

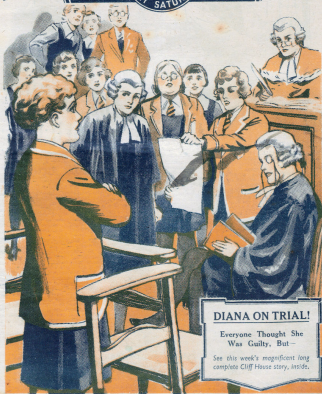
BRILLIANT STORIES of CLIFF HOUSE and MORCOVE

# THE SCHOOLGIRL

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EVERY **2<sup>D</sup>** SATURDAY

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"SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN"



## DIANA ON TRIAL!

Everyone Thought She  
Was Guilty. But—

See this week's magnificent long  
complete Cliff House story, inside.

# DIANA ROYSTON-CLARKE, Stormy Firebrand of the Cliff House Fourth Form, Figures in a New Light in This Fine Complete Story



## Not the FIREBRAND'S FAULT

By  
**HILDA RICHARDS**

### "The Faultless Fourth!"

"S HURRY!"

"Quiet!" Primary's group to speak!"

There was a subdued murmur of interest in Big Hall at Cliff House School.

It was morning assembly, and, true to the routine of the day, all the school was assembled in front of the dais from which Miss Primrose, the kindly headmistress, had just delivered her morning address.

Morning address usually occurs the end of assembly, with just time for a few stretches before the day's classes began. But the familiar "dramas" had not yet come. Miss Primrose was still perusing at a letter she held in her hand.

Some of the girls there looked apprehensive, perhaps wondering which of their latest escapades were to be made public.

Clara Twobly, the long-legged Tomboy of the Fourth, was one—Clara wondering if Duke's Fairweather, the popular games captain, had missed the Sixth Form cricket bag which she had borrowed without permission, because the junior school's had been locked up.

Maude Embury, fatted, bunglers, and biggest duffer in the school, was blushing angrily through her spectacles, hoping to goodness that Mrs. Carey, the housekeeper, hadn't reported the said on the leader last night.

Barbara Reddon, the blue-eyed captain of the Lower School, was grimacing at Mabel Lorry, hoping to goodness that she and Mabel had not been reported for playing leapfrog in the museum yesterday.

The suspense, indeed, was becoming unbearable, when Miss Primrose gave a preliminary cough.

"Oh, yes," she said. The school bowed.

Miss Primrose smiled.

"This announcement," she said, "mainly concerns the Lower School." (The Junior School's apprehensions became intense.) "I have here a report from one of our old girls"—apprehensions evaporating—"of a rather unusual nature. You have all heard of Mrs. Karowulko, who is a famous Society beauty living in Martine, London."

They had. Exchange of glances. Miss Primrose went on:

"Mrs. Karowulko, on Saturday, is giving a party at her Mayfair house in connection with the forthcoming Commemorative celebrations. In her letter—she pointed at it—"she says that she has invited a hundred poor children from a London convalescent hospital, to spend the day at her house. I gather there are going to be rides and plays, dancing, and a party, and so on. Shame! A very pleasant time, indeed, for all the children concerned. She asks me if I will allow Miss Lovell School girls to go to London and help entertain these guests."

Apprehension changed to joy then. A burst of excitement. Miss Primrose coolly held up a hand.

"I have acceded to the request"—almost a cheer—but the question is as to an access decided in its entirety. The three forms concerned in this in-

stitution will be the Fourth—and little else—from the Fourth; and the Upper and Lower Third, None." Miss Primrose smiled, and the smile faded from her face, "no reward is worthy if a mere effort is not made to earn it. I shall not make up my mind as to which Form is to be honored until the end of the week. And that depends—"

"Oh, come on!" muttered Clara loudly.

"That depends," Miss Primrose added brightly, "upon the conduct of the Parties concerned. The honour will go to the Form with the best conduct about at the end of the week. Every black mark earned by any single girl will count against the Form to which that girl belongs. I want every possible means to count its me every black mark given during the day. In the meantime, so that there are no last-minute complications, I should like the captains and the headmistress of the Forms concerned to let me have a list of illness cases. Done?"

So that was Primary's little mystery. But how soon it set the Lower School! Each of the three Forms concerned

**DIANA ROYSTON-CLARKE**—Firebrand, Rebel, the most tempestuous, wayward girl in Cliff House. Hardly the girl to play the role of martyr! Hardly the girl to make a noble sacrifice for the sake of her Form-mates. Yet she does both—in her own inimitable way, of course!

came near at that very moment to ending its first crop of black marks, so they was the contention.

"A free trip to London! To enjoy a whole day at the home of one of London's leading Society hostesses.

Laughing, chattering, almost cheering, they swept out of Big Hall, Miss Barbara Boddison called a meeting of the Fourth.

On all sides at once she was besieged by earnest entreaties, eager pleadings, hostile requests. Everybody, of course, wanted to be among the honored fifteen.

"Well, into the Cosmos-room, all of you!" Babs said. And when they were: "I'm not," she announced, "going to make any list. There are over thirty girls in the Fourth. Only fifteen of them will be required. That means to say that half of us are going to be disappointed."

"And so," Babs went on, after a pause, "the best and the fairest thing to do is to draw lots. Everybody then will have an equal chance, with no favoritism. We'll have the draw immediately after dinner, but before we have it, while the chances of being selected are equal for all of us, I must say all to promise that, selected or not, you will stand solid for the Form, and make the necessary vote."

"What do I?"

"I that agreed!"

"Yes, rather!"

Enthusiasm then. That was fair. It was wise of Babs, too, to exact that promise.

"And if anybody fails," Clara said grimly, "then the Form will jolly well do with them!"

"How, how?"

"But who, Diana Brevint-Clarke, the haughty little, forbidden subject, is going to make the draw?"

"Oh, I'll help!" the Hon. Beatrice Brevinty volunteered at once.

"Right?"

"And I," Jessica Cavatine beamed.

"What! Anything to aid the jolly old cause—what?"

"All right, then," Babs laughed.

"And I," she promised, "will prepare the slips. Now, steady, everybody! No black marks, mind—that's our slogan! There's lesson left. Let's get going."

Excitedly they got going. "No black marks!" That was the watchword from now on, and never, in fact to say, had the Fourth Form made such an effort to be good. Even Miss Boddison, acid-tongued and sour, no more, was amazed by the exemplary behaviour of the Fourth during the first period of morning lessons.

Miss Wright, who took second period, was also pleasantly astounded.

Yet all the time there was a suppressed undercurrent of impatience, chafing, and impure.

And there was one girl who, now and again, was seen to be looking a little crossbred. That was the Hon. Beatrice Brevinty.

She, the proud daughter of the 5th Baron Trevelino, was something of an orphan to the Form.

Very proud, very haughty Beatrice was. Inordinately proud of that Honourable with which her name was prefixed, and inordinately proud, too, of her handsome father, whose portrait, enshrined in a silver frame bearing the Trevelino family crest, adorned the mantelpiece of Study No. 2, which she shared with Brenda Fallay and Jane Morrett.

On the whole, however, she was a likeable girl, who played a good straight bat in cricket, was a very reliable

hockey ball, and entered with spirit and zest into the Form's interests. Most of the Form, recognizing that every lesson being, has its weaknesses, tolerated her occasional outbursts, and quite a few, because of her title, looked to her.

Unusually subdued, however, was Beatrice this morning, in spite of the suppressed excitement which was running through the Form. The lovely Diana, who sat next to her in class, looked at her with that faintly mocking curiosity so characteristic of her.

"Yorks, and what's the matter with the 'hon.' this morning?" she murmured. "Get a bad egg for breakfast?"

Beatrice looked at her sharply.

"What should be the matter with me?"

"Well, I'm asking you."

Beatrice turned her head. Diana smiled slyly. Diana secretly was jealous of that hon., and never lost an opportunity of poking the sensitive Beatrice's leg on the subject of her vanished title-bird. At that moment Miss Wright called.

"Diana, you were talking?"

"Oh, yes!" Diana turned. "I was only amending my verbs, Miss Wright. Habit I've got when I'm thinking freely!"

"Oh!" said Miss Wright, who had that habit herself. "Well, please try to contain four thoughts! Now, Beatrice, repeat this sentence for analysis: My father is her ladyship's father."

Beatrice Brevinty's face went amazingly scarlet.

"My—what?" she asked.

"My father is her ladyship's— But, good gracious, have I offended you?" Miss Wright asked, in amazement.

Diana checked.

"But her father isn't, you know, Miss Wright. Her father is the blue-blooded

5th Baron of Trevelino. Isn't he, Beatrice?"

"He is!" Beatrice affirmed stiffly.

"Thank you, Diana! I do not require your assistance!" Miss Wright said, with cold reproach. "Beatrice, repeat that sentence after me!"

Mumblingly Beatrice did so.

"Now analyze it."

She analyzed it. Miss Wright nodded a "Very good," and Beatrice, still unaccountably scarlet, sat down. Babs, in the next seat, eyed her curiously. As Miss Wright's back was turned towards the class, she bent forward.

"Anything wrong, old girl?"

"No! Of course not!" Beatrice muttered, and smiled.

"E—I say, Babs, Miss Fritmore did say Mrs. Brevinty, didn't she?"

"Yes."

"Oh!" Beatrice mumbled, and looked, for some reason, unhappy than ever.

Diana, watching her, chuckled. She wondered vaguely what she had on her mind. Another witticism tumbled on her lips, and then, catching Miss Wright's eye, she hastily coughed, remembering that a black mark meant was a black mark to the Form. And, dash it—well, Diana wasn't going to let the Form down!

Besides, Diana very badly wanted to be in that fifteen that was going to London, where Diana would have such a chance to prom herself, where Diana would probably meet ladies of high Society.

Diana, indeed, by this time had thoroughly made up her mind that she was going, and was, in consequence, in her most amiable of moods. Firebrand mood was one of the secret, most unshared, temptations of girls in the school.

But where she was pleased, not a niece,



DIANA was across the room in a flash. "Stop!" she cried. "Stop! Beatrice cheated!" There was an electric tension in the room.

more generous girl in Cliff House than Diana, though it was never certain what little thing would upset her.

She composed her face. Miss Wright, having written down a question on the blackboard, now instructed the class to get out its exercise-books and answer it.

There was a rustle. None of the usual banging of desk-lids. Composedly the class settled down. Diana grinned at the earnestness of the question, and Diana takes her lessons more seriously than does any of the other girls would have been level on the top of the Fourth Form's scholastic tree. Diana, however, took nothing seriously, except her own ambitions.

Long before anyone else, she was finished. Curiously she then glanced at Beatrice Beverley. Beatrice, in fact, had her arm sheltering her work, rather as if she were afraid that Diana might see it. The very consciousness of such an attitude was provocation to a girl like Diana. Heyman-Clarke. She crossed forward.

"But Beatrice had covered herself as well that she could not see a thing."

"Ahem!" Diana said.

"These glaucously blue eyes of hers glimmered with sudden mischief. Deliberately she caught up her rubber, deliberately dropped it. At once, of course, she made a dive for it, contriving at the same time to give a jolt to that class which so carefully observed what Beatrice Beverley was doing."

The other shut across the desk. The pen with which Beatrice Beverley had been writing shot with it. For a moment the work was entirely revealed, and Diana, even in that moment, felt a start of surprise. For Beatrice Beverley was not writing her answer at all. She was scribbling things—writing her own name in small black capitals on a small, oblong strip of paper.

But in an instant Beatrice had turned, snatching up the slip. There was fury in her eyes.

"You clumsy thing!" she snapped.

"Ahem! Sorry!" Diana murmured.

"Just dropped my rubber, you know?"

"Diana! Beatrice!" Miss Wright frowned. "Please pay attention! Another remark from either of you, and I shall give the Form a black mark!"

Beatrice hid her slip. Diana scribbled her name. The Form, momentarily disturbed, looked fidgety at the two, and Diana shrugged. She thought no more of that incident then, suspecting that Beatrice was just idly sifting in her time.

Then—the bell! In an excited surge, the Fourth screamed out of chairs. Babo, with Jessica, Made, and Beatrice Beverley, went off at once to Study No. 4 to make out the slips for the draw, and in ten minutes entered a smiling Common-room with two bags, each full of folded strips of paper. The Form gathered round.

"Now," Babo said, "Jessica and Beatrice are going to make the draw. Jessica, take this bag. In Jessica's bag," she explained, "are thirty-three slips of paper. Fifteen of those slips have a cross marked on them, the rest being blank. Beatrice, here is your bag. In Beatrice's bag are thirty-three slips of paper, and on each is a name. Beatrice and Jimmy will draw simultaneously. When Jimmy draws a name slip on the paper, the girl whose name is on the slip which Beatrice drew at the same time is a member of the party. That understood?"

"Yes. All O.K.," Clara nodded impatiently. "Get on with it!"

"Right! They start!"

"What's up?" Jessica murmured.

And Babo, arising herself with a nota-

pad and pencil, pulled them to get Jessica, taking the first slip out, called "Blank." There was a groan from Bridget O'Toole as Beatrice read her name out.

"Next," said Jessica, "another blank. What name, Beatrice?"

"Freda Ferraris?"

"Oh, dash it! Freda worked. The next—Ala! What have we here?" Jessica asked. "A good-looking girl. Who is it, Beatrice?"

"Oh, oh! I'm sorry, you know, I'm giggling in London!" Beatrice chattered excitedly.

"Shut up!" Clara growled. "We haven't seen the last yet. Come on, Jimmy! Next!"

The next was Made Lynn. The next Marie Bond. Then an came out of the hat in rapid succession: Barbara Redfern, Marjorie Handford, Matilda Tattersall, Lydia Connelley, Rena Rowlands, and, to that girl's great relief, Clara Trevin.

Two more blanks, then Margaret Lashford. Another blank followed, and then came Janet Jordan, followed by Frances Peart. Excitement was growing tense. Only three more to go.

Girls who had not heard their names stood round nervously and anxiously. The next came—

"But it wasn't. It was Phyllis Howell."

Then the next—Diana crossed forward and crossed back in disappointment—Leda Carroll.

Only one more. Those girls who had not been selected paled. Jessica plucked her hand into the hat.

"Clara," she said. "What name?"

Beatrice fumbled, glancing round. Then she plucked her hand into the hat. She opened a slip.

"Beatrice Beverley," she murmured.

"Oh, my! What a miracle!" Diana cried, and, suddenly flushed and furious, her eyes gleaming, she was across the room. "She cheated!" she cried.

"What!"

Beatrice sang round.

"Why, you?"

"That was cheating!" Diana cried.

"I saw her. She had that slip in her hand all the time. I was watching her!"

"Oh, rats!"

"Clara it, Diana!"

"But I tell you—Diana hoisted.

"My hat, I know now! She prepared that slip in eight this morning!"

"Oh, don't tell me!" Clara cried disbelievably.

But Diana was really angry now. Diana had seen—Diana knew, she had been watching Beatrice Beverley, and she knew she was not mistaken. Beatrice had planned this—Beatrice all the time had had that slip of paper concealed in her hand—ready to produce it at the appropriate moment.

And with that slip she had cheated—robbed another girl of the honors of going to London—perhaps—robbed Diana herself.

Diana's eyes flashed. She was nothing new. The Form did not believe her. They thought because her name had not been called that she was just out to make trouble. Flaming indignation, her eyebrows arched except Diana. She faced the Fourth with flashing eyes.

"I demand a re-draw!" she cried.

"Yes, I guess you'd like one!" cried Leda Carroll scornfully. "Oh, gosh, Di! Why can't you take it like a sport? After all, you've got the only girl who's disappointed."

"Dear, dear!"

Diana showed her teeth.

"It's not," she said, "a case of being disappointed. It's a case of being cheated! I tell you—"

"Oh, for goodness' sake, shut it!" Babo cried. "Listen to me!"

But Diana, at that, lost all patience, all self-control. She stomped round. She saw the disappointed, the eyes in the faces of the other girls. A gasp of indignation, outraged fury shook her. Without stopping to think what she did, she caught the hat containing the rest of the slips, and with one violent, passionate stroke of her arm flung the slip into Beatrice Beverley's lap. Beatrice, amid a shower of flying slips, staggered back.

"Well!"

"There was a howl.

"Diana, you cut!"

"Make her apologise!"

"Make—"

And then there was a sudden blinding cry of "Care!" With a crash the door went back upon its hinges. The door everywhere wheeled, and everybody there fell back as another girl strode into the room—the sour-faced, glittering-eyed Sarah Harrigan, pushed in the Sixth Form and one of the Fourth's traditional enemies. A moaning woe in its place.

"So this," she said scoldingly, "is how you behave yourselves, in it, Fourth Form! Barbara Redfern, clear up that mess of paper there. And all of you—every one of you! Sarah asked with relief, "put a black mark in your books!"

### Firebrand versus Form!



SARAH, with a sour smile, went on, leaving black marks and consternation behind her.

Barbara Redfern flushed. That was just like Sarah—Sarah, glad of any opportunity of jumping upon the Fourth. Sarah, who most certainly, if she had her way, would do everything in her power to prevent the Fourth from gaining the coveted honour of Saturday.

But Diana marks each—that meant thirty-three black marks to start with! The Fourth's feelings were too deep for words.

"And all," Clara breathed furiously, "because you would kick up a shindy, Diana! Is this what you call playing the game?"

"Yes, rather! Is this what you call keeping your promise to the Form?"

Made cut in.

Diana answered bitterly.

"If you've got my fault!"

"Well, you started it!" Babo retorted.

"Did I? You don't," Diana answered.

"Now to take into account the one who was cheating! Oh, all right, don't place!" she added disdainfully.

"Jolly well believe her if you want to believe her! The blue blood always comes before the black sheep, I guess!"

Betty's eye tossed her proud platinum blonde head. "Well, go on—I don't care! Believe what you jolly well like to believe! But you"—and for a moment her eyes flashed with a glance of hate upon the Hon. Beatrice Beverley—

"well, you mean!" she said between her teeth.

And with that she strode to the door, afraid in that moment to turn herself further. Not alive was it that the Firebrand of the Fourth felt righteous in her cause; but it was righteous anger and indignation that consumed



her own. Beatrice had cleaned—the  
 ● the hall. She had seen it! These black  
 folk took that character's word against  
 hers, did they?

Well, bother them—bother them  
 all!

Still— And Diana scowled. Well,  
 after all, they hadn't seen. To them,  
 Beatrice Beverly was a decent girl—  
 Beatrice Beverly had never been found  
 guilty of any underhand act yet. She,  
 as the other hand, always had a  
 bad name.

If there was a wrong and a right in  
 any case in which she was involved, the  
 Fourth was always ready to put her on  
 the wrong side. Perhaps she wouldn't  
 blame them. They were even—Diana  
 fair-mindedly admitted—justified. But  
 it was galling in the extreme to be mis-  
 judged when for once she had been  
 doing the right thing!

In a starchy mood, Diana flung out  
 of the school.

The fact that she had been left out  
 of the chosen fifteen was in itself bitter  
 enough, without the sense of injustice or  
 the unkind remarks of her Form-  
 fellows.

Black indeed was her mood as she  
 strode on, bitterly reflecting upon her  
 wrongs. She bounced ahead with a  
 glare when she heard her name.

"D-Diana!"

"Hallo!" Diana replied petulantly.

"What?"

And then she blinked. In a moment  
 the fury had faded from her face.  
 For, turning, she came face to face  
 with a girl she had not seen for years  
 ("see, now—"), rather flushed, com-  
 ing late in a dress belonging to a girl nearly  
 ten children dead, a whole world of  
 misery in her eyes. Diana's eyes  
 brightened.

"Why, Tilly!" she cried.

Tilly Coote, from Scarsdale Alley, in  
 Courtfield, it was—Tilly, who had been  
 the friend of a protégée of Diana's,  
 Lily Walters, who, after a brief but  
 successful career at Cliff House, had gone  
 to seek her fortune at the European  
 Academy of Music.

Diana loved Tilly. That Tilly was  
 sturdy, frank, unswayed, meant nothing  
 to showy, whose father, in addition  
 to being the Marquis of Courtfield, was  
 also the richest man in the district.

That again was a peculiar character-  
 istic of Diana's—that, while dying to  
 count the accessories of the land among  
 her friends, while burning with an  
 ambition that was almost painful to be  
 a blue-blood herself, she was always  
 attractive and sympathetic towards girls  
 less fortunately placed than herself.

Instantly her mood was gone. In  
 its place came that sunny, dancing  
 smile that even those who liked her  
 least found irresistible.

"Well, Tilly! Fancy you here!" she  
 said. "You must go now?"

"Oh, Diana—please!" Tilly pleaded.

"Yes—you don't mind me calling you  
 Diana, do you? You—you may recall,  
 you know." Her face flushed with  
 warm admiration. "Yes—you did tell  
 me to—this time you if ever I—  
 I wanted help."

"Did I?" Diana smiled. "Well, yes,  
 of course I did! But what's the matter,  
 Tilly? Money?" Instantly she  
 thrust her hand towards her pocket.

"No—at least—" Tilly word  
 crossed again. "No, miss—no, please,  
 Diana. (Don't—don't give me any-  
 thing. But to-day, Tilly said, "I got  
 a job."

Diana laughed.

"Well, that's not exactly a wis-  
 dom, Tilly."

"No, Diana; but—but—" And  
 then, blushing, Tilly went on to explain.

Her mother was ill in hospital. The  
 job she had got was at the Courtfield  
 Theatre. She was to roll programmes in  
 the second house. But Tilly's mother  
 was undergoing an operation in the  
 hospital that night. Tilly's presence  
 was vitally necessary at the hospital.

"But—but—" Tilly blurted out.

"Oh, Miss Diana—what can I do?  
 Because the manager of the theatre said  
 that if I didn't turn up to-night, he'd  
 have to get someone else. You see, I've

grieved, it was up to her and all of them  
 to back up the Ferra. And if she was  
 found out, that would be another black  
 mark!

"Oh, Diana, can—you help me?"  
 Tilly quavered. "If you don't, it  
 means that I'll lose the job, and I want  
 a job now, goodness only knows, with  
 mother as ill. Diana—" she pleaded.

In a moment Diana's scruples were  
 swept aside. She put her hand on the  
 other girl's shoulder.



DIANA pretended not to recognize Beatrice and her father. "Chocolate, your lordship?" she asked sweetly. "Programme?" But Beatrice looked daggers at Diana. She knew!

only got the job because somebody else  
 is ill.

"Oh?" Diana said.  
 She understood. Watching the face  
 of the little girl, she felt her heart  
 waver in sympathy.

"You mean," she said, "that if you  
 could find someone to take your place  
 you—"

"Yes," Tilly gulped.

Diana pondered. Immediately the  
 idea was born. She herself could do it.  
 Risky, but what of that? She knew  
 Professor Larkin, the musical director  
 of the theatre. It would be easy enough  
 to fix things with him. Yet it would  
 prove breaking news—a thing Diana  
 hadn't done for some time now. And  
 if she was caught—

Diana bit her lip. All these possibili-  
 ties ran through her mind at once. But  
 not Diana to turn a deaf ear to a plea  
 like this—especially a plea from a  
 poorer girl than herself. Besides, it  
 was true what Tilly had said—in the  
 past she had promised to help her.  
 Could she do it?

Ordinarily Diana would never have  
 hesitated, but she was thinking now,  
 not of herself, but of the Ferra. Though  
 the Ferra despised her and disdained  
 her, though the Ferra, as usual, thought  
 that she had her own selfish axe to

"Don't worry, Tilly!"

"Do—"

"I," Diana said, "will take your  
 place. Yes! I'll be all right, old  
 thing. I'll fix it. Don't worry. Your  
 job will be there for you all right to-  
 morrow night. And I do hope," she  
 added sincerely, "that your mother will  
 come through her operation all right."

She paused; then, to Tilly's wide-  
 eyed amazement, she produced two  
 shining half-crowns.

"To-day, when you go to see her,  
 take her a nice big bunch of black  
 grapes—as a present from me, will  
 you?" she added softly. "Now come!"

"Oh, but, Miss Diana—"

"Go on, your loss is constant!"

And Diana, with a laugh, pushed the  
 girl through the gates just as the Court-  
 field bus stopped outside.

She wanted to see the stranger board  
 the bus; then, with a thoughtful smile,  
 walked back to School House.

She felt better than extraordinary  
 the excitement, the raptures of a  
 meeting with a girl like Tilly would  
 have upon the storm and uncertain-  
 tempest-tossed Fire-bird! Alas! gay she  
 felt as she trotted up the steps of Big  
 Hall, and then, bethinking herself that  
 she might as well fix things up with  
 Professor Larkin right away, turned

the steps in the direction of the projects' room, where the silver telephone was installed. She reached the room, turned the handle of the door, and then passed.

The phone, apparently, was already in use. Her face darkened as she heard Beatrice Beverley's voice, speaking loudly, rather agitatedly:

"I tell you I want see you! I want! She? Well, ask for the time off. What time? Yes, all right. I'll be there. But for goodness' sake don't fail me!"

"Hello!" breathed Diana. "And what ruffian can little innocents like me?"

She paused a moment. Then came a little ring as the receiver was hung up. Acting upon impulse rather than any preconceived idea, Diana slipped back along the corridor, turning again as she closed the projects' room opened and Beatrice Beverley, with an almost hunted expression on her face, slipped into the corridor. She saw Diana, hastily composed her features, and, with a glance at the lofty firebrand, strode past her. Diana looked after her thoughtfully.

"It's he!" she said.

She went into the projects' room. There she lifted the receiver. The operator's voice came through:

"Yes!"

"This is Cliff Home," Diana said. "Can you tell me where that lost call came from?"

"The operator passed."

"London. I'm sorry, I can't give you the number."

"Thanks!" Diana said dryly, but her eyes narrowed over so little. "Will you give me Courtland III, please?"

She was put through. A few words with Professor Larkin, and the admission of herself for Tilly Cook that night was fixed. Diana glanced a little on the left the projects' room, just judging Connie Jackson, who lives in sight round the corner of the corridor as the case out. But Diana was thinking not of Connie or Professor Larkin. She was thinking of that agitated conversation on the phone—that hunted look in the face of the Hon. Beatrice Beverley.

Her eyes glanced. Diana knew Beatrice Beverley only as an enemy one. Beatrice had cheated. Diana had declared in the Commons-room that she would get her own back on Beatrice Beverley, and she meant it. If Diana was loyal in her friendships, she was fierce in her enmities.

Straight to Study No. 2 she went. She knocked on the door at the same moment as she entered it. Beatrice Beverley, in that study alone, swung round from the table with a guilty jump.

"Oh!" Diana said. "I say—"

Even she, for a moment, was overcome with astonishment. On the table lay the silver-crested frame which had supported that photograph of Beatrice's father—that photograph which all the Fourth knew and admired.

But the frame was empty now. The photograph of the handsome fifth Baron Tremadoc was in Beatrice's hand, and Beatrice herself was in the act of tucking it in her bag. Diana's eyes widened.

"Yield, what's the matter? Parting with old friend, too? I thought you were as faithfully proud of your father, Beatrice!"

"Get out!" Beatrice panted.

"But why—"

"It's my photograph, and I suppose I can do what I like with it!" Beatrice blazed. "Will you get out!"

Diana frowned.

"When I'm ready," she answered lightly. "Must satisfy my curiosity,

you know. I want to say"—with a mocking glance at the torn fragments in Beatrice's hand—"you can't do these sort of things without inviting consequences. Everybody in the Form has admired that old hero of yours."

Beatrice glared.

"Will you get out!" she almost shrieked.

"Certainly, when I'm ready!" Diana answered coolly, and then passed on a football covered up the corridor, and Barbara Redfern came on the coast. "Perhaps," she suggested mockingly, "Barbara can clear up the matter."

Beatrice bit her lip.

"Will you please mind your own business? Hah!" she added, as that girl came up, "send her away, because if you don't, I shall be throwing something at her."

"And coming," Babs said, "another scene. I just came to warn you that the Bell is sweeping around. Diana, I'm sorry you can't do the party. But must you?" Babs wearily asked, "go around just trying to make trouble, and earn black marks?"

Diana stared.

"So shall's what you think, is it?"

"Well, what else am I to think? You do seem to be going out of your way—

"Here, I say, where are you going?"

"Late school!" Diana fluted back, and angrily strode away.

### Out of Bounds



**A** RATHER trying day that to the Fourth Form. The Fourth was not used to being so painfully good, and the fact that it had earned three black marks at one fell swoop, left it was going to take some living down.

There was one small compensation from which the Fourth tried to take comfort. That was that the Lower and Upper Thirds, having met in violent altercation in the joint Commons-room shared by them, had, during the evening, also earned a strip of black marks.

"Well, from now on," Barbara Redfern warned as bed-time, "net another single offense, you girls!"

"And anybody who does jolly well earn a mark in letting the Form down, and shall be dealt with by the Form," Clara Trevelyan threatened.

"Hear, hear!"

That was agreed. The Fourth had made a bargain. It meant, and would, stick to it. Even Lydia Crosswells was in hearty accordance with her fellows this time. For was not Lydia one of the selected?

Diana heard, and Diana smiled quietly, and gently to herself. She considered what the Form would say if they knew she was going to break bounds that night?

But that, to Diana, was not a matter to worry about. Diana had faith enough in her own smarts, her own cunning to evade detection. If anybody, let the Form down, it should not be she.

She waited until lights out—and the even breathing of the Fourth and the moaning of Beattie Baxter told her her co-scholars of the dormitory were asleep. Then quietly she rose. In the darkness she dressed, and, arranging the bedclothes in her bed to form a screen, slipped outside.

Diana, as usual, had made her arrangements. At Friarhole the taxi she had ordered was waiting to meet her, and off she was whisked, to be

greeted warmly at the stage door of the theater by Professor Larkin!

"My dear Miss Diana," he whispered, "what a pleasure it is to meet you again!"

"Isn't it?" Diana laughed. "You fixed it up with the manager for me to take Tilly's place, I mean?"

"Yes; but my dear Miss Diana—you, sailing programme. Let us," the professor begged, "find someone else. I have a nice seat reserved for you in the stalls."

Diana, however, shook her platinum-blonde head.

"Thanks, professor; but I came here to do a job, and I'm going to do it," she said. "Let me be the programme purveyor."

And the professor, mournfully shaking his head—for who could understand this strange Diana of the shagging woods?—led her to the office of the assistant stage manager. Diana, dressed out with a uniform, her set of programmes, and given several boxes of cigarettes to sell. One soon the wings she slipped into the theatre.

She smiled a little, pleasantly reminiscent of the mother she attracted at once. Diana, with her well-proportioned mop of blonde hair, her really lovely face, was a figure to attract attention at all times. Diana liked being noticed, liked to find herself the centre of attention, and instantly decided in that moment that there were worse jobs than the one she had so voluntarily taken on. In less than ten minutes her stock of programmes was gone.

Diana rushed to replenish her supply, knowing as she trooped back into the auditorium. Oh, this was lovely! This was grand! Honey sweet, it was for her to come people gazing on her, wringing loaves of gold from the platinum-blonde locks. Music to hear such comments as "Isn't she lovely!"

And: "Looks more like the leading lady than a programme seller!" And a delicious thrill it was when she recognized, in the stalls, the tall, dignified face of young Lieutenant Harcourt, in company with his general father, Sir Richard Harcourt.

The Harcourts was one of the families by whom Miss Diana had always been to be known.

So what a thrill when the young lieutenant, calling her to him, purchased a box of cigarettes, and added four shillings to the price!

Diana smiled. A four-shilling tip! Yields! What would he say if he knew she was the daughter of the Mayor of Lardham? All the same, she pocketed the tip, even though vaguely did present her to release it.

The tip was Tilly's, really; it was her job. She smiled grateful thanks at the lieutenant, who smiled back—a smile far from being merely conventional.

And then, turning away, Diana started.

For the curtain which screened the doorway that led from the stalls to the foyer corridor was suddenly whisked aside. Two people entered the theatre.

One was a girl—the Hon. Beatrice Beverley!

And the other—Diana took one look at him. Never had she seen the man in the flesh before, but she recognized him instantly. No mistaking that gravely handsome face. It was Beatrice Beverley's father, the fifth Baron Tremadoc himself!

So this, Diana thought at once, was the result of that hurried telephonic conversation of Beatrice's that afternoon. The man she had been phoning

way her own father. But why such agonizing—why such distress?

And if Beatrice were her lover—  
But immediately that thought came, Diana dismissed it with a shrug. Well, what of it? If she was out of bounds, Beatrice, in the same boat as herself, couldn't very well speak on her. Diana checked. Boldly she sailed towards them.

"Chocolate, your lordship!" she asked demurely.

And as the sound of her voice, Beatrice, with a quick start, jerked up her head. With her eyes became as the recognized Diana. Filled her cheeks were left as the color suddenly seceded from them. The baron stared in surprise.

"Why, young lady, how do you know—"

"Father—quick!" Beatrice gasped.

"Be—"  
"I think," Diana cut in, with cool mastery, "Beatrice is rather surprised to find me here, baron, Beatrice—with a maliciously taunting glance at that shaking girl—" is obviously placing the same little game as I am. But don't worry," she added disdainfully, "I shan't give you away."

The look Beatrice looked at her was a look of hate. Diana met it with a disdainful, sneer smile. The baron, low-headed, plainly out of his depth, clapped from one to the other.

"But I don't understand!"

"Come on!" Beatrice breathed feverishly, agonizedly, and pulled at his arm.

"Be—"  
"Oh, come on!" Beatrice stopped almost abruptly.

"Aye—oh!" Diana sneaked. "Sorry you aren't stopping for the performance."

But Beatrice herself did not hear that. She was trembling, shaking as she snugged her father back into the foyer. He looked at her curiously.

"Why, goodness, Beatrice, why are you so afraid of that girl—a programme-seller?"

"She isn't a programme-seller!" Beatrice bit out. "She's a girl at our school. Oh, don't ask what she's doing here—I don't know! But— Oh, bother it!" she snarled. "Why did you suggest coming to the theatre? Father, look here, I've got to hurry back. I must get back before that girl—"  
"But why?"

"Because," Beatrice retorted savagely, "I've got to do something new that you've let me down. Father—oh, goodness, you've not—positively not—that you can't do it?"

"I'm sorry, Beatrice, but I just can't! The scenery is too big. I shall be wanted more than anywhere else."

Beatrice bit her lip, as fastidiously, as fiercely, that the blood showed in a tiny spot upon her lip.

"All right then, I'll have to try other comedies. But—oh, well, look here, I'm going. I—I'm sorry for dragging you here all the way from London, but—well, I'm sorry still, you can't do what I want you to do. Good-night now!"

"But, Beatrice, aren't you going to kiss me—"

Beatrice, however, apparently did not hear that. She was lying then. Her father looked after her. Pained and lost the expression on his handsome face, rather mistal all at once the look which came upon his eyes. For a moment he stood on the theatre steps, gazing after the Diana figure, and then, with a despairing, shrug his head, with a heavy sigh, he stepped off on to the path.

But Beatrice, racing on, was panting—not so much from her physical as from her mental exertions. Things had happened to Beatrice that night—irritating, shaking things; things which, for once, had completely unconcerned that gentleness of nature which she had always shown to Cliff House, things which filled her heart with savage despair, which brought all her unlovely traits to the surface. First her father! He had let her down. Then Diana—Diana above all people!

She flew on. How Diana! Bother her father! She reached at last just the gap in the hedge through which she squeezed herself into Cliff House's grounds. The window of the lobby was still open as she had left it, thank goodness! With a quick look to right and left, she pushed it up and climbed over the sill. In the darkness her eyes glittered.

"Diana—she'll be coming along soon! My hat, I'll make her earn a crop of black marks!" she muttered.

She looked round. On the sill was an ornamental vase. Carefully she closed the window. Against the woodwork she routed the fragile vase. Next she found a plaster of paris statuette and placed that on the ledge.

Her eyes glowered a little.

She looked satisfied. Diana wouldn't be looking for the statuette or the vase when she came back. As soon as she pushed that window up, over the things would go, giving her presence away immediately. Beatrice laughed grimly as she looked an eye towards Miss Belliveau's door, not very far away, and towards which a light still shone. So much for Diana!

Cautionally she crept onwards. Her heart thumped a little as unobtrusively she crossed the Fourth Form dormitory. The dormitory was in darkness except for the pallid grey light which glowed where the windows were, and everyone appeared to be soundly sleeping. Soberly she slipped across to her bed. In the darkness she undressed and slipped into it. Then she lay awake, listening.

It was some time later that Diana returned to Cliff House. With steady steps she crept to that window by which she had made her exit, knowing that it would still be unfastened.

Boldly, even so softly, she pushed it open, and was in the very act of climbing over the sill, when—  
Crash!

Diana almost fell from her perch as she saw what had happened. The statuette and the vase which Beatrice had arranged on the sill clattered in the ground, the noise of their fall seeming horrible in the silence.

"Dash it!" Diana raged. "That's done it!"

Swiftly she leapt into the room, and then looked the window. Turning, she sped across to the door, but even as she reached it the light clicked on, and she found herself face to face with Miss Belliveau.

Beatrice, arisen angrily in bed, heard that crash, and sniled craftily. So her little scheme had worked, just as she had planned!

She listened tensely. She heard voices muttering indistinctly. Miss Belliveau's voice, the angrier tones of Diana. For three—four minutes they argued, Miss Belliveau's growing sharper, more exasperated; Diana's more shrilly angry. Then footsteps—more footsteps—clumping, boozey—coming up the stairs, along the corridor. One or two girls woke.

"I say, who is it?"

"What on earth—"

The door went open. Bright the light went on. Beatrice struggled beneath her sheets, wincing sleep. Girls sat up, staring at the two who entered them—grim, said-faced Miss Belliveau, obviously in a towering temper, the sulky, Jackson Diana Boyton-Clarke, fully dressed and obviously having been caught out of bounds. There was a chilled silence.

"Diana, go to bed!" Miss Belliveau rapped. "In the morning I shall report this to the headmistress. Girls, go to sleep! Good-night!"

And snick! went the light again. Then! went the door. Diana, breathing fury, stood in the centre of the dormitory.

Then bubble broke out.

"Diana!"

"Diana, you wash-out!"

"What have you been doing now?"

"Oh, what up?" Diana retorted.

"You shut up! Shut up—when we're ready!" Diana Trovay said grimly. "I suppose you know that means a crop of black marks for the Form! What were you doing out of bounds?"

"That," retorted Diana, "is my business. Oh, for goodness' sake, be quiet!" she railed. "I didn't break bounds just for fun, you know?"

"No, you broke them," a voice put in, "because you jolly well wanted to get the Form into trouble!"

The voice was that of the Hon. Beatrice Beverley, and that was more than Diana could stand. Diana was in no doubt as to who had left those things on the window-ledge.

"Why, you rotten hypocrite!" she blazed. "And I suppose you broke bounds because you didn't want to get the Form into trouble!"

"I!" Beatrice cried.

"Yes, you—you twaddled schemer! Oh, don't get the innocent! You jolly well know I see you in the Courtfield Theatre! You jolly well know that it was you who got me caught—by putting the things on the window frame!"

"Oh, look here—!" Beatrice cried indignantly.

"Well, surely it?" Diana challenged.

"Most certainly I don't! I haven't broken bounds! Girls, have I even been out of bed?"

"No!" came a chorus.

"Go to bed, Diana!"

"Yes, rather! And stop telling lies!"

In the darkness Diana's eyes glittered. She was shaking with fury then. Beatrice—that snail little schemer, that beastly hypocrite!

It was too much! In the darkness Diana caught hold of her pillow. Seized by an unmanageable spasm of rage, she hurled it with all her force at Beatrice Beverley's bed.

"Take that, you cat!"

But Beatrice didn't take it. She ducked the pillow, whirling over her head, struck Clara Trovay, who was sitting up in bed. At once all Clara's lightning instincts were aroused. Savagely she grabbed the pillow; savagely hurled it back just as the door came open and Miss Belliveau reappeared. The pillow missed Diana, but, sailing on, hit the Cliff House headmistress's mirror.

There was a headlong, abandoned silence.

"Then—"

"Clara!" quivered Miss Belliveau.

"Oh, my eye!" muttered Clara. "I— I'm sorry, Miss Bell—"

"I must absolutely leave you are!" Miss Belliveau cried. "All the same, that does not excuse your hypocrisy! Diana, who aren't you in bed just? Barbara Boffers, what are you sitting up for? You will see," Miss Belliveau said

terribly," "take a black mark! And, Clara—" "Oh, wasn't my hat! Yes!" screeled Clara. "You will take five, and do my hundred lines into the bargain! And, now, no more noise, please!" the Bull said threateningly. "If I hear another word from this dormitory, I shall give the whole Form!"

**Black Marks for Babs**



"CLARA! Clara Trevlyn!" "Hallo!" growled the Tomboy of the Fourth.

It was the following morning, less than five minutes after rising-bed. Clara, watching her feet, glared through a mist of soap-suds at the scowling figure of Sarah Harrigan, who had just entered the dormitory.

"And don't," Sarah said, "speak to me like that! Miss Halliwell wants to see you."

"What for?" "I don't know, but," Sarah added, with relish, "she's in a fine old way! I doubtless advise you to keep her waiting."

Clara smiled. She rinsed her face, dried herself, and put on the rest of her clothes. Babs looked at her anxiously.

"Oh, my hat! What's happened now?"

Clara shook her head. Clara that morning was feeling fed-up. There were not many girls in the Fourth, indeed, who were looking terribly happy. The burden of black marks already accrued during their term of good conduct—a far heavier burden than normally—was weightily upon them all. Trouble and the Fourth seemed to be inseparable these days.

Babs bit her lip. Instinctively she took a look at Diana. Diana, who was carefully brushing her wispy hair in front of the mirror, saw the look, and returned it with a glare of hostility.

"Better up and get it over, I suppose," Clara growled. "See you in the study, Babs."

Babs nodded. Clara, a frown on her face, went out. Shortly Babs finished dressing, and, with Mabel Lynn and Bessie Hunter, went down to Study No. 4. Five minutes later Clara came in. Her face was white, her nostrils twitching.

"Clara, what is it?" Babs cried. "I'm pained!" "What?" "Gawd!" Clara cried, her eyes blazing. "Somebody get up in the middle of the night and japed the Bull. The Bull thinks it was me!"

"But—?" "Clara showed her teeth."

"Apparently, somebody get into the Bull's nose and upset things."

"Oh, my goodness!" breathed Babs, and looked at Mabel in dismay. "But how does she—she think—?"

The Tomboy shrugged bitterly.

"Oh, she weighed it all up from her point of view! She thinks I wanted my own back because she went for me in the dorm last night. Apart from that," Clara added bitterly, "she's got my slippers."

"You mean—?" Mabel cried. "I mean," Clara said, between her teeth, "that whoever played that mean joke went and left my slippers in the hall's room, so that it looked as if I'd been there."

had been played in a spirit of revenge. Obviously, someone was out to make deliberate trouble for Tomboy Clara. A pair of tricks Diana Roydon-Clarke! The sort of trick Diana would do, that! Babs' eyes narrowed.

"And you can guess," she said coldly, "who did it?"

"Diana?" Mabel said. "Yes."

They stared. Clara's face went a little pink. "Over the look that came into her eyes. She rose.

"Well, I'm jolly well going to see Diana," she said. "Don't you come, Babs."

"By hold on—hold on!" And Babs pushed her into a chair. "Clara, leave Clara to me. You've been getting into enough trouble as it is. But Diana's not going to get away with it. I'll speak to her. Mabel, look after Clara."

Mabel nodded. Clara, breathing deep breaths, sat down again. Out rushed Babs, meeting Beatrice Beverley in the passage outside. She looked at her quickly.

"Beatrice, have you seen Diana?" "Why, my hat, you look excited! What's the matter?"

"The matter," Babs said angrily, "is that the japper Miss Halliwell has japed, and left Clara to take the blame! Where is she?"

"In her study, I think," Beatrice said.

Babs moved off. She crossed up the corridor, while Beatrice, with a strange look in her eyes, disappeared in the direction of Sarah Harrigan's study. Sarah frowned as she came in.

"Hallo! What's the matter with you?"

"Oh, Sarah," Beatrice panted, "I—I thought I ought to tell you! Beatrice Roydon is looking for Diana Roydon-Clarke. Barbara says, when she finds her, she's going to make a scene. Hadn't you better do something?"

Sarah rose. There was a gleam of grim satisfaction in her eyes. She nodded.

"Thanks?" "By—by—oh, Sarah," Beatrice warned, "you—you won't say that I said anything?"

"Keep your mind easy," Sarah said. And Beatrice, with a chuck, bounded off.

While Babs, looking into Study No. 10, frowned at Margot Lenthorn, Diana's study-mate, who was at the table collecting her books.

"Diana isn't she asked."

"No," Margot said. "She went down to the trackshop. But what's the matter, Babs?"

Babs, however, did not reply to that question. Still angry, she closed the door. Out of the school, down the drive she raced, catching Diana just as she was in the act of ascending the steps which led into the school trackshop. She turned as she felt Babs' hand upon her arm.

"Diana, a word with you," Babs said. Diana blinked.

"What! What's the matter?" "You know!" Babs eyed her levelly.

"Diana, you've done some pretty rotten tricks in your time, but don't you think this is going altogether too far?"

"Oh?" "About Clara Trevlyn—?"

Diana's eyes glistened. Very deliberately she eyed Barbara. Her pretty face flushed.

"Now come on," she said, "what are you talking about! What am I supposed to have done to Clara Trevlyn?"

"Last night you japed the Bull and left Clara's slippers in the room?"

"Oh!" Diana said, and for a long moment stared intently and curiously at Babs. "So you think that, do you?" she said. "Of course, you would! Always me to blame, eh? Always the black sheep! Well, you can go and show slippers, Barbara Redfern!"

"You admit it?" Babs cried. "I admit nothing!" Diana snapped, and turned to ascend the steps again.

Babs bit her lip. Diana wasn't going to get away with it, though. If Diana thought she could just dust her like this, Diana was going to be shown how mistaken she was. In anger she started forward, placing her hand upon the Firebrand's arm.

Diana, on the top step of the back-shop, turned. For a moment her eyes flashed. Then with a jerk she snatched her arm hastily aside, forgetting for a moment the silver bracelet she was wearing. As Babs' grip instinctively tightened, the silk gave, tearing softly across.

"You cut!" Diana shrieked. "My bracelet—?"

Babs fell back in dismay. "Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't mean that!" "Didn't—didn't—?" Diana choked.

"Oh, you!" she cried, and then stopped, as down the drive came Sarah Harrigan, accompanied by Miss Pritzeau—Sarah having thoughtfully fetched the headmistress to bear witness to this quarrel of which she had been forewarned. Her lips set.

"Barbara!" Miss Pritzeau cried. Babs jumped.

"Oh, dear! I—I didn't see you, Miss Pritzeau."

"Obviously you did not," Miss Pritzeau fairly roared. "But I saw you, Barbara. I also saw," she added, "what you did. That was a very thoughtful, unkind attack upon Diana. And look what you have done to her bracelet."

Diana sneered. "Did you start this quarrel?" "I did not!" Diana said distinctly. "You admit she did not start it, Barbara?"

"Yes?" Babs muttered.

"Then," Miss Pritzeau said, "you will go back to school. You will put two black marks in your book, which are also marks, I may remind you, that count against the Form. In addition you will write one hundred lines! I must not quarrel with other girls!" Go!

And Babs, crimson, humiliated, sick at heart, went. While Diana watched her with a mocking smile.

From afar, a curious twist on her lips, another girl watched too.

That girl was Beatrice Beverley!

**Diana Repentant**



"NO!" Diana Roydon-Clarke decided. "It isn't fair! It isn't! Babs was justified. Dash it all, wouldn't you have jumped to the same conclusion if you had been in her place?"

Diana was arguing with herself. Diana stood at the door of the back-shop, and Diana, strangely enough, was in a self-critical mood.

It was not often that Diana caught herself in one of these moods, but Diana in her better moments did love fair play, and it occurred to the Firebrand now, that Barbara Redfern most decidedly had not had fair play.

In the bitterness of the moment she had been glad enough to see her represented for the affair; but Babe, after all, had only jumped to an understandable conclusion.

She was the black sheep of the Form—no getting away from that. Her past record, her temperament, her notorious eccentricity and that penchant for getting her own back, were all factors which contributed to the opinion the Fourth had of her.

And, after all, Babe hadn't meant to tear her blouse. Babe had only been sticking up for a pal. She, Diana, could have saved Babe from punishment—by putting in a word at the right moment. She had refrained, preferring to let Babe suffer.

"Not playing the game," Diana decided. "Rather childish, what? But the question is, who did do those things? And who," she added, "brought Primmy and Sarah on the scene at such an appropriate moment?"

Rather strange and shrewd the look that came into her face then. Her mind went back to Beatrice Beverly.

"Can it be," she muttered, "that the dear old Miss, is the one who is trying to get the Form black marked? But if so, why?"

A puzzle, that. But it gave Diana something to think about. For if Beatrice Beverly was working hard to shut everything out, then most certainly she was helping for us. Her eyes flashed.

"Hi," she said, "you're going to Primmy. You're going now—at once. You're going to tell her that that wasn't Babe's fault. You're going to ask her not to identify the Form with your supposed crimes. That's the best you can do."

It was! And Diana, having made up her mind, descended the steps and strode off. She reached the school, knocked at Miss Primrose's door, waited, and when there was no reply, went in. Diana shrugged.

"Well, I'll wait for her," she said. She sat down in the Head's best armchair. She, Diana, was always cool, always beloved in being comfortable. Five, ten, fifteen minutes went by. Still no Primmy turned up. Diana rose.

"Well, hurry it to another time," she murmured. "It will be long."

She went out, closing the door behind her. Three girls were coming up the corridor as she did so. They were Barbara Roffers, Beatrice Beverly, and Lydia Crosscrosdale.

Diana stopped.

"If you're going to see Primmy, forget it," she said softly. "She's not in."

"What have you been doing in there?" Beatrice Beverly asked.

"Hi," Diana answered her with a haughty sneer. "Having rather fond of sticking your aristocratic nose into other people's business, aren't you?" she asked with a sneer. "What should I have been doing in there?"

"Well, you've been in a long time. I really will see you," Beatrice replied.

"Black-blooded little spy!" Diana roared and walked on.

Breakfast had rung out then. Babe, who had the lines Miss Primrose had told her to do in her hands, turned to the other two.

"All right," she said, "you cut off. I'll just pop these into Primmy's study and leave them."

Beatrice nodded. Lydia grinned. They hurried back while Babe, knocking at the door, entered the room and put the lines on the desk. Then breakfast,



SOFTLY Diana opened the window. But all her caution was wasted. There came a terrific crash as a couple of ornaments fell to the ground—and Diana knew that the warning had been given!

then assembly—with Babe called to sharp attention by Connor Jackson, who called the roll, for not wearing her captain's badge. Babe looked bewildered.

"But—but I had it on before breakfast," she said.

"Well, you'll find it before you go into class," Connor snapped.

But that badge, despite the most frantic of looks, seemed to have disappeared into thin air. She did not remember a single thing about it since. Could she have lost it in that altercation with Diana at the window? She ran back that way, but no badge was to be found. She was still without it when the Fourth led into class.

"Barbara," Miss Cherrant asked,

"where is your badge?"

"I—I've lost it," Babe muttered.

"Well, come to see after lessons, and I will give you another one," Miss Cherrant said. "Be seated, girls!"

The girls sat down; but hardly had they settled into their places when the door swung open. Miss Primrose, in a towering temper, strode into the room.

"Barbara!" she cried,

Babe wondering why.

"Come here!"

Usually Babe stopped in front of the class. Miss Primrose eyed her grimly.

"Barbara, have you been in my study this morning?"

"Yes," muttered Barbara.

"Thank you! I didn't think you would trouble to deny it. And you left in my study—this, Miss Primrose said angrily.

She opened her palms, disclosed to Babe's secretary noted, her missing badge.

"Oh, Miss Primrose, thank you—"

"No; wait a minute"—Miss Primrose was still shaking. "Barbara, why did you go in my study?"

"I—to put my lines on your desk."

"And you did not, I suppose, go anywhere near the window?"

"Why, no, Miss Primrose!"

"Think, Barbara. Did you?"

"No," Babe said confidently.

Miss Primrose's lips came together.

"I am sorry, Barbara," she said, "you should try to excuse yourself in this way. But—and she glanced—no doubt you were annoyed with me for giving you those lines. No doubt you acted on the spur of the moment. Bar-

bara, I found this badge by my window, where my case of flowers stood on the sill, and I found my flowers five minutes ago," Miss Primrose added, "appeared upon my desk. Barbara, what have you to say about that?"

"But—but I don't know anything about it!" Babe cried, while a little hint came from the class.

"Barbara!"

"I'm sorry, I—"

"Thank you, go to your place!" Miss Primrose's face was like that. "I have no doubt, Barbara. The presence of your badge proclaims it. I see you," she said, "going to give you a black mark for that; but as a punishment you will be detained on Saturday. And you go!"

Her eyes swept angrily over the Fourth.

The Fourth jumped.

"I have never, never," Miss Primrose said, "known you to behave yourself in a more ungratefully or more disgraceful way than you have done these last few days. I am tired of hearing the reports of your conduct. I want to make it clear," Miss Primrose went on grindingly, "that this is the very last offense I shall tolerate from this Form. The system of black marks is finished with from this moment. But there—and here her eyes glared except the dismayed faces of the girls before her—"I hear of one more—only one—single

preference on the part of this class, I shall, without making any further consideration whatever, most decidedly engage you from the list of Forms who are in the running for the London trip on Saturday. That is all!"

And, leaving the Form in a state of collapse, and Barbara white-faced and writhed, she swept from the room.

### On Trial



**A**N attention, that, if you like! A blow from which the Fourth escaped.

Barbara, in any case, would not be going to London now. The chances of the rest of them seemed to hang, by the most slender thread.

But questions set in presently when Miss Charmant went out for a few moments, leaving Babs in charge of the class. Then, one and all, the Fourth turned upon the Firebrand.

"Diana, you pig!"

"You did that!"

"It was you who planned it all!"

"Diana," Beatrice Beverly cut in, "you jolly well want to kybock the whole thing. I hope," she added loudly, "you've arranged now?"

Diana's eyes narrowed; her cheeks flushed. But, strangely enough, she said nothing. She had half expected this attitude of the Form. Everything was against her. More than half the Form believed by this time that it was she who had planned Clara's slipper in Miss Primrose's study. More than half the Form believed—and said so—that she had snatched Babs' bag during the altercation on the backshop steps and had planted it in Miss Primrose's study afterwards, together with the unexplained van of Bessie.

Disputes flared in the Fourth against the official, vindictive Firebrand—his god who could take such a pull and dastardly revenge upon them all because, in her childish spite, she wanted to pay them out for not having selected her to go to London.

They said that—and much more. Their scorn and contempt were heaped upon her. They threatened her with Fern her. And yet Diana—this strange Diana who, on another occasion, would have persecuted with a force that would speedily have brought a dozen mistresses on the scene—said nothing. Not a word. She just looked—hard, steadily, bitterly—at Beatrice Beverly.

And then suddenly Babs called "Care!" and hastily the Fourth resumed their places, just as Miss Charmant reentered the class-room. Almost at once Diana put up her hand.

"Well, Diana?" Miss Charmant asked.

"Please," Diana asked, "may I go to see Miss Primrose, Miss Charmant?"

"But why, Diana?"

"Well, Miss Charmant, if you don't mind, it's something I'd rather not talk about before the class."

Miss Charmant gazed at her oddly. The Form gazed, too. Was Diana going to cover up, they wondered? Miss Charmant, with a brief, troubled glance, nodded.

"Very well, Diana?"

Diana rose. She looked neither to right nor to left as she crossed the room. But she did not go to Miss Primrose. Diana had never intended to do so. Diana had a session of her own, for wanting to be out of the Fourth Form class-room when the Fourth was in it, and also when corridors, studies, and

other rooms were empty. Amazingly, she went not to Miss Primrose's study, but to Study No. 2, in the Fourth Form corridor.

The study placed by the Hon. Beatrice Beverly, Brenda Pallace and Jane Merritt.

Her face was hard as she stepped into the study, closing the door behind her. Straight to Beatrice Beverly's desk she stepped. There she pulled open a drawer. There were papers and letters in that drawer, and one letter Diana caught up. It was headed by a Park Lane address, and it began:

"My dear daughter—"

Diana's lips compressed. A rather triumphant gleam was in her eyes now. She put the letter back. Off she went to the prefects'-room. That, of course, was empty. Once again Diana took the door. She took up the telephone receiver. When the operator's voice came through she asked for a trunk call.

"To London," he said.

And when she was put through:

"Please give me Lydia Park 323," she said. And when she was connected:

"Ah! This is Miss Charmant of Cliff House, speaking. Will you kindly ask Mrs. Havethwaite to come to the phone?"

**WHAT IS DIANA?**

"Class out!"

"But," Clara Beverly cried, "never mind Diana! We can hold this meeting without her!"

The scene was the Common-room, the time, after morning lessons—although, on this afternoon was half-holiday, there would be no afternoon lessons. The Fourth was jangling still. Clara stood up on a chair.

"Girls—"

"Listen, hear!"

"No, don't make a row," Clara said. "We don't want a prefect here. We've still a chance of missing through to London, and we don't want to kybock that. But pass all Babs, through no fault of her own—"

"Shame!"

"Will not be going now! And why," Clara demanded, "have we got to thank?"

"Diana," came a roar.

"Diana," Clara agreed grudgingly. "Ever since Diana wasn't picked for the London trip she's done her best to get the Form into the Head's bad books. Like a lot of me—we've put up with it. We earned black marks right and left—just because of things Diana has done. Every black mark we earned since the draw can be traced to her. But—and the Tomber's jaw became set—hard, we've had enough of it. Diana's reached the limit through playing that trick on Babs, and Diana," she added grudgingly, "is going to be held to Form law!"

"Hurray!"

"Are we agreed? Hands up those who aren't!"

Not a hand was raised, not even Margaret Lenthorn's.

"Right!" Clara's lips set. "Then we're all agreed that even Diana," she said, "shall have a chance to stick up for herself. This afternoon is a letter. This afternoon we hold Diana to a Form trial in the room. We don't risk it after lights out, as usual. In case some prefect comes snooping along. Will anybody stand for Diana's defence?"

There was a roster. Then Jessica came forward.

"Well, fair play," she said. "I haven't any words for Diana, but then it's good old British justice, what? I'll stand as her counsel for defence."

"And I," Clara said grudgingly, "will stand for the prosecution. Just Cartwright, you to judge Beatrice and you, Lydia, her godmothers. And it's up to you," she said, "to collar her as soon as dinner is over, and bring her here."

"Right!" Beatrice Beverly said, and smiled.

"Now break up," Clara ordered. "And they broke up. Beatrice among them. But Beatrice did not stream down to dining-room as once with the rest. She went, instead, to Sarah Harbigan's study.

**IT TURNS OUT!**

"Collar her!"

Diana Reynolds-Clark, smoking a cigarette in Study No. 10 after dinner, sang round with a snarl.

But it was too late then. Beatrice Beverly and Lydia Crossendale, faces grim, were racing across the room. Out of Diana's hand the cigarette flew as Lydia, gripped her from one side and Beatrice from the other, hauling her out of her chair. Across the floor she was piloted towards the door.

"How—what—dash you, let me go!" she spluttered. "Hang you, blue-blood, you're smothering me!"

"Come on!" Beatrice muttered vengefully.

She trailed her out of the study. Down the corridor Diana was beautifully handled. The Common-room door was open with a crack. Diana, panting, was flung into it, steering round at the right-angled assembly which awaited her. She understood them.

For the Common-room was crowded. Just Cartwright, seated at a desk writing, one of the Amateur Dramatic Society's wigs, dressed as she came in. Jessica Christie, in a gown and wig, and Clara Trevlyn, similarly attired, coughed as she came in. Madge Lynn, acting as court usher, nodded her head.

"Take her to the dock," she said.

The dock was a contraption of three chairs placed in a square which had one side open. Firmly Beatrice and Lydia gripped the prisoner's arms, forced her forward. Diana laughed disdainfully.

"Well, what is this silly little game?"

Just Cartwright frowned.

"Diana, you have very well what it is. This is a Form trial. We have brought you here so that you can answer the charges made against you. You are required," Just went on sternly, "to observe the rules of the Form court, and, above all, don't make a row."

"Oh, get on with it," Diana said impatiently.

Just's lips compressed.

"Clack of the court, read out the charge."

Madge read it out. Diana listened as though she weren't interested. Her mind was busy with things other than that Form trial, particularly with Beatrice Beverly, who now stood at her side.

In her eyes was a glowing glimmer of mischief, in her face a certain tenderness.

At her side Beatrice Beverly watched three changing expressions that came and went in the Firebrand's face.

Perhaps she was rather disappointed that Diana did not make the scene she had hoped for. Diana, indeed, came amazingly far, seemed to be making everything being done for Diana, though she was mischievous, was not going to give Beatrice Beverly the satisfaction of making a row and so bringing a prefect or Form-mistress on the scene with a consequent punishment for the whole Form.

Beatrice's eyes glinted suddenly. Taking advantage of the cover of the arm-chair clack affected, she withdrew a pin from her dress. Madge was just finishing the change when—

"Wow!" howled Diana, and lung forward with sudden temperance fury upon Beatrice. "You struck a pin in me!"

"I didn't!"

"Order! Order!" cried Jean Cartwright. "Diana! For goodness' sake don't strike a pin!"

Diana scowled. But the glare she gave Beatrice Beverly was threatening in the extreme. Class, for the prosecution, began her case. Then—

"Look here——" howled Diana.

"Silence!"

"I won't be silent! This cat's sticking pins in me!"

"That's untrue!" cried Beatrice Beverly.

"Diana, will you be silent?" Jean expressed.

"No, I won't jolly well be silent! I demand," Diana said, "that Beatrice Beverly be taken out of my way. B—— Why, you beast!" And her open blood then, as Beatrice, under the cover of the desk, kicked her ankle. "Take that!"

There was a tremendous smack. Diana was furious now.

Beatrice took it. She had no alternative. The sound of the blow echoed through the room, and Beatrice staggered back. Immediately the court proceedings were forgotten. A hand came up.

"You bully, Diana!"

"I tell you——" Diana howled. "Oh, bother you! Bother the lot of you! I didn't want to come here. You can't expect me to stand here while this brute, whenever it makes things into me all the time. Get out!" she blazed at Beatrice. "Get out of my way!"

"I——"

"Will you get out!"

"Order! Order!" cried the judge.

"Diana—Beatrice!"

Uproar then. Diana's face was flaming now. Beatrice, angry, too, determined to annoy her, kicked out again. That was enough! Diana, glaring, fairly hoisted herself at her gaiter this time. There was a ruck.

"Oh, my hat! Stop her!"

"Diana, behave yourself!"

"Girls!" cried Babe distractedly.

But it was of no use then. The Fourth, annoyed, was on his feet. Diana, seeing fury in her face, caught Beatrice Beverly by the arm. Half the girls were rushing to her rescue. Joan Chasman, in the park, went sprawling over the chair, half a dozen other girls piled on top of her. Pandemonium was at its height when—

"Girls!" cried a terrible voice at the door.

And the girls, turning, gasped with dismay. Far in the doorway, accompanied by Sarah Harrigan, stood Miss Primrose!

Baron—or Butler?



"DIANA, you will go to your study!" Miss Primrose said angrily. "As for you others—— I have never seen such a disgraceful exhibition! Barbara, you are again here! Why did you not keep quiet?"

Babe crimsoned.

"Well——well, you see, Miss Primrose——"

"I certainly do see! I think," Miss Primrose said, "that this form is completely irresponsible! I warned you this morning what would happen next time I caught you offending against the rules of the school! Every girl concerned in this case will take a hundred lines,

and must definitely——" Miss Primrose quivered——"must definitely see the Fourth in forbidden to partake in the trip to London on Saturday! Diana, go to your study!"

Diana went. The Fourth remained behind, bitter silence and dismay enveloping them. They had lost. The lesson was not to be theirs, and all through Diana! In a stink but worthily angry body, they fled into the quad. There, without Diana, a meeting was held. Diana wasn't fit to be spoken to. Diana had played traitor, and worse. The Fourth decided upon its sentence. Diana should be sent to Coventry!

And from that moment Diana was in Coventry!

Not, as a matter of fact, that that seemed to trouble Diana. Diana was still going for her own private eye. Perhaps secretly Diana unlocked the bar, it fitted in nicely with her secret plans. For the rest of that day and the next no one spoke to Diana. Nobody even recognized her existence.

And the next day—that was Saturday.

But on Friday night, Diana was mysteriously busy. In her own study, Diana sat thoughtfully typing. At night, after lights out, she got up and huddled dressed, but because she was in Coventry, nobody could see anything to her. She went out, followed by unnumbered glances and hazy looks. In twenty minutes, however, she was back again, smiling with proud anxiety at the remaining glasses which greeted her. She went to bed.

Next morning—that was Saturday.

Gladly, deprecatingly, the Fourth Fern rose. Only one girl looked anything like happy, indeed, and that girl was Beatrice Beverly. In the drowsy Diana glanced at her.

"Looking chirpy-what?" she asked.

Beatrice frowned her with a scowl.

But the Fern looked at Diana; they looked daggers and dislike. To-day should have been the day of their great treat. This was the girl who had deprived them of it. In sickly silence, they dressed; dejectedly trooped down to breakfast. And then came the bomb-attack.

It came from Beanie Baxter—Beanie almost gaiting with excitement. "Like a fat little whirlwind, she plunged along the corridor just as Babe, Mabel, and Clara, in a gloomy group, were descending the stairs.

"I—I—m-m-m, you girls, we're going!" she cried.

"What?"

"We're going to London!"

"Babe?"

"But it's true!" Beanie glovered.

"Miss Primrose has left a notice on the board in Big Hall. Primary," she explained, "was called away in the middle of the night by a telephone message from her mother, who is ill at Worthington Cove and look for yourself."

Humiliation then! At breakfast speed the Fourth tore down the stairs. Quite a crowd of girls were in the Hall, most of them from the Third Form—a Third Form which, only yesterday so unobtrusive, was now looking glaucous in the extreme. They were all surveying the notice-board.



"D'YOU think I've a common, drooping-ha-penny butter jar a father?" Beatrice sneered. Her scornful words were drowned by a sudden crash of falling glasses as the butter himself entered the room.

And on that board, neatly typed, was this notice:

"In view of certain facts which have come to my notice, I hereby cancel all bookings in the Fourth Form, and have great pleasure in announcing that the Fourth, under Barbara Beffers, has been selected by me to attend at Mrs. Ravenscroft's party in London this day. Please apply for tickets and permits to Miss Bullivant."

"(Signed) FREDERIC FRIMMING,  
"Headmistress."

The Fourth read that, and blinked. The Fourth read it again, and stored. A third time they read it, and whooped.

"We're going!"  
"Prismy says so!"  
"Good old Prismy!"  
"Oh, my hat! Come on!"  
"But—"

Beatrice Beverley jumped forward. Beatrix's face was suddenly white. Beatrix herself was suddenly trembling. "Wait a minute!" she cried. "How do you know that message is not faked?"

"Yes, rather?" Diana Repton-Clarke put in. "How do we know it isn't a fake?"  
"Oh, rats!" Barbara Redfern said. "Who would have faked it? Who would dare fake such a thing as that? It would mean expulsion for sure and certain! Come out! To the Hall, everybody!"

A murmur then. Beatrix, white-faced, trembling, looked herself depressed. Evidently they needed Miss Bullivant's views. Miss Bullivant, apparently, was unopposed as any of them at this sudden change of mind on the part of Miss FrimMING, but even Miss Bullivant did not dare to go against the typewritten order on the notice-board.

Pale and shamed, Beatrix wished them go. Diana, next to her, walked meaningfully and helplessly.

"Not so chirpy—what?" she asked.  
Beatrix threw her a look. She bit her lip. Then suddenly she turned, running back to the stairs. Diana followed her, watching her as she dashed into the prefects' rooms.

She dashed.  
"Good job," she said. "I thought of putting that phone out of order, my old boy. I don't think you'll get through to London now."

And Beatrix didn't. She came out, looking really ill. She glared when Babs thrust her railway ticket into her hand. Diana, still smiling, plucked out of the school, and, catching the bus to Finsbury, boarded the London train. Ten minutes later Babs & Co. came along. They stopped and stared as they saw Diana in a first-class compartment, contentedly, coolly smoking a cigarette.

"Here, I say," Babs blurted, "you're not in the party!"  
Diana smiled.  
"Not?" she asked. "All the same, I'm coming. But don't talk to me!" she added meaningfully. "I'm in Coventry!"  
Babs bit her lip. She had forgotten that.

Into the train they tumbled. Diana grinned again. She had the carriage to herself all the way to London, but she was there at Charing Cross when she came off her cog. Three great cars were waiting to meet them. Diana, coolly and calmly, and apparently unconscious of the glares which greeted her, stepped into the one shared by Babs, Miss Bevis, Clara, and the Hon. Beatrix Beverley. Beatrix was white.

"I tell you it's all a mistake!" she said. "I must bet Prismy—"   
Clara checked.  
"Mistake or not, we're here now; so what odds?" she asked. "In any case,

## MEET HILDA RICHARDS

in these chatty little replies which your favourite author gives to some of her readers.

**Marie Sunny, White Well Station, L.A.**—What nice things you say about my stories, Marie! Thank you! I'm afraid that there isn't space to answer all your questions here. Do send them you write—you will write again, won't you? I remember to give your full address, and I will reply personally.

**Oliver Alger.**—The first letter to me, Olive—but not the last, I am sure. (I have a very nice cousin named Olive!) If you were at Cliff House, you would be in the Lower Third. And a very popular little number, too, I'm sure.

**Constance, Moss House!**—(What a teasing pen-name!) Forget you for writing to me! Why, my dear, some of my happiest hours are spent replying to the many charming letters I receive. I really enjoy doing so. Now—your letter was rather long, and space doesn't permit me to answer your questions here. Won't you write to me again, giving your name and address, so that I can send you a letter in answer!

**Diana Clark, Perth.**—Hello, Diana! So pleased to hear from you again. June is just gone. She grows more adorable every day. You should just see her sitting gravely beside me when I am answering letters. And suddenly—comes her paw—plumps on my knee, and she says she looks at me says so clearly: "Can I give a hand, missus?" Yes, Diana, June is an Amazon and very gentle and sweet. And now—if you were at Cliff House you would be in the Fourth Form with Babs & Co. Would you like that? Your liking idea is a grand one. The best of success—many enjoyable tramps.

**Christine, Downlands As, Sussex.**—More about Joanna, Christine! Well, by now, of course, you will have read "Just Like Joanna." Do let me know what you thought of it. "Daisy" is a great favourite with my readers. . . . You would almost certainly be in the Fourth Form with Babs & Co.

**Margaret, Penelton, Lancs.**—As you will see by the above replies, such a lot of readers wonder in which Form they would be if they were at Cliff House. I like to think it's a compliment to my stories! I do feel pleased to know that my readers find Cliff House and its many adventures so interesting. Your Form would be the Lower Third, Margaret.

**Kath, Berwick-on-Tweed.**—You do not include your own name in your list of favourite names, and I think Kath is charming. Wash, wash, such interesting stories Hilda. Aren't dogs grand companions? I'm sure that you love Tim every bit as much as I love Juno—and that's a tremendous lot. June is really very clever, the old dog, but do you know, Kath, she can't beg. You see, when she was just a puppy she was run over. One of her hind legs was injured, and ever since she has been unable to beg. No, thank, I have no more snippets. Juno—she is an Amazon, and the bravest and gentlest of friends—is the only one.

if we've made a mistake, the Hall has, too! Oh, driver!"

Again Diana smiled.  
Through the London streets they went, positive and eagerly the place of interest. At last, in the fashionable Brompton Square, the man came to a halt. In happy, laughing group, the girls entered into the house, to be respectfully greeted by Mrs. Ravenscroft herself. She smiled.

"Oh, I'm so glad you have had a safe journey!" she said. "My guests have not arrived yet. But, see," she added, "take off your coats. One of the servants will dispose of them for you. Now, I expect you would like a little something after your journey."

"Oh, yes, rather!" Babs beamed.  
"A cup of tea, perhaps?" Mrs. Ravenscroft suggested. "May?"—to her maid—"ring for the butler!"  
"Oh, but—" Beatrix tremblingly cried. "Oh, dear! Let—let me get it, Mrs. Ravenscroft!"

"My dear, how nice of you! But you must be tired. Besides, I must keep my servants busy," she added. "King, Mary?"

Beatrix drew a deep breath. She seemed to be pulling herself together. Her Babs watched her with a keen eye. A moment later the door opened. Everyone turned, and then suddenly everyone stiffened. All eyes became wide and wondering as they fastened upon the figure of the butler who entered.

Were they all dreaming? Bewilderingly they turned towards Beatrix Beverley. For this man—who stood so proud, so upright, so erect before them now, was the living image of that familiar photograph which had only recently disappeared from Beatrix Beverley's wall in Brompton Square!

It was Beatrix Beverley's father!

### Heroine in Disgrace



**B**UT Beatrix gave no indication at all that she recognized the man. Still she stood, upright, composed, cool now as ever. She saw his look

towards her; saw that sudden yearning light in his eyes, and deliberately turned her head away.

"Oh, Beverley," cried Mrs. Ravenscroft, "will you get tea, please?"

"Yes, madam!" the butler answered. He went, again looking towards Beatrix. The chimes stood silent, unheeded, while Mrs. Ravenscroft, with a smile, flattered out on some other errand. The door that behind her, and she vanished. Then one and all turned upon Beatrix.

"Beatrix, did you see him?" Babs beamed.

Beatrix shrugged.

"Of course I saw him!"

"But—oh, my hat—I thought that photograph had come to life!" Babs cried. "Beatrix, did you notice how like your father he was?"

"I didn't!" Beatrix snapped.

"And his name! Diana wanted."

"Beverley, too! Sure he isn't your father, Beatrix?"

"Of course I'm sure he isn't my father," Beatrix snapped, and the color ran into her cheeks. "What are you trying to hint at?" she cried with a burst of anger. "What speaking insinuation are you trying to make to me? The man's name might be Beverley, but he isn't, I'm not the only Beverley in the world, am I? My father's a baron, not a butler!"

"Well, all the same—" Diana said.  
"Oh, rats! I tell you, he isn't my



father," Beatrice almost shrieked. "Do you think I've got a conscience, two-penny ha'penny brother for a father?—and then she jumped—and everybody jumped, as there was a sudden appalling crash, as they started to behold the brother who had entered with the loaded tray, plunging in hurried astonishment towards the girl.

The man turned white.  
 "I'm sorry!" he cried.  
 "You change!" said Beatrice, cried, and just to show these girls that she had no fear of the man, strode towards him. "Pick that up!"

The man looked stricken.  
 "Yes."  
 "Pick them up!" stormed Beatrice.  
 "Here, I say," cried Clara, "draw it out, Beatrice! This isn't your house, you know!"

"But," Beatrice said, "I see a great hole. If there's one thing I hate it's clumsy servants. My father—and here she looked wistfully, imploringly, at the half-dressed brother who stared at her—never never tolerate a man like this. He would hit him at once for a trick like that. Pick these pieces up!"

The man's face went pale. Such an expression of agony crossed it that the chams felt their consciences stirred.

Beatrice eagerly they glanced at Beatrice Beverley—the amazing, scorching Beatrice who now shone like a star as such a beautiful little maid. Beatrice's lips curled a little.

"Oh, come on, girls, let's help!" she cried.  
 Willingly they helped, even Diana. The pieces were picked up, the tray taken out and Beatrice, white and shaking and into a chair. Diana eyed her mockingly.

"Beatrice, about that butter—"  
 "Sit up!" snarled Beatrice.  
 "But are you sure—"  
 "Shut up!" Beatrice repeated. "I don't want to hear about the wretched butter! Just because he happens to have the same name—"

She broke off there, starting. They all started. And they all stared up into the room came two figures—the figure of their brother—and another.

"Why, Miss Primrose?" Babs cried.  
 "No," Miss Primrose said, "you are here!" Her eyes ranged over the group.  
 "Miss Havemalks, will you kindly drive these girls back to school?"

Miss Havemalks looked amazed. The Cliff House party almost fell down.

"But Miss Primrose, you left your—" Babs cried.

"I," Miss Primrose informed her, "did nothing of the kind. You, I have seen the message. The message was a forgery. Somebody typed it and kept it in a bag without my permission. That someone who phoned me up last night, telling me that my sister was ill, a report which, when I met my sister this morning, proved to be false. I have come here to find out which among you that girl was!"

"Diana!" cried Beatrice Beverley.

"I don't!"  
 "Diana—she went out of the dormitory last night," Beatrice cried, forgetful of the fact that she was speaking, and oblivious, apparently, to the looks of contempt which greeted her announcement. "I said this morning that that message was a fake!"

"Diana!" Miss Primrose cried.  
 Diana shrugged.  
 "Well, I'll own up," she said. "You, Miss Primrose, I did it all!"

There came a murmur of amazement.  
 "And why, pray?" Miss Primrose enquired.

"Because," Diana said, "I wanted the Form to get a square deal!"

"You—you what?"  
 Diana wearily nodded her head.

"Well, that's the truth," she said.  
 "You see, Miss Primrose, the Form carried black marks. The Form thought it was my fault. Well, as it happened, it wasn't, although, being the black sheep of the Fourth, I was blamed. I don't," she added mockingly, "want to follow Beatrice's example and weep, but I'm afraid if you insist upon an explanation there is no alternative!"

The chams blinked. Miss Primrose's lips set.

"Diana, most certainly I insist upon an explanation!"

"Well," Diana said, and shook her head. "It's a long story," she added vaguely.

"Diana, I insist!"  
 Diana shrugged.

"Right! Then," she said cheerfully, "here it goes from the beginning." And then, while the ladies were listened in amazement, while the Cliff House chams gained air enlightenment from Diana to the white-faced Beatrice, she explained. She told how she had caught Beatrice Beverley cheating in the show for the party. She told how the Form, because of her reputation, had taken Beatrice's word against hers. She told how Beatrice had looked towards and gone to a theatre. How Beatrice had been a trap to betray her.

"And then," she said, "because Miss Beaufort found Clara, Beatrice made it appear that Clara japed Miss Beaufort out of a spot of revenge. Because you find Babs, Beatrice crept into your study, upset your vase of flowers and left Babs' badge on the scene. All the time Beatrice was working up projects and intrigues against the Fourth—because," Diana added, "it was she who wanted the Form to get a bad name so that you would be there from coming here. The Form wouldn't listen to me—"

"And so?" Miss Primrose said grimly.

"And so," Diana answered, "when Beatrice finally announced, and you cancelled the Fourth's chance of competing for this trip, I decided to take a hand. The Fourth didn't deserve to have their treat taken away from them. I decided they shouldn't. And so," Diana added, "I risked expulsion. Miss Primrose, had you called away, and put up that typed message on the board—"

Miss Primrose gazed at her penetratingly.

"Thank you," she said quietly. "I am not sure that I shall not expel you, Diana, Beverley—"

"It—it's a lie!" Beatrice panted.  
 "It's the truth!" Diana stated.

"But what possible reason could Beatrice have for not wanting the Fourth to come?"

Diana laughed.  
 "Will you tell them, Beatrice?"  
 "No," gasped Beatrice, white to the lips. "I mean I—I had no reason. Miss Primrose, it's a lie! The whole thing's a lie from beginning to end. Why should I plot to get the Form black marked?"

"Because," Diana said, "she did not want the Fourth to meet her father, Miss Primrose. The Fourth, she knew, would recognize him as soon as they met him. She always boasted of her father and her high connections. She did not want the Form to know that even if he was a lawyer, he was a pauper and was washing his fingers to the bone in order to supply her with the education she's having. That father!" Diana added quietly, while Beatrice fell back shaking and aches. "Is Mrs. Havemalks' father!"

"Oh, my hot!" breathed Babs.  
 "Mrs. Havemalks, is this true?" Miss Primrose asked.

Mrs. Havemalks bit her lip.  
 "Well, yes! Baron Beverley is working here for me under the name of plain Mr. Beverley, however. He lost all his money during the slump—"

And there was a lull at that. Bitter, condemning looks were thrown at Beatrice Beverley. This was the truth—the avowed truth! To this end Diana had been working to save them and now she had done it! Beatrice, at the same time, faces suddenly turned with anger as they realized how Beatrice had cheated her father, how she had humiliated him before them all in an endeavour to create that accusation Diana had made. There was a heavy sigh.

Miss Primrose looked grim.

"Diana," she said, "I admit your methods. I do not. You have caused me an enormous amount of worry and anxiety. If your object was to save your year of schooling it must certainly be met. I shall not expel you now that I have heard, and your girls, as you are here, can remain. Diana, however, will not remain. You will come back with me!"

To which Diana, meeting the glowing, grateful looks of her Form-mates, and looking once more at the utterly crumpled Beatrice, smiled.

She did not mind. She had done what she had set out to do—in case the Form and show up this half-dressed sneak and mob at the same time.

Back to Cliff House she went—direct, but, nevertheless, the heroine of the Form!

THE END.

**BABS' AMAZING REQUEST!**

"Clara!" Babs gasped out. "I want you to help me. Bring Teresa to my study—at once. It's terribly important. And—she gulped for breath, while Clara regarded her in amazement—"and when you've done that, Babs rushed on, "I want you to go downstairs and get out the custom-trower. Run it up and down under my study window—and don't stop until I signal!"

No wonder Tomboy Clara was baffled. But she obeyed Babs' instructions — with dramatic results!

Read all about this intriguing episode in next week's Long Career Cliff House story —

By HILDA RICHARDS

In next Saturday's **SCHOOLGIRL**



## NIGHT OF STORM—AND MORCOVE MAROONED! Dramatic Chapters of a Brilliant Serial Starring Betty & Co.

# WHEN MORCOVE EXPULSED HER



By  
**MARJORIE  
STANTON**

### FOR NEW READERS.

**TESS TRILIBERRY** has been expelled from Winslow School owing to the activities of **MAINE** and **BALPH PENNICK**, who are living now **hiding in a (Theology) Dungeon**, the making of **ambrosia**. The discovery that they are **amalgam** gold. The teacher, having Tom knowledge, Misses for and make for a prisoner.

**BETTY MARLOWE** and **POULY LINTON**, two school friends, receive news, only to be captured themselves. They are all three taken out to sea in a motor-boat. Another boat, however, with some of their friends from Winslow School, puts out in pursuit.

(Don read on.)

### Danger on the Deep

**BETTY MARLOWE**, sitting between Polly Linton and Tess Trilibrary in the motor-boat that had them on board as a trio of kidnapped schoolgirls, came in for a sudden shock.

It was from Polly, who next moment staggered in the darkness:

"Betty, is it someone signalling from another boat, after all? It doesn't seem to be the sort of light a lantern would give."

"Just what I was beginning to think," Betty voiced back softly; and then, to Tess, on the other side of her: "What do you say, Tess?"

"It's a gas-light, blubbing about in the water."

"Good!" Polly ejaculated, for she had caught Tess' answer. "So it is, of course! And that means—"

"Gull Island!" Betty just as confidently realized. "It does have a gas-light, I remember now. We've seen it by day."

The three of them would have begun to talk amongst themselves very anxiously, for it was a fresh sensation to know that there was no steamer, after all, waiting about by arrangement, to take them on board, and so bear them, perhaps—a thousand miles away!

But there was to be no time for any exchange of comment. At this moment the woman who sat between them, and

the man in charge of the motor-boat, obtained their attention.

While he gave all his attention to navigating this tiny craft over the roughening sea, she faced the girls again, and spoke moodily.

"Gull Island, one of you said," she began. "Now, listen, you three. We're going to land you there."

"They stopped. To be landed on Gull Island!"

"It is not what was intended—I don't mind telling you that," the woman spoke on, in a tone that evidenced dejection. "But there's no help for it. You understand?"

"Yes, we understand," nodded Betty. "Do that, then! Gull Island—"

"Do you know it?" the woman gravely asked.

"Know it?" Polly laughed. "I should just think we do! Many's the time we've picked on the island."

"Then you know what it is like at this time of the year?" the woman pressed, in that same heavy tone. "No pickers now. And does anybody live there?"

"Not a soul," Betty answered. "They couldn't! At least, there'd be nothing to make it worth while."

"It's no bigger than our two games fields put together," Tom struck in. "But we don't mind—"

"Whether you like the prospect or not, it's the best we can do for you," the woman said, as if with grim finality. But after a moment, she added:

"You'll come off better, anyhow, than I and my companions. I'm not going to explain; but he and I don't know what will happen to us before the morning."

"Then land with us on the island!" Betty suggested.

"No—impossible!"

The woman said it like one hardening her heart to an appeal by some better wile to her nature. And it helped the girls to believe, more than ever; man and woman alike, had as they were, were not altogether callous.

Saying nothing more, she started to rummage about in her part of the boat,

and the kidnapped three might have noticed that various things were fished out of a small locker, to be kept ready to hand on one of the men.

But now Betty and Polly and Tom were all for peering ahead over the white-frothed waves, as the boat was kept shudding on by its powerful motor.

That light upon the waters was quite dim at last, and it was obviously a gas-light, glowing in the waves. Gull Island had never been given a light-house, as its position rendered gas-buoys sufficient warning to navigation by night.

A very powerful light it was, casting away from this particular buoy. In the darkness of the cloudy, moonless night, it enabled the girls to make out some of the low cliffs of the island off which it lay. Between it and these cliffs, the water was surging restlessly because of rocky shallows. But there was an area of quiet water, looking siltily dark, away to the left, and towards this the man now steered the boat.

A few moments more, and they were out of the wind, receiving the shelter of the cliffs. This was the eastern side of Gull Island, and to-night's boisterous wind was coming in from the Atlantic.

"You girls!"

They had again to pay attention to the woman.

"I've found what I can to be put aboard with you. We had a few provisions—in case of emergency. You shall have all these!"

"No?" they voiced together.

"Oh," the woman laughed mirthlessly, "the risk to me and my companions is not large! We shall land somewhere else before morning."

"Then I can guess what the risk really is," Polly broke out impetuously. "Fishes, if you're caught! You both belong to a gang; it's been a conspiracy—an organized—"

"That will do!" the woman said, with sudden ferocity. "Keep what you have to me—until you can say so to the police. That won't be for a day or so, anyhow," she added, speaking more to herself than to the girls.

Next moment the man gave warning:

"Look out, now! Hold tight!"

The boat was so close in, the men were that no noisy jarring or banging came, to ring the chains about. It broken the dark water might be, but it was certain that they held dangerous rocks, some only covered by a few inches.

As a word from the man, the woman switched on a pocket-lamp, and then the boat was steered in, very slowly,

with the bright air picking out just the selected landing-places, and leaving all else in darkness.

The girls saw water-worn rocks that formed a natural jetty. A few mosses were there, and there came a feasible job that barely staggered them, although they were all standing up.

The engine was kept "tipping over," and with the assistance of a life-line sailor, the men made everything right for the girls to land on the rock-ledge.

"Oh, no, then!" he said gruffly. "Sharp now!"

As Betty moved, to be first of the boat, she found the woman, throwing a few things into her hands. There was a box of matches, and there were two tins of preserved meat for Betty to take with her.

"Eye!" the woman said, in a teasing voice. "I hope you're not afraid."

"Oh, no!" Betty said, and meant it. "I'm fast—fast of grateful!"

"You may well be that."

Then Betty had the man landing by a steady hand on the point herald to make the jump to land. She jumped and kept her balance. Instantly Polly was with her, and then Tess followed.

Morcove's Masque had been given some tinned provisions, all which would have gone into a small paper bag quite easily. There had been put astern with a blanket.

"Here, you can have the torch as well," the woman suddenly decided; "it belongs to one of you."

It was Betty's—the one she and Polly had had with them when they were getting into the Cliff-edge cavern.

For a few moments after it had come into her hands again Betty kept that torch switched on. She and her companions in silhouette saw the man thrust off and then drive back to his seat at the controls. The engine went full throttle, backing the boat away from the natural jetty.

His entire partner, the woman, remained her seat, and she neither looked towards the girl nor went to parting word of them as the boat went about sharply at a safe distance from the rocks, and then sped away.

"**WELL!**" POLLY gasped at last, ending an awkward silence. "I'm bothered!"

"Come!" said Betty, and she thumbed off the torch. "Leaving us marooned."

There came a feeble laugh from Tess.

"For me, anyhow, it's a change for the better."

And in the darkness she flung up her face to the sky, thankful to know that only those cloudy beams were above her now, who knew this low boat's noise she had been the Fendens' helpless captive, crouched beneath Morcove's great cliffs.

**Across Dark Waters**

"**MARCOVED!**" Polly echoed Betty's word for their present plight. "But how perfectly jolly!"

"I'll say it's a dashed sight better than what was intended for us if their plans hadn't gone wrong!" Betty heartily granted. "If only—if only Morcove could know that there's no need to worry!"

She added bitterly:

"But there, it's the very reason why we've been dumped on Gull Island—so that nothing can be known about us for several hours at least!"

"I like your several hours," Polly said, changing from levity to gloominess.

"It's not so certain that we'll be seen and taken off when daylight comes. Anyway, if Morcove hadn't you and me, Betty, to be anxious about at present, there's been would still be in that cavern. As a chance of evil, give us this."

"You two won't expect me," said Tess, "to wish that nothing like this had happened. Betty drove—Polly, I haven't had a chance to try to thank you for—"

"And you needn't begin now," Betty lightly checked that voice. "Here, let's do something about finding shelter for the night. It's not a bit cold, but it's prolonged misery."

"So long as it doesn't rain!" "It won't do that, I reckon, whilst the wind keeps up." Tess set Polly's mind at rest on that score. "Talking of wind, Betty, it'll be worse on the other side."

"Oh, how. We won't go far. I say"—Betty raised her voice now that they were all three picking their way over the tumbled rocks which formed the natural jetty—"there are several caves, don't forget!"

"Oh, caves!" Tess exclaimed, "All right," she instantly added; "it's all better now."

Both her chums then turned to her as if she were one who must be helped and cared for.

"Poor Tess—" Betty began again, in allusion to all that she—Tess—had suffered before tonight's emotional developments.

But the very excitement of recent happenings had done much already to help Tess to forget the worst of the horrors she had had to endure alone; she was in no unenviable state now.

"I'm all right," she joyfully boasted. "Not even hungry—an you two must be. I'd just had something to eat when you girls came into that cave. The Fendens had given me far more food than I could get through."

"I," Polly sang out, "am hungry! The journey on the water, I suppose. Any rate, soon as we get to cover we'll have something; and if there isn't an opener blushed in one of these tins of canned stuff there'll be a row."

"But look!" shouted Betty, above all the busy-busy of wind and waves. "Just along there—a cave, quite handy!"

As quickly as possible, without making a long for another hundred yards. The sea's foaming edge was so close that a slip meant going into it. More than one sense dashing were damped water at them. They could not wade away from the surf, being kept to narrow ledges and rounded rocks at the very base of the island's cliffs.

But all three got through safely to the cavern—and a better disappointment it proved. Instead of a dry, sandy floor, it took the tide; and as a refuge for the night it was out of the question. "Fool luck!" Polly gasped, compelled to huddle, with her two chums, upon a snowed slab of rock that the incoming waters had surrounded. "Let's take a breather, anyhow."

"That's the idea!" Betty cheerily agreed. "There are caves on the island, we know, that don't flood like this. Let's have a breather, and then—Oh, well! manage! Shall I switch on for me?"

"I wouldn't," Tess advised. "Those batteries run out so quickly. Hallo, though!"

"Why—what?" her chums chorused. That startled cry was coming from the cave because it had been reined in the deeper darkness of this cave.

"What do you see, Tess?"

"See! Can't you see anything! But listen!" she exclaimed. "Hark! Hark!" she said under her breath. "It's the sound of a motor-boat! Quite close in!"

"I hear it!" Polly exclaimed. "They're coming back! That's their boat again!"

"And what does that mean, I wonder?" muttered Betty. "Have they had to give up because of the weather? Or have they come back for us?"

"You mean," Polly said, "they find they can do as they first intended to do with us, after all! The ship they were longing about for has turned up late! But what do we do there, whilst there's still time? Get away from here! Hide somewhere else on the island! But supposing they're in trouble!"

"I know what!" Betty quickly settled the awkward problem. "We'll hold them now. If they show back for us to help them, by attacking the torch, we'll do our best for them."

"They may like to us," Tess said gloomily, "but we've got to chance that."

"I think so," Betty murmured; and Polly sighed:

"We want! The sea's the sea—and it's becoming a perfectly foul night, too."

So they started from where they stood, holding on to one another, almost at the cave's mouth.

"Hi! You in the boat out there, wait my help!"

Then, from only a little distance away upon the rocky waters, came an answer that gave them the night's biggest thrill. One word it was—and that word:

"Morcove!"

Over and over again it was wailed and howled to them in the windy darkness:

"Morcove! And again: "Morcove!"

**Grangemoor to the Rescue!**

"**IT'S** the boys!" Polly yelled, "Hurray, hurray! It's Grangemoor!"

"How so, earth—" was Betty's amazed cry. "But some answer back to where we landed, girls; that's best!"

She switched on the torch, and as they all three started to make that way back, between cliff and sea, she flashed the light now before them, and now out across the swirling waters.

At the same time, there was the girl's eager shouting, bringing them hallooing responses.

"Grangemoor! Grangemoor! Can you see our torch?"

"Keep it going!" boyish voices howled back. "We want to get in! Hi, how many of you—three?"

"Yes. There's a sort of jolly. Wait a sec, and we'll show the torch from here!"

"O.K. Thank!"

Even the girl's desperate haste to work back to the jetty made the way seem harder than before, or else over this sheltered side of the island was now leading the wind back.

The waters near which they had to skip an often from rock to rock were swirling madly. A loud sound of roaring waves was perpetually in their ears. And it all tended to make Betty and Polly and Tess terribly anxious for those who, obviously, had put out from Morcove's shoes a night like this for such a noble purpose.

The boat was still not in sight when the girls chose stopping back to the jetty. Away to their left there was a patch of sea that caught something of

the faded light from the anchored galleon. But that light was quenched, by intervening masses of rock, from whatever what was, to-night, the best marked patch of sea—immediately in front of the jetty.

Suddenly, however, they made out the dark shape of a boat. It was smaller than the one in which they had been carried off awhile ago.

"There she is!" Polly shrieked in the wind, and thrust her lips with her hands to shout again: "Ahoy, Grangerson! Here's your place for a landing!"

"Three of them, I make it!" Tom cried, standing blown about with her chance on the rough jetty. "Two of the boys, and—someone else who isn't Grangerson, I fancy."

love of feeling. At heart, there was not the least doubt, she felt indignantly proud of her brother at this moment—in well she might!

Another minute went by before the boat was appreciably nearer. She was moon-driven, but was not firing well. This, as the girls realized, was making it ten times more difficult for her to be worked in safety.

Their straining eyes could not see her clearly in the torchlight, and it meant long-beating hearts when she moved, at moments, to be waving about as if quite out of control.

Suddenly she bumped and stuck, and there was Jack's playful "Wow!" to make light of a threatened catastrophe.

The hunched together girls on the jetty could see him darting about in

startled aff." Dave said the fingered streaks of hair away from his forehead, as if he did not like to feel that the recent ordeal had ruffled his usually neat appearance. "So what you were meaning to do, when you set off, was to try to keep after you."

"Couldn't hope to gang your boat, like caps on the road," Jack broke in breathlessly. "But you thought it likely that you were to be put aboard a steamer."

"Ralph Foster's father is a big shipowner," Dave put in crisply. "It was just a chance that a steamer had been arranged to pick up just Tom to-night. It would have been something to have got the steamer's name, anyhow. And, instead—"

"Instead, you did—nothing, is that



THE boat came nearer, nearer, and Polly sent up a wild shout: "Ahoy, Grangerson! Here's your landing!"

"Hi, who are you?" Betty yelled. She was shining the light steadily now toward the stillly tooting boat.

"Having any trouble?"

"No," the plaudering answer came faintly. "We're Jack and Dave and Miss Merrick."

Again the marooned girls gasped. Miss Merrick! What meaning there was in this, that their own Farm-mistress was in the boat with these two lads!

Even when the boat had come within a couple of hundred yards of the jetty, its occupants were still only shadowy heads and shoulders in the darkness to the eager watchers.

Polly, suspense keeping her stamping a foot, began to shout:

"You're all right now!"

But Betty was suddenly not so sure of this. It had struck upon her like a falling tide might have rendered this boat liable to pound upon rocks that were not new so deeply covered.

"Chandel!" she warned at the top of her voice.

And then came a characteristic response from one of the lads. It was Polly's own jovial brother Jack, singing out:

"Ay, ay, she's careful it is!"

Betty and Tom had to burst out laughing then. As for Polly, they saw her rise that grimace with which she always implied a pretended scorn for Jack's

the boat, holding himself low, while he and Dave, who seemed to be at the controls, shouted to each other.

Then the boat wobbled clear of the rocks she had struck. Her engine, however, was stopped. Dave suddenly rose up from the steersman's seat to do as Jack was doing. They had had got out a headhook, and was using it to push the boat in. Dave, having seized a reserve oar, used it to the same effect.

So at last the boat was at the jetty, but she was by no means in quiet water. To hold her in, as no sleep could be made, Tom and Polly hunched on a dozen oars.

Betty, keeping the torch going, kept upon the rock ledge to help Miss Merrick out of the boat.

### The Wind Rises

"WHAT a night!" Miss Merrick half laughed, as she scrambled up after a most awkward landing.

"And fancy your knowing we were here!" was Betty's rejoinder.

She turned to Jack and Dave, who had easily jumped to the jetty as they were.

"You—you can't have known we were to be put ashore on this island!" Polly was drawing.

"No, but we knew you had been

it?" Polly said. "Oh, you fellows! And you, Miss Merrick—you are well!"

"My dears," said that youthful Farm-mistress, half crying now, "I don't care if I do give the sack for it from Horace! It's all very well, but I had to make up my mind in a moment! There were those boys at the Cliffside care, suddenly determined to get that boat out and out of after you. I just couldn't let them go alone. I thought, supposing they do catch up with the other boat—supposing they do even have a chance to get you away from those gangsters—I can be of help there! But I'm afraid," she sighed, "I've only been—very weak!"

"So you were all simply crying about, looking for the other boat," Betty excitedly interposed, "when you got close to the island and we heard your engine!"

"To tell you the absolute honest truth," Jack said gravely, "we mistook the light of that galleon for some signaling by a steamer. We thought we were O.K. for coasting up with her just in time. And, instead—"

"Don't keep on saying 'instead!' Polly roared angrily protested. "It's not such a bad 'instead, anyhow! All safe, and Tom, who was a prisoner in an inner cage."

"Yes!" cried Miss Merrick. "So those boys told me; they were sure the

Footstep had got up in their sleeping. But we can't say here! Oh, do let us find shelter for the night; then will be the time for going into things."

As they started to get off the jolly, Jack and Gladly:

"The gang didn't leave you anything to eat, of course?"

"No, they did!" his sister joyfully contradicted. "Only, we've left it all in a bag. No, no, no, all going there to shelter. Betty and I will get back and get the stuff."

So, while those two girls did that, the rest of the party clustered about, finding it just possible to get up a few perpendicular feet of the cliff.

It ended in their coming out upon an exposed bit of lumpy ground, where Betty and Polly soon joined them. The wind was still rising, and now it shrieked in their ears.

Stripping against the raging blast, they struggled and stumbled along, seeking for the more shelterly side of the island.

Normally, it would have taken them only a couple of minutes to go the short distance. To-night, it was more like ten minutes before they were off the wind-swept drifts. Following one another down a craggy gully to where, once again, they would have the sea swirling and crashing close at hand against overcast rocks.

They all knew of one cave on the southern side of Cliff Island that did not flood at high water. The gale was likely to be blowing into the cave, but so long as they had dry ground underneath and a covering in their heads they would be thankful enough.

During all this waiting with the elements in the stormy blackness of the night, there was no attempt at conversation.

One after another they got to the cave, absolutely blown for breath, with Betty, and Polly, and Tom still behind for the others' fuller explanations.

Similarly, Miss Merrick and the two boys were lagging for Tom's story, and for Betty and Polly to give an account of themselves.

This second cave, anyhow, was no disappointment. It went a good way into the living floor of sand was almost stifling dry. The wind came snatching after them, but they were not going to wind that—for the present, at any rate. The blanket had been brought along, and Dave talked of easily rigging it up, "to keep the draught out."

Meantime, they sampled the provisions. The biscuits were passed round and a tin of soaked beef was opened. It was like playful Jack, whose jock-tail first opened the tin, and then put some remarkable slices, to say, as if he were at a birthday party:

"Oh, have all you want, you young people!"

"What I want," came Polly's impatient voice in the dark, "is to have been you two fellows had a bunch—we you must have done—that brought you over from Grandgeour this evening?"

"You've through, Dave!" said Jack, as if conversing his chums on the phone. "Speak up!"

"Oh! Oh, we can't go into all that now," was the quiet one's typically evasive plea. "Put it that something to do with Ralph Fender, at Grandgeour, set me thinking hard to-day."

"What was an address do," Polly asked. "Put us on!"

"Then I had a row-over with Jack and the others about it all, and—well, we decided that some of us must get over to the Morcove warehouse in the

evening. The idea was to beat open those cave gates, and chance it. But what we got those—"

"The cavern was 'burn,' Jack gibbered joyed. "No, it wasn't. Miss Merrick was hanging about, as gawdily as a girl could be. So we paddled the whole thing—all the question, because we could see a smoke-lane going away from that part of the shore. Then Miss Merrick, better in company, Miss Merrick, I should say, volunteered to set off with us. As for Jimmy Merrick—"

"Jimmy?" jerked Betty. "Oh, was Jimmy with you?"

"Jimmy had orders from me and Dave to cut away from Morcove and let them know."

The cave rang with the girls' united cry of relief.

"So it's been known at the school since just on dark!"

"Oh, yeah," said Jack, whose way would was very different from Dave's. "And a wacker's wonder if the Sandman. Boy! lifeboat has been called out by now, to beat about for what it's worth."

"Gosh!" clasped Polly. "But could they take us off, a night like this, even if they discovered we are here on Cliff Island?"



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"A lifeboat would," Dave reckoned. "Any rain, I'm for starting a fire on top of the cliff. Petrol, Jack—there must be some in the tank of the boat."

"I've matches!" Betty joyfully interposed. "Say, though, had you better draw off the petrol? Reporting, in the morning, the wind has blown itself out and it's all right for making a run to land?"

"But something happened to the engine when we leaped so badly," Dave eagerly answered. "I don't like the way she stopped. The propeller may be broken, or jammed."

"You know," said Jack, in a sparkling tone. "I'd just enjoy being stuck here on Cliff Island for a week, say, to help get through the town! Still, we will send up a flare."

"Morcove might see it," cried Miss Merrick.

"I doubt it," said Dave. "A night like this—Oh, thank, Betty! Perhaps I'd better."

She was waiting him to take the torch, and he accepted it. Keeping it switched off, he reached Jack to go along with him, and they hastened away.

The little party left behind watched, silent and thoughtless, until the boys had disappeared.

Betty it was who spoke first. She looked grave, even though her voice was purposely light.

"I hope they got the petrol. We've simply got to send up a flare. In this sort of weather it won't be pleasant having to stay here."

"Especially if the lifeboat can't take us off, even if it does come to our aid," added Polly.

"No. That might mean," put in Miss Merrick, a trifle nervously, "our having to stay here for a day or more."

There were significant looks, then. It certainly was not a pleasant prospect. At best of times, even in summer, the island was not exactly an ideal place of residence for more than a few hours—certainly not after daylight.

What it would be like on a night like this—

The girls plainly did not relish the prospect any little bit. They did not voice their innumerable thoughts. Perhaps it was best they should keep their heads to themselves. But one and all knew what the others were feeling, what the others were thinking.

How long, exactly, might they be marooned?

A few hours would not be serious. They could even last, without undue discomfort and danger, until dawn. But beyond that, supposing they had to spend another night here—a third, maybe!

Their store of provisions would not last, and one of them might be taken ill. Such things happened in situations like this. It was to any one of the little party, stranded without hope of rescue, would be dreadful.

Betty, clenching her hands, could think of a far more appalling word.

"Tragic," she said, in a whisper.

And her eyes went feverishly towards the spot where Jack and Dave had gone.

Not for another half-hour, at least, did the girls and Miss Merrick expect them back. Yet suddenly—within less than a minute of their setting off—back were Dave and Jack.

"According to tell you," Dave proclaimed, as if it were bad news. "We've just found a boat—half-full of water—lugging herself to bits amongst the rocks."

"A boat?" stared his listeners.

"What sort of a boat?"

"Well you come and look!" he asked.

At a rush the girls and their Foremost went with Jack and Dave to the mouth of the cave.

The shelter they had been enjoying made them feel, as they returned to the open shore, that a full gale was now blowing. The night was one great roar of wind and waves.

Dave clicked on the torch and shone it towards a patch of black-and-white water, where something pitched and wallowed.

"There!" he said.

It was the boat.

"Their boat!" Betty almost screamed.

"The one we were brought in! Polly—Tom—don't it so! Can't you tell?"

"Yes," they both shrieked. "That's their boat."

For a moment there was a horrified silence.

Dave switched off the torch.

"Then where are they now?" Betty wondered aloud. "The man—the woman—where are they now?"

**THE mystery deepens!** Dramatic developments crowd next Saturday's chapters of this intensely exciting serial of the adventures of Betty Barton & Co. Make sure of reading what happens in the evening installment in next Saturday's **SCHOOLGIRL**. Be wise—order your **SCHOOLGIRL** at once!