edwina had been at Primrose yesterday when the doctor's glass collar had been pinned—Edwina had made a special point of accompanying them! She found her mind wandering; truly Edwina, under the guise of friendliness, could have done all that!

"I'm going," Babe said, "to see Edwina. Give me that, Mabel!"

Wooingly, Mabel handed the button over. Resolutely, Babe stomped out. And then, reaching the door of the prefect's room, she paused. Edwina was there—on the verge!

She was speaking.

"Yes, Mabel, I did it! No, I wasn't seen. Unlucky though, I left a button behind. You might try to find it! What's that? Mabel may have it! Well, it doesn't matter if she has—just as long as it's not found on the scene!"

Babe clenched her hand.

"And what," Edwina gave a reply to some question of Mabel's, "is a button? Of course, if it's recognized, I shall just deny ownership. Luckily I had a spare one, and I've seen that on the coat—so it would be hard for anyone to prove it belonged to me, wouldn't it? No, you chump, they don't, they can't suspect a thing—"

Babe's hands gripped. Then suddenly, her window shattered, she turned. Now she knew! Edwina and Mabel were the conspirators—they, all along, had worked against the play. And nothing—now was the tragedy of it—could be proved! It seemed that they had succeeded.

But had they?

In their satisfaction, the plotters had reckoned without Barbara Reddon's Co.—and especially without Babe.

For in that moment was born a fierce and resolute determination within Barbara Reddon's mind. The play, in spite of the feud between the two schools, should go on!

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

THE CLIFF HOUSE SECRET SOCIETY

DETERMINED that Edwina Booth shall not smash the play, which means so much to them, Babe & Co. carry on with the rehearsals. But because they know that the scheming prefect is watching their every move they cannot rehearse openly.

SO THEY FORM A SECRET SOCIETY—THE SOCIETY OF THE SCARLET STAR!

In next Saturday's powerful complete story you will read how the Society carries the war into the enemy's camp and meets cunning with cunning.

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COMPLETE
NEXT SATURDAY

By
HILDA RICHARDS

Dedicated
TO SAVE
THE PLAY

The Castaways' Dramatic Rescue: Exciting Concluding Chapters of This Powerful Adventure Serial



"A Way They Have In The Navy!"

"I SAW! Look now!"
"Yes!"

The searchlight, manipulated by a still distant vessel, which the junkies hoped might be a British cruiser, had suddenly picked out the island.

Folly Linton, Pam Willoughby and Muriel, out here in a boat on the open sea with Folly's former Jack, and Jimmy Chevrolet, saw as by floodlight the very strip of beach where they and their fellow castaways had spent so many adventurous days and nights.

"That's a beautiful effort," Pam murmured; and then Jack gave one of his cheery chuckles.

"Hi—what? Beautiful? Oh, my hat! The greatest bit of luck—that's what I call it! We're saved—the whole jolly lot of us, I tell you!"

"We know we are!" Folly retorted, with congested calmness. "And it'll be rather nice, won't it, to be picked up in the next few minutes, and taken on board a cruiser?"

"Hi, that is, Jimmy—must be," Folly really insisted. "Trust one of those to get that B.O.S. our people were able to witness the other night."

"You can see our folks running about on shore just by the beached phonos," Jack rattled on. "Hi, look at that way!"

A rocket, fired from the beach!
"Hurrah!" Folly cheered, as if this were the commencement of a fireworks display. "Aw!" as the rocket burst, scattering the darkness. "Be-yoo-tiful!"

Pam laughed as much as Muriel at this playful echoing of that word. It was one of those moments of unexpressed relief from deadly danger, when the castaways just can draw almost hysterical laughter.

All five of them—boys that were, crowded together in the little launch whose motor had failed them when they were in such dire need of speeding back to the island.

A minute since, and it had seemed to all of them as if the villainous Dalip Khan's ocean-going yacht, having started to chase them, would overtake them. And there—to be taken on board that vessel as prisoners—

A ray of hope in the very darkest

By MARJORIE STANTON

hour—literally, that was what the searchlight had meant for them. It had no sooner shown this way across the nightmarish sea than all lights had been put out upon the pursuing yacht.

"Yes," Jack broke out aloud, peering a different way over the dark sea. "The yacht is off whilst the going is good!—Just about saved still Khan want be now!"

"But what a shame if he does get away!" Muriel exclaimed. "If it were only the harm he wanted to do my parents, by getting hold of me, then perhaps I would say—his game; let him go. But the watch has cost all of you so much trouble. When I think of all the risks you've had to run—"

"Don't think of them any more now, Muriel dear," Pam gently reassured. "To-night, anyhow, ends it all. We shall soon be home—all of us."

"Hark!"

That was Folly, soaring her head to listen the better, as she stood up with these others in the launch.

The very faintest part of a moonlight marking motor-engine was coming to them across the calm sea.

"That's a motor-boat from the ship that's working the searchlight," Jimmy inferred. "Coming full speed."

The searchlight was suddenly upon them again, dazzling their eyes. Then it roved away, making a clear sweep

over the nightmarish sea, to become fixed upon the great yacht.

Steaming away was Khan's yacht, upon a course that would—it was undoubtedly hoped by all on board—enable her to give that other vessel the slip.

Among the three girls and the two schoolboys experienced thrills of delight.

They had seen the yacht only a couple of minutes ago, bounding after them in the night. Then her graceful lines had been directly towards them; now they saw her stern, with a frothy wake streaming as her propellers thrashed to carry her away—over the wide ocean.

"I know what," Jack muttered grimly. "Dalip Khan will be wondering to the cruiser not to worry about them. He'll wonder a lying story that he was going to pick up the castaways, but will leave it to the cruiser now."

"Don't matter," Jimmy said. "They'll get him when they want him—any!"

The searchlight suddenly switched back to the island; but the junkies had only a half-minute or so for a renewed gaze in that direction, and then—

"Who, here's that motor-boat already!" Folly suddenly clapped.

"Hurrah!"

"Aho!" Jack skittishly vociferated. "Who are you, there?"

"Boat from H.M.S. Retriever!" a voice called back over the sea. "Who are you?"

"Look, that wants some explaining!" Jack muttered; and his sister and the others checked. "But have good stars of the castaways who managed to get off an B.O.S.—if you picked it up!" he shouted lustily.

"Happy you've been kept waiting," that voice responded. "But we had a thousand miles odd to come."

"When?" Folly gasped. "A thousand miles?"

Then she and her companions kept silence, listening delightedly to the

reaching boat's final touch as she came up with them.

A young officer, smart as new paint in the electric light that had been switched on, and three or four "ratings" of the typical bulging breed could be seen.

"Roaring, sir!" said Jack and Jimmy, coming to attention in the swaying launch as if this were their headquarters.

"What's been the idea?" the officer gravely inquired, while the two boys reached aside. "Get down bit of dark-baking, and had a breakdown? Hello, young ladies? And be saluted them. "Shouldn't you be at school?"

"With us now," Pam severely answered; but Polly cried:

"No, we don't! Not now; when we're rescued. Em-phatic—er—captain, I—"

"Lieutenant Anderson, at your service!"

"It's like this, sir," Jack now appointed himself spokesman of the party. "The ship you came the other night that has just made off, the ladies trying to kidnap this girl"—indicating Marie—"She's been with us all on the island, and Philip Klimey—that's the name of the cutter—has been trying again and again to kidnap her."

"That of course upon my father," Marie softly put in. "But now—"

"And so," Jack very fervently resumed, "if the Retriever could just get after the yacht, and ask the star-boat—"

"Oh, that's all right, my lad! Plenty of time for that, after we've seen to you. You want to be run back to the island? I'm for there, with orders to pick you up on the way."

"We ran out of juice," Jack said.

"If you could give us a tug—"

"Seemingly worth it, is it?"

And the chattering fellow smiled an invitation to them all to step aboard his boat.

"What's the ship," he asked, "that is jolly up on the beach over yonder?"

"Ah, that—I mean, her," Jack hastily corrected, himself. "She's a mystery schooner that drops ashore in everybody's wake. Not a word working her! But this morning we found a man—a cartographer—quack card. He wouldn't explain. We gave him the run of the island. Now he's on board the yacht—another, we guess, who needs to be collared."

"O.K.!"

The young officer was chiefly interested, at present, in seeing the girls safely transhipped.

"O.K. it is," Polly sparkled at the grinning ratings. "Had any luck lately?"

The reply came in the form of a good-humored negative.

"Yes—well," Pam something remembered. "You've got it to come!"

"And that," Polly objected, "is more than is coming to us!"

In Touch With Home!

WHAT the entire help of Morcove cartwhegs did come in for, less than an hour after H.M.S. Retriever's timely arrival upon the scene, was the sweets of enjoying a most luscious supper.

Supplies had been ratched up from the cutter, and it was the very richest "rather-rare" which Morcove & Co. could enjoy—with Lieutenant Anderson and the ratings as well-baked after guests!

They made the island's beach, where

NEW MORCOVE SCHOOL SERIAL

BETTY BARTON & Co.

are back at Marcove School, but it is not

long before they are dramatically plunged into the thick of a gripping mystery—a series of events which revolve round their school friend, the young pilot Pam Wilborough, and his steady love, Stephanie.

In Marjorie Stanton's vivid new serial, written specially for The Scenechord, you will be able to follow the dramatic absorbing adventures in going to probe the mystery of Stephanie. Next week start the exciting chapters of

"HER SECRET AT SWANLAKE"

By MARJORIE STANTON

STARTS NEXT SATURDAY

the campfire was blazing grandly in the night, the setting for what duty Naxos styled "as grandest do, ever—scampily gorged!"

But they were all going to sleep as heard the hoarse school-crier—once again and for the last night.

In perfect comfort would they sleep, too, for the Retriever had been after them all in this direction also. Even fastidious Paula Reed would have no complaint to make about the sleeping arrangements tonight, inasmuch as that her Morcove class and Marie would keep on talking when they should all be soundly "off."

But there was not to be much starry weather to talk after all. Much too tired were the girls for that!

Some, in that part of the wooded road, which Morcove had to itself for the night, there was that silence, except for measured breathing, as Betty & Co.'s Form-masters liked to find, paying an after-light-out visit to the dorm.

And while they and all others showed the hulk were sleeping as peacefully as diva, H.M.S. Retriever was going quietly, efficiently, about that other little job which had come her way.

The yacht was to be arrested!

That a British cruiser like the Retriever would not be long about this business, the girls and boys had been fully certain before they turned in.

Even so, it came as a staggering surprise to find at dawn, next morning, a grey-painted bath-ship lying at anchor less than a mile off the island.

"Dew! goodness!" Polly gasped.

"She's back already!"

"It is in the Navy," said Jack.

"The British Navy?"

"And he gave his own idea of a hompion after coming along the schooner's deck to see "Manning all!" to the girls.

"Best thing you can do, when you leave school—join it!" Polly sneered at her adored brother.

"I mean to—when!" Jack returned in

stress. "Tubby and I—we were talking about that last night. Tubby says he feels that in the Navy you do get looked after, for good."

"Yet I don't know how the Navy can ever look after itself," Judy Cardow seriously remarked. "It does so much looking after others."

"Where is Tubby?" Naxos wanted to know, most anxiously. "Belas—"

"Yes, I know," Jack roared. "Tubby did rather go it with the second staff last night. Knew for Tubby, it was a record. But Tubby's all right. I left him still dressing on the beach, after my morning swim."

"Already?" cried Benny Trevor.

"You boys must have been up early."

"We were," Jack slightly corrected—"you, we thought we would. After all, you can always have a bit of extra bed at school. So why worry—"

"Some of the last few hours on our island—quite!" Polly agreed with her brother for once.

"There's a small boat coming from the cruiser now," Betty lightly commented—"perhaps it takes us on board straight away!"

"Goodness!"

"Yes, but Jerry!" And Paula obviously left in need of making herself "respectable," as she called it. "How were you?"

"Belas—we haven't had brekker yet. Or do you give us brekker on board?"

But it was a false alarm.

The boat had only run across from the Retriever as early as this, because it had more than a score of Morcovians for the cartwhegs.

Messages had come pouring in "over the air," for the cruiser to pick up and convey to Marcove & Co.

On the deck of the old schooner there was such an admirable shilling open of envelopes as could be compared with a postman's extra-heavy delivery on a Christmas morning!

Polly and Jack had received a long, loving message from their parents, Betty, Paula, Tom, Boney, and Tom—they also heard from their people.

Naxos, important little personage that she was in her own country, had a whole sheet of "grams" to shoot about. Tubby—he could be seen smiling brightly at what his parents had witnessed.

Even Jimmy Chevrolet, who was an orphan, had heard from that uncle-guardian of his who was usually so grouchy.

And Marie—she had heard from Kerry!

Actually, thanks to the way they have in the Navy, communication during the night had been established with Marie's parents at their home in Kerry.

Ample details must have been relayed to that father and mother who had suffered such distracting anxieties on account of an only child's safety. For it was a long, long message which the cruiser had received.

"Look, girls!" was her cry to them, as soon as excitement over their own gladdening messages had begun to die down. "Be sure this!"

"This, actually, guessing that they would never glance at the Marcovians as soon as they see how it pleased them all, Marie's read it aloud:

"News of your safety has ended a heart-breaking time. Realize we owe your rescue from terrible danger to all who have been with you on the island. Please tell them how we admire them for wonderful heroism. Will keep in constant touch now. Love,

"DAD AND MOTHER."

Murphy's eyes were shining as she looked up from the pencilled message to include all her friends in need in a very eloquent look.

"And even now," she said, "they can only know as little of the full story. When I get back to them the very first account I've with said and mean again later."

"You'll have better things to talk about than that," Betty laughed.

"And, Maria," Polly justed, "if any reporters could your way start trying to get you to talk, remember, world copyright reserved by me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Polly mock-seriously insisted. "I'm going to write it all for the 'Morrovo Magazine.'"

"With illustrations by Tom, here," Jack carried on the nonsense talk. "Coloured plates of Tally showing his action with Naomee, off an admirable plate."

"You boys won't come into it," Polly withered her brother. "At least, I shall not mention that there were some loose-ome fellows, whose shirts we had to wash."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Then Pam's father came along the deck, obviously polishing a before-breakfast cigarette. The Retriever had supplied the mess-table of the customer party with about enough cigarettes and pipe tobacco to last a month.

"Heard about our stowaway, you youngsters?"

"Oh, what—what?" they chorused.

"The yacht, of course, was arrested during the night. An officer from the cruiser is now on board the yacht, with a bunch of fellows out of Penney—the old naval word for Portsmouth. They're working the yacht to the nearest port."

"How lovely!" clapped Morrovo, while Jack chorused:

"One in the eye for Bubby Khan! Oh, so, can't you imagine his feelings this morning—under arrest on his own ship?"

"And Stowaway, too?" Betty rejoined.

"But the stowaway, what about him, then?"

"He's for it when they get to port, as an absconding company promoter from the City. He made a clean breast of everything to the officer who took over the yacht. There was a warrant out for him at least, so the accidental stowaway aboard this schooner at Bristol as a stowaway. It was a clever get-away, but he stayed in hiding on the ship, and that's what led to his becoming the only one allowed."

"But how on earth was that, sir?" asked one of the boys.

"The stowaway had no idea, of course, when he stowed on board, that there was to be over seas business with the schooner that voyage—her last, as it proved to be. There he was, containing hidden for three weeks on end, bearing no name out but the skipper should land him at some port from which he might be extradited. But the skipper himself was a wrong 'un—a good man gone wrong, you'd likely. These men have been a plot to steal the ship, and the crew had been chosen accordingly."

"Is that why her name had been accepted out when she drove ashore, the other day?" Betty asked. "We wondered why."

"That is why," Pam's father nodded. "They worked the schooner all this way from home and then, in mid-ocean, they set about showing her. But it means that something happened to make them wish they hadn't. There must have been a panic, an accident of a sudden scare. Anyway, they took to the

boats during calm weather, leaving the schooner to go ashore."

"Still showing a bit of snuff?" Jack exclaimed. "And so that was why she lost a name when the wind got up. Guess and I suppose that stowaway suddenly found himself left all alone on the ship!"

"With not the least idea of what to do, even if an experienced sailor could have done much single-handed," Mr. Willoughby added, and smiled. "So there by gill was, when that gale came on which hit us so hard, the other day."

"No wonder he wanted to avoid being taken off the island by any ship that might turn up to locate us," was Betty's comment. "And he wonder he was ready to make it a bargain with that Stowaway woman about helping her, if she would help him. Oh, yes, the moment she fell in with him on the island, she guessed that he was a crook."

"At this point in the talk Naomee, who had been furnished of necessary clothes coming from the ship's galley, looked in that direction rather wistfully. Then she saw Mrs. Carver beckoning her.

"A sudden eager scamp by the deck, Morrovoan, a smiled, whispered word from Mrs. Carver, and then Naomee glanced to where she could see the ship's bell as a breakfast gong.

"A more long! long! or so would have suffered, but Naomee was in the mood this morning to keep that big old bell on the whang going steadily.

"Belong—hit! Break her!" Her shrill voice supplemented the deafening clanging. "Long, long, long!" "Every-body, roll up for no reason!"

"Beag, long, long!" "Goodness!" giggled Harry, stepping her ears to the din. "Sounds like a fire alarm!"

"On the bell for morning school at Morrovo," was Polly's muck-gum suggestion. "And all of us—late!"

"And so we are late," chuckled Betty.

"By a couple of weeks or so—that's all!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "We shall have forgotten everything by the time we do get back," Madge laughed on.

"We shall have lost the studies we had," Tom continued, with playful optimism.

"Some other girl, Betty, will have been made captain in your place!" Bangs projected.

"Oh, well, good luck to her!"

"But Paula, always liable to take jesting remarks seriously, sighed dolefully.

"Tow-wilds, goals—dreadful! And the novel of it is—what an absurd for the children! Far too risky!"

"Oh, don't say that!" cried Mariet. "For you'll find me, next time your holidays come round, wanting you all to come out to Kemp!"

"Who-a-ah!"

"But, of course!"

"Well, thank you very much, Mariet—delighted!" Betty warmly accepted, for self and friends. "We'll be there!"

The bell was still clanging, and Naomee still yelling.

"So cheer up, Paula," chuckled Polly, flinging an arm about the dejected one's waist to draw her along, now that all were teeming towards the galley.

"You're going home in a battleship—part of the way, at least! If that isn't safe enough, even for you, I'd like to know what is!"

"And as for Morrovo," Betty chimed in gently, "I'vey much doubt if the dear old school will have changed, when we do turn up there—at last!"

Morrovo Once Again!

NOR had it. Ten days later, staid Mrs. Betty and her chaperon of Morrovo were talking to the post-office boy at the school gate noon, as drinks take to water.



"AHOT!" came a hearty hail, and the cruiser's launch slid alongside the crippled boat. There was a cheer from the shore—for they knew that at last rescue was a reality!

Exactly the same desks were theirs in class, whilst upstairs in the Form quarters there were exactly the same only studies where mathematics, in the past, had been so very satisfactory.

Study No. 12—the captain's study—was Betty's once more, and Betty still the "capt."

Girls who had got back to Morocco for reopening day, could tell her strange and said it had been to see Study No. 12, in particular class, remaining deserted day after day, evening after evening—awaiting its rightful occupants' return. But none—

Study No. 12 was filling up every evening, as of yore, for after-noon gossip.

Study No. 12 was again the mis-called "Abode of Harmony." Madcap Polly being in the odd state of constant warfare with Impish Nanner, to the discomfort of a would-be long-time Paula, who as often found herself tipped out of the best anchor.

The corner cupboard of Study No. 12 was as well stocked as ever with the means of dispensing Betty & Co.'s traditional hospitality.

The Bismarckian Courtesy knew, by its earlier mention in sales, that Betty & Co. were back. So did the room-room plans, now that Madge could gravitate to it as much as she had always loved to do.

Polly, after all, was not going to scribble the African adventures for the "Morocco Man." She had found it far easier to give the whole thrilling story to the Form in nightly instalment—after lights out!

Indeed, already Polly was looked to write that play for the breaking-up concert, which was always expected from one of her versatility.

Betty, the cap, was certainly "up to her eyes." Account-keeping over did

subscriptions, the sports fixtures, and those records—these kept her lying to make jottings in various notebooks, as frequently as ever.

She could think she was going to be able to sit back for a minute, but either some spot of leather or other would creep up, or else there would be a flying-queue of the study class, and a breathless:

"Betty! Miss Everard wants you!"

But the captain, after her first week "back on the bridge," had not, at any rate, encountered really stormy weather. A lot to do, but all plain-sailing!

The Form, in fact, this term, was going along remarkably well.

If there were a few girls peering as "difficult" as ever, that fact of Betty's which made her such a good captain, was always equal to the emergency. She herself dealt successfully with the culprits, so that the Form-mistress did not have to do as it were, called in:

"Terribly slow," Betty complained at last. "Can't somebody do something to make a first-class sensation? Can't one of us?"

One of them did!

It was the following evening, and Betty and Polly were both letter-writing, when in walked Benny to ask:

"Heard about Pam, girls?"

"No! What about her?"

"Next week—she starts being a day girl!"

Betty and Polly dropped pens. Paula bounded up from the best anchor. The news was even of a nature to flush Nanner out of the corner cupboard, where she had been literally "taking" stock.

"Pam, a day girl?" asked Polly.

"Why? Why, leave yet?"

"She doesn't—leave? Oh, but the worst" was the impatient cry with

which Polly headed a rush to the next-door study.

"But I don't know, I tell you," Pam was next moment earnestly answering her clamorous intruders. "I'm to go home to Swaziland after games on Saturday, and then I shall hear all about it. At present, it's just a mystery!"

"Will you ring us up, as soon as you do know?" Betty pleaded. "Right!" as Pam gave a very ready nod. "So we can get back to our lessons, Polly."

"I'm writing to Jack, at Orange-sburg," the Madcap addressed Pam. "And now I must tell him to tell Jimmy and the others. Pam, to be a day girl!"

Betty had already withdrawn. But evidently she was back again.

And I, Pam—I'm writing in Marie's night. Most much the better shall I call the man's name, I have heard, I've told her that our old nursery jester looks like getting at the Old Bailey! And about Klaus—how the Indian Government is going to take some of the plumes out of the Tiger's Eye! Any message, Pam?"

"My love to her, of course. I'll be writing to her myself by the next mail."

"That is," Benny sweetly qualified. "If you're not too taken up with other things! You, a day girl—just fancy!"

"Yes, you lucky girl!" cried Polly.

"Betty, not to be in any hurry to tell me that," was Pam's laughing retort. "Hurry wait and see, girls—just why it's all to be!"

At that moment a great line was ploughing its way across the sea—forging its way steadily through the heaving waters toward England.

On the shrouded boat-stow, leaning against the railing, stood a girl. Her nose pointed directly into the darkness—concerned towards the broad, white water which lapped her cheeks; sometimes towards the bows, moving forward into the night.

Her thoughts were wild. Some were of the country types which she had come aboard this nighty vessel—a country of hills and forests and great new cities—scapes of spreading steam-looms and unknown territories—Australia!

Some of those thoughts were of the country to which she was going—a country of soft green valleys and hills, of rocky bays and red and white cliffs.

Sometimes she smiled, as she thought of the hundreds and hundreds of white, sleeping sheep struggling into their pens—arrived by galloping herds and barking dogs.

Then, again, her face would hold a little grimace—a little apprehension—as she thought of the unknown things to which she was going—the new things to which she must become accustomed—the new friends she must meet and get to know.

The deck trembled slightly to the powerful thrashing of the great engines which drove the liner through the night. The wind caught the girl's hair and ruffled it. She smiled again.

And the great waves glided on through the night.

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