

EVERY SCHOOLGIRL'S OWN PAPER



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Incorporating
SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN



JEMIMA ACTS JUST IN TIME!

A thrilling moment in this week's brilliant long complete Cliff House School story

This Exciting Complete Story Features Popular *Jemima Carstairs*

By **HILDA
RICHARDS**



Just Like JEMIMA!

The Cover of Ghosts



"**M**ARJORIE, you are sure your brother said an 'oleak'?" asked Barbara Radford.

"Yes!" Marjorie Hand-dene replied.

"But, blow it, it's nearly half past ten now!" Tuesday Clara Trevlyn pointed

"And it sure does look," Lella Carroll, the elegant American junior, chipped in, "as if he's not coming. I vote we allow him another ten minutes." "Dud-don't forget that Celeste will be expecting us," Bessie Bunter put in anxiously.

While *Jemima Carstairs*, strolling up from a conversation with the ticket-collector, peered thoughtfully up the railway line and adjusted her crochets. Miss Lyle and Marjorie Buxton, the drowsy French junior, exchanged rather impatient glances.

The whole sight of them were chafing with impatience, except, perhaps, gentle Marjorie, who looked rather worried, puzzled, and apologetic. The whole sight of them, indeed, were anxious to

be off. It wasn't much fun, after all, looking one's best about an Ffrivale Station when such a glorious day's enjoyment was before them.

For a week now these chums of the Fourth Form at Cliff House School had looked forward to this day—but Marjorie Hand-dene, the gentle, sweet-faced, and sunny-tempered girl of the Fourth—had anticipated it with greater eagerness than any of them.

For it was on this day that Marjorie was to be reunited to her elder brother Philip—Philip whom she had not seen for over five years, who was, in fact, a big-long travel, collecting from some strange illness which had necessitated a long sojourn in *San Francisco*.

Philip, for the first time in five years, was coming to *Ffrivale* today—this day on which Marjorie and her chums had been invited to spend the day with "Gloriana," owned by the grand ladies of their madcap friend, Celeste Marjoram.

Naturally, they were all looking forward to that, especially as it was Celeste's birthday-party treat. By a strange coincidence it was also the birthday of Philip Hand-dene, and Celeste, in her generous, impulsive way,

HAPPY Day for the **ONE**

Home (Gloria) & **Friend** (Philip) of the **Party** (Marjorie) with her long about brother; a birthday party aboard a **luncheon** party. And then, across the scene falls the shadow of mystery—a mystery in which the **inimitable** *Jemima Carstairs* takes a hand.

had decided that the party should take the nature of a double celebration.

In those circumstances they could hardly refrain from waiting for him—especially as, Marjorie had pointed out, he was bound to be an invalid reliant upon their help.

But now it was half-past ten. Philip had promised to be here at ten.

"Strange!" muttered *Jemima*.

"Hey! What's strange?" demanded Clara Trevlyn.

"This Philip had not turning up. Jolly old mystery—what?" *Jemima* murmured.

"Just been having a storming with the ticket-generals' *Speranza*. Thought, y'know, his train might be late. But the tea I think got in early."

"Oh!" Bessie said, taking an interest. "Did you ask the ticket-collector who got off it?"

"I did! Trust a Carstairs to think of everything. Only our passenger—certainly not our ticketing—old world. Big, heavy fellow who got off—young-looking, handsome, strong, in, and all that Hercules stuff, you know. Certainly not Philip."

"But Philip?" Marjorie said anxiously. "Oh goodness! Something may have happened. Something most!

If Philip had missed the train he would have sent a wire or something. He—"
And then Marjorie started, as from along the platform there came a hail.

"Marjorie!"

Marjorie jumped round. They all jumped round. A bright figure was in the act of passing through the barrier—a big, broad-shouldered figure, with a remarkably handsome, sunken face, whose grey eyes were twinkling. Marjorie started.

"What's the long-late brother?" *Jemima* asked.

"No," Marjorie Hand-dene said, but she blinked again. The boy—she might have been just a little older than her cousin, Ralph Lawrence, of *Ffrivale* School—came hurrying towards the group.

Certainly he was not the invalid they were all expecting. Nothing to suggest in his gait, athletic stride, in the alertness of his bearing, that this fellow had ever experienced a day's illness in his life. On the contrary, he looked remarkably fit and handsome.

"Marjorie, where are you?" And, looking in front of them, he looked quickly from one girl's face to another.

Then impulsively he caught Barbara's hand. "Well, well," he chuckled, "here you are! How goes it, Marjorie?"

"But I'm not Marjorie," Babs said, laughing. "It's Marjorie Haskins you mean."

"Marjorie Haskins's the name," the young man said, and a little awkwardly let go Babs' hand.

"This is Marjorie," Babs smiled, indicating her claim.

"Well, well!" The young man beamed again. "Marjorie! I say, though, you have changed! No wonder I never recognized you. Well, well, don't stare at me like that, kid. Don't you recognize your brother Philip?"

"Ah!" Juliana murmured profoundly, and stared at the newcomer with intent interest.

"But—but—" Marjorie stammered in amazement. "I—I thought you were ill."

The other chuckled.

"So did a good many people. Everybody I've met in England so far seems to be expecting a staggering wreck, bent and broke at the knees, with a crutch in one hand and a walking-stick in the other."

"Eg—but—"

He laughed merrily.

"Surprised, eh? Well, I wanted you all to be, you see. I didn't tell you about my operation, did I? Wonderful cure! I've been keeping my health a secret ever since. Thought I'd spring it upon you, you see. Still, I'll talk about it some later. Well, well, here I am—sure, bright, and fit, and looking forward like a schoolboy to meeting all your friends and going aboard the *Colossus*. We are going aboard the *Colossus*," he asked abruptly.

"Yes, of course. But, Philip, you—well, you've taken my breath away, you know."

"Sorry?" And Philip laughed again. Such a frank, merry, boyish laugh that Babs and the others, watching its infectious gain, found themselves laughing with him.

Then, one by one, Marjorie introduced her friends—thrilling now, not with pity, but with pride, looking as if something like a miracle had happened to her.

"This is Barbara," Marjorie said laughingly. "Oh, Philip, I can't believe it even now. This is Bessie—I've told you all about Bessie in my letters. This is Clara, and this is Marcelle." And all round she introduced them until finally he passed before Juliana Carstairs.

"And this," Marjorie explained, "is my one and only Juliana. Juliana Carstairs—Jimmy for short."

With a grin the young man was extending his hand. He looked rather sharply at the girl with the sleek *Etan* crop, however, as Marjorie started her name.

"Juliana—what?" he asked.

"Juliana Carstairs."

"Oh!" And very quickly he eyed her then. For some reason the smile for a moment faded from his face. Then with a laugh he extended his hand. "Well, well, Juliana," he said. "Pleased to meet you."

"How do!" Juliana beamed. Welcome to the merry prodigal! Sorry we haven't got the old faded call with us. Bessie ate it all for breakfast."

"But why," Marjorie demanded, "have you kept us waiting? You said ten o'clock, Philip."

"I'm sorry," Philip apologized. "My fault. The train got in early, you see, and—well, I thought I'd give you a pleasant surprise by treating off to meet you. I must have got on the wrong road or something though. Anyway, I got thoroughly lost. Still, better late than never. Er—hem?" And then he turned away as he found Juliana staring very intently at him through big goggles.

"Well, let's go, shall we?" he asked hurriedly.

Merrier than ever, in the most boisterous of spirits, the dainty, aviating round the man from Madagascar, tripped off up the platform.

This was tapping! From the moment they met him they all liked Marjorie's brother. At the minute went on they liked him more and more. What a cheery, jolly young man he was, to be sure, and how thoughtful, how jovial, how well-mannered! Certainly it was amazing even to think he had been an invalid.

Through the barrier he led them, Marjorie clinging happily to his arm. On the bus he helped them, and was the first to alight, reaching up with a helping hand for each of them when they reached Fogg.

All the time he chattered gaily, happily, about Marjorie, about his illness, particularly about how pleased he was to see Marjorie.

And yet there was one girl who did not join in that chatter—one girl who, from time to time, eyed him curiously, penetratingly through the monotonous air waves.

Juliana Carstairs, at least, did not seem to find him such good company as the others, even though she smiled shyly when called upon, and replied with her usual languid brightness to every question she was asked.

"Now," Babs said, as they stopped outside the bus in Fogg. "Which way? The cliff-top or the beach?"

"Tugs the beach," Lolla cried.

"Oh, the cliff-top," said the man easily. "Lively breeze along the cliff-top. Being the colour to your cheeks, girls."

"I hope," Clara said, as if with offended dignity, "you aren't suggesting that I've no colour in my cheeks. Which way, Marjorie?"

"Oh, I don't mind."

"Oh, take the cliff-top!" Philip Haskins urged.

"But why," Juliana asked, "should we take the old cliff-top? Mean to say, that's always there. It's for this one, and one can only walk along the beach at low tide."



"WELL, Marjorie, how are you?" the young man cried, and to Babs' surprise he addressed her. "But—but I'm not Marjorie," she protested. Only Juliana seemed strangely interested in Philip Haskins's anecdote. Juliana was wondering . . .

Sharply Philip gazed at her—quickly, less certainly. He shrugged.

"Very well, then, the beach," he said. "Come on, girls."

And down the sloping path to the beach he led the way. The others, in a hazy crowd, followed. Certainly it was pleasant there, with the bright, warming sun shining down, transforming the sands into golden glory.

The sea, rolling to a lazy swell, looked lovely as it broke with little murmuring ripples upon the rocks.

Half a mile along the beach, just before the cove were reached, they came in sight of the Gherardini, gleaming like a white and gold fairy ship, a thing of beautiful lines and graceful curves. Philip looked back.

"Your friend's yacht?" he asked. "Then is it necessary to go any farther? Can't we signal the yacht from here?"

Babe smiled.

"Well, we can, of course. But we have to go up to the cove. That's the only safe mooring-place, you see."

"Oh!"

They went on. In front of the cove they halted. Girls, forbidding, these coves looked—especially the largest of them, which went by the evasive name of Monte's Tomb, and which, local legend had it, was still haunted by the ghosts of the fifty monks from Cliff Abbey, who had been put to death three hundreds of years before, by a gang of pirates.

There was something awe-inspiring, something terrifying about Monte's Tomb, even in the bright sunlight. Bessie, who had a wholesome terror of ghosts, blinked at it nervously.

"Oh, creaks, black up, Babe!" she said.

But Babe was backing up. She had her handkerchief in her hand, was raising it above her head. She wailed.

"There—"

"Oh-o-o-o-o-o-o!"

Sudden, distinct, that long-drawn wail came from behind their backs.

Babe jumped. In a flash the open road, starting with suddenly startled eyes into the alarmed faces of her cove.

"Did you hear that?"

"It came from the cove!" Clara cried.

They stared, eyes wide. Towering, the cave passed before them, its interior, reaching into pitch blackness. And then—

"Oh-o-o-oh! He!"

"Again!" murmured Lela. "I say—"

"Somebody in there," Babe said.

"Somebody wants help. Somebody, perhaps, who has met with an accident. Come on, girls!"

"But no-no! Where are you going?"

Philip Hamilton cried, springing in front of them. "Babe—" as she started toward the cave.

"In there. You heard—"

"Yes, I heard." He looked grim.

"But—well, you're not going. There might be danger."

"But we must."

"I'll go! No, none of you must come with me. If there's any danger, I'll face it alone."

"What do, the hulking spirit?" Jimmie murmured.

Philip looked her a look. Jimmie blandly smiled. Then, with a nod to the others, he strode forward, disappearing into the darkness of the cave. Marjorie bit her lip.

"Oh, I do hope everything is all right."

"Clad, he is honest," Marcelle muttered, with a shudder.

"I suspect, you girls, that was a

gig-ghost," Bessie Baxter stammered nervously.

"Oh, hush!"

They waited. Five, ten minutes passed by. Nothing more they heard. No sign, no sound. And still Philip had not returned. Babe looked at her cove.

"I say, what's happened to him?" she asked anxiously.

"Come on, let's go and look."

"But he's away," quavered Bessie.

But nobody was paying attention to Bessie then. In every face was uneasiness. In every eye alarm. What had happened to Marjorie's brother?

It was Babe who led the way forward—rather nervously, if the truth be told. Babe did not believe in ghosts, but she shared all the ordinary girl's fear of the unknown, and the legend of this particular cave, the mysterious disappearance of Philip Hamilton, had rather set her nerves on edge. She passed as she reached the entrance.

"Philip!" shouted Marjorie.

They waited. In booming voices, which sounded like a mocking voice, the chalk walls flung back the name. There was no other reply, however.

Babe stopped forward, straining her eyes into the gloom. Nothing! On and on again. Now out of the bright patch of sunlight which bathed the sands at the entrance, into the darkness of the cave's outer regions. For some reason all their hearts were thumping with uncomfortable wildness now. There was something ghastly, eerie about the place.

"Philip!" Babe shouted again.

"Philip!" cried the echoes, beating down upon them from the walls. Even Clara shivered.

There, four or five more steps they took, then suddenly Lyla Carrel ruffled up with an shriek that sent Mabel Lynn, at her back, cowering into her.

"C-o, what's that?"

"Who's what?"

And then they heard it. A low, spectral green from in front of them. Rooted they stood, eyes staring into the darkness ahead. Then suddenly from Bessie Baxter:

"Look!"

They looked. For a moment they could scarcely credit their eyes. From out of the darkness something was resolving itself. Some dim, white form that came drifting towards them.

"It's the gig-ghost!" shrieked Bessie.

"Help! We've haunted! Run!"

And Bessie, with a gasp, turned. Babe, with a yell, went flying.

Paris is infectious. In the strangest state of nerves which was absorbing them all then, not one stopped to think.

Handy they turned. Blindly, they ran, never pausing until the warm sunlight was reached again.

Then, a little advanced of themselves, they turned, to hear the crunching sound of footsteps from the inside of the cave. Desperately they all conjured the impulse to turn and run again. Tingly they waited, and then from Marjorie went up a great cry.

"Philip! Philip!"

She rushed forward. The girl stared. Philip it was—Philip blinking a little in the rays of the sun—but Philip well, unharmed, grinning all over his face. He smiled.

"What, still waiting?"

"Did you see it?" Clara gasped.

"See what?"

"Well, the—"

checked herself. "There was something in the cave."

The young man smiled.

"I saw nothing," he said—"Just nothing! There's nobody in the cave. I struck a whole box of matches exploring, and got tangled up in a mass of passages and lost my way. What did you see?"

"Well, we saw," Clara began, and stopped. "Well, what was it?" she demanded of Babe.

"Something white."

The young man laughed heartily.

"The chalk," he said. "Your eyes were probably playing you tricks, after the midnight. That sound was only the wind, I think. The whole cave is honeycombed with narrow passages when you get further into it, and it's full of mysterious sounds. I don't think," he added, "we need worry about that."

The girls laughed, if a little sulkily, then. Now that it was all over, they felt rather ashamed of their panic-stricken flight. Still, they had heard, they had seen—

"Look! The boat's putting off!" Marcelle cried. "But, I say, Babe, where's Jimmie?"

And Babe, started. Foot of Jimmie's Carstairs there was no sign.

Ship of Gay Adventure



JIMMIE at that moment

was in the cave.

And Jimmie was doing something which would have taxed the

climax' curiosity to the

limit.

Near the wall of the cave, just where the fading light was giving place to interior blackness, Jimmie was on her hands and knees.

In front of Jimmie, in the mud, was the clear impression of a foot. It was a man's foot. In Jimmie's left hand was a sheet of paper, and in the other a pair of scissors which she had taken from her pocket.

The muzzled Jimmie, very thoughtfully and carefully, was cutting out the exact shape of that footprint, and seemed to be utterly absorbed in doing so.

"What-fo?" she breathed. "The footprint of the old ghost! Detective work—what! Find the shape to which this pattern belongs, Jimmie, and there's the merry old ghost himself! Hraime—what!"

She straightened her back a little, and, carefully holding the pattern of the print, rose to her feet. For a moment she stood thoughtfully surveying the black interior of the cave, tracing with her eye the path taken by the ghost.

For Jimmie at least, had not joined in that panic-stricken rush back to the sea. Jimmie, sitting upon one of those rock impulses for which she was rarely given credit, except by those who knew her, had dodged behind a sheltering shoulder of the chalk wall. She had watched as that astounding figure came out. No fear had she been to the ghost, indeed, that by stretching out her slim fingers she could have touched the white smock which enveloped it.

She had waited, however, wishing only that she could see the man-quadrant's face which, like the rest of him, was covered by the smock.

Five or six yards he had blundered past her, and then, satisfying himself that the girls had gone, returned to the inner darkness of the cave.



"LOOK!" shrieked Beate. "It's a g-ghost!" And she darted to one side of the cave while the others stood rooted to the spot, watching that spectral figure emerge from the depths of the cavern.

But will Jeannine, perhaps expecting developments, had waded. Development came. For presently footprints waded. Where the footprints waded before had passed, now appeared the broad-shouldered figure of Marjorie Handlow's brother Philip. Again Jeannine made no move. Boldly she stood, and he, unsuspecting her presence, passed on.

Then she had taken the pattern of the footprint.

"Nice work—what?" she murmured, as she slipped that pattern into her pocket. "But caution—caution, Jimmy, my girl! Ahem!"

And she pointed toward as there was the sound of footsteps near the entrance of the cave, as Babe, Mabel, Marjorie and Clara, accompanied by the bearded young man from Madagascar, came rushing forward.

"Jimmy," cried Babe, "so you're here!"

"Your powers of perspicacity," Jeannine said solemnly, "do you credit, friend of my youth! Here I am, chirpy and sound, and feeling as Spartan as ever!"

"But, where have you been?" Clara demanded.

"Oh, just here!" Jeannine said vaguely.

"But doing what?"

"Oh, nothing! Just exploring. You know what a keen old paleontologist, and all that sort of thing I am. Here to the Curman family," Jeannine added severely. "You know, I once found a fossil that was just like my old gov'nor, and we decided that must have been our first jolly old ancestor. Wonderful things you find in caves at times. Don't you think so, Mr. Handlow?"

Philip Handlow stared at her.

"You mean you've been in this cave at the time?"

"Every minute of it," Jeannine cheerfully asserted him.

"You mean you'd been sharply."

"And you saw the ghost?"

"I saw some joker playing the fool in a white smock," Jeannine informed him blandly. "But I haven't seen a ghost, you know. Not a real ghost of the rattling skeleton type, with the clanking old chains, and all the other accessories. Not even one of the window-gaze variety that you can see through. Just a cheap imitation of the real thing—very cheap," Jeannine said, with a cheerful stare at the young man. "And frightfully—oh, so frightfully clumsy, you know! It left its footprints."

Philip Handlow stared.

"Footprints! What sort of footprints?"

"Oh, a man's!" Jeannine said vaguely, and stared thoughtfully at the man's own feet. "About your size, I should say. But, ahoy!" she added. "Let's slip from this scene of woe. Here's the jolly old longboat."

The longboat—otherwise the motor-launch from the Gloriana, it was, it had come to rest in the deep water outside the cave, and Celeste, gay, irresponsible madcap that she was, could be seen standing up in the bows, merrily waving her hand.

They all turned then, the mystery of Jeannine and her ghost forgotten for the time being. Celeste's cheerful voice hailed them across the bows.

"Ahoy, Cliff House!"

"Ahoy!" shouted Clara, in a stentorian voice.

She led the rush to the shore. Jeannine, with a bewitching smile for Philip Handlow, followed. Philip Handlow frowned, however. With Marjorie for company, he dropped behind.

"Philip," Marjorie said anxiously, "what's the matter? You look worried."

"Worried?" The man laughed. "Oh,

I'm not worried—just a little puzzled," he said. "That friend of yours—Jeannine. She seems a queer sort of girl."

Marjorie smiled easily.

"Jeannine is," she said; "but you must take no notice of her. None of us can ever make up our minds whether she's being serious or just funny. But why should you worry about Jeannine?"

He shrugged.

"Nothing," he said. "I just had a feeling, that's all. I'm pretty sensitive to other people's attitudes, and—well, it did strike me that Jeannine didn't like me."

Marjorie laughed outright.

"Why, of course she does, silly! That's just Jeannine's way. But look, here's Celeste."

Celeste it was—Celeste, having shaken hands with Babe & Co.—who now approached in the middle of the Cliff House group striding up the beach.

Very pretty, very fresh Celeste looked, her blue eyes twinkling with that irresistible spirit of fun that was never very far below the surface—jolly, gay, breezy, like a breath of the sea itself.

She greeted Marjorie boisterously.

"And this," she said, "is the invalid brother? Must say, she added, in her frank way, "that he doesn't seem much of a croak! Happy happy returns!"

"And to you," Philip smiled.

"Rather strange that our birthdays come on the same date," he said. "And so jolly decent of you to let me share your party! I hope," he added sincerely, "I am not intruding."

"Intruding?" Celeste laughed. "Just listen to the man, girls! Why, half the fun is having a double party! It's been such a thrill! But into the boat, you fellows," she cried, "and off to the Gloriana to make whoopee!"

A merry scramble then. Assisted by the courteous Philip, they clambered

into the boat. The second officer, whom they all know by sight, gained a cheery welcome, and landed the launch across the smooth sea towards the glittering yacht. Marjorie smiled fondly at her brother.

"Enjoying it, Philip?"

"Instantly!" he answered. "But I say, what a topping affair that party is!"

"Ripping it most! A fairy ship, seen from the shore, the Gibraltar, on closer approach, proved to be almost like a floating palace. White, cream, and gold, it sailed gently at anchor in the calm sea, the sun glistening on its gleaming sails."

"Gay flags in honour of the double birthday had been hung from the rigging, and on the bridge, waving cheerily, the Spanes of old Roderick Margerson, Celeste's grandfather, could be seen."

"A raft had been dropped overboard, seaward to the yacht by an iron ladder. Surely the boat slipped alongside?"

"Aha, grandpopp!" shouted Celeste.

"Aha! Happy aboard, girl?"

"No need for that injunction. Hardly had the launch been moored to the raft than they were scrambling out. Up the ladder, then, the gallant Philip still smiling, and on to the deck, to be greeted by Celeste's affixive Aunt Mary and the general old Roderick Margerson."

"The yacht, it seemed, was alive with people—friends of the Margersons and other guests invited to share in the day's celebration."

"Recollections, they were all introduced."

"And now," Celeste said, "you'll want to dump your stobber. I've tossed my wardrobe into a temporary cloak-room. Put your toggery there, and we'll be up dressing-rooms later. By the way, I hope none of you has brought fancy dresses for the dance to-night."

"Nur-ny," Bessie stammered; "you told us not to."

"That's right," Celeste said cheerfully. "I've got all that fixed. Whooops, there! Make way for a sailor!" she laughed. "Follow your leader, girls!"

"Off went Celeste. In high feather the chains followed her down the gleaming companion, along the spindly corridors."

"Gaily Celeste threw open the door of her cabin—a scene which proved to be much happier than any of the studies of Cliff House. A screen of stanch had been arranged along one side of the wall."

"Hang your things up!" Celeste cried. "Philip, you don't mind parking your stobber with the coat, do you? Here's a special hook for you. Now, back up, girls! Grandpopp wants us all on deck to drink a toast to the guest of honour, Philip Handelson!"

"Oh, I see!" gasped eager Bessie. "And do we eat, too? Come on, you stobbers!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But in spite of their laughter the chains were not slow in following Bessie up to the top deck.

"There a space had been cleared, and in the centre of that space, as if by magic, a great table, loaded with cakes and jellies, with pastries and fruit and bowls of all sorts and descriptions, had appeared. Roderick Margerson beamed.

"Here we are!" he cried. "Come along! Help yourselves, girls. Scratch and grab. But leave some room for Bessie!" he added, with a laugh. "Now, sit up the glasser. Girls, I give you a toast—a double toast. A toast to my guest of honour, Philip Handelson, and to my niece, Celeste, who jointly celebrate their birthdays to-day!"

"Hurrah!"

With enthusiasm the toasts were drunk.

Marjorie stood, pink with happiness, looking on, fondly into her hand-some brother's face. Philip himself laughed a little awkwardly. And then, of course, they must each make a speech—Celeste first, who, in her usual mad-cap way, recited off a lot of humorous nonsense. Then Philip, who assured them all very gravely that this was the happiest day of his life.

After which they broke up, chattering and laughing as they did justice to the good things provided—especially, of course, Bessie, as the dealer avowed that the sea voyage had made her hungry.

After that, Bessie Celeste, who was never more hungry than when she was doing something, suggested a round of deck games.

"What-to?" Jermina observed. "But what about chess? Or what about?"

Jermina added, "playing deck games in bare feet in the true old nautical style, what? Such great fun, rolling around the deck collecting splinters."

"There was a laugh at that. But the idea was scouted. Everybody voted that deck games in bare feet would be ideal—except, of course, Bessie, who was only anxious by this time to find a comfortable deck-chair in some shady spot and let the rest of the world go by."

There and then they divested themselves of their shoes.

"And you, Mr. Handelson?" Jermina beamed.

"Well—"

"Oh, don't blush! We don't mind seeing your old booties-overshoes, you know."

Philip Handelson laughed. He gazed at his niece, and Marjorie, who was kicking off her own shoes, smiled. He bent down. With one eye on Jermina, he unlaced his shoes, putting three slippers the others. Jermina rose to her feet.

"Another collection?" she beamed.

"Hugs the shoes. I'll take three along and hang them in the merry old cloak-room."

"One of the stewards will do that," Celeste protested.

"Steward?" Jermina said faintly. "Should not be overlooked. No, no! Never!"—Jermina frowned sternly.

"Interfere with a Captain in the execution of his duty. Shoes, Bessie—this way! Your shoes, Bessie, old Spartan's shoes, old Clara's—but perhaps," Jermina added thoughtfully, "I'd better borrow a trolley or something to trundle these."

"My slender arms might break under the strain."

Clara glared.

"Look here, if you're suggesting—"

"Fax," Jermina sighed. "Fax, my Trojan! All right then. I'll be British—"

and with an exaggerated grunt she picked up the shoes. "New yours, Marjorie. Mr. Handelson—"

"The man passed."

"Can't you call me Philip?" he asked.

"Satisfying! Call you," Jermina said, "whatever you like. Shoes, please! This way with the shoes. Thank you, Philip Handelson's, and, loaded up, disappeared towards the companion."

She reached the cloak-rooms; but there she allowed the shoes to fall in a heap on the floor, and suddenly the rippard Jermina became changed. Swift, alert and keen the expression on her face as, with a swift glance towards the door, she picked up one of Philip Handelson's shoes. Quickly she took out the paper pattern she had made in the cabin, and fitted it over the sole. Her lips purred.

"Now what," she asked of the empty room, "was Philip Handelson doing (laying ghost in that case)? And who, Jersey boy, made those noises that sent him into the crew? And what—ah?"

The last exclamation left her lips as, starting round, she noticed something lying on the floor beneath the stool on which was hung Philip Handelson's coat. She bent forward, picking it up.

It was a leather release which had obviously slipped from Philip Handelson's pocket when he had hung up his coat. Jermina hesitated a moment, quite plainly struggling with the temptation to open it. Then she shook her head.

"No, old Spartan! Be British," she told herself.

She moved forward, intending to place it in the pocket of its owner's coat. She did not notice by this moment that something—a folded slip of paper—slipped out of the wallet, and, dithering down her dress, lodged in her own pocket. She reached up, pulling the coat towards her. Then, wallet in hand, in the act of replacing it, she jumped round with a start.

For suddenly the door of the cabin swung open, and there, his face startled, stood Philip Handelson. With him were Marjorie and Bessie.

He gave an exclamation.

"Jermina," he cried, "what are you doing with my coat?"

Jermina Walks Out



EVEN Jermina, so normally composed and equal to any crisis, was taken aback

then. As for Marjorie and Bessie, they just stared.

"Er—ahem!" Jermina said. "Sorry and all that, what? Part of the matter is, I found this waist on the floor!"

"Indeed?" Philip Handelson said mildly.

"Indeed?" Jermina probed.

"Then how was it we found you fumbling in my pocket?"

"Just getting it back, what?" Jermina explained lightly. "Knew it was yours, of course—found it under your hat stand. But here you are, so I added cheerfully, 'now you've been you can jolly well put it back yourself!'"

"Philip, come in here, stand!"

"I suppose it's all right?" he asked.

"All right! What do you mean?"

"Well—oh, nothing! But—"

"You don't mind if I look through it?"

Jermina's eyes glowered.

"Meaning," she asked, "you think I've taken something out of it?"

"Well, no—"

"Well, what?" Jermina challenged.

"I've told you the jolly old truth, haven't I? If you believe me, why look through it? Just as if—with an unusual flash of anger—you suspected I'd taken something from it."

"Jermina?" cried Marjorie. "Oh, my goodness! Philip, no! It's all right. Leave the wretched case alone."

"Yes, rather. Jersey wouldn't tell me, Philip," Bessie chimed in anxiously.

Philip lit his pipe. Again he stared at Jermina—hesitatingly, suspiciously. Jermina glared fiercely back. He seemed reluctant to take either Bessie or Marjorie's advice, however.

"Well—well perhaps," he said. "As a matter of fact, I'd better look through it. No reflection upon you, Jermina," he added hastily. "But—well, I had a rather important paper in here. If the wallet was fumbling about the floor, it might have got lost with it. I—"

and he stopped abruptly. Then he stared, giving a sort of little jump.

"Jemima," he said in a strained voice, "if this is a joke, don't you think you are carrying it rather far?"

Jemima frowned.

"I don't understand!"

"You have been something out of this world!"

"Really?" cried Marjorie.

"No, please, Marjorie!" Her face was intent then. Suspiciously she looked at Jemima, and Jemima, a little pink but proudly unflinching, returned the glance with interest. "Jemima, there was a paper here—a rather important paper. What have you done with it?"

"I haven't," Jemima stated distinctly.

"From whom a paper?"

"But it was here."

"Then may we suggest," Jemima insisted in a trifle coolly, "that you look somewhere else for it? Marjorie, let us pass, please."

"Oh, my dear!" cried Babs. She blinked. Never before had she or Marjorie seen Jemima in this mood—Jemima looking so settled, so angry, so stiffly upon her dignity.

"No, hold on, you idiot!" Babs cried. "Let's have this out and clear the air. Did you or did you not take the paper?"

"Well, you've known me for a good many years, Babs. You ought to know by this time whether I speak the truth or not!"

"But the paper was here!" Philip declared desperately.

"But—Oh, bother!" Marjorie cried. "Why make a fuss? Where's a paper, after all? Now, now, you two! Be pleased, be jolly, please!" For Jemima's sake did not she! Philip is my brother, and—and, after all, it is his birthday!" Marjorie ended lamely.

"Is it?" Jemima asked.

"Well, you know it is."

"So it?—Jemima said irritably."

"And—and, oh, Jimmy, don't spoil the party!" Babs pleaded.

Jemima passed at that. She looked again at Philip Haseldene. Philip stared back, the expression on his face suggesting that he no longer regarded Jemima as a business curiosity.

"Well, I'm sure I don't want to burst up the merry old celebration," Jemima said. "All the same, that was a naughty thing to do. Mr. Haseldene may be guilty of many crimes, but taking papers from walls isn't one of them. Do we apologize?" she added.

Philip Haseldene passed. Then he broke into a laugh.

"Oh, all right!" he said. "I'm sorry. I—I was a little taken aback for the moment. Of course, Jemima, I—I never meant that. But it's now where that paper has gone to," he added hurriedly.

"I say, do you mind having a look round for it?"

"I say, do you mind having a look round for it?" They looked round. They searched every inch of the floor. Jemima willingly lending a hand. But no paper was to be found.

"Decided it is some other part of the yacht, perhaps," Babs suggested. "We'll make inquiries. What sort of paper was it?"

"Oh, nothing you'd understand. It was news sort of diagram," Philip replied awkwardly.

It wasn't much to go on. Again Jemima looked at him curiously. They proceeded to the top deck then, where a merry game of deck tennis was in progress. With Philip Haseldene, Babs sought out Mr. Margesson, and told him of the visitor's loss. At once Mr. Margesson set inquiries afoot.

"Well, if it's knocking about it will soon turn up," Babs said. "Come on now, Philip, let's join the game!"

Philip went, but it was noticeable that his expression was uneasy. It was noticeable, too, despite the quarrel

which had been patched up, that there was a distinct air of aloofness between he and Jemima; and Marjorie, sensitive to atmosphere as she was, bit her lip. The day which had begun so happily seemed to have become marred by a shadow all at once.

In the interval of deck tennis she approached her brother.

"Phil—" she began anxiously.

"Yes, Marjorie?" Philip smiled.

"Oh, dear! I—I wish you and Jemima would be more friendly," she said. "You've hardly looked at each other since we came on deck."

Philip frowned.

"Well, it's not my fault, Marjorie. I've tried to be friendly. The truth of the matter is, Jemima doesn't like me."

"But, Philip, it's not like Jemima. I'm sure," Marjorie said earnestly, "you're mistaken, Philip, go and find her. Ask her if you can get her something."

He smiled affectionately.

"Would it please you, Marjorie?"

"Oh, Philip, it would?"

Philip rose. He went in search of Jemima. But Jemima, whom he had just seen leaving over the rail by the wheel-house, was no longer in evidence. Jemima, indeed, at that moment was in the throes of the most tumultuous perturbation. For Jemima, plunging her hand into her pocket in search of a handkerchief, had discovered, to her consternation and amazement, Philip Haseldene's piece of missing paper!

Naturally, Jemima did not connect Philip with that piece of paper all at once. Ifly she unfolded it, thinking it must have been some old private document of her own which she had forgotten.

She did not even think of Philip when she found herself staring at the rather cryptic diagram the paper contained—the diagram which seemed composed mostly of parallel lines. On the right

of the parallel lines was a number—23—and in the middle of the fourth line from the figure 13 there was a cross, surrounded by a circle.

Jemima frowned.

"Now, what the pretty old deuce—" And then, as she remembered, she straightened up with a start. Oh, great heavens! This must be Philip Haseldene's missing paper!

Excited the look in Jemima's eyes then. Impulsively she folded the paper again. Her first natural reaction was to rush it back to its owner; but she paused. No, wait. Now she had seen it there was no harm in having another look, and here—

She looked round. With a flush in her cheeks she hastened towards the companion-way. Unseen, she stepped down the stairs. Quickly she unlocked her way to the writing-room, which, as she had hoped, was empty. Then she drew out the paper again.

"Thirteen," she muttered, "and that cross. Now what—"

She adjusted her spectacles. Long and intently she stared, until, gradually, her eyes widened, her lips parted.

"Jimmy, too," she murmured softly. "I believe you have it. I believe—"

And there she started, instinctively crumpling the paper in her hand as a football assailed at the door, and diffused as she saw that football belonged to Philip Haseldene. She frowned.

"Well, well, well—fancy seeing you!" she blurted. "Now why for a cracker what? Be lively, and read, and all that sort of thing! Take a walk, will you?"

He did not respond to the invitation. He stared at her broadly.

"Jemima," he said, "what was that paper you were reading?"

"Oh! Oh, was I reading a paper?" Jemima blurted impatiently.

"You were reading a paper?" He



JEMIMA swung round as the cabin door suddenly opened, revealing Philip Haseldene. "Jemima," he exclaimed gleefully, "what are you doing with my note-case?"

looked round quickly. For a moment his face was transfigured. A flame seemed to leap into his eyes, his teeth showed. "That was my paper!" he bit out. "The paper you stole from my wallet, you little thief!"

Jimmie drew back. "Whose, boy, black water?" she cried. "Neither forgetting yourself, aren't you?"

"Hand it over!" "Well, ask for it nicely!"

The man gave a half snarl. Then, suddenly, blindly, he plunged forward. Jimmie, coolly, half expecting the move, stepped nimbly back. With a cry the man stumbled forward, and, claving at the air, tripped over the carpet and measured his length. Jimmie clapped her hands.

"Tapping, old scoundrel!" she cried. "Do it again!"

Red-faced, Philip Handbless rose to his feet. He glared grimly at Jimmie. She took on his face a gleaming glint, he was contemplating a second attack. At the same moment there was a rush of footsteps outside.

Babe, Clara, Marjorie, and Lolla Carroll appeared.

"My hat, so here you are!" Babe cried. "We've been looking everywhere for you. We want to get up a couple of sides for a game of deck cricket. But I say," she added, stopping and glancing quickly from the face of Jimmie to the face of the man, "what's the matter?"

Philip Handbless, breathing heavily, straightened his tie.

"I'm sorry," he said, with every appearance of regret, "to open a memory which I had hoped was closed. But I have just discovered that Jimmie has my paper."

"Oh, but—" Babe started.

"Jimmie—"

Jimmie shrugged. "True," she said—"true! I have his paper. I have it here." She opened her hand. "By a most unfortunate coincidence, the paper must have slipped out of the wallet into my pocket when I was putting it back in Mr. Handbless's pocket. Sounds a bit this—what?"

They stared at her. Jimmie, coolly polished her monocle. They looked at each other, wondering, amazed. The story, as Jimmie herself had confessed, certainly did sound this.

"You deliberately kept it!" Philip Handbless accused.

"I did not!"

"Oh, please!" Marjorie broke in desperately. "don't start working again. For goodness' sake, don't spoil the whole day! Jimmie, what has come over you? Why don't you like my brother?"

Jimmie's eyelids flickered.

"Have I said I don't like your brother?"

"But, bother it, you keep on roving with him!"

Jimmie smiled blandly.

"Oh, but that's impossible! I wouldn't," she said, "now with your teacher for my friend, Marjorie. Not for all the oceans of gold in America." She looked directly at the man as she said that, and Philip Handbless, for some reason, paled, and then flushed.

"Well, well, there we are, all waiting to play the money old game of deck cricket or whatever it is. Let's stagger along."

"But, Jimmy, you're going to apologise to Philip," Marjorie cried.

"Philip—"

"Well, I guess I'm willing to bury the hatchet, if Jimmie is."

"Well, that's ripping!" Babe cried. "Oh, come on now, be sensible, Jimmy! It's sensible, both of you. Oh, goodness, let's forget all about this. Philip, shake hands."

And Philip, with a smile, put his hand forward. Jimmie pretended not to notice it, however.

"Well so," she murmured, "get on with the money old game!" And, ignoring the outstretched palm, walked out of the room.

Like a Nightmare!



"JIMMIE!" "Jimmy, you old idiot!"

"Jimmy, you silly chump!"

"Jimmie Christina, reclining lazily in a deckchair on the Gloria's after-deck, opened her eyes.

"Hallo, children! Run away and play!" she murmured. "Aunt Jimmy wants to scold."

It was after lunch on the Gloria—a lunch which had exceeded even Bonnie Bunter's most blissful expectations. A good lunch, but, it is to be feared, one that had not been pre-arranged in that same light-hearted manner which had characterized the party in the morning.

There was a dead end for the Cliff House party. Jimmie, Marjorie, and Philip Handbless, the Gloria's guests of honor, were not on speaking terms.

But the "children"—they were Babe, Babe, Clara, Lolla, and Celeste herself—did not run away. In a rather grim anticlimax they confronted her.

"Now, look here, Jimmy—" Clara Trevelyan said.

Jimmie sighed, yawned, gazed for her eyes, and put it in her eye.

"No peace for the naughty old wicked," she remarked. "Well, my Sparrows!"

"Jimmy, why have you quarrelled with Marjorie's brother?" Barbara demanded bluntly.

"But, old Spartan, I haven't!" Jimmie blandly informed them.

"Nothing further from my thoughts!"

"Oh, shut it!" Clara cried impatiently. "You know jolly well you refused to shake hands with him!"

"With Marjorie's brother!"

"Well, of course, chump!"

Jimmie sighed.

"Friends," she said, "there are times when your Aunt Jimmy is proud of your cleverness. There are others, when I weep for you! When I ask myself—" and Jimmie molly shook her sleek blue-cropped head—"that is going to become of you in the great battle of after-life for which you are now being prepared, I shudder! Refuse, pray! Let me sleep in peace!"

And gently Jimmie closed her eyes again.

They stared at her, puzzled. When Jimmie spoke in riddles, there simply was an understanding here—but usually Jimmie had some very strong reason for her apparent foolishness.

Clara cooperatively squared her shoulders.

"That may sound like an explanation to you, she retorted bluntly, "but to me it's just plain gibber. The position's this, Jimmie, and it's up to you to clear it up. Whatever you think about it, you've jolly well insulted Marjorie's brother! You can't expect Marjorie to take that lying down—"

Jimmie's lips straightened a little. There was a curious constriction in her face now.

"Well, yes! Go on!" she said.

"And so a week," Clara continued, "you've just naming things up for everybody! Either you shut down off this giddy parcel you've stuck yourself on, or—"

"Or—" Jimmie asked.

"Or—well—"

But, being Clara—that Clara who always spoke her mind first and thought afterwards, she simply could not help the words which were slipped off her tongue, and for which she could have kicked herself the moment they were uttered.

"Well, if not, jolly well go back to school!" she blurted.

It was not Jimmie, however. Babe & Co., and Celeste, breath taken away by that announcement, could find no words. Very quietly Jimmie rose; with extreme deliberation folded the rug which covered her knees. She put it down.

"Good-bye!" she said.

"Jimmy, no!" Babe broke out, while Clara stood aside biting her lip.

"Jimmy, Clara didn't mean it!"

"Clara," Jimmie said, "did mean it. Never shall a Christina betray where she is not wanted, forsooth! If I am spoiling the party—whom, then, the authoring cause shall be recovered! Cheer up, Clara! I don't blame you for speaking your mind—the old building spirit will not, what! Let me go—"

"But, Jimmy," Celeste begged, "Oh, look here, we can't let you go like this!"

"Will you," Jimmie asked, "order the old launch, Celeste? I shall be ready in ten minutes."

"No—"

"I'm going!"

And it was obvious that Jimmie's mind was made up. She stood up. Even neither one to the other side looked. She walked straight out. The chums looked at each other in consternation and dismay.

"Oh, my hat! The touchy chump!"

Mabe growled. "Clara, you idiot!"

"Oh, all right! Blame me!" Clara said bitterly. "I'm sorry! I didn't mean that to slip out! But—well, blow it! I'm not going to see old Marjorie depressed and miserable. Dash it all, this is her brother's birthday, and I—"

"Clara!" Marjorie's own voice interrupted.

And Marjorie herself came along the deck at that moment, her face rather white.

"I—I came to see Jimmie," she said. "Oh, goodness, we can't go on like this! I've never, never quarrelled with Jimmy in my life before, and—" But where is she?" she added, staring round.

"Oh! She is gone!" Celeste murmured.

"Gone where?"

"Well, back to school, I guess," Lolla Carroll volunteered. "She—she seemed rather upset."

Marjorie's eyes widened.

"You mean— Oh, my goodness!" she cried. "Oh, no! She mustn't go! She mustn't! Jimmy didn't mean that! She couldn't have meant it! I—I don't understand, but—but—well, we all know she has a reason for everything. Lolla, where is she?"

"Well, in the cloak-room, I guess," Lolla said. "But—"

Marjorie, however, was not waiting to hear more. In a sudden burst of apprehension she was flying along the deck. Naturally Marjorie had been hurt by Jimmie's treatment of her

brother; naturally, sitting with him, she had been annoyed with Jimmie. But Marjorie's gentle, peace-loving nature would not allow her to be at loggerheads with anyone for long—and certainly not with Jimmie, who had poured himself such a soothing drink in the past.

Marjorie felt if only she could come to an understanding with Jimmie, that all difficulties would be smoothed out. And for Jimmie to leave the yacht—because of a quarrel with her—

No!

Marjorie flew.

She reached the companion, plunged down it. At the bottom of the steps she passed a little, blinking up the passage. That was Jimmie—tugging the corridor—but what was that strange knocking noise which came from below? She cried out:

"Jimmie!"

But Jimmie, by that time, had vanished. Desperately Marjorie ran after her, just in time to see her disappearing down the passage at the bottom of the stairs which led downwards. Where on earth was Jimmie going? This, secretly, was not the way to the stateroom!

Down the steps Marjorie pelted—just in time again to see Jimmie descending the third stairway, which led to the bunkers and the boiler-rooms. The knocking she had heard before was never more. She called frantically:

"Jimmie!"

Jimmie did hear that. She looked around swiftly. For a moment she paused, then, crossing her head, her eyes in a more swiftly than ever.

Marjorie bit her lip; but determinedly she followed.

Now she was at the bottom of the steps, she was racing along the corridor. It was darker here than on the well-lighted corridors above. Hyster, too, with an unpleasant cilia smell in her atmosphere that was faintly nauseating. Round the corner round which Jimmie had disappeared, Marjorie paused, only to pull up with a gasp as she recognized full into that girl, who was standing still.

"Jimmie!" she cried.

Jimmie hung round. Her face was white now. There was some very strange quality in her expression which, faintly startling Marjorie, caused her to stare.

But it was that moment she saw something else. A bent figure in the corridor. It was the figure of a man—one of the crew, Marjorie supposed. He had a hammer in one hand, some other instrument in the other, and he was at work on the foreheads, which ran in straight, parallel lines between the doors which interrupted the walls on either side. Just a glimpse of him she had.

"Jimmie!" she panted again.

"Jimmie, I want—"

No more! For at that instant a strange thing happened. She saw Jimmie's hand go up; she saw it coming towards her face. She started back. At the same moment the light went out, plunging the corridor into dark blackness.

Marjorie faltered back, the last picture in her mind's eye that of Jimmie with her hand upraised. Before she could recover her breath, however, rough hands seized her. She gave a thin shriek as she felt herself borne backwards. Desperately she shrieked.

"Jimmie, what—" she gasped.

"Let me go! Let me go!"

The hand about her shoulders tightened. Back, back, back she was borne, this ink, rather than see, a door behind

her opening. With a twist and a twist her senses assailed and her spinning. Five, six paces, Marjorie staggered helplessly. She felt the hot steel plates of the sloping floor beneath her feet. In her nose was a strong smell of coal and tar pitch.

She gasped, even as she reeled, where she was. In one of the enormous coal bunkers of the yacht!

That was true, though, in the jolly darkness, Marjorie could see nothing. Dimly, unable to stop, she stumbled on. And then, with a thin scream, she pitched forward—right into the solitary mountain of coal before her.

For one dizzy second, all the breath jerked from her body, she lay still, and in that second, the coal, piled against the wall in a loose heap, disintegrated. With her rear end a rotund the heap from the top came crashing down, growing into an avalanche. Marjorie, rolling her pearl, desperately heaved herself away.

You late! She had a momentary sensation of the earth opening to engulf her—a million flashing lights leapt before her eyes, in the middle of which, strangely enough, she saw Jimmie's face staring out at her.

Door 13



"O H, my hat! Where is the dickens is Marjorie!" Barbara Redfern asked anxiously.

"Isn't come up from below yet?" Clara Trevellyan said.

"But it's ten minutes since she left," Maie bit her lip. "Maie, you—you don't think Jimmie and Marjorie are roving in the stateroom?"

Maie shook her head. It was rather hard to imagine that, but it was also hard to imagine what was keeping the two of them down below.

The six of them—Maie, Maie, Clara, Lella, Marcelle, and Celina—Bessie was still noosing on the after-deck—were gathered at the head of the companion that led to the lower deck, and rather shaken and upset by the recent events, were waiting anxiously for the two absences.

During Marjorie's absence they had come to a decision. Marjorie, the most injured party, apart from her brother, was on a mission of peace.

They couldn't let Jimmie go off like this, leaving behind her the shadow which would mar the rest of the day. If Marjorie's pleading had not succeeded; then Clara, out of all precedent, was going to plead with Jimmie to think things over—and that, added to the pleas of Celina, should do the trick, they thought. For if Jimmie was unusual, she was certainly not unreasonable.

"And where," Lella demanded, "is Philip Handstone? Say, girls, I haven't seen him since lunch."

"Dois't he say something about going to be down?" Maie asked.

"But why should he be down?" Clara demanded.

"Well, it's a habit, I guess," Lella chimed in. "Bessie of his three days, I expect. Besides, it's so jolly hot in Maie-what-you-call-it, that I expect they're glad of a shade in the after noon. A habit once formed isn't so easily got out of, I reckon. Hallo, there!" she cried forward. "Somebody coming up the steps. Gro, it's Philip himself!"

Philip it was, smiling as usual.

"Hallo, girls! Waiting for me? Where's Marjorie?"

"Haven't you seen her?" Clara asked.

"No, why?"

"Nothing. But she went down there too minutes ago. To talk to Jimmie," Clara said. She passed, looking at Maie. "We—we've been thinking things over," she said. "You know what a tender-hearted old chap Marjorie is, and you know how it's hurting her not to be friends with Jimmie. Like an idiot, I went and put my foot in it just now."

He eyed her curiously.

"How?"

"Oh, I said something I didn't intend to say. Jimmie took it wrongly. Marjorie's gone after her to make the peace, you know, and I—well, dash it, I'm going to apologise as well. The lieutenant is missing up the whole day! Philip, you don't hear Jimmie any grudge?"

The man smiled. Curiously he lit a cigarette.

"Jimmie isn't the usual type of girl one meets," he remarked, "but she's a good kid at heart. I'm sure if there's anything I can do to help smooth out the tangle—well, rely on me. Shall we go and look these men?"

The chums looked at him gratefully. What a topping fellow he was! It was he, in fact, who set the search party moving to the companion-way, and in his usual polite way, waited for them as they came tripping down after him. They went to the stateroom.

"Not here," Philip said.

Certainly Marjorie and Jimmie were not there. They turned, a little puzzled, a little disappointed. At the same moment there was a step in the corridor. Jimmie, looking a little flustered, came hurrying along.

"Oh," she said, and quickly dried her hand into her pocket.

"Jimmie!" cried Marjorie. "We look for you! Where is Marjorie?"

"Marjorie!" Jimmie murmured.

"Yes. She was looking for you," Maie supplemented.

"Oh! That's why of her," Jimmie said. "Why was she looking for me?"

"Well, she wanted to make it up, you know."

"Oh!" Jimmie said again, openly, and stared at Clara, who flushed.

"And—and I do, too, Jimmie," Clara said. "Oh, hang it! I'm sorry for letting my tongue run away with me like that. But—well, you know what I think of old Marjorie. You know how I hate to see her upset. But she was more upset than ever at the thought of you leaving. That—that's why she came to try to make it up."

"And—and," Jimmie asked, "you want me to stay?"

"Oh, please Jimmie," Celina begged. Jimmie smiled.

"Well, well," she murmured, "jolly old bygones, what, Mr. Handstone? Be—what do you say about it?"

But Philip Handstone at that moment looked as if he were incapable of saying anything. From the moment he had seen Jimmie in the corridor he had never taken his eyes off her. He stamed now.

"Oh, I—I—of course I'd like you to stay," he said.

"Thanks!" Jimmie accepted dryly. "And—and—well, dash it, if I've given you any cause for offence, I apologise most sincerely," he blurted.

"And so," Jimmie beamed, "all merry and bright in the jolly old bygones again, what? The calm returns. What's in my old rheumatism?"

"The only thing you," Bessie cried happily. "It is to feel Marjorie. Jimmie, you didn't see Marjorie!"

Jimmie coughed. She looked at Philip Handstone.

"Alena! Did you?" she asked.
 "I?" He looked taken aback. "Why should I have seen her? I've been asleep."

"Sure!"
 His face reddened.
 "Oh, never! I'm sure! What—"
 "Oh, my hat! I thought you two had made it up," Babs cried. "Now, now, the goodman's safe! Anyway, let's search," she added hastily.

"Better look before," Jennina murmured in agreement.

That, obviously, was the best plan. But again Babs seized, with an inward pang, that Jennina was looking very steadily at Philip, and she looked for the first time that Philip himself did not look the same as usual. Was it traces of unconsciousness, or fear she saw on his face as he returned the direct stare which Jennina gave him? If it was, it was gone in a flash.

"Marjorie!" shouted Clara again.
 No reply.

"Well, she can't have gone to the store," the Tumbler grunted. "And there's only the motorbald and the bankers to explore. She wouldn't have gone down there."

"She might," Lolla Carroll said. "I guess Marjorie was so keen to know the workings of this outfit as anybody else. Anyway, let's hike."

They went off, descending the last of the companions. In a group they stood in the box, dimly lit corridor. Again Clara raised her voice.

"Marjorie!"
 "No!" Babs began, and then tessel. "Listen!"

A faint voice floated back to them along the corridor. Babs jumped.

"That came from the room over there—No. 15!"

"That's a coal bunker," Celeste cried in amazement.

They went forward, Celeste leading now. She caught the door.

"Hallo, it's locked!"
 "But how—"

From inside came the sound of a measurement.

"Somebody in there," Babs breathed. "It is! It's Marjorie, she must have been locked in."

Celeste set her lips. She turned the key. Her hand forced the switch and flashed the banker with electric light. Into it they all crowded.

And then Babs gave a horrified shout.
 "Marjorie—look!"

And for a moment they all stared, rooted to the spot with consternation and astonishment. For there at the foot of a small staircase of lower coal, half-covered by coal herself, was the grizzled, blackened figure of their missing stealer!

She was unconscious when they lifted her up. She was unconscious when they carried her along to the ship's hospital. She was unconscious when Mr. Haggerson was summoned, and the ship's doctor came to attend her.

Back in the depths of oblivion, Marjorie knew nothing of all that. To the banker her reply to her own name had been purely mechanical—not in response to the prangings of her brain, but simply because in some dim way that name had penetrated through her consciousness.

It passed days and days, indeed, to Marjorie before she opened her bewildered eyes again.

"O' opened them vaguely, wonderingly, still in the throes of a dreadful sense of unreality.

Lights flamed down, and in a crowded group the busy faces of Babs & Co. surrounded her. As through a mist she saw Babs bending over her.

"Marjorie," Babs whispered. "Marjorie! We found you, old girl! It's all right now! But who stole you in the bunker?"

Marjorie closed her eyes. She did not know what she said. Semi-consciousness still she was in the state of a dreamer who talks in her sleep. Unconsciously she snarled-sipped from her lips.

"Jennina!" she said, and relapsed into a heavy sleep.

"Until We Meet Again!"



"JENNINA!"

The name was taken up by every lip. Everyone there turned, wondering, horrified eyes upon the clerk.

Even-cropped girl who seemingly had been as anxious as any of them to catch that whisper from the stricken Marjorie.

"Jennina!" Babs cried. Jennina very stiffly shook her head.

"I plead," she said, "not guilty!"

"No!" It was Philip Handstone who spoke now—Philip now who took a step forward. His face was ashen, his eyes glaring. Come was the talented, good-natured young fellow they had all known before.

"Wait a minute!" he cried sharply. "Jennina, this is my sister—"

Jennina's eyes glared.

"Is it?"

"You know it is!" His eyes seemed to glare. "Jennina," he added, "for some reason you've had it in for me from the first moment you met me. For some reason you stole my paper in the cloak-room. I forgave that. You refused when I offered to shake hands with you and make it up."

"That upset Marjorie. She came down there to try to persuade you to put things right. Well, we can see now what happened. You refused to put things right. Instead, you pushed Marjorie into this bunker and closed the door on her."

"And let her," Jennina asked, "like that?"

"What else? Do you deny being down there?"

"Do you?" Jennina countered.

"Jennina, this is no time for question and counter-question," Mr. Haggerson said. "Mr. Handstone has made a very serious accusation. Perhaps one cannot blame him. After all, he is the girl's brother, and naturally is upset. You may only have meant it for a joke, of course—"

"Thanks," Jennina said disdainfully. "But even I don't go to those sort of things for jokes, Mr. Haggerson."

"Do you deny that you looked Marjorie in the bunker?"

"I do!" Jennina replied.

"But does she deny it?" Philip Handstone asked, while the chairs, bewildered, clustered round, "that she met Marjorie during the last quarter of an hour? I assure," he added, "that you seemed rather nervous to avoid that question when it was put to you."

"And I return," Jennina retorted, "that you didn't seem so jolly keen to twitter your own explanation when I put the same question to you!"

"I told you I had been sleeping—"

Jennina gave a shrug.

"You've told us," she said, "too many things. How you never saw that jolly old ghost in the caves, for instance."

She stared round.

"It seems pretty clear," she added with a sigh, "that you've won, and I've lost. Mr. Handstone—at least, for the time being."

She turned.
 "Well, I suppose this is the end of it!" she asked. "Obviously, the faultless Philip has no care of the company."

"Not Jerry," Babs said, "look here—explain, you stump! Did you or did you not meet Marjorie?"

Jennina looked at her queerly.
 "Well, I do?"

They all stared.
 "Where? In that passage?"

"In that passage," Jennina said. She kept her eyes on Philip Handstone.

Marjorie was there. Philip was there. The three of us were there. Then something happened. The lights went out. I was terrified over. And if," she added finally, "you want to know who pushed Marjorie into the bunker and locked her—ask him!"

Philip Handstone started back.

"You—you dare suggest that I—my own sister—"

"I suggest it—yes," Jennina said.

"But, apparently—with a glance round—the suggestion does not fall on fruitful ground. Well, well, what a life! Here and it is to be misjudged and misunderstood. Perhaps," she added softly, "would be better if I reverted to my suggestion of ten minutes ago, and returned to my jolly old native berth! Perhaps then every one would be happier."

She stared round again. Babs stood still, bewildered, amazed. She could not believe it—not that of Jerry. But there were the facts! Out of injured Marjorie's own mouth she had been condemned. Jennina gave a little smile.

"For the last time—good-bye!" she said.

She walked towards the door. Babs took a half-step forward, only to be pushed back rather angrily by Clara Trevlyn. Celeste bit her lip. Mr. Haggerson shook an head.

Very sweet, Jennina stalked forward. She reached the door and placed her hand upon the knob. Then for the last time she turned.

But this time she did not look at her friends. With a faintly mocking smile, she stared at Philip Handstone.

"Good," she murmured softly, "we meet again, Mr. Handstone!"

And with that cryptic remark, she passed into the corridor.

And when, five minutes later, the doors flared the docks again, it was to see Jennina, a lovely figure, seated in the bows of the launch, shooting back towards the quay.

"Bewley By Night"



IT was all very worrying, in all poor clarity, to Clara Trevlyn just it.

It was a accident, to Marjorie, that terribly unpleasant scene in the hospital, the departure of Jennina, had had such a depressing effect upon the Cliff House party that the double birthday celebrations seemed like fading out like a damp squib. There was little revelry that afternoon. Nobody felt like it.

They cheered them up a little. After tea there was a concert by the Pegg Pierrots, whom Celeste had specially engaged for the celebration.

Then, still looking a little white, but professing herself to be more the worse for her adventure, a strangely silent Marjorie joined them.

The appearance of Marjorie cer-

tains helped to lighten the atmosphere, even though fully conscious now, Marjorie was reluctant to say anything about the arena which had led up to her being imprisoned and locked in the coal-bunker.

"Well, please let us forget it," she pleaded. "J-Jessima didn't mean it. I'm sure. And please let us be happy," she cried. "This must be a dreadful birthday for poor Celeste and Philip. Philip, I'm frightfully sorry," she added.

Philip smiled faintly. "Dear old kid! Don't be sorry about me," he said, and put a hand upon her own. "I'm happy being just with you!" he whispered.

Whereat Marjorie blushed faintly and smiled.

But it was Philip, all the same, who pulled the party together—Philip who made the champagne drink of the lingering traces of glasses which had sat so heavily upon them.

His was the suggestion before dinner that they should hold an impromptu concert, and he it was, with clever mimicry, who set the ball of fun rolling again. And then came Bonnie with her really clever ventriloquistic turn; Mike, who gave an excerpt from Cliff Haines's last play; some very funny dialogue between Marjorie in her quaint (lookop English and Lella in her blunt American.

And then to cap it all there was dinner—one of those really magnificent, large meals which one always connects with the Riviera. Many heaps of over-ripening apples lay before—with Bonnie growing fatter and more distinguished with every morsel, and over-ripened then, thanks to Philip, unaccountably good-humoured.

After dinner, in the beautiful painé lounge, they sat and sipped coffee and listened to the radiograms, while the men smoked cigarettes. And after that came the treat of the day—the great fancy dress dance, after which Miss Margerson was to present to the two guests of honor their birthday presents—with an additional gift for every member of the company and the ship's crew.

Kentlemen then. The last lingering shadow disappeared. Even Jessima's absence was forgotten in the merry helter-skelter rush to get into the gorgeous fancy dresses which Celeste had prepared for them, the cabins, in the meantime, having been turned into dressing-rooms.

Such thrill, then! Such exclamations of rapture, of delight, when finally they all stood dressed, forming a picture which must have captured the imagination of any artist.

How marvellous Marjorie Handstone looked in that lovely simple Dolly Varden costume which Celeste had procured for her! How changed Clara, in the dress of an Egyptian princess, and Lella in a lacemaker's costume.

Marjorie was radiant! happy as Madame Tupper, and Babe looked really regal in the Ruby Queen of Scots dress which she of new perfection. Even Bonnie was happy—Bonnie dressed as a rather fat pueretto.

Then came Celeste—Celeste dressed, if you please, as a highwayman, pitch and all. She appeared in the doorway masked and spurred, pointing the pistol at them.

"Stared and delirious!" she cried. "Dazed!" cried Bonnie Baxter, and indignantly "dressed" behind Babe. "Handits!" she roared. "Keep 'em off! And—ov—ov—how!" she yelled, as she slipped up and snatched the door. "Who pushed me?"



It was a very dashing highwayman who suddenly appeared in the doorway with the ringing cry: "Stared and delirious!" But Bonnie certainly didn't guess Celeste's fancy dress. "Help!" she belloved. "Handits!"

"You pushed yourself, old rhy-pops!" Lella chuckled. "Tripped over the rug, you change. Woe, Bonnie—quick! He's going to fire!"

"Hi, ha, ha!" And as the fun went on. But with just the slightest hint of shadow. The shadow caused by the absence of Jessima. Jessima, who would have so enjoyed this! Who so loved dressing up, even though she did protest that it was a fog—Jessima who, at this moment, would be back at Cliff House coast, probably thinking of her many charms and the times they were having.

What had come over Jessima? What had made her act with such bewildering hostility towards Philip Handstone that day? What had prompted her to play that great trick upon Marjorie? Certainly not like Jessima!

And yet—
"I say, Babe, how do I look?" Marjorie dimpled.

"You look lovely," Babe smiled. "Kindly topping. Has Philip seen you?"

"No, not yet. Shall I go and show him, do you think?" Marjorie asked. "He may not recognize me when we're on the dance floor, as we shall all be masked."

"Good idea," Babe said. "Wait a minute, Marjorie, I'll come with you." And she put down the powder-puff she had been using, with Marjorie went out, knocking at the door of the dressing-room three doors farther down, which Philip had been allotted. There was no reply.

"Philip?" Marjorie called. "I say, he's not in!"

"Perhaps he's on deck having a cigarette," Babe suggested, and then stopped as footsteps could be heard clumping up the companion at the far end of the passage.

"I say—Hallo! Here he is!" And then Babe broke off. There, cer-

tainly, Philip Handstone was. He was coming along the passage, head bowed, shoulders slumped, not seeing them for a moment. His lowered face was almost grey now, however. In his eyes was a lesson, baffled look. He started as Marjorie uttered his name.

"Philip?"
"Oh?" Philip said, and seemed taken aback for some reason. "Hallo, Marjorie!" he muttered.
"Babe, Philip, what's the matter?" Marjorie asked anxiously. "You're not—not ill are you? You—you look quite worn out!"

He forced a smile.
"Do I?" he asked, and bit his lip. "Oh, it's all right, thanks," he added. Then, as if remembering: "How pretty you look, Marjorie—and Babe, too."

"Babe, Philip, you're not dressed," Marjorie pointed out.

"No."
"Philip, where have you been?"

"Oh, just having a look round," Philip evasively replied. "As—as a matter of fact, I—I left my cigarette in the hospital. Well, see you later," he said abruptly. "By—the way, I—I suppose you can't hear anything of Jessima?"

Marjorie stared.
"Why, not! How could they?"
"No, of course," he muttered, and walked into the cabin. "I—I won't be long," he said.

Marjorie blinked. Babe looked a little puzzled. Was the man ill? she wondered. Why this sudden change in him? Certainly in those last few minutes Philip had seemed a changed man—and why, she could not help but wonder, that extraordinary story about having come to the hospital for his cigarette, when she remembered most distinctly she had seen him take out his cigarette on at least three occasions since then!

"Oh dear! I do hope he'll be all right," Marjorie sighed. "He looked

quite worn out, don't you think, Babs?"

"Well, he certainly seemed so," Babs answered. "But, after all, what can you expect? Although he looks fit and strong, he's had several years of illness, hasn't he—and he has had a pretty strenuous day. But there," she added, as the ship's bell went, "that's the signal for the dance. Get your mask, Marjorie!"

"Yes."

Forgotten for the moment, was Philip. Maska in hand, they swarmed on to the dance floor. Mr. Margesson, as M.C. of the proceedings, greeted them as they came streaming in, assisted by Celeste's rather nervous Aunt Mary, who smiled uncertainly from one to the other as she fingered the end of the glittering necklace which she wore about her neck.

"Who is that, Mary?"—everybody called Mrs. Margesson Aunt Mary. "How marvellous you look!" Babs smiled. "And oh, I say, May I look at that lovely necklace? They are real diamonds, aren't they?"

"Aunt Mary sighed. "Yes, my dear, but they're not the originals." She lit her lip. "This is only a copy—a copy of a very valuable necklace which had been in my family for centuries. It was stolen," she added. "Sister!" Babs cried.

"Three years ago. A man named Martin. One of the crew of the yacht, you know. He stole quite a lot of my jewellery, and when he left the ship after our Australian trip he disappeared with it. Of course, we put the police on his track. They caught him, but—"

"You didn't get the diamonds back?" Babs asked.

"No, my dear. Most of the other stuff—yes. What the man did with the necklace no one knows—perhaps he sold it before he was caught. But here we are," she added, "the band is playing the Paul Jones. Before you get made on your girls, I do hope you will enjoy yourselves."

Hardly need for that hope. The CREW danced alone, despite the sobriety of the day, were determined to enjoy themselves. Masks were donned. In a circle they gathered on the floor, while the masked boys circled them, jiving back.

OUTSIDE darkness had descended—a pitch darkness, unvarnished by moon or stars. Calm and lazy the sea rolled, with not a breath of air and only the monotonous lullaby of the waves rippling over the shingle of the shore to disturb the silence. A thing of twinkling lights and fairy beauty, the Gloriana stood out to sea.

It was nearly high tide then. In another hour the sea would have reached the mouth of the cove. The distant lights of Pape glimmered like jewels in the mist, and the twinkling beacon of the lightship farther along swept the sea with searchlight resistance. Round the beam sped, leaving the night blacker by contrast of its brilliance as it went. Then round again, blazing across the water.

Except for the Gloriana, the sea, like the beach, seemed deserted.

And yet—round came the sweeping beam, stroiling once more. This time, as it lit the black, rowing south of the sister case known as Morda's Tomb, it shone for a moment upon a solitary figure gazing at a pair of cove in a boat with one handing the other.

On swept the beam—leaving Madness behind it.

Ten, twenty, thirty seconds; then the lightship's searching beam swept the sea again. This time it showed the figure clambering out of the boat, and

dropping the anchor overboard to make it fast.

A third time it cut the night, wheeled away, blackness once more. A fourth time it swept round, so close that many boats riding in the rippling foam—and the lone figure stalking towards the cove. When it swept round for the fifth time the figure had gone!

But there was light in the cove now where no light had been before. The light came from a torch in the hand of Jimmie Cartain.

The Interrupted Waltz



"PHEW!" laughed Barbara Redfern. "Enjoying it, Philip?"

Philip Harrison, looking really striking in the garb of an old-time pianist, laughed, too.

"Injunctively!" he said. "You know, Barbara, this is a very wonderful birthday! My only regret—and here he sighed—is that Jimmie is not here to enjoy it with us. Oh, Barbara, what made her act as she did towards me?"

Barbara looked at him. The eyes that gazed at her through the slit in the mask were very earnest, very regretful. Philip Harrison's really did look sorry, and Babs, thinking of her absent friend, let a pang. But once by many times, had she asked herself that question, were and were mystified every time she thought of it.

"I don't know," she said, biting her lip. "I've never known Jimmie to act like this. You never met her before to-day?"

"How could I, when I have been in Madagascar for the last five years?"

Babs frowned. Jimmie surely must have had some reason. For a moment her thoughts went back to that last time she had seen Philip Harrison—when he had looked so baffled, so worried, when he had told that life about his cigarettes.

And she could not help but think then of that accusation Jimmie had made in the hospital—that Philip Harrison had been present when Marjorie had been imprisoned and locked up in the coal-haard. How mysterious hint that Philip Harrison had played the part of that ghost they had had seen in the cove!

Perhaps Philip Harrison, glancing at her, guessed what was going on in her mind. He leaned forward solemnly.

"Barbara, you believe in me, don't you?"

"Yes, of course!"

"Thank you?"

But he did not smile. The lips revealed beneath the mask still looked a little worried, a little grim.

But he said no more then, and Babs, dismissing her disturbing thoughts with a shrug, stared across the dance floor.

Very gay and animated the scene which presented itself to her eyes. Everybody seemed happy—to be enjoying themselves. In one corner, screened by the palms, the band played a dreamy waltz; girls and boys, men and women representative of every country and every period of history floated hazy past. Even Babs was dancing—her partner for the waltz being the good-natured Mr. Margesson himself.

Yes, it was wonderful—dear old Celeste for having thought out such a treat! So serene, so tranquil, with

the Gloriana as a backdrop, that it was hard indeed to believe one was in a yacht at sea.

Babs smiled. Her own. "Shall we," she asked, "go out on deck and breathe a breath of sea air?"

And there she stopped. There everyone stopped. For from above came a sudden deafening clatter of a bell. It was accompanied by one shouted word, which sent a stab of fear to every heart.

"Fire!"

"Fire! On the top deck! All out! All out!"

A rush then. One and all crowded to the exit. The emergency doors were thrown open. Up the companions they tumbled helter-skelter. But there was no panic, no rush. Celeste and Mr. Margesson, taking matters coolly in hand, saw to that. Out on to the top deck they tumbled; and then there was a cry:

"Oh, my hat! Look!"

A cry there certainly was—on the after deck. Great billows of smoke were pouring up from that deck. In the middle of it was a great red glow. And yet—

Babs, soothed.

"I say," she said to Lolla, "it's a funny smell—like fireworks!"

But everybody was rushing forward now. Everybody, in fact, was surging towards the fire. To be sure, it was not serious. Hissing and flashing and emitting showers of red flames and sparks and smoke the fire belched on. The crew was already tackling the outbreak. A hose was run along the deck, and a stream of water guided forth. Then suddenly there was a shriek.

"Oh, my hat! It's not a fire; it's a fire gone! Glass popped."

"What?"

"A bomb! One of those things they use to make good fun on the stage! Somebody's been larking!"

"Oh, my hat!"

And everybody laughed in sheer relief, while the fire once flared up out. In a group they stood watching it, and since everybody at that moment was gathered on the after deck, nobody noticed the two figures which, seen faintly in the afterglow of the fleeing cone, came quietly creeping up the ladder that led from the raft.

The first figure was that of a girl. As she stepped on to the deck she reached a hand down to help her companion.

"The witness," she chuckled, "worked, old Spartan! Sorry to cause the alarm, and all that, but there was no other means of blowing away the stimulus of the look-out. Jolly good aim, what, striking that thing from the sea? Let's smile demurely before we're spotted!"

And as the girl turned, the light shone full upon her face. It was the face of Jimmie Cartain!

"A **NO SHOW!**" boomed Mr. Margesson, "before we have supper and take our leave, I have the most important duty of the day to fulfil."

"Hush!" cheered everybody.

The dancing, for the time being, was over. The whole company—and there must have been forty or fifty masked guests—were assembled before the play-furn on which Mr. Margesson stood surrounded by parents. He leaned down at them.

"That duty," he said, "is to present the gifts to my granddaughters and her guests. But, of course, the guests of honour must come first. Celeste!"

"Ahoy!" Celeste laughed. "Step forward!"
Celeste stepped forward, smartly clicking her heels together. With a laugh her grandfather handed over the parcel.

"Wishing you," he said, "many more happy birthdays, Celeste! You may remark. Now, ladies and gentlemen, our second guest of honor—Mr. Philip Handstone, who has come all the way from Madagascar, after an absence from this country of five years. Mr. Handstone."

Philip Handstone stepped forward. Mr. Mapperton sought regard for the parcel. He handed it to Philip.

"Mr. Handstone," he said, "I congratulate you—not only on account of having attained your twentieth birthday, but for making so complete and so marvellous a recovery. Will you please accept this, with our very best wishes for the future, and as a memento of a very happy day!"

He smiled, handing the parcel towards the young man in the pirate costume. Then Philip's hand reached forward to take it. But before he could touch the parcel another hand reached out, snatching it away from him, sharply hand belonging to a girl dressed, like Philip himself, as a pirate.

And then, while everybody stared in surprise, while Mr. Mapperton stood motionless, and Philip Handstone staggered back, a calm voice spoke:

"I think," it said, "you have made a mistake, Mr. Mapperton."

"Hey! What? Good gracious, girl, who are you?"

"You did," the voice went on, "say Mr. Handstone, didn't you?"

"Of course!"

"Then," the girl in the pirate costume said, "why not present the gift to Mr. Handstone?" And she pointed to the man in the sailor's uniform.

"For this," Justinus said, and with a sudden gesture whipped off the man's mask, "is Philip Handstone himself!"

For a moment everybody stood rooted to the spot. Justinus, coolly taking off her own mask, smiled round—Justinus, whom they had just seen heading towards the shore in the yacht's launch.

The young man, now revealed for the first time, looked a little—a young man whose face was dead white, who looked most dreadfully ill, but ill whose features, for all that, there was an unmistakable likeness to Marjorie Handstone. At sight of Marjorie he gave a cry.

"Marjorie! Marjorie, don't you recognize me?"

Marjorie was staring like a dazed thing. She was looking from him to the "pirate" on the deck.

"But yes," she stammered. "I don't understand—"

"No!" Justinus said. "Then I'll explain. Mr. Mapperton, don't let that man get away!" she cried. "Stop him—quick!" As the masked pirate with an expression leapt into the body of the hall. "That man is a cheat, an impostor!"

Undoubtedly that! No one understood. No one knew. But the very fact that the impostor was trying to get away stamped Justinus's statement with the impress of the truth—the very presence of this other man, so like Marjorie, so bent, so broken, so obviously an invalid, caused a swift reversion of feeling.

There was a cry at once. Instinctively girls and boys and older guests closed upon the man, bearing him to the

"Let me out of this!" he yelled, but to see him any notice of his protest. He was closed upon, seized, and mounting exclamations, pressed back against the wall.

Justinus smiled.
"Good work!" she applauded. "Field his share. The silly old police will be coming along presently—about ten, I told them," she said calmly. "Ahoy! Well, here we are, old Spartans, all merry and bright, what?"

"But Justinus, how did you get back?"
"Oh, boss, you know, Aided." Justinus said with a smile, "by a little forework."
"Oh, my hat! So it was you?"

"Twas me, also!" Justinus sighed sadly. "Too naughty, what? Scaring you all like that. But Philip and I had to get ahead without being seen by you know. So heartily anxious both of us, to come to the presentation. Which reminds me," Justinus said absently, "talking of presentations reminds me that I've got to make a jolly old presentation myself."

She plucked a card into her pocket. Out of it, shimmering and gleaming in the light of the lamps, appeared a glorious string of diamonds.

"Aunt Mary," she beamed, "allow me!"

"But—but— Aunt Mary's face expressed incredulity. "Justinus, that is my diamond necklace—the one that belonged to Martin's mother."

"And," Justinus said, "also his. Of course old Martin never took it away with him, you see. He hid it in the stowaway of this yacht. Later, when he came out of prison, he sent his son to get it."

"He can!" stammered Mr. Mapperton. "Mr. Martin's name—there is Justinus' name—marked on the stowaway impostor." "But no matter," she added, as a silver scabbard outside. "I hear the police. Let us bid our Martin bird a merry, glad farewell, and then I'll explain."

AS ONE LEAVE, now appear, Justinus did explain—much to everybody's stupefaction.

She told them what no one had ever known before—how that morning before stepping out of Cliff House School, she had received a letter from her father, Colonel Carstairs, now out in Nigeria.

In that letter the colonel had told Justinus that Philip Handstone, as his way back to England, had called on him.

"And the Philip Handstone who visited the girl's mother was a jolly old invalid," Justinus said. "Imagine, then, your uncle Jimmy's astonishment when the Howards turned up on the platform. Did I smell a mouse, my Spartans?"

Justinus did. But being Justinus, she had kept her own council until she was in a position to prove all she suspected

and laid out the impostor at the same time.

"If this was not the real Mr. Handstone," Justinus had argued, "where was the real Mr. Handstone?"

From the moment that the young man from Madagascar had appeared across from the curtain, however, Justinus had suspected. She checked now how he had played ghost in order to prevent the change from entering that area and discovering his secret—the real Philip Handstone, whom he had imprisoned.

She described how she had found the plan of which the impostor had been so scared—how she had deduced from that plan that something was hidden beneath the floorboards outside door No. 13. She described the scene in the strog, held—and how, in the darkness, she had slipped from the beds in the floor which Marjorie had so painstakingly made, the necklace which she had handed over to Aunt Mary.

Not immediately, however, had she given it to Aunt Mary. Justinus was looking if not thorough. She had planned to confront this impostor with his victim at the same time she landed the necklace over.

"Well, meaning hat?" Clara stammered.

"And the rest of the story—well," Justinus smiled, "I know that to our dear old Philip to tell. You see? Justinus went on, "Mr. Martin was the son of the real thief. Obviously, therefore, naturally old had, couldn't come himself, so he sent Martin junior. There was only one difficulty in Martin's jolly old way—that was to find an excuse to get on the Howards. He met Marjorie's brother in London a few days ago. Marjorie's brother told him about the Howards, and—well, the great idea was born in wily old Martin's secret brain, of going off in Philip Handstone's place. Simple, wasn't it?"

"And—and—?" Marjorie stammered.

"All the time I took that man for Philip."

"Well—?" Justinus shrugged, "and who not? After all, she beamed, "we can't all have the brain of a Carstairs! But still, all's well that merry well ends well! And here we are, girls and boys! I'm sorry," Justinus said, "remissively."

"But I had most of the fun. But now we're all merry and bright once again, will you drink a toast with me? And the toast?" Justinus asked, rising, "is the guest of jolly old kinsman—who had passed this time. Girls, boys, Romans, countrymen and kinsmen—to Philip!"

"To Philip!" The toast was thundered, and they all stood up while Philip, his pale face flushing, smiled gratefully at Justinus. While Marjorie, who could hardly believe it all even now, looked ready to cry with gratitude.

And the drama, even in the midst of their joyful congratulations, started wonderfully and admirably at the girl they had misjudged.

Quiet Justinus, strange Justinus—wonderful Justinus!

THE END.

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BETTY BARTON, one of Tom's school friends,

and DAVE CARSON, of Gungahpor School, investigate Tom's disappearance. Marsh, however, leading his investigation, takes a letter from Tom to her Morrove chance to put them on the nose.

(Don't read on.)

Sunset at Morcove

IT was a crimson light that flooded into Study No. 12 at Morcove School towards sunset that evening.

Betty Barton, standing at the window to read a letter with burning eyes, had her face suffused by the rich glow. Otherwise, she would have looked unusually pale.

For she had just been seized by a fancy so uncaptured then it had ceased the blood to ebb from her cheeks.

She was alone in the study, but was not to remain so.

Suddenly the whispering step of mad-cap Polly Linton sounded in the corridor, and in the doorway, with a comic sashet to be added into its usual career.

"I'm glad you've turned up, Polly."

"Oh, are you looking at that letter of Tom's again? But, Betty—the madcap charged to a ton of silver—what's the matter, then?"

"Ben's letter, Polly. I've looked at the letter more than once since Miss Somersfield handed it back to me. And now I'm wondering if Tom did write it, after all!"

"Gosh! Why?"

"Polly dear, I just can't go so far as to say that this isn't Tom's writing. If it isn't his, then it's a most queer imitation. But supposing—supposing it

is a spoof letter, intended to lure the police on a false trail!"

"Spood or not, it's just an end to the police concentrating on the seaside district. The postmark on the letter—Dorchester—that was enough to send them chasing over to Dorchester. Let's have another look, though."

Betty, after her quest had started to re-read this extraordinary missive which had done so much to alloy anxiety on account of missing Tom Trellawney, resumed very gravely:

"I find now that it's too much of a riddle for Tom to have written. It doesn't seem plausible. 'Making for London'! And you notice this, Polly! Although the letter had as much to say, yet it doesn't say anything as to why Tom got the wrong side of Miss Somersfield over the Fenders! On second thoughts, wouldn't Tom have been likely to confide in me, when writing to me, just why she let herself be expelled from Morcove, rather than—"

"Here!" Polly burst out, done with her re-reading of the letter. "Let's get a look at Betty, in case it really is a hoax!" "We can't afford to—so ignore doubts!"

"Just what I've been thinking! Until this letter turned up we had such deep suspicions against the Fenders. Then my all-wise whoopee and called ourselves allies for having formed such strange theories. But now—"

"Oh, we ought to be down on the sea-shore now!" Polly turned. "On watch! Here I've been playing tennis, and the others have kicked into Harrods; and suddenly—this! Tom in a great danger as ever, and the letter—truly written by Marie Fender, most likely!"

Her brother Ralph has a motor-bike. He could have got that letter posted at Dorchester for him. It wouldn't take him any time. Well!" Betty spoke on, as she and Polly hastened away, "heater late than never! There's still time for us—Oh, and I say!"

"Yes, what—what?"

"We won't speak what little there is just watching. That best-case

which the Fenders keep locked up," Betty said, dropping her voice a tone or two—"we'll get into it and take a good look round. I'd better get hold of a torch, Polly. But don't you wait for me."

Betty was flushing round to run back to the study.

"Polly, you get hold of a couple of gardening trowels down at the sheds, and I'll catch you up at the gates. I don't know if we can collect any of the others—"

"Only Paula and Mamma are in hospital tonight."

"Then we'll go by ourselves," Betty retorted back to Polly, who was starting to run for the stairs.

A few minutes later the Furs captain and her left-of-center were going up a tree towards that cliff path which was the school's own handy way of getting down to the rock-walled footpaths.

Polly had the two trowels, and by now she knew the progress to which they were to be put. A certain brain-wave of Betty's had accounted for those small implements being requisitioned.

"Look at that sky!" Betty exclaimed, as soon as she and Polly had got down to the shore. "There's wind about."

"Sort of breeze Tom would have loved to praise," was Polly's comment. "Poor Tom! I feel that something terrible may have happened to Tom, after all!"

"Same here," Betty nodded.

Then the talk lapsed, and there was a very wary hurrying along close to against the incoming cliffs.

The two had been crossing the water-water which were no bigger than usual, for this rugged shore. The sky in the west displayed some 'marco' tails' above patches of dark, but receding, clouds. But the wind had got to get up.

"Now," Betty suddenly advised, "careful!"—meaning "more careful than ever."

She and Polly had got far enough along the sands to have the gained mouth of the Cliffside cove in view to them.

Nobody was in sight, and Betty knew that her insipid claim might feel like going the real of the way at a run. It had to be remembered, however, that one of the Fenders might be in the cave—on the point, too, of coming away from it!

So Polly had to curb her habitual impatience and go, if anything, even a little slower with Betty. Still slower in did they keep to the base of the cliffs, for by so doing they could talk over instantly should the need arise.

Those lattice gates were closed, and as they only opened outwards, it was a case

of being ready to smother down, or become fattened against the ragged cliff-base, if suddenly a gale was seen to come upon.

But this did not happen, and at last Betty and Polly were at the cave, finding the gates still chained and padlocked.

It was a state of things that left them very keyed up. The Fenders were off the scene, and so now, if only they, Betty and Polly, could have the place to themselves for the next few minutes—why, they would then be inside the cave!

Down they went upon their knees, to do the trick with those trousers. As the gates were always kept closed and padlocked, it had been Betty's idea to dig away the sand from under one of the stones.

With hair-raising haste they worked, often scooping with a hand as well as digging with the trowel. At first they obtained a hole going straight down almost to the depth of an arm. Then they started to burrow through under the slabs of wood.

In silence they toiled on, one fetching away the sand freely from under the gate, for the other to scoop it still farther away.

Soon there was a narrow big enough for Betty to huddle into it. In that cramped position she dug farther in for a couple of minutes; then Polly took a turn.

Nor did the making come out again. Scarcely she went right through, wriggling and wriggling, and spitting sand from her lips.

Now, following instantly, was never going to say how many times she was nearly kicked in the mouth by her chain's heavy feet. There was more to think about than that.

No sooner were both girls standing up, inside the locked gates, than they made their way towards the back of the cavern.

Stripping quickly past the boat which was hauled in the cave, they were then far enough in to be able to risk a halting cry.

"Tom, dear!" their united voices rang out in the gloom. "Tom, are you here?"

And then, giving those shivers down the spine as they heard it, came a very faint, but frantic cry, in answer.

"Yes, I'm here—I'm here! Help—help!"

Polly gave a wild yell.

"We've found her. Betty—we've found her!"

From Bad to Worse

AND yet, when Betty thrust out the pocket-torch, and there it here and there in the semi-darkness, there was no Tom to be seen.

They took a few rushing steps towards the very end of the cavern.

Now they were in darkness, except for the brilliant ray of the torch. Everywhere Betty dashed that searching light, and still it picked out only the rock walls, arching over the sandy floor, and a locker or two, that probably hold gear connected with the boat.

"Tom!" they shouted again. "Tom, where are you?"

"Here! In this other cave—an inner one," that faint voice again answered.

"Look for the niche, again!"

"Oh, my goodness!" Polly almost groaned. "She's that away somewhere—"

"Look, Polly!"

Betty was no longer seeing the light around. She had it steadily shining upon a narrow cleft in the right-hand wall of the last-cave. It was an

aperture just large enough to take a human being, but the crazed girl saw that it was choked with lumps of rock.

Polly dashed at them, to start getting them away. She yelled out again, in a raging manner, when she found how cunningly and securely they had been jammed together.

The light came in very useful; if she and Betty had been without it, the removal of the wedged stones would have been a much more baffling task.

Even as it was, Polly had great difficulty in getting the first stone away. But their removal left the remainder in a loosened state.

One after another, the madcap, in her excitement, wrenched out a block of rock and cast it behind her. Mountainside, Betty was shining the torch into the cleft, so that its light might comfort that ill-fated girl who had been shut away in darkness.

"All right, Tom," was Betty's cry. "We'll soon have you out of it."

And then to Polly, who was still pitching lumps of rock out of the way:

"We must go in to her. Or, at least, one of us go in, Polly, whilst the other stays out here, as guard."

"I'll go in," Polly protested. "Let me have the torch—thanks! Now, Tom—coming!"

And she began to squeeze through the fissure.

Betty had to go back a little way, to have the gated entrance to the last-cave in view, for this first cavern was almost l-shaped, causing the windows and to be out of sight of anyone at the far end.

It relieved her to see the gated entrance just as she and Polly had left it; but, to make quite sure that nobody was coming, she ran right up to it. She stood very still, listening, peering out between the slabs.

But again the noise of the high tide precluded her from hearing any other sounds, if other sounds there were. So she got down into the sand-trench again, wriggled out under the gates, knelt up, and looked both ways.

"No one!"

With that thankful gasp, she wriggled back, and in a few moments she was at the inner section of the last-cave again. As soon as she placed herself close to the fissure, and was peering through it, she beheld a weird sight.

In the bobbing and jerking light of the torch, she could partly see Polly and Tom. They were together, exchanging some fast, breathless words.

"Is Tom all right?" Betty demanded.

"If you want me in there?"

"She's a bit shaky," Polly called back through the cleft. "But it's O.K., Betty. I'll soon have her out."

"Quick, then! I haven't seen anybody coming, but—"

"Quick it is," Polly heartily agreed.

"Betty, we were right; Tom says it's all the Fenders' doing! Maime kidnaped her."

"The wretch! But why—what! Oh, but you can't tell me now, of course!" Betty realized. "Have; let me help Tom out, from this end."

Nearly any of the torch-light found its way, now, into the passage. Tom had started to wriggle through, and even her slight, girlish figure almost filled the narrow space. She was a dark shape, in the semi-darkness, her face hardly discernible by Betty for the next few moments.

Then that chain began to see the seaward girl's countenance. Its pallor and its expression made it much like.

"Oh, Tom," Betty said, "what a

terrible time you've had! But it's all over now."

Was it!

That heart-rending wretch had no sooner passed Betty's lips than she became greatly startled. And with alarm—by a most significant word. It was the faint jingle of chain-links.

"Quick!" she gasped. "Someone at the gates—wrecking them! It must be one of the Fenders! Polly, come on now!" Betty veiled into the fissure, clear of which she was lifting Tom, almost helpily.

"I—I'm all right now; can manage." Tom protested, as Betty set her down. "It's only Maime Fender—we can go for her. There's no—"

"Yes, Tom! Oh, we'll beat them another!" Betty gritted. And then she said: "Ah!"

She and Tom, without waiting for Polly, had started to go along the cavern towards its exit on to the shore. But now they had to stop dead, and Polly confronted as they were by Maime Fender—and her mother!

So there were two of them to be reckoned with, and one a grown woman. There they were, at a sudden pause, as were Betty and Tom. The light from the mouth of the cave was behind mother and daughter; even so, it was possible to see the swarthy, dusky to show pain, in their looks.

To Betty, in such a moment of crisis, there seemed only one thing to do—and she did it. Whether poor Tom, in her upset state, would be able to act with strength and quickness, was doubtful. But Betty meant to have a good try at fighting her way past both Maime and the mother.

So, Betty, made her desperate dash, hoping to slip by between Maime and the mother, whilst the mother, perhaps, would feel bound to "go" for Tom.

But mother and daughter both swooped upon Betty, and between them, they caught her and held her fast. Whilst she still struggled, she heard Mrs. Fender crying her daughter to "see after the others!"

Mrs. Fender seemed to be as strong as a man. Betty feared herself utterly overpowered, and held with her claws together at her back. She tried to throw herself down, but could not do so.

Then, to the horror of seeing Tom easily mastered by well-grown Maime, there was added the dizziness of feeling a cord being used to bind one's elbows together. Mrs. Fender must have snatched a bit of cord from one of the lockers.

After that, what hope could there be of Polly's getting away? Mrs. Fender was free to pounce upon that third Moroccan, whose desperate resistance proved as futile, against such superior size and strength, as Betty's had been.

So, of a sudden, there was a dramatic standstill after such a scene of wild association. All three girls were in similar states; huddled, with their arms tied behind their backs.

Mrs. Fender looked very haggard. As for Maime, she was utterly agitated at what had been done.

At last Mrs. Fender gave a shriek.

"Well, the boys must take all three of them, that's all!"

"But, mother—"

"Now, Maime, pull yourself together!" the daughter was angrily bellowing. "These two other girls have burst in; were those right if they have to go—where does that leave you going! Go and see if the boat is coming, Maime!"

She went away to the mouth of the cave with dragging steps, at the same

time sweeping a head across her forehead, again and again.

Mrs. Fender, still standing motionlessly in front of the three captives, suddenly raged out at them in a hoarse manner.

"Serves you right! You, Tom Teahurny, would never have been detained by us; you need never even have been expelled from your school, only—you wouldn't mind your own business!"

"It was my business, too—" "Quiet, will you! As for you others," Mrs. Fender harshly addressed Betty and Polly, "you should have left things to the police." She laughed mirthlessly. "As it is, you'll just have to be away from school for a bit. Serve, but we can't afford to have a—a highly important transaction—quarred by you girls!"

"Transaction, do you call it?" Polly hotly retorted. "Tom has told me. You're engaged in smuggling gold from the Continent. There's a large fortune in it for you, but it's a dishonest, violating 'transaction.'"

"Silence, girl!" "Mrs. Fender," said Betty, with desperate composure, "haven't you better realize that the game is up? I mean to say, it can't save you from being found out—your keeping us out of the way, along with Tom. As soon as Polly and I are missed at the school—"

"And we shall be, within an hour!" Polly chimed in, smiling triumphantly. "Then you're bound to be exposed. It can never be thought that Betty and I have simply—"

"I know perfectly well what is going to be thought at the school," Mrs. Fender said, giving another very polite. "And the game, let me tell you, is not up!"

She was going to say more, but new Missie came flitting back.

"Mollie, the boat is in!" "And the tide up," said Mrs. Fender's gratified rejoinder. "Stood by those girls for a moment, Missie!"

Then the mother went away to the quiet assurance in the cave.

Betty and Polly had nothing to say to Missie. All three felt too proud and scornful to make any remark. They preferred to leave her to the doubtful enjoyment of her own thoughts. She was trying her hardest not to look worried, frightened; but they could tell that she was desperately anxious.

For a few minutes this state of strained silence went on. Then Mrs. Fender came back. She was smiling in an excitable, relieved manner, as if all were going well at a time that had called for momentous decisions.

"As soon as we have helped to put those girls aboard the boat," she said to Missie, in full hearing of the captives, "I will go back up to the hangar. I must do some telephoning to the school!"

These were words that left Betty and Polly and Tom utterly astounded. Telephoning to the school? What on earth was this daring woman's idea in doing such a thing as that?

"There was time for the case to darken a little more now that the sun had set. Then, suddenly, two newcomers appeared upon the gloomy scene.

One was a sturdy man in rough clothes and sea-boots. His companion was a tall woman, quite tidily dressed. There was nothing coarse-looking about either of them. Moreover would have taken the man to be an ordinary bluff sailor, and the woman—a stewardess, or something like that.

Mrs. Fender gestured.

"Here they are—there of them instead of one. Be quick, now!" And in a moment all three girls were being marched out of the cave.

It was a powerful motor-boat which roared at the water's edge, and now that they were speedily dumped—be sprouted away they knew not whither, over the darkening sea!

Plotlers in a Panic

"HAL-LO! Hallo, there! Is that Morocco School? I want to speak to the headmistress, please! Urgent!"

So this iron-nerved woman, Mrs. Fender, was voicing into the telephone now that she was back in the sitting-room at Cliffledge banglow.

"Hallo?" she repeated a few moments later. "Miss Bonarfield? Oh, Mrs. Fender speaking—from Cliffledge, just I say; I thought I ought to let you know; Missie and I have just seen two of your girls being taken out to sea in a motor-boat. Is it all right?"

Coolly Mrs. Fender listened to her, and in the most hurried way came over the wire in answer to that labor-hearted inquiry.

"There," she spoke again, in a tone of great concern, "we felt sure there must be something wrong! It was a man and a woman who must have taken the two girls on board—from the shore, just here under the cliff. Missie and I even wondered if it all has something to do with the Tom Teahurny mystery! And yet, it's hard to see how— Pardee! Hold on, then, for a moment!"

Leaving the telephone, Mrs. Fender went through the pretense of going to look out of a window that faced sea-

"INTO the boat now—and be quick!" hissed Mrs. Fender. And so, one by one, in silence, knowing themselves to be in the power of these plotlers, the Morocco captives stumbled down the beach towards the waiting boat.



rewards. Then she came darting back and spoke again to Marcove's accompaniment.

"No, the boat's gone now! It must have been a very powerful motor-boat. Marcove is down on the shore at this moment, to see if she can find out what it all means. Do you know, we fear that our private boat-crew has been put to use by some unauthorized person! Pardon!"

At the other end of the pier, Miss Somerfield was now entreating Mrs. Fender to ring off so that the police could be rung up.

"Right, then! Good-bye! And I am so sorry you are having such a worrying time! Anything you can do for you," the dining woman severely finished, "only let us know!"

A little laugh escaped her as she replaced the receiver. But, next instant, her face became drawn together and her chest rose dilated with alarm. The steamer was rushing into the harbor, a spray for length after a hasty ascent from the southeast.

"Mother! Oh, it's awful!" she cried wildly.

"What is? What's awful?" jerked Mrs. Fender.

But Marcove was so exhausted, for the moment, she only gurgled wildly. She collapsed into a chair.

"Something has happened to the boat out at sea!" the mother bravely conjectured. "But—"

"Oh, that isn't it!" Maude wailed. "The last I see of those they were going away all right. But suddenly—down there at the curve—three fellows leaped up, and they had a young lady with them. And now they've boarded the boat that was in the cove!"

Mrs. Fender stood struck back by the shock of such news. She tried to speak, but could not. Her daughter, after some more hard breathing, looked on:

"It was a Moroccan Perambulator. And the fellows went from Ralph's school—"

"Gracious! One of those—that Dave Underhill?"

"Yes!" Maude nodded, standing up as if she felt the moment had come for flight. "Oh, what are we to do now—what are we to do! They—they brained our maid. Even the Formidableness wouldn't speak to me. They seemed to know! She said 'Yes' to the boys when they suggested getting the boat out. And she's gone with them—"

"Out to sea!"

"With two of them. The other had— he had orders to run to Marcove and let her know. Miss Merrill has gone in the boat so as to be with the girls if—if they are mistaken."

It said much for Mrs. Fender's nerve that even now she sought of the news to which her daughter had already become a prey. She moved about the room, biting a lip and thinking hard.

"Well, does it go?" she said at last. "And is it going to be traced to us, after all? We must get away, Maude. I'll get the car out, you snatch a few things—"

"Hark though!" the daughter struck in. "Oh, it's too late—too late! I can hear someone now—getting down at the gate. The police perhaps!"

And in deep agitation she clatched at her mother's arm. But she failed to grasp it.

Mrs. Fender ran round into another room so as to be able to see out by a window which looked towards the road.

"No," she turned to say, in relief, as Maude came up behind her, "it's only Ralph on his motor-bike."

"Ketch!" Maude echoed her brother's

name dreamily. "Then he must have had to clear out at a moment's notice from Grandgossamer School!"

— — —
WHY NOW?

IT had come on to blow hard after dark.

The boat, with its man and woman and the three luddered-together captives, was a fine craft of the latest type, and it took the roughening sea very well.

Much there was to keep Betty and Polly and Tom in a most anxious state of mind, but at least they were without fear for their present safety.

Many a time they had been out in motor-boats, and they knew enough about the handling of such craft to be able to tell that the man who was in charge of this one knew his job.

But now, an hour after twilight, one thing had become apparent to the girls that was peculiar. The boat was not being kept upon a direct course. Nor was she being driven at all fast.

Mostly she was kept head to the wind and waves, but this could not have been a necessary precaution, due to the heavy sea, for every roll and then she was being run right round, to starboard before the wind, with the white-capped waves chasing after her.

Not a light was being shown, and there were frequent mutterings by the man as he kept his look-out, which evidenced his strained, uneasy state.

And the woman, whenever she spoke, only did so to address some flippety inquiry to him as if she shared his suspense.

All three girls had had their heads taken off, and it seemed that they were free to talk amongst themselves as much as they liked.

Not once, as yet, had the woman ordered them to remain silent. She sat between them and the man at the controls, but there was that understanding of his exacting task to keep her attentive to all he did and said.

But Betty and Polly and Tom were sitting side by side in silence now. Their strange and terrible plight of the night was keeping them in a most state. No harm was to be done to them; of that they were convinced. But where were they? They saw Marcove School again! Suddenly it flashed into Betty's mind—

—they were to be transhipped at sea, put on board a much larger vessel!

Perhaps it would be an extraordinary steamer, bound for a far country. At any rate, the motor-boat was hanging about, waiting to pick up a signal or to make its own signal when the right moment should come.

Noticing that Mrs. Fender was pre-occupied, staring ahead of her in harassed interest, Betty turned to her charm. She had a finger to her lips for caution, and spoke the matter, disturbing thoughts that had come to her.

"I say, are we to be put on board—another ship?"

Polly and Tom stared at her.

"What makes you think that?" came a quavered whisper from Polly.

"I don't know," Betty responded.

"Just a—just a hunch, I reckon. But why else should we be taken out to mid-ocean like this? They can hardly be taking us for a jinx!" she added, with a whimsical little smile.

Tom seemed to stare about her through the darkness. With a puzzled, rather worried little frown she finally shook her head, and turned back to the others.

"I can see nothing," she confessed. "No light—"

"Nor I," said Polly, shielding her eyes as she, too, scanned the surrounding water off changing waves.

"I can't either," said Betty. "But I can't see what else we're being treated like this for unless it is to put us on to another vessel."

Silence between them, then.

Each girl was busy with her own thoughts. Not that those thoughts differed in any great respect. Each was thinking and feeling very much along the same lines, just as each was striving to catch the faintest suspicion of a winking light—anything, that would bear out Betty's disturbing suspicion.

From left to right they peered and squinted; behind them, as it were. And they were very careful the while time not to arouse the suspicion of their captors. That would never have done.

But visibility had become very poor. As the night grew wilder the weather was thickening. In a way they felt sorry for the man upon whom such responsibility rested. He was "one of the gang," but he was also a trained seaman, doing his best to rapidly vanishing conditions.

There was still no speak of light to be seen in the murky night, when suddenly the girls were aware of the man getting the woman to open out a chart for him. He was having to consult it whilst still paying attention to the heading light.

From where they sat, they could tell that it was a chart showing the Marcove coast. The girls could see the outline of that stretch of coast which they knew so well, and in the top left-hand corner of the sheet was a tiny blue dot, noted for Gull Island.

Still looking at the map together, the man and the woman continued to talk for several minutes. Not a word reached the captives, who began to feel that their capturers were in making great perplexity.

And then suddenly a distant speck of white light winked out for a moment upon the dark sea. A few seconds later it could be seen again, like the flash of a signal lamp.

The hearts of the kidnapped girls took on a quiver beat.

There, a mile away at least, must be the ship from which a signal had been sent. That was the signal now!

They saw the man nod aside to the woman that she could put the map away.

Then he set the boat driving on through the heaving waves straight for where that white light still shone out at irregular intervals.

And to all three girls it meant a thrilled, expectant state.

Each had her mental picture of a big ship steaming in the darkness and with all her lights masked. Each of those hapless captives could imagine someone at a desk-seat, working the shutter of a signal-lamp to send the message:

"Here we are; come on!"

And so, whilst the motor-boat sped on, and space from the frothing waves called their lips, all three Marcoves wondered upon what voyage the unknown steamer was bound—and whether they must make it with her!

WHAT NOW? Are the drama indeed to be taken away—kidnapped, and held captive by the Fenders? You must not miss next week's powerful instalment of this exciting Marcove serial. Order your SCHOOLGIRL at once—and tell your chums to do the same.