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"CIPSY JOY—the Rich Girl Romany!"

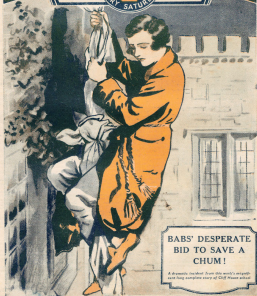
Commences
This Week

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*A dramatic incident from this week's story will
tell the complete story of Cliff Whose school!*

BARBARA REDFERN & Co. play an important part in this
 Enthralling LONG COMPLETE Story of Cliff House School—



Joan Charmant's ORDEAL!

By
 HILDA RICHARDS

Illustrated by T. Laidler

idea of playing Joan Charmant, and only making me a reserve?"

Joan's lips tightened a little, though she answered steadily enough.

"Because the committee has decided that Joan's the better player—*that's why!*"

Theresa protested.

"That's not fair!" she retorted. "Didn't I beat Joan the day before yesterday?"

"And didn't Joan beat you yesterday—and on plenty of other occasions, too?" said the other girls. "You'll see, Theresa!" she added indignantly.

"Be a sport!" she said. "But Theresa refused to 'let it rest.' 'It's unfair!' she cried loudly."

"The committee should have chosen me. You know I'm right at the top of my form."

"Oh, run away!"

If Theresa had expected to gain any support from other girls there she was sorely disappointed. Five girls of her own team eyed her disdainfully.

Theresa was not a popular member of the Lower Fifth at the best of times. Her innate vanity and egotistical rather arrogant but firm-belted and, as a result, she was left severely alone.

Her present outbursting for tennis, indeed, had taken them all by surprise, though in all truth she had never looked at anything as especially good player.

And quite probably the best one they had on playing in the tournament. But, good as she was, she had not quite the brilliancy as Joan Charmant. Hence the committee's decision—and the committee was standing by its verdict.

Joan eyed her a little seriously.

"Nobody else here disagrees with my decision, Theresa," she said mildly.

"I'm sorry you're taking it so badly, but after all, you are reserve, and should anything happen to one of the team, I should definitely play."

But that, far from proving of an troubled nature, only made Theresa more furious.

"Who wants to be a reserve? I don't!" she boomed. "A few minutes, I must say! (Joan's one of themselves and make up the team with their friends.)"

There was a short of spring at that. Joan looked back at the committee of the moment, to get Joan's opinion, but there and there—both hasty-tempered, both ready to fly up on the least provocation—*absolutely* bristled.

"Theresa, you'll apologize for that,"

The Girl They Left Out



"WELL, thank goodness that is settled!"

Blurred faces were turned back to her, and she from the table to study No. 4 in the Fourth Form passage at Cliff House School.

"Come on! Let's get it pinned on the notice-board before we change our minds again!"

"O.K.," grinned Flora Gray, the duck-headed captain of the Lower Fifth.

And, wonder of wonders, she smiled sweetly in the direction of Clara Trevlyn, the Fourth's toughest games captain, as that girl scrambled nimbly to her feet.

The fourth member of that little gathering, Joan Grayson of the Lower Fifth, frowned and retreated her own share to her seat.

"Ho-ho! I thought we were this far on all-right sitting," she smiled. "I've only left, trying to decide whether Joan Charmant or Theresa Grayson should play." But I think we've done the best thing."

"You let us have!" chorused Flora and Clara together, for now it had been in complete agreement.

Joan asked they collectively had. They took that afternoon had been to select two girls from the Fourth and Lower Fifth to play against Whitechapel in the first Junior School tennis tournament of the season, which was due to take place next Saturday.

It was a good team they had chosen—without a bit of argument and heated discussion—consisting of Flora Gray and Marie Ford of the Lower Fifth and Clara Trevlyn and Joan

Grayson of the Fourth, with Theresa Grayson as first reserves.

Together the tennis committee selected Marie Ford, it and marshaled down the way that when an eager crowd of French Womers and Lower Fifth girls awaited them.

"Here they come!" cried one Janet Aspin. "Who's been chosen, Jo?"

"Am I in it?" put in several voices at once.

"What! What for?" laughed Marie, as she strode up to the notice-board and scanned up the list. "How can any French mark, here, and cowardly dogs."

There was a surge forward.

"Looks like a good team," remarked Rose Matthews.

"It is!" murmured Leah Carroll, scanning the list. "What Joan's got in it."

"Oh, I know!" said a chattering voice. "It's a good team, then, that's what means you must have included her."

There was a burst of laughter, which passed for Marie Ford's of the Fourth Form to glare indignantly through her thick coated spectacles.

"Not this time, Fustina!" chuckled Clara. "We're keeping you to call the boys' name."

"Oh, ho, ho!"

"Be so friendly, Clara—" began Marie, ready, to break off with a cry. "Here, I say, what's the matter?"

For Marie Marie suddenly found herself looking forward, at a dark-haired girl beaming amiably just by.

It was Theresa Grayson of the Lower Fifth.

Straight in the notice-board she stepped, and as she returned the list a red flush came on her face, but she did not say a word about Joan Charmant.

"There, she sniggered, "that's the

Clara said grimly: "For I'll just tell Uncle Sam!" And, with glowing, the influence upon Theresa.

"You leave me alone!" boomed the Fifth Form. "Keep back!"

But Clara was still whispering under the influence of that remark.

"Apologies!" she said grimly. Then a yell from Missed Lydia:

"Clara, look out!"

But Clara had seen. She leaped back, but not quickly enough. Her Theresa lay face red with rage, suddenly leaped on, with her two hands, pushing the Tommy violently backward.

With a gasp, Clara went staggering. Before she, or anyone else, could step forward, she slammed against the glass door containing the advice swimming tank which hung on the wall.

Deftly Missed sprang forward as she saw the case starting suddenly; she caught it.

In a moment fragments of the case splattered on the pavement floor; the rest lay flat, not a large dent displacing one side of it.

For a moment there was dead silence; then up went an awful, hoarse cry:

"Theresa, you had!"

"That was your fault; your father's money!"

"That's right, blame me, when Clara herself did it!" boomed Theresa, though she was plainly aware of the damage her temper had caused.

Then she spun violently round to a new voice and to:

"Theresa, I say that!" And on to the same words Miss Valerie Charmant, the Fourth's adored mistress.

Instantly, the roar which had filled the Hall died down. Girls fell back as Miss Charmant advanced, her pretty face unsmilingly grim.

"I could have you girls questioning from my desk!" she said sternly. It was instantly that I came upon the scene that day, so that I know who it was that said:

"She tried the question but mistook Theresa."

"Theresa, you will take me hundred lines and clear up this case. And while I am here, she went on, her eye sweeping over the group, "perhaps someone will be good enough to tell me what all the shouting was about?" If one of you girls has a grievance—

Theresa gasped, her temper returning, still forward.

"I'm in the room with a policeman!" she said loudly and indignantly. "I've been left out of the tennis team!"

"You will please leave your notes," Miss Charmant broke in quietly.

Then she stopped, however, her blue eyes scanning the lot which had been placed on the board.

"That seems to me a very good note," she added. "However, the committee has selected it, and you should be satisfactory enough to accept their decision."

"Good old Charmant!" murmured Edie softly.

But Theresa, furious at being left out of the team, knowing neither what she considered the mistress's intention in making her the respondent for the broken shaver and glass set, remembering that she expected her Miss Charmant's sister, suddenly became blindly, unconsciously angry.

"That's right! Stick up for Theresa, you would!" You've already found me by mentioning one of your own girls!"

"Theresa! Miss Charmant's voice was calm, though stern. "For your

supper you will take another hundred lines!"

But Theresa hardly heard that in her rage.

"I don't care!" she said furiously. "Keep me lying on!" But the school might as well have been only sticking up for the committee because they've included your sister. It's not fair! My accusations—why do you just saying my name because you're a mischief!"

There was a gasp from all the girls assembled there.

For a moment Miss Charmant stood silent, too utterly amazed and angry to speak.

Then she drew a deep breath.

"Theresa, I am a very good mind to report you to Miss Frisette, both for your insolence and for daring to make such an absurd statement. As if it, too, will be obtained in your Father's office, tomorrow, and you will spend the half-holiday with three hundred lines. You will get them on my desk by Friday. Now go to your study!"

Theresa, not daring to argue further, went. But her heart was filled with fury against Miss Charmant. She forgot that she had brought about the punishment herself, blushed herself in the fact that she had got off lightly.

"Detained!" Theresa landed lines to be done—and this afternoon a half-holiday!

Edie was Theresa's closest friend. She did not guess to think how much damage her punishment might have done if Miss Charmant had been less lenient. How she hated the Fourth's perpetration—she and her sister, but that they wouldn't get away with it. She'd put them back, she thought (murmured); and with this thought in her mind, returned into her study and slammed the door behind her.

Tennis—or History?



"W"ell, what about tennis?" said Missed. "You see, Missed?"

"I don't know!" approved golden-haired Missed Linn. "What do you say, Miss?"

"Oh!" Barbara Rodgers, seated with her sisters on the combined steps of Miss Whose Room, looked up with a start.

She had not heard Missed's question. Her mind was still wrapped with that unpleasant scene in the hall. "What did you say, old thing?"

"She suggested a game of tennis!"

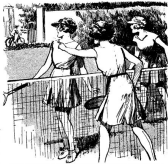
"Oh, tennis!" The faces radiated from Missed's pretty face. After all, it was so good for getting upon what had happened, unpleasant though it had all been.

"Let's dig out Jane," Clara went on, "and make up a foursome. Must get in all the practice we can. By the way, where is she? I haven't seen her since then."

Miss and Missed shook their heads as they went off to the Fourth Form quarters to collect their sisters. Then they went along to Miss Charmant's study.

Jane was there. But the three sisters started in surprise when they saw her. Her face was flushed as the steady table, hands to her head, giving over a look of violence which, Edie recognized as a history book. Indeed, Jane seemed to be surrounded by books and papers, for the table was littered.

"My hat, what's the matter with you, Jane?" asked Clara. "Don't you know it's a father to-day? We want you to come down to the court for tennis practice."



"My hat!" agreed Missed, pointing to the dressy figure leaving the school. "It's Jane!" The chosen sister, embarrassed, Miss Charmant had deliberately not tennis practice—to go off jay-riding on her own!

strives to get back into the room. Another man sees what is going on.

"Shame!" And that makes you as sure of that, Theresa?" put in a third voice.

Theresa spun round with a gasp, as Miss Charment strode towards the stage.

Your bicycle has been found, Jean," the woman went on. "A large band was a girl pushing it into a ditch in the field where it was hidden. It is found Jean's name on the handlebars, and telephoned me. He's bringing it to the school— Ah, here he is!" the added, as there came a ring at the door.

Gravely Pierre swung the door open, and in came the youth, wheeling a bicycle. He looked awkwardly at advanced towards the group.

Then his eyes suddenly lit up. Dangling his cap, he stepped forward—straight up to Theresa Charment.

"Why, here you are, what? to be delighted. It's a lovely game, to be sure, pushing your bicycle into a ditch and leaving it there. I reported you back to it, but when you didn't come, I thought maybe I'd better phone the school."

And he smiled good-naturedly at Theresa, but Theresa faced him sternly.

"Why, why tell me about it? It's not my business, but you've got it in the ditch?" she had demanded. "I've been making a mistake—"

"No, I hadn't, miss!" Really the youth stared at Theresa. "It was you, right enough—I saw you of me own eyes."

Flair came to Theresa now. She saw the pair of eyes turned suddenly upon her, questioning, suspiciously.

Apparently the pair seemed as if trying a course of revenge. Her eyes lightened upon her visitor. She wanted to hurt it at the youth. She tried, but she failed.

"So, you don't, Theresa?" exclaimed Clara, stepping forward grimly. "My bet, so, that was your game! That's why you followed Jean out of the game!"

Jean gave a start.

"Theresa followed me?"

"Yes, and it's pretty plain to me why she did your bicycle, Jean. She wanted to make you late for tennis practice."

"It's true—all lies!" declared Theresa.

"Silence, Theresa!" Miss Charment's voice was like ice. "I think we have heard sufficient." She turned to the startled girl, and, with a stern look, she said, "You're following the boy's lead, she's following the boy's lead. It was very thoughtful of you. You have the machine there. Thank you! Good-afternoon!"

Meanwhile his hands, the youth walked off. There came again Miss Charment eyed the pair—strictly Theresa.

"Theresa, I am ashamed of you!" she went on sternly. "By going out this afternoon you have ruined my order. For that, and the man in the room, played on Jean, you will take a further two hundred lines, and do your discretion on the next half-holiday. And if I have any more trouble from you, I shall immediately report you to Miss Fennmore."

Theresa trembled with the rage that swelled her heart.

"I won't be detained on the next half-holiday—I won't! That's Sunday! That's the day of the tournament!"

But Miss Charment, mistress of the situation, was already walking away.

Contemporaneously Clara repeated the Fifth Commandment.

"I wouldn't bother about the tournament if I were you," she said. "You're tried to drink your way into the team. Theresa, but why? when to you turn. You won't play now, whatever happens."

"Here, here!" agreed Clara.

Together the three walked off, Jean wheeling her bicycle.

Alone in the drive, Theresa stood alone, not caring if they, her last day's long marriage.

Disturbed, Jean interrupted—out of the tournament just when it had seemed that she would get a place in the team!

A sudden gust of temptation lay thick low. Passionately she flung her hands to the ground.

Not playing in the tournament—and the first invited a weekly cycle of boys to be invited to watch her play; had seemed to him at the moment, had been something a man for the boys club because the man for representing Old House at tennis.

But when, on Saturday, he learned that she was detained, was being punished for some mistake—

And this was all Miss Charment's doing? She'd interfered, she'd punished her! Not for the first time, but for the second time that same day!

"Why don't you think Jean means the same thing as you?" Theresa asked.

"But they won't let them play with it. It'll make them of us for tennis!"

All the worst instincts in Theresa's nature were aroused now. In that moment she hated Miss Charment—hated Jean Charment, blaming them for her disappointment. Revenge was all she wanted.

And at the back of Theresa's mind was that little trick she had witnessed between Dr. Langmore and the man of Mrs. Lewis' cottage. Peering through the window, she had seen everything, heard everything.

Her crafty mind became busy.

Trouble Shared—



"Come in!" called Miss Charment, looking up from her desk.

The door slowly opened and the worried face of Jean Charment appeared.

"You're not for me?" she asked, a little hesitantly.

"Yes, come in, my dear!"

A look hesitantly, Jean entered.

Valerie Charment smiled softly at the crossed the room, putting her hands on the younger girl's shoulders.

"Oh, yes, Jean," she said, putting her arms round the woman. "And don't let me see you, please! I'm not going to let you."

Jean smiled feebly.

"Remember why do you want to see me? Nothing wrong at home, is there?" she asked, a little anxiously.

"No, of course not. And it isn't for any of your troubles at school, though I suppose there are enough of those!"

"Oh, Jean! Be serious, then—"

And, dropping her handkerchief, Valerie Charment passed nervously into the younger girl's face.

"What is the matter with you, baby? I have been watching you. There seems to be something on your mind. You look so upset, so pale."

"You haven't been playing. It's worrying you, seeing the school through the world come again to Miss Charment."

But Jean said as she said that, there was an unusual light in her blue eyes.

Jean smiled unconsciously.

"Oh, you—you're imagining things, Valerie," she said, with what she meant was a light laugh. "There—there's nothing wrong with me. What should I have to worry about?"

"What's the matter I want to know," the mistress said, frowning a gentle frown on the girl's forehead. "Now listen to me, Jean dear. I'm not speaking to you as a Fennmorester, but as your cousin—the one to whom you should come if you have any worries." She passed a moment, glancing at the unhappy face of her niece. "I'm sure I'm sure that I'd be glad to help you. You're happy, aren't you? Knowing that you can tell me what it is?"

Again Jean hesitated, biting her lip. How she longed to confide in her cousin—wondered desperately to tell her of all that had happened the other day—how frightened she had been, and how ashamed she still was about Mrs. Lewis.

Indeed, the only thing that had stopped her doing this before was her own pride. She was not to get her story mixed up in all this scandalous affair.

But now, looking up into the pleading face, she had seen her own fear, her own shame if the girl told her the whole tale on the beginning. And, realising this, she hesitated no longer.

"Oh, Valerie," she said slowly, "I've wanted to speak to tell you."

And perhaps the married one had been little more.

Slowly Valerie Charment listened, almost startled at first, then becoming all tender concern.

"And that's all?" Jean looked at her, "except that I want you that again, Valerie—really I must. Don't you see what it means to Mrs. Lewis?"

Valerie Charment smiled. For a long moment she got what, her pretty face softened. The understood now why Jean had been looking so pale. Poor girl! she thought tenderly. But how she longed to keep this secret to herself!

"You must do everything we can for Mrs. Lewis," Valerie said slowly. "And don't be afraid about the other, Jean. It's a marvelous idea. But listen, I've a feeling—no, come closer," she added softly. "I don't want anybody to hear us talking about the door."

"Don't worry, but with a relieved, eager light in her eyes, Jean had been away.

"My idea is this," Valerie Charment began. "If I give you—"

And then her voice dropped to a whisper as she outlined her plan. "Well, Jean, what do you think of that?" she finished.

But, for a moment, Jean was silent. Her face was pale, her hands were shaking.

"Oh, Valerie!" Jean said feebly.

"You're a brick! Absolutely the most wonderful plan I ever heard of!" And, going with adoring eyes at Miss Charment, she hugged her feebly.

"And now run along," laughed the mistress. "But not a word to anyone, please. And, remember, if I don't give you the hand I mean to, I'll have done for me."

The girls of in a tap were at the door. It opened to admit Miss Fennmore, the Fennmorester.

Mrs. Peabody glanced with some surprise at the two as they passed, somewhat curiously, both her girls left.

"Does the teacher demand Jane, too, just as if she were willing to do it? It was an idea she had been not to confide in Valerie before." Everything was going to be all right now. All her worries were solved. Already an awful load appeared to have been lifted from her shoulders.

Her happy face, as she took her place in the classroom, surprised her parents, who noted that her eyes had been used to seeing her rule and books.

After dinner it was Jane who suggested a quick game of tennis with Miss Tremaine's game which, after a disagreeable battle, she won.

"The Tenney was justified."
"My only wish, Jane, keep that record well, especially when the time with Miss Tremaine. You never knew you play so well before."

Not had Helen and Helen, who, with a portion of other Fourth Formers, had been seated opposite.

Jane laughed gaily, while Helen looked to see that old paper slipped back in her chair's eye, even though she wondered what the crowd had been about, and how Jane had so calmly disposed of it.

Yes, indeed, the Form captain had been questioned over Jane. But one everything seemed all right again, and Helen was glad.

"Lemon left" laughed out at that moment.

"Come on, this way, you to the steps," challenged Tenney. Clara was up.

And with a joyful manner they pulled off, walking on bravely, as the door which led into Big Hall.

After a hasty wash in the cloakroom they made their way to the room in which Miss Charnant was taking the special examination class composed of girls from the Fourth and Lower Fifth.

Quickly Jane went to her desk, with a feeling of eager anticipation flung up the desk lid.

Oh, good! There it was—an envelope with her name written upon it in her

step's unmistakable handwriting. Dear old Valerie! She had kept her promise!

Carefully Jane opened the flap of the envelope, peered inside. Yes, all there, safe and sound.
How could she have been the desk behind her another pair of eyes she never dared that moment. The eyes of Theresa Stewart, of the Lower Fifth, another student by the name?

Certainly, at first Theresa looked. Then very slowly she stopped, her eyes glittering with a strange brilliancy.

"Goodness! What was she thinking? What was she doing then? But Helen had just asked as she stood at that envelope in Jane Charnant's desk!

For a moment the creature of it appeared, frightened her. No, she wouldn't dare do such a thing.

But then her face brightened. She'd been waiting for something like this. She wanted to have Helen the opportunity to be hand-squeezed like the chance for revenge on Helen and she hated. Such an opportunity would not come again. She'd do it.

With a hard intensity she watched as Jane closed the lid of her desk, then, with a ready smile on her face, Theresa leaned back.

Oh, she'd do it all right! Just let them wait—Jane and her interfering sister—for the blow that was going to fall; a blow that would mean black diagrams for Valerie and Jane Charnant!

In the Darkened Study



CHEER!
Jane Charnant darted in her breath sharply, as the sound came through the slats of the Fourth Form doorway.
"Low voice, Jane!" she whispered to herself.
She paused, listening tensely. But apparently the cracking of her bed, as

she had slipped out on the floor, had not disturbed anyone.

Cautiously she drew her pillow down, arranged the sheets over it so that it resembled a mound of wool, gave this her previous that the bed was still occupied.

Heavily she donned her clothes, and, carrying her shoes in her hand, tiptoed towards the open doorway, she turned the handle. It gave a grating squeaking sound which set Jane's teeth on edge.

Softly she looked again, glancing back at the mass of bed in the moon-lit doorway. There her heart leaped. A figure had moved.

"I say, what's that?" came Barbara Redburn's voice.

Another had moved. A figure sat up. Then Clara Tenney's sleepy voice.

"Hello, what's up?" Clara looked all. "I say, there's someone by the door. Who is it?"

Jane closed her door. But Helen, whose keen eyes had detected the first signs of her, suddenly started. She was not disturbed by the pillow. She was too old a hand at that kind game to be taken in.

"It's Jane Charnant," she whispered, preparing to creep out of bed. "Jane, what are you going?" she asked, peering towards that silent figure by the door.

Jane gasped. She realized she had been spotted. But she had the door open now. Heavily she slipped through.

"Jane, come back!" whispered Helen urgently. "Clara, after her! She surely's back home!"

"I'll see she doesn't!"
Whispering the two others leaped withly but miserably towards the door.

Jane began to feel peculiar. Good, well, she'd single out to get out. But if Helen and Clara were in a nick, her strength would only end in her being dragged back into the dormitory, or all three of them being caught by a mistress.

JUST as Helen and Helen reached the gates, and Clara was in the act of chasing them for the night, a party, including Agnes, stumbled through. It was occupant Jane. The chains started at her. Wherever had she been?



understanding her motives, would have had to forbid her going.

In the ordinary course of events it would have been quite a simple matter to break down, thank Mrs. Courtfield and see Mrs. Lane, and look upon the CBS House without anyone being the wiser. It was just Joan's bad luck that her skill should have been untried for that night.

And now—
Joan shrugged helplessly. "What do you think Fitzroy will do? I'm so worried about the exam. You know how desperately keen I am to win it. If Fitzroy refuses to allow me to enter for it, my—"

"You break off with a suspicion of tears in your eyes."

"That was what distressed her, when she dreamed last evening. For if it did happen, then everything she had worked for would count for nothing. On the exam she had pinned all her hopes of being able to help Mrs. Leslie and bring happiness to that woman."

At that moment the study door burst open to admit the plump, breathless Miss Brown.

"Miss Lane!" she burst out excitedly. "I'm sorry, what do you think?"

"Oh, what is it?"

"Dorothy's eyes were huge and round tonight, but I don't remember."

"Is it Fitzroy?" she queried.

"That's got the apartment with her— that's just arrived, you know?"

"Cook!" Something between a gasp and a moan came from between Joan's lips. She fell back a pace, her face ghastly in its pallor. "But, dear, there's no time to wait for me. Miss Lane must have seen for the governor. Oh, dear, do you think they'll expel me?"

Miss Lane.

"Oh course not, Joan! They can't expel you for breaking hundreds of laws; it's never been done before. I can't understand it. Surely Fitzroy wouldn't vote for the governors just because of that night's affair."

"But what did you do for them?"

"I took to them, in an awful case. "I happened to hear them away at."

Miss Lane's face had a horrible feeling as if by water trickling down her spine. "What was all this mystery? How could I do it if it were nothing. She would just imagine how Joan would be reacting to all this mystery, and in that moment would really feel as if she were to become her."

"Then—"

Suddenly a bell laughed shrilly.

Joan jumped.

"What, what's that—?"

"Why, because you goose! At least, the exam for us!" the Form captain yelled, grabbing Joan by the arm. "Come on. Let's get along to the classroom, and don't forget you've got to go."

Inductively Joan pulled herself together. Yes, she had got to write, though none of her dreams recalled just how important it was.

With head held high, arm-in-arm with Miss Lane, she marched along to the room where the exam was taking place. A number of other girls were already assembled there. They glanced curiously at Joan as she entered, but on the whole their glances were sympathetic.

Even Miss Evelyn, seated on the far side but Joan's adventure would not drive her away in the least. In pity that girl's beauty, though so far back and a steady "Good luck, old thing" as she passed.

"This is mine as Miss Chapman says," going to Miss Ford. Quietly she explained the value of the examine-



JOAN gave a sigh of relief as she saw that the envelope was safe and sound. But she would have been startled indeed if she had looked round. Theresa Graves was spying, over her shoulder!

tion. Questions and papers were handed out.

The girls picked up pens. A final glance glanced over the room, but before you could reach papers, before the girls had even reached the questions—

The door was flung open, and there, framed in the doorway, stood Miss Fitzroy, her face more angry than the girls had ever seen it before. By her side, his face like a thunderbolt, glared, heavily laden with keys, was Major-General Middleton, the chairman of the board of governors.

As one the girls rose, a feeling of impending doom settling upon them all. Joan Chapman's eyes grew wide, and she stared slightly at the door, her heart suddenly racing unaccountably.

Without even glancing at the Fourth Form tables, Miss Fitzroy stopped in the front of the class; in a voice that grated the eardrums.

"Girls, you will remain standing. Everyone of you will throw upon your desk, before me, the papers you have taken home last night."

The class gasped. Wonderingly they obeyed that strange order. Miss Lane's wondering glance at the girl on the right. And Joan, breathing a little more freely, managed a faint smile.

Overwhelming relief was flooding through her job. For a moment she had thought this intrusion was connected with her, and she felt that that it wasn't made for her eyes alone.

But now the chairman turned forward, with a curt nod to Miss Fitzroy, he walked up the aisle between the first two rows of open desks.

"No more than a dozen papers should be given each of them, while the girls watched him in amazement.

Then he started on the second side, his footstep following on the line boards in the aisle, wandering slowly.

For some inexplicable reason Joan found herself looking her breath as he approached her desk. The queer feeling of nervous strangeness, the clear-room seemed to have increased.

She cast a hurried glance round the room. The rest of the girls were watching General Middleton, their faces full of a wondering excitement.

Ah, how he was! The chairman passed, and a protesting glance at her face brought his body against; then his eyes lowered to her desk. Quietly, unobtrusively, he regarded the two papers that were in there.

Again Joan's heart began to beat unaccountably. She felt that if he saw she did not pass on the world around; and then—

In sudden movement that she fell back with a shriek, stepping off. Major-General Middleton's hand shot out; it dove into her desk, closed upon something. Out came the hand again. And now everyone saw what he clutched—the envelope.

With a gasp, fully comprehending glances at the quaking Joan, he opened the flap and peered inside. Then, twice he looked his head slowly, gravely.

Then he turned, stamped briefly down the aisle. He turned round, just held the envelope before Miss Fitzroy's eyes, smiling more smug, and stalked from the room.

A greynish pallor seemed to overgloom the ladies' room; here, suddenly she looked out. When she spoke it was with difficulty, though there was something in her voice which made everyone there shudder—no angry contempt that drew like the look of an old bird.

"Girls, for the time being the examination is cancelled! Miss Chapman—Joan Chapman, you will look someone up to the board-room! The rest, dismiss!"



Accused!

VALÉRIE and Jean Charment stood in the board-room of the House Hotel, in Paris, white-faced, but fearless, they looked at the grim, forbidding faces which regarded them with cold interest.

Major-General Mallesson, at the head of the table, cleared his throat loudly. His deep eyes gazed steadily, slowly, from one to another of the assembled gathering. Next to him sat Miss Finerman, her face drawn and pale. On his other hand sat Mr. Mansfield Woodhouse, vice-chairman of the board of governors, looking a little uncomfortable.

Grouped beyond them, around the large, polished mahogany table, were the rest of the governors, with Miss Shillington at the far end, her stern features more cold than ever.

"The chairman rose," he barked in his terrible, gravelly voice. "The majority of you are in ignorance as to the reasons why you were called here on a summons by Miss Finerman. That summons, I assure you, is a very grave one. Never before in the annals of the House Hotel has such a thing ever happened." He paused again to clear his throat, then burst out his arm dramatically. "This is Valerie Charment, it is in virtue of this sister's name that you are summoned by all who have had, in virtue of a deed deplorable as well as heinous, the right to speak, glancing at each other in awed bewilderment. On great goodness! What was all this? But before they could speak, the chairman's voice boomed on.

"As you know, there was to take place this morning an examination conducted by me in which the prize offered was a handsome scholarship to one of the Europe. Waiting to be in the school which the examination was taking place, I arrived very early this morning. I was with Miss Finerman in her study when a note was pushed under the door. That note, from an unknown sender, I will read to you—

"I am sorry to see you in their chair. Jean is in the chair with you together. With trembling fingers the chair was flung for the questioner, adjusted them, and took the sheet of paper which Miss Finerman passed to him.

"The note is short," he continued, "and printed in capital letters, so that we have been unable to trace the writer. But listen!

"The room has been arranged between Miss Charment and her sister. Jean has the answers in an envelope in her desk, when Miss Charment played them last night. If we don't believe me, look!"

"That was all. But a simultaneous gasp came from the Irish company which looked through their fingers at Miss Charment's desk as if she had been struck; she took a step forward.

"But, that's not true!" she cried vehemently. "Such an accusation is preposterous!"

"Silence!" said the chairman sharply. "You will have your chance to speak later, Miss Charment." He turned to the vice-chairman again. "At first Miss Finerman was inclined to send for the letter. It was I who persuaded her to not open it. Such a writing in such great circumstances could not be disregarded. It was a very good thing," the vice-chairman added impressively, "that I did insist, but upon searching

Jean Charment's desk just before the examination, I found—this!" He dramatically he picked up the envelope that lay on the table, opened the flap, and from it pulled out a long sheet of paper.

"On this paper you will find the answers to every one of the questions set in the examination," the chairman pronounced. "I will ask you to examine it, ladies and gentlemen."

The room as he handed the paper to the vice-chairman. Miss Charment darted forward, her whole body quivering.

"Here there you may catch a thing!" she exclaimed passionately. "How can you make such a terrible accusation?" The flap closed upon the handwriting.

"Miss Finerman, you don't believe this—you can't believe it!"

Miss Finerman averted her head. Valerie Charment recoiled, horror in her eyes. Then she drew herself together upright, held her head high in the air.

"Then you do believe it?" she cried bitterly. "You all believe it! You condemn my sister and I believe even going to a chance to defend ourselves."

"Not at all—not at all!" barked Major-General Mallesson gruffly. He held up the sheet of answers. "Miss Charment, these answers are in your handwriting!"

"They are," admitted Miss Charment wearily.

"Will you tell us for what purpose you prepared them?"

"That is obvious," returned the chairman. "I prepared them to facilitate the reading of the examination papers. I should have thought—Miss Charment, these answers are in your handwriting, would have been aware that this is the usual procedure."

Major-General Mallesson continued sharply.

"Of course, never!" he said softly. "And where did you leave this paper?"

"Lucked up in my desk. I put it there yesterday evening."

"Then," put in the hard voice of Mr. John Jackson, "you looked it in your desk, perhaps you can explain how it happened to be in your sister's desk this morning—in an envelope with her name written upon it in your own handwriting?"

"Then I cannot explain," Miss Charment said bravely. "I was not even aware that the paper was missing from my desk."

"Then I suggest," continued Mr. John Jackson, "that instead of making a complaint of the proceedings, that the only other person who could have taken it is your sister."

"No, no!" cried Miss Charment vehemently. "How could she have got in my desk when I hold the key."

"Hark!" The chairman pointed upon that remark triumphantly.

"Think if your sister could not get to your sister's room, nobody else could get there either."

"Which proves, despite your denial, that you could have been the only person to have given your sister the reply!" pressed Mr. Jackson harshly.

He rose to his feet. Hard-headed knicker that he was, without business gain, he was in his element when conducting a cross-examination like this.

"You must either give your sister the reply," he concluded stoutly, "or the reverse!"

Jean looked at him fearfully. "She did not," the sister would not do such a thing. Her voice rose shrilly. "And I hate you—I hate all

of you—the scolding and wicked things about her!"

"Jean!" called Miss Charment sharply, springing to her side. "Don't speak anymore, you mustn't! It's all right! We'll prove it all right!"

"Beverly Jean blushed, but the tears that had welled into her eyes.

"Then the handwriting case rather happily in her lot.

"There are just two points that have not been mentioned," she said slowly.

"As handwriting, it is my duty to bring them before you. Yesterday, Miss Charment happened to have Charment's receipt, I know her and Jean together. I prepared a receipt, made by Miss Charment, which was taken on an early typewriter. The words were: 'Remember, if I don't get a chance to hand them to you, I'll have them in your desk.'"

"There was a mistake in the handwriting."

"And last night," continued Miss Finerman, "when the first took place, Jean Charment was discovered to be absent from her dormitory."

The atmosphere was electric now. Harter and Harter became the witnesses against the sisters.

"John Jackson pointed a finger at Valerie.

"You admit making the statement Miss Finerman has just mentioned?" he asked.

"Most certainly I do; but it had absolutely no connection at all with the examination papers," Miss Charment denied vehemently.

"Then to what did it refer?"

"And then, for the first time, Valerie blushed. Perfectly well she comprehended speaking these words, but they had never been in a very full manner received from the examination.

"She had been discussing her plan to help the injured Mrs. Lewis. Valerie could explain that in the presence, that was it going to help, or only make the situation more complicated?"

With an agonized feeling of hopelessness, almost paralyzed by the weight of circumstantial evidence against themselves which she knew already was going against them in the eyes of the assembly, Valerie realized that to reveal the facts of the accident would not help in any way.

At last Miss Charment replied:

"The subject I was discussing with my sister when Miss Finerman entered was entirely a private matter. It had nothing whatever to do with the examination, and is quite irrelevant to your situation against us."

"We don't agree!" barked the chairman. "We demand to know—"

"And you shall know," Valerie is only trying to save me. And before the minutes could stop her, Jean had stepped forward.

Impulsively she had cried, "Unhappily, she had not seen that nothing was to be gained by explaining about Mrs. Lewis. She could only think that Valerie was doing this to prevent her own part in the accident from coming out. Now Jean is sure that Jean's part in the accident was not so bad as she would be sure Mrs. Lewis," Jean smiled on. "She said Mrs. Lewis must go into hospital, and gave me money to pay the expenses."

"Then," was what that wretched man called the money which Valerie had in my desk yesterday afternoon, and the man would have to be in a bit of money, I don't know, I only wish I did. Miss Finerman heard of talking

drive in a sharp knock to wake her, only to find it but a passing breeze.
"Our mysterious visitor is not both of you shall leave this House School in disgrace!"

Clara Uses a Mower



CLIFF Haines looked with the eyes of a man from the Fourth Fifth Commencement class upon the young girl who had reached his grade.
"It's a wicked shame!"
"They're not guilty!"
"Oh course they're not!"
"And no one's stand for it?"
"Neither we!"

There was not one girl among the Fourth-year even Miss Cromwell & Co.—who believed Miss Charman and her sister guilty of the charges made against them.

Even despite the overwhelming evidence against them, the unanimous opinion reached by the government, the Fourth-year girls was still loyal to their alleged accused.

"Let's go up a delegation!" suggested Peggy Fenton.

Barbara Redden, looking very, very thoughtful, shook her head.

"We shouldn't do an atom of good," she declared.

"What, like jolly well go on strike, then?" demanded hot-headed Clara.

Clara appeared at this reckless suggestion, but again Miss-eyed Bala shook her head.

"That would only antagonize the board at the same and wouldn't help the Charman and Joan in the slightest."

"But I guess we've got to do something," yelled Bala Corvill. "And pretty quick, too!"

"What do we want to do something?" said Bala. "I don't think I can do anything for them."

"Magnificently the affair did down. A set of faces gazed expectantly up at the Fifth captain.

"You all remember," Bala began, her blue eyes blazing, "when I climbed one of the dormitory last night to see Miss Charman, how as I was passing the window of the Charman's study, saw somebody in the room—somebody looking a look—"

"Oh!"

Bala turned sharply at this faint exclamation came from behind her—from a figure standing by the door. It was the figure of Theresa Graves, who sat just that moment returned the Commencement.

And the Fifth captain's eyes suddenly grew both as she saw the dainty, pretentious girl, which had overpowered Theresa's face, saw the way that girl raised a little and hastily put out a hand to the wall to steady herself.

As Bala started, Theresa forced a little laugh.

"Who'd you see who it was?" she asked in a tone that strove to be casual, but which there was a desperate intensity.

But Bala started. She did not answer that question.

But Clara Thurler took a step forward.

"Show, what do you want?" she asked, proudly. "We're holding a conference."

With an effort Theresa dragged her eyes from Bala's face. Again she found that laugh.

"Oh! I—I just came in to see you as a matter of fact, Clara. About the treatment this afternoon. My feelings, my shocked ones, of course. And as you're going to be a girl short, I—I thought you might like me to sign."

Clara glared at her. Truly to tell the truth as it was, Theresa Clara had completely forgotten about the house treatment.

"Why, you mean—" Clara spluttered. "You expect me to think about that now, after what's happened to Miss Charman and Joan?"

"Theresa smiled." "Well, the world isn't coming to an end just because they're going to be the school. The treatment's got to be placed—"

The rest of her words were drowned in the snuff, protruding again which Theresa.

Bala surrounded Theresa in an indignation circle, and in that moment as she started Bala did speak, clearly from the room.

A Bala whose blue eyes were glittering with an inner passionate excitement, whose pretty face was suddenly flushed very red.

"Oh, almost being herself at the study, I think there is a time she dashed out, searching the landing, except towards the lower Fifth dormitory. She reached the door, peeped in."

"Good! Kooky!" she muttered. "Into the dormitory she dashed, looked the door behind her. Then she gazed around her, which was Theresa's room."

Clara stepped towards the top of beds, passed slowly along them. And then she stopped, a shivering sensation gripping her.

Suddenly her hand darted out, forward upon something which lay across the foot of the bed by which she had passed. It was a dressing-gown—a blue dressing-gown—a pale blue with an elaborate spray of floral material upon the back of it.

"Got it!" Bala breathed, holding the dressing-gown up. But as the light fell on a small shining object fell from one of the pockets and landed upon the bed.

"Bala's face paled. A look!"

"Bala's face paled to leap. Her breath came quickly. This dressing-gown—the last one, it looked, on the floor that had been in Miss Charman's study last night!"

With fingers that trembled she picked the collar of the garment, looked inside for a time, put a white toy was pointed the collar of the gown. And the corner of the dress-gown was revealed.

"Theresa's dress!" Bala cried.

And, as she uttered that name, Barbara Ferguson instinctively flung into the Fourth Fifth captain's mind.

Theresa had confided with Miss Charman, had allowed her of allowing forbidden towards Joan. Theresa had been punished by Miss Charman.

Theresa had played that trick on Joan—she had looked on her chance to play in the house government. And Theresa had been in Miss Charman's study last night!

Bala dropped the dressing-gown as if it had become red-hot. Great gasps, which was behind all this!

Clara remembered Theresa's vindictive eyes, remembered her wild flushed face of that girl's, remembered when she, Bala, had told the girls about the figure she had seen the previous night. And Theresa's question: "Did you see who it was?" asked in that queerly frightened tone.

But surely even Theresa would not go to such lengths to get revenge! For—
For a moment Bala stood still, thinking fitfully. And the more she thought, in the light of all these descriptions, when she could she do not remember the Fifth Former!

Clara's thought, that strange description of her, Bala knew—knew that it was Theresa Graves who had somehow got those extraordinary answers in the envelope in Joan's desk, that Miss Charman and her sister of the Fourth Fifth year were suffering distress for an art piece. Theresa Graves had perpetrated!

What, Bala was convinced of that.

But how to prove it in the indignation of indignation and government? She could tell them what she knew—that it was only her word against that of Theresa's.

A moment longer Bala stood there, thinking desperately, fruitlessly. Then suddenly she dashed from the dormitory.

CLIFF

Barbara Redden's head appeared round the door of Study No. 4 in the Fourth Fifth corridor.

Clara Thurler, who was just passing that study, stopped.

"Come in here a minute. I want you."

Clara stepped quickly by the doorway in the Fifth captain's words. Clara entered the study. Bala gripped the Fourth's arm, loudly.

"Listen, Clara. I want you to do something for me. I can't tell you anything just of what I have to mind you of what I think you might be able to do for the Charman and Joan."

Clara gave a start of excitement.

"Bala! What?"

"No, don't ask questions. Listen! I want you to talk Theresa Graves and bring her here. Yes, Theresa! Make sure you know you like—like it's about time. But get her here. Under any!"

"My heart is she—"

"No questions, Clara!" Bala was flushed with excitement now. "But wait a minute. There's something else. After you get Theresa in here, I want you to dash downstairs to the kitchen! Get the most-supper! Run it up and dress outside this study window, and as much noise as you can with Bala added impudently, "don't stop!"

Bala added impudently, "don't stop!"

"Bala added impudently, "don't stop!"

Clara's mouth fell open. Her eyes sparkled. She stared at the Fifth captain as if that girl had suddenly taken leave of her senses.

"The most-supper?" she gasped faintly, in her excitement.

"Oh, Clara, no questions! Just do as I ask," said Bala, her eyes sparkling the Fourth year the study, "and you'll do everything else!"

"As there as now?" cried Clara.

"But that you, Bala?" cried Clara.

She pulled away.

A few minutes later there came a tap on the door of Study No. 4. Theresa Graves answered it.

"You want to see me?" she asked.

Bala smiled.

"Come in, Theresa. Take a seat—"

And as Theresa sank down into the arm-chair, Bala started across to the door, closed it and turned the key in the lock.

"Here, what's the idea—?" began Theresa, jumping up in alarm.

At that moment, Bala opened the door, and Theresa saw the chair of a messenger. Bala's face flashed across to the window, peeped by the screen, and then turned.

"The idea is," she said contemptuously, "that I've found out your little game, Captain Coffey. I've found out that it was you who put the comparison needle in Joan Charmant's coat."

All the colour had from Theresa's face, leaving it pale, strained and most surely, dreadfully scared.

Her mouth opened.

"How long did you find out?" The words came almost in a whisper.

"Then you admit it?" asked Bala triumphantly.

Theresa started. Her eyes searched the Form captain's face. Then her lips closed as her sides.

"You're lying, Barbara Redfern!" she almost shrieked. "You're lying! You didn't know that I put them in your coat. You've only guessed at it. It's just a trap to trick me into confessing."

Bala smiled lily.

"Yes, it was a trap, Theresa—a trap into which you fell beautifully! You've admitted now that it was you!"

Theresa stood there, like a hunted animal, to whom, with a great effort, to succeed, had been thrown together a ready plan, came into the terrified eyes of her.

"And how," she gasped, "are you going to prove it? You think you're so very clever, Barbara, but you didn't think of that. Where are your wits now? Nobody found me except you."

Confidence began to return. She looked into a mirror and said:

"Yes, I admit I did it, if that will give you any satisfaction. But it's your word against mine. What will Miss Fremont do if you take your life to her? She'll believe you, won't she—and I don't think! And if she does question me, I'll deny it—I'll deny it! Theresa's voice rose. "I'll tell her that you've made it up just to try to give that hateful mistress an even. Well, why don't you say anything? Why don't you speak up and admit it?"

Bala smiled a slow, unguessed smile. While, from outside, the whirring of the motor-car was on and on, unceasingly.

"That will remain to tell Theresa that all was not as it should be. She glared hatefully around her. A sudden terrible bell clattered at her legs.

"What have you done that in the street? But, no," she said. They were alone. No one could have heard their confessions, and then Bala spoke.

"Thank you, Theresa?" she said sweetly.

From her pocket she drew out her handkerchief, methodically slowly shook it out, and then, crossing to the window, shook it carefully.

Suddenly she shone of the motor-car's wheel. But now another sound could be heard—a sound which came from inside Study No. 4 itself—a faint whirring noise which the motor-car's had drowned.

Theresa heard it.

"What's that?" she gasped. "Barbara Redfern, what trick are you up to now?" And then she stopped, stopped, fell, as Bala, looking out the screen, revealed a black, square object—a machine on which was revolving a black cylinder. "A dictaphone?" shrieked Theresa.

Like a wild thing she leaped across the room. But before she could reach that precious object, Bala had discovered the cylinder from the screen.

"Yes, a dictaphone?" she said triumphantly.

And, just as Theresa lung forward madly upon the Form captain, hands

clashed in search of the record, Bala dashed wildly aside.

"That record!" Theresa gasped.

"Give it to me!"

"Oh, no!" Bala was at the door now, had snatched it. Outside stood Clara Trevan. "Clara, this thing," she pointed. "Whatever you do, don't leave it out of it!"

She shut the door again, was more confident than ever.

"Well, Theresa, you've bewitched me. Your little trickery is on that record. You've bewitched yourself. You only got to let Miss Fremont hear that!"

Theresa closed her back with a shrieked scream. Her face knew she was beaten.

"You won't do it to me, will you?" she pleaded. "You can't! I shall be caught!"

"Exactly as you get Miss Charmant and Joan expelled!" Bala said snarlingly.

"But I didn't mean it to go so far as that—really, I didn't!" whimpered Theresa. "I only wanted to get these two people to get my work back on them."

"That won't better tell that to Miss Fremont!" Bala said indignantly.

"You've got your choice, Theresa. Either you tell Fremont and make your excuse, or I shall take the record to her. Which is it to be?"

Half-a-second, Theresa stared at her. Then:

"I—I'll go!" she muttered, her face pale and white.

And, as Bala opened the door, she staggered away.

OVER NEXT PAGESION WITH CLIFF HOUSE SCHOOL.

Once again the Fourth Form Commencement was in an uproar. But a different uproar this time. Jubilation was rife, the singing shook with the cheer of the students.

And in the center of that room, surrounded by the cheering throng, were three figures—Miss Valerie Charmant, her sister Joan, and Barbara Redfern. Miss Charmant spoke now.

"Barbara, how can I ever thank you?" she cried softly.

Bala smiled modestly.

"Oh, don't thank me, Miss Charmant," she said. "I've got only one happy that you've managed to get your sister back again. Oh—well, what happened about Theresa?" she asked.

Miss Charmant's face grew a little stern.

"Theresa," she replied, "has been

suspended for the rest of the term."

"Yes," put in a restless Joan, "because she jolly well pleased with Miss Fremont, so to speak."

How the Fourth glared at that! How they chorused and stamped again! What's that just like their beloved Charmant?

And then were Miss Charmant and Joan vindicated—thanks to Barbara Redfern.

Gradually the whole truth leaked out; how Theresa had seen Joan take that money out of the envelope in her desk; how she had decided to substitute the same results in the envelope; that night, when Bala had seen Miss Trevan, Theresa had crept into Miss Charmant's room when the mistress was out, had taken the form from the book behind her bed-room door, and then gained access to the Charmant's desk.

Early the following morning Theresa had put the needle in the envelope in Joan's desk, and shown the communique letter to Miss Fremont.

But all this business happened in the excitement of the term's termination, and she took part on the Saturday afternoon's entertainment in which a captured and thoughtless Joan occupied all previous form. Joan's brilliant effort played a great part in the House's smashing victory over Whitehaven.

And when that same evening Miss Fremont called Joan into her study, she imparted to her some news which the Fourth Formers' cup of happiness was overflowing.

For Miss Fremont told her that the governors felt they must make some contribution for the hospital which had very nearly been done. They had consulted Miss Fremont.

"And," the headmistress said, smiling kindly, "I told them that when you would meet applications would be for them to make the necessary arrangements for Miss Lewis to be sent to Whitehaven when she has completely recovered. Did I do right, my dear?"

No need for an answer. Joan's glowing face was confirmation in itself.

And so the worry of Miss Lewis was removed from Joan's mind, though, when the examination took place on the following Saturday, Joan still missed her.

And was it?

"And my compassion on the tip to Europe is going to be my sister," she thought, still her jubilation ebbed of the Fourth Form.

THE END OF THE WEEK'S STORY.

"THE GIRL YOU WANT AS CAPTAIN IS THE SISTER OF A CONVICT!"

Startling words indeed they placed Barbara Redfern & Co. into a state of utter bewilderment as they did. Dublin Postgraduate, to be rebuffed of the captain of the school by that convict's daughter? Whether it was true or not, Bala & Co. did not care. They wanted Dublin for captain, and they wanted to have her. Not until it was almost too late did they discover that, for Dublin, the whole terrible problem meant she must be one of two things—

Red web's biggest
LONG COMPLETE
CLIFF HOUSE
STORY by
Hilda Richards.



Waiting for News!

lightened by a strange light. It was like that of a roman candle, vivid and bright.

From somewhere on the wild sea it came, and it was Betty's first hurried thought that a ship in distress was sending up rockets.

The light died away, but instantly another of a different kind illumined the night. This time it was like the lightning bolts of several moments, making Betty's immediate surroundings plainly discernible. And her jumping up was to where the light originated, and then the great sea again.

"The Island!"

CHEER! The shouts their hoarse sound in the wind, as Betty came bounding on with the thrilling news. "Miss Marshall! Polly-Toni! The Island!"



BUFFETED by the gale, driven against the wall of the hut, Betty stared at the haunting light. There, all at once, a cry of sorrow railed broke from her lips. "The Island—the Island!" It had come to the rescue. But could it bear the storm?

"The London Bay Island—it's not looking for us! You can see it! They're showing three! Quick, come and look!"

But they dashed into the stormy darkness. A moment, and the door swung closed, but first all its flaring light went away and sitting the heavy flaps, and then they were beating against the wind as they dragged towards the brink of the cliff.

Another brilliant rebound light was bearing.

"They may have seen our fire," Polly panted, "and as they're trying to get us! But can they do it—can they?"

When an appalling cry of the rafting sea it was that moment, so come, just then, as it is to my study! "Let them try!"

"Is there to get us taken off," Betty panted, "then we can beat the Fenwick yet! I mean, about the gold in that cave on the mainland?"

"There's it," Tom started, with passionate ardor. "The money we are looking for is hidden, but the gold can be held if only the Island can get us there!"

But there was that imminent roar of angry waters, signaling a mounting gale, the winds blew.

It was midnight at Marston School. Everywhere in the great school-house, lights were still burning.

Students had been ordered away to the dormitories at the morning hour, as for their night to sleep on as to by the fire work in the morning—there could it be supposed of them!

Authority was relaxing discipline during such a time of acute anxiety. If three young girls who had not even thought of studying, and who even at this late hour were still grouped at this window and their captives, what might they have the heart to spend a word of comment?

And here, in her own private study, dejectedly, the headmistress herself was still waiting on.

On the great headboard, framing the wall Atlantic, Marston's lady walks came in her thinking hours from the

terrible gale. Now and then a thinking glance about the flying lines of smoking chimneys.

Once again Miss Mansfield noted the light by the clock on the mantelpiece. She expressed a sigh. After a moment, she was back at the window, holding a curtain aside to peer out.

From Marston's own ragged shore, far below, came rushing sounds that added a deep agonizing note to all the hurly-burly of the gale. There was not a wren whispering, however the air, that a wren whispering. But Miss Mansfield, although tearfully oppressed of this, could not withhold her darkness under the black sky.

Momentary gleams of light there had been, a good while since, but not the nightingale one. But during the last few hours (light had been nothing!) the telephone.

Miss Mansfield rushed round, and started across to catch up the message.

"Yes, who is it? This is Marston's head—the headmistress! Do you want me?"

For several moments she waited in bewilderment; and then a voice burst. But she could not hear it properly. Oh, what was it that somebody was trying to tell her? Some tragic it was almost certain to be, but at least it would be news.

"Is it London Bay?" she suddenly panted, having made out that phrase.

"Who?" "Yes—speak up, please!" she became very erect as she listened on. Something was being told her by that blurred voice that left her startled. Her curiously looks were transformed by sudden joy.

"Say that again, will you, please?" she implored. "Six of them, you say? All Yes, I've got that, certainly, all! All Yes, that is it! The Great Island! But when they're not, the wonderful! Marston! Right there, you say! Yes, I can hear, I understand!"

A sudden, rapping rattle, and the line went dead.

But Miss Mansfield did not mind, she banged down the receiver almost as unconsciously as one of her own scholars might have done.

Marston's usually dignified headmistress went from her room with something of the wildness of a reading Polly Linton. Her voice, sending the news before her, as she ran to get assistance, was loud enough to be heard outside the school-house.

And indeed it was, even outside the noise of the wild night, by two persons who had come crawling close to the house walls more than an hour ago, there to stand as best they could.

Miss Fenwick and her brother Ralph had hung about in the protective darkness, desperate to obtain some news by questioning any sudden entry in the school-house.

"Oh, Ralph, you heard?" his sister exclaimed. "On Great Island—all six of them?"

"But the lifeboat couldn't take three of us," he hushed. "That's something, anyhow, will in our favor. I'm not surprised at your having to be left on the island, either. It must be terrible out there!"

"But at daylight," Maria cheerily volunteered, "I mean you'll be rescued!"

"Not so sure," he answered. "I can imagine it's dark for a quarter of a mile and from the shore, all round the island. Your candle's gone out this forenoon, too. No, there's no use my wait for the wind to drop. And a new, wax tapers like tonight's nearly always lasts three days."

"Then we may have two more nights for trying to—to get the gold away?" he asked, pondered aloud. "We can't tell neither that!"

"Yes," he nodded. "But let's get away now, back to where we left her, making up the net."

They shook off, making for a shabby path that would bring them out close to a boundary fence. Ralph walked in front of Maria, and he was to find himself getting rather far in advance of her. Near the hedge, he halted and looked round, and he could tell that she was still dependent.

"Oh, come up!" he called, in a forced tone. "As long as the three of us don't get tangled down in our hiding place, we may do all right for ourselves, after all."

Marie, as she got to him, stared back at the night-bird moonbeams, with all its lighted windows. Through the opening of the gate there came ringing sounds—hard cheering, and girlish voices exchanging glad news.

"Come, whatever, they have, Ralph!" she muttered. "They've just started with relief!"

"That would make it a fourth of difference to you and me, and I don't," he said impatiently. "Let the gate

be only long enough, and we'll get that gold yet!"

But would they? He might not have felt so confident had he remembered one thing that the girl Island refugees, at the midnight hour, had, in fact, suddenly thought of doing.

A STRANGE MESSAGE!

That it was who had hit upon that idea, only a minute since. Now, on the island's storm-battered shore, the message was being hastily pencilled on a piece of white paper.

Miss Marwick, by the light of the candle, was writing in a bold, free hand, what the visitors looked on—

"GULL INVASION."

"Whenever these birds, please let the gulls come at once, the Pirates have a lot of uncooked gull hidden in the cave that is set in a safe way of shelter."

"It's an atrocious idea, message to the use in case the gulls prevent our being taken up at daylight. All at once and well!"

The pencil came away from the paper, and Polly eagerly offered an empty glass luminous bottle. Quickly filled up, then the best of a dozen rocks, lying about the eastern door, came into use.

Down and the corking of the bottle, for he and Jack were to go with it as soon down to the shore.

The girls meant to get off what message by the same means possible. In bottles and rocks there were certainly enough and to spare. But there was only one pencil, and Jack and Dave

could not keep about, waiting for them to be taken with it.

A few minutes' delay might make all the difference, when so much depended upon the use of the tide.

Directed against the wind, both sets were soon off by Morocco at the shore. Harry shook at "Man of Jack?" upon whom the girls' only reliance. "There, leaving instantly to reach that door, Betty, Polly, and Tom started to a window that faced the way Jack and Dave had gone.

"Oh, how I hope it does!" Polly cried, thinking of the latter's poor chance of being detested to the mainland's beach. "For you've to be stuck here a good while yet by the look of things!"

"But it's a good job the fishermen were able to catch us, where we all stood waiting on the shore," was Betty's fervent cry. "Think of the loss of everybody's wind, on shore?"

"Ralph!"

Already the water darkness had reached out Jack and Dave, and so the girls turned away from the window. They were shouting. Miss Marwick, with her face, self-reliance being strong within them.

But presently the door banged open unexpectantly, and, while a gust rushed in, setting the lamp swinging, they saw that Jack was back—straggling weakly, with those long and swollen legs in his arms.

WHATSOEVER can be the meaning of this dramatic development? Dave, obviously hurt, in Jack's arms! What has happened? You will learn the answer to these intriguing questions in next week's chapters of this circulating serial. On no account should you miss them. Therefore, RUSH to your pen, why not write your SCHOOLGIRL well in advance?



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