

Exciting LONG COMPLETE "THE SECRET OF STOWE ISLAND!" in this issue.

THE SCHOOLGIRL

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SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN



THEY HAD COME TO DESTROY HER PET!

A dramatic incident from the magnificent LONG COMPLETE Girl House story, featuring Tomboy Clara Trevlyn, inside.

Exhilarating LONG COMPLETE story of the Chums of Cliff House School.

The Secret of Stowe Island!



Photo Starts a Mystery!



"I've been lonely," I breathed into good Barbara's bosom.

"Alas, my dear!" sighed Miss Logan.

"Yes, my dear! But I

wonder, you know, what about a

visit?" asked Miss Logan, looking at

Barbara seriously. "There's some talk

about it."

"Tuesday, Clara Trevlyn promised

"If you and my sister, Phoebe, you'll

go through the bottom of the next

tide and I have nearly pulled out some

kind of silver rocks in it, making your

visit very pleasant."

"Oh, my dear, Clara—" began

Barbara hesitatingly.

"She's a dear," I

interrupted.

"What about a visit?" she suggested.

"We've plenty of time yet, and if Phoebe

really wants something to try, we might

just as well pull the book along inside

her as to the hanger."

"Perhaps you're right," agreed Clara,

with a laugh. "And here's the key

to the lock!"

"And from the key member of the

party came an effort:

"Good, good!"

Phoebe, Clara's handsome Abelian, was

certainly eager to fall in with any sug-

gestion that would enable him to get his

four feet on firm ground once more.

Phoebe and Clara stopped, looking at the

key, which Phoebe, and then Clara

followed, the four of them, from the

Fourth Form at Cliff House School.

It was a half holiday at Cliff House—

a holiday which Mrs. & Co. had spent

residing on the River St. They had

been deprived of half an hour ago in

one of the deady rivers of the

interminable winding river; now they

returned to their homes with their

and impressions of the day.

were boundward bound, but that

was not the case, and the lot was

beginning to take effect.

The Fourth Form and Clara, who had

been sitting down too, were ready for a

visit. The hanger was already forgotten, but

the contents of the picnic in the hanger

was forgotten—was, naturally, ready for

a visit.

And what better place for both parties

than the quiet, tree-shaded Stowe

Island?

Strictly speaking, Stowe Island was

private property, belonging to a Mrs.

Frank, who lived at Green House, on the

opposite bank of the river. But Miss

Frank and the Cliff House girls were

great friends, and she had given them

permission to land there whenever they

wished.

With Phoebe thinking at her side, Clara

led the way in a little clearing on the

bank.

"Here we are!" she announced, bring-

ing Phoebe full length on to the

grass. "Welcome!" she laughingly pro-

claimed as Phoebe unconsciously applied his

pink tongue to her hot face. "Sweetly

old boy! I may be hot, but I'm not in

need of one of your waders—thank you

all the same!" And playfully the

Thursday pushed her aside.

Phoebe pulled her waders and was

in his booting tail. There was a loud

and he exclaimed, into Phoebe, who had

been sitting on the grass

By
HILDA RICHARDS

Illustrated by T. CARROLL

with the red hanger clasped in her

poor arms.

Neither more—and certainly leaving

—than the water in Phoebe's

eyes. The hanger, about four feet long,

was made of a certain kind of wood, and

Phoebe's level of English changed to one

of dismay as the one remaining message

and disappeared down Phoebe's throat.

"Oh, Phoebe!" she shouted, miserably.

"Call him off! Stop! Go away! And

When Clara Trevlyn's Abelian pet found a piece of paper, little did the Tomboy of the Fourth Form dream of the extraordinary mystery into which she would be plunged. That, through her determined efforts to solve it, she would have to face perils . . . disagree . . . and the threat of losing her pet for ever.

indifferently she waved one plump hand,

while Phoebe, thinking she was either too

young, crowded and groined, crossed

her hands, and then, as if by a

stroke of fate, she fell into the

water. "Look at it Phoebe's having

such a good time!"

"Yes, you know," laughed Phoebe,

with a look, but this is going too far!"

With a sudden movement she grabbed

the doughnut from Phoebe's

plate, and it disappeared in a moment,

and then tossed it into the

water.

After it dashed Phoebe, while Phoebe

quickly grabbed up the scattered

pieces, and then, with a

sudden jump, she

jumped back into the hanger.

Phoebe settled on the little

This is where you meet

**CLARA TREVELYN
BARBARA REDFERN
HABEL LYNN
BESSIE BUNTER**

and a host of other fascinating characters

Edie, Mabel, and Clara lay on their backs, eyes shut, making faintly rhythmic sounds, and she lay there now, and looked at the open papers, steadily disposing of its contents.

Philo, having lost interest in the document, had started off among the trees in search of rabbits.

Five minutes went by, then Edithy from a distance came a plaintive wail.

"Clara, get up with a jerk."

"Hello! That's Philo?" she exclaimed. "Wonder what the deuce he's up to now!"

"Rough a rabbit, perhaps," suggested Mabel.

"Clara, don't let her lead."

"Larkin?"

"Again come that wain."

A jangled frown crossed the Younger's forehead. What was that wain which Mabel used when trying to dig a rabbit out of the burrow, but what it is a matter of guess. Knowing her job as she did, Clara recognized a queer note of urgency in the sound.

"Quickly she ascended to her feet. Mabel sat up.

"What's the hurry?" she asked briskly.

"Not going yet?"

"No, I'm going to find Philo."

"Well, wait for me. I'll come, too."

But even as she spoke to rise there came a splutter from Edithy.

Edithy, trying to eat and talk at the same time, gave an ungrammatical shriek which left her face even redder than usual, and then she sprang up quickly (forgetting to look the opposite bank of the river).

"Ungrammatical screaming."

Edie, Mabel, and Clara wheeled, gazing in the direction Edithy had indicated.

On the opposite bank stood Stone House, the picturesque residence of Mrs. Frith, in front of it was a private landing stage, in which a small boat had been fastened, but this boat was now half-way across to the island, a man pulling loudly at the oars, a woman sitting half upright in the stern and gazing furiously at the Cliff House chimes.

"Well, who ever's that?" asked Edie.

"It isn't Mrs. Frith, anyway; she's in the Strand of France."

"Don't look too pleased, wherever they are," added Mabel, with a yawn.

"But Clara's intention to search."

"Well, it seems of our business. My hat! There's Philo whining again."

She turned, striding quickly in the direction from which the whining came! (It is not more than three steps land she takes, when there came a loud shout.)

"Hi! You girls, wait a minute!"

Clara stopped, wheeled. It was the man in the boat who had called, his voice loud and authoritative.

"What's he doing by calling of?" demanded the Younger, striding towards the occupants of the boat. "Oh, come on!"

"Wait! I want to speak to you girls!"

The boat had pulled the island; the man was scrambling out, shouting as he did so, not to come running up to the chimes. He had had some success. "I had you out of my mind. I had you here, and this place is private property, and this is my house!"

A hot rebuff to the man's outburst sounded on Clara's lips, but before she could voice it Edie laid a restraining hand upon her arm.

"We know that Stone Island is the private property of Mrs. Frith," Edie said quickly, "and we have both given permission for her to come here whenever she likes."

"Oh!" The man crossed a little white cloth.

"Well, I can't help that. I've visited Stone House for a few weeks from Mrs. Frith, and I don't want my body on the island. Understand?"

kind shortly, for she was never one to hide her feelings, and the man's tone still resented in her mind. "I was just going after him when you arrived."

But the man hardly seemed to hear her. He took a step forward; with some care was passing in the direction whence the whining came.

"A dog?" he muttered, and a furtive look came over his face.

Clara saw that Edie, and glanced back at Mabel, wondering if she, too, had noticed it. But Edie hadn't. As that moment the Fourth Form captain, with Mabel and Bessie, was in animated conversation with the woman.

"I haven't introduced myself yet."

The woman was saying. "I am Mrs. Lyle, and that is my husband. We're going to be here for some weeks, so I thought you should see quite a bit of me. And as I'm sure you must be feeling frightfully thirsty, supposing I go back to the house and bring you some lemonade—"

"Oh, thank you! That would be helping Mrs. Lyle," said Mabel gratefully.

"But we wouldn't dream of putting you to any trouble."

"No trouble at all, my dear," Mrs. Lyle smiled. "My husband will see me soon, and we'll be back in no time. But where is he?" she asked pointedly, glancing around.

One of Mr. Lyle and Younger Clara then went to sign.

"Where they go! They're off to find Philo," Edie agreed. "But let me see your glasses, Mrs. Lyle—please!"

"Very quickly the woman shook her head.

"No, no, I wouldn't think of it!"

And, before Mabel could utter the words she was looking down the bank. She clanked into the boat, and with a gasp saw of her hand, started off.



TREVELYN. Clara passed through the lavender, watching Mr. and Mrs. Lyle in the distant house. At all costs, the Younger was determined to discover their strange secret.

Mrs. Moore, Clara, on the bank of the lake, was just plunging into the wood. Clara's whisking had now stopped to a frantic halting, and the Tommy was looking back worried and puzzled.

Suddenly Mr. Lyle stopped, planting himself right in Clara's path.

"Look here! Don't go after your dog," he said, with exaggerated agitation. "He'll run to his danger. You stop here—don't follow him!"

Again Clara noticed that queer look on the man's face. But at that moment she was more concerned about Plato.

"If Plato's in any danger," she said loudly, "I'm jolly well going to be there to help him!"

And she darted ahead, calling the dog's name.

The halting had stopped. There from ahead of them came a snuffling in the undergrowth, and a second later a spring shape bounded into view.

"Clara! Clara! here you are!"

"Yes, I'm here," she called. "My hat! What's that in your mouth?"

"It's slipped between the dog's eyes," while with each was something else—a letter! Clara knelt beside her pet in excitement.

But the man who had seen it, with a sudden realization he came hurrying forward, grabbed a corner of the letter, and tugged desperately.

Came a growl from Plato's dipping head to the letter. Ah, the man glared angrily at the girl to hold, and then he seemed to become even more frantic.

"Let go, you brute! Let go, you brute!" he yelled, making a grab for the other piece.

Again Plato growled, barked away, his teeth still gnawing the paper.

Mr. Lyle hung round eagerly upon the "dog's letter."

"Take them, give it to me!" he exclaimed. "This is my property, isn't it a very important letter? I insist that you get it from him!"

Clara started back in his indignantly.

"There's no need to shout like that!" he said calmly. "Show, Plato! Come on, boy!"

Obviously the situation troubled up to her, and dropped the "dog's letter" down, from which fell a piece of paper that she had been holding. At the look it, Clara glanced the writing in great amazement. The last, of course, no intention of deliberately reading the letter, but quite unconsciously she had reversed itself upon her mind.

"They're keeping me from, aren't they?"

No more than that did she get, for in that moment Mr. Lyle's hand shot out and tore the paper violently from her grasp.

"That's mine!" he snapped. "And to future kindly keep your dog's nose, and your eyes, out of my private affairs!"

And the incidents of that afternoon were making her think wildly.

The man's obstinate manner when first he had led them had annoyed her. That frightened glance she had seen in his eyes when Plato had been behaving so strangely had aroused her curiosity. Now this extraordinary display of anger and shame, making her feel quite unconsciously that all was not as it should be, and then again that someone who she had inadvertently seen behind her back's eyes—"They're keeping me from something!"

What did that mean? Who had written it? Where had Plato found it? With all these thoughts swirling in her mind, the Tommy looked steadily at the man before her.

She amazingly the angry red was dying out of his face now. The stars were still swirling.

"I'm sorry if I was a little rough," he said sheepishly. "I didn't mean to speak like that, but—well, I was most frightfully concerned about my letter." And he put a hand to his pocket in which he had carefully stored away both her pieces.

The Tommy laughed slowly.

"You see what an old you were frightfully concerned," she said, in that slow, way of hers. "Rather frightened that I should read it, weren't you? If you ask me," she continued reflectively, "it looks like—"

"Clara, you guess?" came a merry voice. "What ever are you talking about? What's that?" And on to the once straggled Hain, Stone, and Bruce Street.

Clara looked a little taken aback. But, having made a statement, not she to withdraw it.

"Everybody's busy," she said, with impudence, continuing, "Plato's got a frightful fuss, and grabbed it from me. But I just couldn't help seeing one line of it. It said something about somebody being kept here—"

A year of laughter from Mr. Lyle interrupted her words.

"My dear girl, what nonsense you are talking!" he exclaimed. "Did I suppose there'd be no justice for the world I tell you what it's all about. The letter was from my niece, who is staying with her aunt and uncle at Merton." He chuckled again.

"She has been ill, you see, and she wrote to say that she'd be keeping her things because she was in doing her good. Quite straightforward, isn't it?" he asked calmly.

Clara made no reply. But she was far from satisfied with that explanation. A letter from his niece, and yet Mr. Lyle had read it was frightfully suspicious.

It didn't ring true. Indeed, it only intelligible by suppositions. For the case she the Tommy kept her own counsel. She said nothing when Hain laughingly gripped her wrist.

"Come on, Clara, you old goose," she said lightly. "You really do get the poor little thing into that silly old head of yours. Run back up," she added loudly. "Mrs. Lyle has brought us some luncheon, and she's waiting."

So back to the clearing they all went. But there, in her shared surprise, Clara nearly refused the luncheon. She did not join in the merry chatter that followed, but on a little apart, examining Plato's head, a most thoughtful expression on her face.

She sat on even with Hain, and Mrs. Lyle gazed when they rose to go, and smiling when she caught suddenly

invited the dog to see the following afternoon at Bruce Street.

Five minutes later, sitting huddled away from the island, Hain, Stone, and Bruce, excitedly discussed their new-found friends.

"I think Mrs. Lyle is very sweet," said Hain.

"And I believe Mr. Lyle, you know," beamed Bruce. "It's most kind of her to have a definite invitation for us here, because he's invited upon his having the pleasure of luncheon. Don't you think he's nice, Clara?"

"I don't," said Clara, very distinctly, "think much of either of them."

"Clara," protested Hain.

"Well, I don't! Oh, I know you were taken in all right, but they're coming in. All that friendly chat was just to lead to your meeting, and you were almost ready to let it up!"

Maria looked a little annoyed.

"Never to me that you're being the cheap," she said. "What ever's the matter with you, suddenly? You perfectly nice people—"

Clara shook her head.

"That's your opinion. My opinion is that they're up to some funny business."

"Nonsense!" laughed Hain. "Oh, look, they're waiting to us from the window!"

And with the word her hand in sight to Hain, and Mrs. Lyle, who, framed in one of the upper windows of Bruce Street, curiously watched the little group when they drifted down the stairs.

"Suppose—suppose, did he?"

Arriving back at Old Hain, Hain, Maria, Clara, and Bruce had just straggled through the gate, and were making their way leisurely up the drive. Hain, looking them up and down, happy to be back at his old home with some, eager to tell his friends in the party, looked at the exciting afternoon he had spent.

"You're looking so called in him, would it be?" Mrs. Lyle asked the Tommy. "You're looking so called in him, would it be?" Mrs. Lyle asked the Tommy. "You're looking so called in him, would it be?"

She bent down now to fuddle his deeply head.

"Using an old chap," she said softly. "See for you now."

Clara looked up at her, the intelligent eyes were sparkling with indignation. He knew what that meant, and straightaway struck off in the direction of the gate house.

"See you here, Hain?" called Clara, as she followed him.

Across to the gate house she came, to be greeted by a shower of sparks in every volume and lay on the illuminated gate. She saw Plato in his kennel, saw Hain comfortably settled down. There, with a arch bow and a soft kiss on his cold nose, greeted her.

"Sarah Haverley, the unexpected guest of the South View, about walking on the steps leading into Big Hall."

"It's about time you came!" she snapped. "Miss Primrose is waiting to see you. You'd better go to her study."

"What?"

"Prudence!" Clara looked startled, and hardly she was in her mind all her indignation of the last few days, but failed to find one that would send this summons from the local village.

Feeling somewhat apprehensive, nevertheless, she made for Miss Primrose's study. A somewhat tired "Come in!" answered her gentle tap.

Complaints About Clara



"W" H Y, I'm sorry to hear that," said Clara.

"A and why about trouble in the middle of the night that night?"

Clara, she said, she had been thinking about it. She had been thinking about it. She had been thinking about it.

He, too, very obviously shared the interest of Clara's life.

But Clara's child was changing into something deeper now—a feeling of interest of vague suspicion. Of what he was suspicious she could not have

"Ah, Clara, I have been waiting for you," said Miss Frimrose quietly. "I am very sorry to say that I have received a complaint this afternoon."

"A complaint, Miss Frimrose?"

"Yes, Clara. From a Mr. and Mrs. Lyle of Stone House."

"They claimed," the headmistress continued, "saying that your dog, Plato, had made something of a nuisance of himself on Stone Island this afternoon. Apparently he growled at them in a threatening manner, and rather badly scared Mrs. Lyle."

"Oh, there's not true!" burst out Clara hotly.

"Miss Frimrose looked up with a little frown.

"First of course, I'm in no position to judge," she said quietly. "But the fact remains, Clara, that Plato is a large dog and very likely to behave unpredictably who is not acquainted with him. You admit he was running loose on Stone Island, Miss Frimrose. But Mrs. Frisk said I could take him there when you'd like."

"This does not concern Mrs. Frisk," pointed out the headmistress. "Mr. and Mrs. Lyle have rented the house, and the island, and that gives them the right to decide who shall and who shall not possess a dog on Stone Island. You may, of course, and I am sure you will, try to persuade them to make over, you had better keep him confined to the porch house for the remainder of the week."

"No, Clara," she said sternly, as a hot glare flashed on the young girl's eyes, "please do not argue. You must remember that it is a very great privilege to be allowed to bring a pet at all, and in those circumstances I do not like to receive complaints about their behavior from any outside source. You will go."

And Clara's, holding loudly, went. She went walking with rage against Mr. and Mrs. Lyle. How dared they suggest that dear old Plato was vicious! And so for Mrs. Lyle being frightened of him—she gave a short, contemptuous laugh.

In returning home she stumbled along in the shade of A, to the Fourth Form passage. Hilda, Mabel, and Fernie, sitting over a photograph album which lay open on the table, stood up to stare at the dim-crawled back.

"Hilda, what's that you saw?" asked Mabel.

"I'll tell you what's biting me," said Clara between her teeth. "Your sister's morning friends, Mr. and Mrs. Frisk, are in very alarming people, aren't they?" she asked bitterly.

"Well, what have they done?"

"They've plumped Frimrose," Clara said angrily. "They've made a complaint about Plato. They had the cheek to say that he's been annoying them, and I'm not to take him on Stone Island any more. Well, what do you think of that, the dog out?"

"Hilda and Mabel exchanged looks.

"Well, I'm awfully sorry about Plato, old thing," said Mabel sympathetically.

"Well, what?"

"After all, it is their island—naturally it's their dog—and Plato may be a bit over-protective, conceivably, isn't he?" Mabel asked, her cheeks reddening under Clara's indignant glare.

"You mean you're sticking up for them?" Clara demanded indignantly.

"Not exactly that, but I can see their point of view, you know."

For a moment Clara looked at the Form caption, as if she could hardly believe her ears. Then—

"I see," she said. "So you still think they can't do anything wrong! You can't see that they're handling this in perfect good faith—they've frightened off Plato, but because they're frightened of what he'll do on the island. Oh, but what's the good of talking. I'm surprised at you, Clara, being them, you'd the best give your little tin" she wiped a little lightly.

"Oh, Clara, you're making a mistake."

"Yes, and I'll jolly well prove it to you before I'm finished," roared Clara grimly.

It was probably in Study No. 1 in the Fourth Form passage, a lovely August day. It was Clara, Frimrose.

Clara's brow was creased in thought. Not word was it, by the light-headed, happy-go-lucky Tommy to give her

But what was it that he might do next? That was where Clara found herself stumped.

"But I'm going to find out what it is," she muttered to herself.

When Clara put an idea head in her mind, nothing anyone could say or do could stop it. She knew that Hilda, Mabel, always, or almost, considered that she was talking up the wrong road. But even Hilda seemed doubtful could not still get conviction from the young girl's stubborn mind.

And making her determination even more fixed was the thought of the stigma she Lyle had just gave Plato. A reputation some Plato's character was to Clara a million times less vain. Plato, above, admirable dog that he was, could do no wrong—at least, in Clara's eyes.

Plato must be cleared of that stain against his good character the way to



CLARA, surprised at her pet's return, raced towards him. Then suddenly she halted, pointing to him dramatically. In his mouth, Plato was gripping a lady's shoe! The young girl's eyes glared. Was it—a clue to the mystery?

up to mark them and various methods. But that she should do so on a lady's foot, knowing full well the quantity of the problem with which she grappled.

From outside, on the playing field, came the merry shrieks and laughter of girls at tennis and cricket. But Clara, if she heard, looked on.

Thoughts and literary best thoughts were swirling around the words on Stone Island that afternoon, the Lyles and their latest news were on their part which had involved her previous Plato.

The more Clara thought, the more convinced she became that there was some vital message for the Lyles bearing her pet from the island. What peculiar business, she heard Mr. Lyle's peculiar business, she could find out for sure. It was not her of Plato, but her of what he might discover.

clear it was to search the Lyle at whatever study business they were indulging in.

But when to start?

To Clara there was only one answer to that question.

Now!

Footwith the run, eyes slight with determination, she stepped to the cupboard, took out her glass and doctored it. From her desk she took a powerful pair of scissors.

Down the Fourth Form corridor she leaped, the door unlocked. The outer door, Big Hall, and so out into the bright evening sunshine. A glimmer of low white-ditch told her that it was now a quarter to six. Plenty of time before daylight, she decided, and strided purposefully to the gravel drive.

But, nearing the gate, she halted.

For, from the direction of the port came, came a familiar bark.

"That's her again!"

"Driver old Pige," the man cried, "the boat here! I'm going out and want to come with me. But be careful after what Frumpy said. Well, I'll just slip across and say good-night to her."

So across to the port's house the boat. Photo greeted her with merry joy.

Clark looked before the wire fence of the boat.

"Dear old darling!" she murmured. "How I hate going out and leaving you behind. But you must be a good dog and stay here. You," she said loudly, and shook her head, as if Photo said dependently back.

For a few moments longer she remained there, talking in low gut, just as if he were a child. Then, remembering the evening upon which she was released, she turned away, and, with a soft "Good-night, old darling!" hurried off, pulling to the gate of the port's house behind her.

Out of the island she hurried, along Fitzgerald Road, and towards Stone Island.

"RINGS BATTLE!"

Thump, thump!

Photo's strong white teeth gnawed and tapped at the door of his kennel in the port's house.

Every now and again he pained, gnawing through the wire fence of his kennel at the latch on the other side of the door. Yes, that latch was slipping a little. Hadn't he been's tugging at that door when he brought it forward?

In another ten minutes, provided no one came along and stopped him, Photo would be free of his kennel.

With increased strength Photo again attacked the door. Then, with a confident jerk, it flew open, almost precipitating Clark's head into the passageway outside.

On both sides of the passageway dogs looked curiously, but Photo had no time for them this evening.

There the creature he stared towards the big white door at the end. Up went his front legs, stretching against the panels, and soon against the door.

Photo had known that door was open. He'd known that his mistress hadn't shut it properly when she had dashed off. But the single reason that he hadn't tried the familiar trick of the latch falling into its socket.

Clark had not understood her pet's intelligence. Clark's his most un-foolishly was.

And now, with new glory in the ground, he curiously trailed his mistress. He, too, looked for Stone Island!

At least, so Clark loudly imagined.

For had he not the light been searched there, working in loose opposite through the powerful blow-downs she had brought with her. But not a sign of life or movement had she seen.

Clark admitted to herself that she was getting lonely.

She couldn't stay here much longer. She would, otherwise she would be left for another, and then she'd be trouble with a vengeance. Besides, it was getting dark now. According to the tree in daylight had been difficult enough, determining it in the darkness would be ten times more so.

Another ten minutes she gave herself. If nothing happened in that time she'd have to admit herself beaten-for tonight, at any rate.

The ten minutes passed, and another ten. By that time the evening shadows were lengthening fast, and the house opposite was hardly visible.

Then suddenly a light opened up in one of the rooms at the ground floor. Clark tapped and waited her moment.

There she then she saw Mrs. Rogers looking out. She saw Mrs. Lytle.

But their subsequent actions could not even remotely be called suspicious. Mrs. Lytle, walking to the window, drew out a cloth and began laying the table. Her husband walked behind in an apron, and very obediently polished on the window, he faintly to Clark's eye came the strain of work.

Clark's thoughts ran. This was perfectly ordinary. In her experience was she had come here with the idea that she would find mystery and strange things happening every on Stone Island or at the house opposite. But the sight showed of her visit was the sight of a perfectly peaceful domestic scene between the people she suspected.

Clark felt rather dazed.

"Oh, how I do distrust!"

And with one last look in the direction of Stone House she began to descend the tree. It was foolish, weak, but without mistaking she reached the ground.

Oh, well, there was nothing for it but to go back to Cliff House. Thank goodness she'd told nobody where she was going. At least, they wouldn't be watching her. At least, she'd be safe.

Rather disconcertingly she struck off through the trees, making for the spot on the other side of the little island where she had moved her boat. It was getting very dark in the trees now; several times she caught her foot on a protruding root and tripped.

By and then she reached the morning place. Clark's tongue was sticking out of her mouth then. She was a fool, she told herself.

As usual, she had not had food and thought afterwards. Fortunately, she realized now, to imagine that the Lytle would carry on any steady scheme if there was a steady scheme to break daylight, and especially during that particular half-hour up in which she had been looking up in the trees.

Clark's tongue felt like lightning brand! Now, she'd have to go to work in a far more quiet way if she wanted to find out the Lytle secret—provided they had a secret.

Oh, goodness, there she was again, standing where hitherto she had been so perfectly convenient.

She looked up to the bank now, looking for the place where she had moved her boat.

And there—

Her eyes opened wide. A gray came from between her lips.

"What was the boat?"

This was the right spot, wasn't it? This was where she had left it, taking

care to move it secretly to a tree-trunk?

There it grew high, some into the Lytle's room. Yes, that was the secret right enough. But, well, that would be interesting, was the morning rope with which she had covered the boat. And that rope, as she saw on closer examination, had been cut.

Somebody had deliberately cut the boat's rope, leaving her stranded on the island!

A name flashed instantly into the Lytle's mind.

The Lytle—she'd done that!

In spite of her precautions, they must have seen her ropes in the island, probably—and here she realized a truth—they had seen her people herself in the morning, had known all along that she was watching the house!

The Lytle's hands clanked at her sides as she realized how they must have been laughing at her. But now all her suspicions were returning in a flood—were magnified and more positive. The Lytle must have done this—there was nothing else to do it.

But in the excitement, rising above her thoughts, she saw another thought through a great dimming fog.

"My girls, aren't they returned, in stone?" She had been without a boat. How the dickens am I to get across to the mainland?"

SOMEONE AGAIN, AGAIN!

Clark, Lytle, and Mrs. Lytle, sitting in comfortable, and very quiet, grouped her way down the road towards Cliff House Island.

Water ran in little rivulets from her so she walked. It seemed to her about every time she put a foot to the ground, she delivered a little in the mud beneath that foot spring up.

The light of the lights of Cliff House were in sight, though, truth to tell, she was rather dreading her entry into the island. That it would prove pleasant she was only too sure. Girls did not walk into Cliff House, rising out as she was, without a battery of questions being fired at them.

Well, this was just one more score she'd got against Mr. and Mrs. Lytle.

Only one way of escape from Stone Island had presented itself to the married Mrs. Rogers. That had been to swim for it. And Clark, fearing she would be late for school, had not delayed in doing that.

Now she reached the gates of Cliff House, stepping through just as Pige, the parrot, was about to give them. She greeted her with astonishment and his enquiry as to his mistress's and his master's on the drive had into the school.

If Clark had cherished any faint hope of being able to slip up to the Observatory again, that hope was speedily dashed. For a positive one of those turned to regard her as she stepped into Big Hall.

"How do you do, Miss?" cried Louis Carroll. "Go, what ever's happened?"

"Clark, what have you been doing?" "A message, your honor," said Bruce Foster, his eyes twinkling in mischief.

"Oh, how?" stopped Clark anxiously.

"Right over her head!"

"But what the dickens have you been up to, old thing?"

Clark smiled.

"Oh, this is just your friends' idea of a joke."

"No, it's not."

"My friends? A joke?" she repeated. "What on earth are you talking about?"

"I'm talking," said Clark lightly, "about Mrs. and Mrs. Lytle. They did this—at least, it was their trick that I happened."

She stared dazedly at her.

When Photo Returned!



CLARA THRELTON was at it.

Clark Threlton was certainly not.

Very certainly the Lytle, of the Fourth House dashed her wrapped legs and passed around her.

Smoothly her was an expense of green today through which glided the shimmering surface of the River Boat. For there was now that she was the last and best of one of the spreading old streams that crossed the river.

It was a perfect party, but the rubles Tuesday gave her to head to that. For that party gave her a splendid view of Stone House on the other side of the river, while she herself remained hidden in the bank below.

"But I—I don't understand. What—"

Clara laughed mirthfully.

"They thought it would be delightfully funny to run my head against that fence and see how far it would go."

"Oh, yes! But what were you doing there?"

Clara passed, frowning a little.

"I went down," she said somewhat faintly, "to find out what they were up to."

Babe stood at her for a moment, suddenly grinned, and then burst into a peep of merry laughter.

Clara glared.

"What you can see on the funny side of it?" she snapped. "At the moment I was!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" pealed Babe, and the laughter, taken up by all sides, echoed through the hall.

Clara smiled.

"That's a good job," she said, with heavy sarcasm, "that we have someone here with a sense of humor!"

"Oh, Clara, you're silly old thing!" spluttered Babe. "You really are a piece. And—and did you discover any prisoners or hidden green junk or anything?"

"Only that your head had gone!" cried Babe, still grins having the best of it.

"Well didn't you pull at them when they got the best advantage?" inquired Janet Jordan, grinning.

"I—I didn't see them do it," confessed Clara.

Babe and Made exchanged amused glances.

"Well, in that case, how do you know it was the form captain's head?"

"Who else could it have been?" snapped Clara. "It's the best of me! I'll bet they would do it."

"Well," the word came in a gust of amusement from Babe. "Clara, why don't you get this silly, too out of your head?" she said, snatching Clara's arm.

"What are you saying? You are perfectly serious when you head-dive away, and you attribute them with some sinister motive for trying to measure you on the island?"

"But the sign was cut!" boomed Clara. "Oh, probably frayed!"

Clara glanced round her at the sea of throbbing faces.

"I don't care how much you laugh at me," she said, with a quiet indifference that caused Babe to glower at her sharply and for the first time to realize how desperately in earnest the Tumbler really was. "I don't care what you think!" repeated Clara's words defiantly.

"I know I'm right," Clara said, "because you are up to something, because I'm sure to find out what it is!"

"Oh, yes, but" interrupted her Beanie from across the hallway, "perhaps they're blushing, you know, like Clara."

"Oh, yes?" she said slowly. "Then, I'm going to change. Let—"

And then she started violently as an angry voice cut through the laughter.

"Clara, what is all this commotion about?" it was Miss Peterson. "How dare you—"

And then she, too, stopped, started in amazement. "Clara! What is my girl, you are making out! Goodness gracious, where on earth have you been?"

Clara reddened uncomfortably. Oh, goodness, this was the very crowd of her look, being caught by the head-

mistake! She fell into the arms, Miss Peterson, she declared.

"Then I think you'd better go upstairs and get those wet clothes off

immediately. Not just one moment, Clara, before you go." And Miss Peterson's voice sounded even more stern. "I have just received another complaint from Mr. and Mrs. Lohr. They say that once again your dog has been annoying them. Why I ask you, you deliberately flouted my strict prohibition that Pluto should remain in his kennel!"

Clara's jaw dropped.

"But—but, Miss Peterson, he is in his kennel! I took him there myself before I went out. He couldn't have been anywhere near Steve's island."

"Indeed? Then why have Mr. and Mrs. Lohr taken the trouble to telephone me and make this complaint?" asked the housekeeper coldly.

Clara's eyes glowered.

"Because they're trying to get Pluto into trouble," she said indignantly. "This proves that they're telling the absolute truth!"

"Clara, how dare you—!" began Miss Peterson, and then looked up indignantly at Sarah Hastings, who hurried into the hall. "Well, Sarah!" she asked.

"The telephone proved that a covert dog is in the house."

"The house dog's open," she commented, "and Clara's dog is not there."

"But—but he must be!" Clara cried desperately, an ashamed light springing into her eyes.

"I tell you he is not!" snapped Sarah.

Miss Peterson breathed deeply.

"Clara," she said, "you are trying me patience. As I told you before, I will not have these complaints about your dog. If you persist in disobeying my orders, I shall have no alternative but to insist that you take the dog away from the school altogether. Meanwhile, you will take a hundred dollars."

Now go and change immediately!"

Clara, now, angry, bewildered, and still filled with anxiety on behalf of her pet, turned and made her way up the stairs, leaving a trail of water behind her.

"A new name, Clara?"

"No, Babe."

"Mr. has? Where the deuce can he have got to?"

Clara's forehead shook her head.

"That's what I'd like to know, Babe," she said, a note of fear in her voice, "you—you don't think anything can have happened to him?"

Marjorie Hollman smiled reassuringly. "Of course not, old thing. Pluto can look after himself."

"But he's terribly fond of me. He'll be sure to get away like this before long. Oh, I'm frightened!" she blurted. It is a pathetic note as unlike the Tumbler that Babe felt a lump come into her throat.

"Now, Clara, don't be an old thing! Pluto's all right—just running around somewhere. Anyway, you know he won't go to Steve's island because of the dog's law."

Clara's jaw gave under.

"And they've probably done something to him," she said, in a hard voice. "But how could you see where, or even—? Babe, they wouldn't harm him, would they?"

Babe sighed. That too is Clara's humor! Happily in reason with the Tumbler what the love was concerned.

"Clara, you know very well they wouldn't," she said reproachfully.

"Look here, you get on with your prep! Pluto may be back now for

all we know. I'll go down and see." With a reassurance which she qualified the more, for the Tumbler, left alone in Study No. 7, could not work. Almost heavily with her hands, she stared uncomprehendingly at the paper before her. How could the crowd think of work when Pluto was missing!

Pluto—Pluto! Where was he? Oh, what would have happened to him!

Convinced as she was that the letter flayed Pluto, positive that they were playing some cunning, unexplained game, she abandoned to think of what might be her pet's fate at their hands.

What telephone call from Steve—had it been some message to convey their gratitude? Had they caught Pluto on Steve's island, and kept him prisoner!

That was the fear in her mind. That was the dread that was driving her frantic. Supposing Pluto—oh, oh! What! What! What—never seen back?

"Oh, Pluto, I should do if anything happened to you!"

The words were wrong from Clara's throat. She drew her books under, swung back the chair, and began pacing up and down the study. Babe was a long time. Why hadn't she come back!

Across to the door Clara went. Even as she reached it, however, Babe entered.

"Babe, is he—?"

"The window looked in a green. Babe was shaking her head, her pretty hair swayed.

"No sign of him, Clara. But don't worry, old thing."

"How can I help but worry?" cried Clara distractedly.

Again she passed the room. Babe, with a compassionate glance at the Tumbler, went on.

"Five minutes passed. Again Clara made an effort to walk down to Miss Hollman, dried, uncomprehending, unresponsive mistress, would expect it to be finished with evening. If it wasn't trouble!

The window to try to walk. Absently, and pitifully weeping!

The window here and Clara herself was hurrying down to her pet's home, a prey to desperate hopes, all of the instant she was in the hall.

A chorus of books greeted her. Dogs, shaking just as they were settling down for the night, leaped and whined in their kennels, clanking at the wire netting.

But she could not detect Pluto's bark. She would have recognized it in an instant. She reached his kennel, looked

at it, empty!

"Oh, Clara—Pluto!" muttered Clara, and now something entered to have happened to her heart, or would she die!

Back she went into the school, slowly, miserably.

Beattie had slipped out as she reached the Fourth Floor corridor. Clara was coming out of studies and the common-room. There was a general movement towards the stairs leading up to the hall.

Babe, Made, and Beanie stood waiting for their Tumbler whom.

"Not back yet, Clara?"

"No, Babe, I've got to do something," Clara gasped. "I simply must. I can't stay here doing nothing. I've got to go to look for her now!"

"But Clara, you can't! What will you do? Where can you go?"

"I don't know—I don't know! But I'll find him if I have to search all night!"

The words died in her throat. But duty she found. A host of school

rolled into her cheeks, her eyes flamed with wild excitement.

"The backing of a dog! What's back? That was Phlo!"

"He's come back!" shouted Clara. "He's come back!"

"And he's in the school!" Bala exclaimed. "Sounds as if he's down in the Hall!"

Clara was already half-way down the corridor.

"Phlo, old boy—"

After her pulled the string No. 4 chain.

"Oh, Phlo, Phlo!" shouted Clara. She'd reached the Hall. And there was Phlo, standing by the lobby door, his nose held close, looking back through the air as he saw his beloved mistress.

In great bounding leaps he came rushing towards her, had reached her, and had played two minutes before on her shoulder. But even as Clara staggered back a little under his weight, she was staring at him in wondrous amazement.

Here it was dripping wet. But it was not by ordinary accident that made the Tumbler come at him in such impetuous wonder.

It was the something Phlo had gripped between his teeth.

A shoe—a small, shiny one shoe!

Proof At Last!



CLARA THIRVLYN suddenly flinched. She felt a wave of excitement sweep over her.

"Phlo, where did you get it—where, old boy?"

Clearly she took the shoe from between her pet's teeth. Eagerly she examined it. Phlo, bright-eyed and quivering, jerked tongue, looking straight up at his mistress unblinkingly, trying in his doggy way to answer her queries, and obviously tremendously pleased with his part in the sensation he knew he had caused.

Clara's thoughts raced wildly. How did she ever thought crossed through her mind?

Where had Phlo found this shoe? Why had he brought it to her? Why—what—Oh, goodness, dozens and dozens of questions crowded to her in cloud-flying succession. "If only Phlo could talk, it'd be worth it!"

To reach long upon the finding of this shoe—intuitively Clara knew that.

But the shoe itself conveyed nothing to the wildly speculating Tumbler. Every inch of it she examined with trembling eagerness—the heel, the sole, the outside and the inside. And found nothing—absolutely nothing beyond the very ordinary details that it had been made by a well-known London firm, one case of approximate costliness.

"My boy! What do you fellows say Phlo has brought? What's he brought that shoe for?"

It was Bala who spoke, and she and Bala and Bala were staring at the shoe wonderingly.

"That's what I want to know," said Clara. "That's what!"

"Clara, what is your dog doing here? You mean it found you to be brought inside the school?"

The Tumbler jumped. Quickly she inspected the shoe looking first back at the spot round to see Miss Primrose eagerly hearing down upon the group.

"I'm sorry, Miss Primrose—"

"And goodness me, look at his dishevelled condition! The dog is astun-

ded. Clara, did you bring him into the school?" thundered the headmistress.

"Yes, Miss Primrose," Clara replied.

"I can see your dog's dirty paws all over the polished parquet!" Miss Primrose cut in angrily. "I am very annoyed with you, Clara!"

"I'm awfully sorry," the Tumbler said again. "But—but Phlo's just returned, Miss Primrose. He must have come looking for me, and got in through the lobby. Phlo's snout's been—been—been—"

"The headmistress, Miss Primrose—"

"Phlo has just returned, has he, Clara? I see! And in this disagreeable wet condition. Perhaps you will explain how it happened that you, Clara, were getting wet when I see you a shoe white ago!"

"I don't understand—"

stammered Clara.

Miss Primrose said her sharply. "It seems a remarkably unlikely chance that both you and your dog should be wet when you return to the school. You assured me that you did not allow Phlo out of the pet's house when I had strictly forbidden it. I know, Clara, said the headmistress sternly, "that you have not been telling me deliberate falsehoods."

Clara looked under Miss Primrose's scrutiny.

"Oh, never, Miss Primrose! Phlo didn't come out with me—did you, boy?"—glancing down quickly at her very clean and passive pet. "I—I don't know how he managed to get out of the pet's house. But he didn't have to be lying untruthfully, Miss Primrose, and I'm sure Phlo is awfully sorry," she said, pleading desperately. "Aren't you, Phlo?"

The question whined very softly.

Miss Primrose had to say. But her voice was still stern when she spoke.

"Very well. But I insist that you show the strictest regard for your dog, Clara, she said. "If I have any more complaints about him—from Mr. Lyke or anybody else—you will have to go away and mean them, Clara. Now take him to the pet's house, then hurry to your dormitory. Barbara, Mabel, Bessie—you will go immediately."

"Yes, Miss Primrose."

The headmistress turned away. The doors hurried to obey her. Off to the pet's house went Clara, Phlo trotting at her heels.

Some minutes later, up in the Fourth Form dormitory, she found Bala and Mabel sitting up in their beds and eagerly awaiting her return. The usual look of animated chatter before "lights-out" shined the long apartment.

"Clara, why didn't you warn Primrose to see that shoe?" asked Bala curiously.

"And I wonder where Phlo got it from?"

Clara, in the act of placing the shoe in her locker, grinned.

"Where did it come from Stone Island—"

from Stone Island?"

Bala looked quickly at her shoes.

"But how do you know that? Why are you so sure, old thing?"

"Oh, I just know! Anyway, it's pretty obvious. The Lyke placed up to make one of their little complaints that Phlo had been on the island, didn't she?"

Bala nodded.

"Yes! I'd forgotten that. But it's hardly evidence, of course. Phlo could have picked it up anywhere—"

"He got it from the lobby!" Clara passed to her undoing. Her bright eyes were glancing with an excited light.

"My hat, Bala, I told you there was something fishy going on there—"

Bala started, and there was a ripple of laughter.

"Shoot old detective Clara!" roared Clara's grandmother.

"You are awfully spiteful to the man!" chuckled Bala Gandy.

"Clara!" exclaimed Bala. "You can't mean you're still on that same track?"

"I am!"

"But—but—Oh, it's absurd!" protested Bala. "Clara, you guess, you're all wrong. Wrong about the Lyke, wrong about recognizing Thora's mother's key as if it were—"

"I tell you, I tell you," said Clara rebelliously. "And Phlo knows it, too! He found that shoe on the island and brought it back to me because it's a shoe!"

"A shoe to what, cheap?" grinned Bala.

"To solve the mystery!"

"What mystery?"

Clara hesitated, then said, "Oh, you won't be satisfied, will you?"

"I'm convinced that you're making something out of nothing," Bala said.

"What if Phlo did find the shoe on Stone Island—what does it prove?"

Clara remained silent and stared into her bed.

"What does it prove, Bala?" insisted Bala.

"I'll tell you to-morrow—after we've been to tea with your charming lady!"

The Form captain looked a little startled at that.

"Clara, if you're going to make trouble—"

"I don't make any trouble."

"Never mind you, you're going to do?"

"Never mind you, you're going to be convinced, Bala—"

"Look here, Clara," said Bala rather seriously. "I don't think you ought to come back up. You say you don't like Mr. and Mrs. Lyke—"

"I don't. That's why I'm coming."

"But don't—"

Clara started down for her room. "I'm coming, Bala! I've got an idea I want to try out. I tell you there's something fishy happening on Stone Island, and I'm going to go to the bottom of it all. Wrong, am I? A dollar, am I? You want and see. Good night, old thing! 'Night, Mabel!"

As if Clara did go to tea at Stone Island—well, after tea.

Bala thoughtfully looked steadily at the shoe, but Clara obstinately refused. Mr. and Mrs. Lyke had invited them all, and she was accepting the invitation.

So Clara went, looking very thoughtful, taking with her the shoe which Phlo had brought back to Cliff House the previous night.

It occurred to her shoe in a small attic, neat and garish, it was a curiosity at view about the Crown Jewels.

She and Bala were rather amused. Bala was serious, and not a little apprehensive.

"She knew the ways of her daughter, certainly, probably important looking shoe. And Clara, with a lot in her house was likely to do the most extraordinary things."

"Clara, she said gently, as the last remark of the CBE about Clara's mother the Landlady's of Stone Island, "you—"

"—you won't do anything silly, will you? Whatever your opinion is of the Lykes, remember that to their guest—"

Clara laughed.

"Don't you worry, Bala, old thing. I don't boggle."

Bala looked a sign of relief. The Tumbler's mood was far less.

And then the host was scrupling along—

side the stage, and Mr. and Mrs. Lyle came down the month, calmly drove to their home.

"I'm so glad you've come, my dear!" welcomed Mrs. Lyle, looking very proud and attractive in a smart salmon-pink dress.

And Mr. Lyle beamed down at them, his rather dark face all smiles.

"Hello, girls! How, let me give you a hand out of the hat. Another grand day, eh? Having some real success for a change. Careful, Clara—It is Clara, isn't it? I'll take that name—"

Edie crossed quickly. Oh, good, Clara was smiling!

"I can imagine all right, thank!" the Tumbler replied, and she studied the new and unexpected looking head and long position of the white-cane as she lunged limply on to the bank.

Mr. Lyle made a point of walking alongside her as they all made their way up to the house.

"I'm sorry we had to make these complaints to your husband about the tin," he said, giving Clara a look. "But the fact is that both Mrs. Lyle and I don't see it like dogs, you know. Mrs. Lyle especially. She was taken over by some kind of feeling, as it happened, and since then she has been rather nervous of them. I hope you understand?"

"Oh, perfectly," responded Clara. "You didn't get into trouble from your husband?"

"Nothing to speak of. Primmy only said I was to keep Phoebe at the school."

"And you will? I assure you I hate trying to make complaints."

"Orders are orders," said Clara solemnly.

She was watching the man, and a look of interest crossed to come into his eyes.

"Mrs. Lyle doesn't think all of Phoebe are tired with the stage work," she said quickly. "After all, my dog is liable to be victims if he isn't treated properly. There wouldn't harm a do, Mr. Lyle. He's won an award, and I've been offered lots of money for him. He's a wonderful old darling dog!" she finished proudly.

"Yes, yes, of course! I must admit he looked a grand chap. Ah, look, my dear, we were just talking about Clara's."

Mrs. Lyle, with Edie, Phoebe, and Bessie, had started across to join them.

"I was telling Mr. Lyle how proud I am of Phoebe," Clara broke in. "But he's rather inclined to be snappy sometimes."

"Yes?"

"Very snappy." Clara suddenly looked across the garden to her attractive neighbor, wondering why just a little apprehensively when was coming over. "So you know, Mrs. Lyle," Clara continued brightly, going to the man. "But when Phoebe comes to the school last night he brought—"

And, in the manner of a conquer bringing forth a victim from a trap, she very dramatically produced the white shoe.

Then, inwardly tripping with suppressed nervousness, Clara's gaze became riveted on the woman's face. She saw the tiny frown that contracted the muscles in Mrs. Lyle's forehead, saw the brows arch narrowly; heard the slightest catching in of her breath. And a second later she was smiling again.

And only Clara, by watching in truth, had seen how angry her friends had looked, not that at all, being far more concerned in watching the Tumbler.

"Well, I never!" exclaimed Mrs. Lyle lightly. "Did he really?"



"TRY one of my shoes, my dear," said Mrs. Lyle, smiling. Clara took the shoe with trembling hand and made to fit it on. Mrs. Lyle had taken eight into her trap.

"Oh—Clara's voice sounded rather surprised—but isn't it one of your shoes, Mrs. Lyle?"

The woman threw back her head and laughed heartily. "Good goodness me, no! Why, I—?" And then she stopped, catching a swift glance from her husband, who passed the tip of her tongue over her lip. "But just a minute!" she said suddenly. "May I look at it, Clara?"

"Of course."

Mrs. Lyle took the shoe, made a game of examining it, then again she looked at Clara.

"Why, how stupid of me! It is white. It's not that for me, I got some time ago; that was why I didn't recognize it immediately." She smiled across at her husband. "Just imagine, Charles, my shoe turning up after all this time! Thank you, Clara, for bringing it here. And thank Phoebe, too, for bringing it around a great while upon the Tumbler, taking the shoe with her into the house."

While Edie, Phoebe, and Bessie gazed admiringly.

"But of a snitch in the eye for old Clara," whispered Edie to her mother-in-law. "After making all that mystery about the shoe, she took it belongs in Mrs. Lyle, give it!" She gave a little shrug, glancing towards the Tumbler, with an "I told you!" look in her eye.

But Clara, strongly enough, was not looking shocked, as Edie expected her to; her Clara was quite happily smiling.

The Tumbler, indeed, was feeling very satisfied with the progress of events. She, for so good!

Now, at the opportune moment, she would get into operation the next part of her trap.

As it was just after seven o'clock she ran round to the gate, where she saw a couple of Brown Hens that she apparently recognized well.

"Oh, Mrs. Lyle," said Clara sharply. "I've been admiring your shoes all the afternoon. I'd love to have a pair like it myself. Those white kid are all the rage now, aren't they? I wonder—"

Her husband looked gratified.

"Perhaps you'd like to try mine on and see?" she offered. "Our feet look about the same size."

"Oh, Mrs. Lyle, may I really?"

"Of course."

And, slipping off one shoe, Mrs. Lyle handed it over to the eager Tumbler.

Clara took it, slipped it on; it fitted perfectly.

"Marvelous!" she exclaimed, handing it back. "I shall most certainly get a pair myself!"

But there was a queer note of constraint in her voice.

Inwardly Tumbler Clara was thrilling, she felt strongly excited; every nerve in her body tingled.

Next Clara's feet were had succeeded. Inwardly, she had smiled for that offer to try on Mrs. Lyle's shoe, and the woman had fallen into her trap beautifully.

Mrs. Lyle had lied. That shoe Phoebe had found was not her property—could not possibly be hers.

Mrs. Lyle's shoe fitted Clara—and the Tumbler was quite ready to admit that fact and wear on the large size.

But the white shoe had been put more than a dozen. How, then, could it have been Mrs. Lyle's?

To whom did the shoe really belong?

Curiously enough, there were no records at Brown House. Mrs. Lyle had

mentioned a silver; a friend might have left it there. But Clara dismissed those possibilities instantly.

"No. Why should Mrs. Lytle have had about the size of the diamonds around it were so beautiful?"

"Why—why—why?"

"And, as the rest of the party moved off to inspect the cavity, Clara turned behind, suddenly thinking an answer to her own question was answer which almost stared her.

"Oh goodness! Could it really be possible—could it be that there was actually someone—"

Clara drew a deep breath. All those questions which she had harbored against the Lytles were now crystallizing into stark reality.

Something peculiar was going on here—over in the island. There was a man—Snow Island was not merely home—the medicine man's; the gold man's; and that mystery involved a girl and a woman, the real owner of the black coin case.

But where was this unknown person? In the answer, in that question, lay the rest of the whole dark affair.

And into Clara's working mind there leapt the memory of that curious incident—how she saw certain men—Snow Island, the great afternoon when Floto had come knocking up with a message in his mouth. That message had said—

"They're keeping me here because I—"

No wonder Mr. Lytle had been so wildly frantic that she should see the light of that message.

Now these words took on a startling new significance.

Remember—the owner of the case—was kept here—yes, against her will!

"Oh, my only girl—my girl!" breathed Clara. "That's it! That's the girl's mystery—I'll make my life on it!"

"CLARA! Oh, where is the doller!" Clara," called Barbara Bostwick.

"Here, Ma, and Beale was really in on it. Ma and Mrs. Lytle were really in on it. They came to their head at the landing stage."

By Tomboy Clara Twetye was saying.

"Clara!"

For the third time Beale called, while Mr. and Mrs. Lytle exchanged glances.

"Coming!" called a shrill voice, and there came Clara, trampling into view in the direction of the sun lounge.

"Back up! We're waiting to go!"

"Sorry, old thing, but I forgot that!"

And Clara, coming down the lawn, held up her attachment.

"As long here they were back at Cliff House. Straight in her study under Clara."

With a note of satisfaction, she set that Maxwell and Janet Johnson were not there.

On in the table she hung the attachment, whirring it open—revealing the main case!

Beholdingly, Clara had searched by it, found it, and brought it back with her.

For Clara had come to a decision—irreversible decision.

Her fingers were already busy.

That could be the world's best—would go to Snow Island.

And Floto was waiting with her!

Together they would unravel the secret of the island. Together they would find and rescue the unknown prisoner—if prisoner there was on the island.

That there was, Clara herself had no doubt!

Her Pet to be Destroyed!



"QUIET, PLEASE!" breathed Clara Twetye. "Here."

From the girl's house at Cliff House distant came the click of a latch lifting and the creak of a door swinging back.

In the darkness a large black shape leaped out of its lair, bounded straight up to the doorway.

"Floto," drew," whispered Clara frostily, "casting an apprehensive eye around her, expecting at any moment to hear the shadow of the night broken by the din of breaking china."

But, apart from some faint, faint swiftness among the stars in the face of Kenneth, and a few eager whines, there was silence.

Clara Twetye breathed a sigh of relief. That position the dog knew her name, though she had taken a terrible risk in leaving the doorway unguarded—she was late at night—a risk which involved not only Kenneth, but also old Floto as well. If they were caught—

But they wouldn't be caught!

Her pet was but just leaped out from the dark cover. Only being out there in the black silhouette of the school was there a beam of light—a mirror late at work in her study.

Now, with her hand on Floto's collar—Floto he had noticed to be tricky and a little inclined to begin taking out of such an unusual loop—Clara looked down and saw the dog's head—his head in the gap in the ledge which led into Lane's room.

Over through the ledge, and peering her way towards the gate, she had seen Floto's head. Clara gave a sigh of relief. She'd got out of the school without mishap. Nobody had seen her leave. Nobody, she hoped, would see her return.

Now for Snow Island!

It was a long walk, but that did not worry the athletic Tomboy. It certainly did not worry Floto. Floto was enjoying himself.

Across Fitzwilde Common the Tomboy struck up past the Fitzwilde Boys' School, and on to the main road. Thinking her again, she did not look back. At a point of the road where she knew one or two boats were always moored.

Floto, who had been snoring contentedly hither and thither, suddenly awoke, came running to Clara's side, and gazed up at her impudently.

"A whale came into his throat. His was pointed up."

"Quiet, boy!" said Clara, but a little that she thought best.

Goodness, did Floto recognize where he was going? Was he not eager to be on the boat of that mystery?

Clara smiled, questioning her pet. Unconsciously, her fingers strayed into one of the pockets of her raincoat, closed upon the coin which she carried there.

There was work ahead for Floto, work which Clara, with supreme confidence in her pet, was sure he could handle. Her fingers would be busy upon Floto—upon his ability to get the secret of the case and pick up a trail that would lead her to the spot somewhere on Snow Island, where Clara was convinced the mysterious prisoner was concealed!

So engrossed in her thoughts was

Clara that she did not notice the dog at her side suddenly and did not see her own pet pick up. But she knew the breathing grew that came from his throat.

"Floto, what is it?" she began. Then, "Floto!" she shouted. "Floto, come here!"

But for some Floto did not obey. Floto, with agitated leaps, was bounding ahead.

Clara's face turned a little white. Goodness, what had suddenly come over Floto? What had he seen?

She broke into a run, eyes straining through the darkness, she followed in the wake of her pet.

Quite unconsciously Clara noted the fact that she was running straight at a barred gate. And then, from ahead, came a sudden shout.

"Get down, you brute! Keep back! Ah—what that!"

There came a dull thud. A great form, Floto, then a low, terrifying growl.

Clara's heart seemed to leap into her throat. She rushed on. "Floto—"

"Stop—stop—stop—Floto—"

"Floto, very loudly and Floto went to fly at that hateful figure before him! The man who, though his mistress did not know it, had given him a fearful whacking last night on Snow Island.

But Floto, gentle as he really was, marvelously trained by the Tomboy, would not attack, even in self-defense—unless given the word of command by his mistress.

And the man's arm swept upward and downward. Floto leapt his jump, leaping back out of the way of the blow which he knew was coming.

"You brute!" grunted the man. "I'll teach you a lesson you'll never forget. I'll break every bone in your body before I'm through with you."

His arm swept viciously forward. The side was striking through the air towards the dog. Then—

"Aah!"

A stream of pain came from the man's lip. For, in his determination to get the greatest possible blow into the blow, he had forgotten the barred wire fence behind him.

As his hand strayed through the air to a downward motion the sharp, cutting prong of the barbed wire caught it. Through the skin these points penetrated, tearing the flesh.

For a moment he stood there, his face going white in the night. Then suddenly he snuffed with anger.

"The—"

Then—

"Stop!" cried a voice. "Stop! If you hit that dog again—"

Enough on the man the long hair, striking his arm, or great strength in that moment that she saw a line round, and on he beheld his ragged-dotted hair.

"You!" he gazed. "You—"

For the man was Charles Lytle!

For a moment the two gazed at each other.

"How dare you strike my dog?"

Clara's voice was choked with anger.

"I'll kill the dog!" snarled the man.

"I'll let it be!" said Clara, her face white.

And before Clara's terrified eyes she thrust his injured hand from which the blood was now pouring.

"If you see that! He's bitten me—seriously attacked me—"

"That's a lie!" the Tomboy snarled.

"A lie, is it?" Charles Lytle's face was twisted. "Come now was the case made he had been that afternoon."

Came over all pretenses and posturing. When he came out in his first surprise. "You'll soon find out whether it's a lie or not. This time I shall not only complain to your headquarters, I shall complain"—he leaped at her—"to the police! I shall tell them the dog's a dangerous animal. I shall tell them that he's a public nuisance. I shall insist that he be destroyed!"

"Chas. fell back, but here again.

"No—no!" she cried. "You can't do that. It's not true. Pluto didn't bite you. He wouldn't bite anyone! His teeth broke into a splinter. Listen to me," she cried loudly. "Liberate! And, in the heat of emotion that settled inside her she leaped forward, shouting at him now. "You must listen to me!" she shouted, the tears pouring down her face.

But with a rough shove of his arm, he pushed her aside, and before she could regain her balance he strode off and vanished into the darkness.

"Oh, Pluto, Pluto—I couldn't bear that! I love you so, old chappie!" the pained, heartbreaking cry burst from the Altonian's mouth.

And Pluto snuggled up to her, as if he knew what was happening, as if he knew of the shadow that hung over his forehead, innocent head.

"You didn't bite him—did you, my dear?" Chris breathed into her ear's ear. "But he's my dog, too. He'll show them his head, and what will they think?"

Chris knew what people would think. They wouldn't think that kind of thing, that he was a savage, a maniac.

Altogether, wonderfully nervous was the Tumbler's faith and confidence in Pluto. What had really happened she had not seen. The man had struck Pluto; the Altonian had growled terribly; but Chas. was ready to swing with her life that Pluto had not attacked Charles Lyke.

Remember—Mind—the Tumbler as

have been dangerously, wildly, awfully disturbed!"

"The Tumbler quailed before the headmaster's anger.

"But, Miss Fritmore—"

"Silence, Clara! Mr. Lyke phoned me this morning. He is, apparently, in very great pain. He tells me he has those very bad spasms on the back of his head when your dog's teeth scratch him. According to his statement, Pluto savagely attacked him—"

"Miss Fritmore, it isn't true!" burst out the Tumbler. "Pluto wouldn't attack anybody—he wouldn't, I tell you! That man's lying—"

"Clara, silence!" Miss Fritmore's voice was icy. "You are not suggesting, I hope, that Mr. Lyke would deliberately inflict such wounds upon himself?"

"I don't know how he got them, but Pluto didn't do it!" cried Clara desperately.

But Miss Fritmore did not heed.



"I'm a friend—I'll protect you!" Clara shouted, tugging at the door. But at that moment footsteps echoed down the passage. The Lykes were coming in the house. In a few moments Clara would be too late!

BROWN, Brown!

That's what! The man in the military light glared at the windows of 2311 High School. Everything was quiet, still.

But wait! By the bridge overlooking Leno's field something moved—something which showed vaguely at first and then resolved into two black shapes. Chas. Tumbler and Pluto had returned.

But quite was Clara's highest delight: "You've arrived, Chas!"

Didn't mind the Tumbler—a something, quivering dread that drove from her air-farred head all thoughts save of what happened that night.

Miss Brown looked and as myopic had become forgotten—understood by the first part which threatened her beloved Pluto.

Chas. was already frantic with anxiety.

Would Charles Lyke, brute that he was, carry out his terrible threat? Would he complain, to the police? Would he insist that her pet must be destroyed?

Chas. shuddered—

shuddering she reached the post's base and left Chas. in his hands.

"And it's all my fault!" she murmured hoarsely. "I took you out, old dog, when I'd had notice to keep you here. I should have known better. Chump! Ah! Pluto! I'm more than that! But, Pluto, I'll stick by you. Whatever happens I'll stick by you, my precious darling! Nothing shall ever happen to you."

Pluto's soft tongue caressed her. He sank down in the straw. Chas. was gone.

"Good-night, my sweet!"

Pluto approved with a soft whimper. They both to the Fourth Floor dormitory. Chas. crept, reached it, without noise, and was quickly in bed.

And it took the long-travelled Tumbler approximately an hour to head by on a pillow that was moist with hot tears!

Shining tears.

And with it, first of all, came a consolation from Miss Fritmore.

The headmistress was angry—strongly angry. Her pale grey eyes flashed as the Tumbler introduced her.

"Clara," she said, "I am awfully sorry, as much as I can, for your utter disregard of my orders as I can be the terrible thing that has happened! You

"That has happened is entirely your responsibility, Clara," she went on. "I gave you strict instructions that the dog was to be left in the kennel for a week. In spite disregard for those orders, you took him out—once during the day, but you took him out at night as well. That I cannot forgive. Have you any explanation to offer for your self-responsible conduct?"

Miss Fritmore, the Tumbler shook her head. What explanation could she give? If she mentioned her suspicions about the Lykes and Clara's Altonian, it would only increase Miss Fritmore's anger.

"In that case," the headmistress continued coldly, "I am going to punish you severely. Clara is to be detained within bounds for the next month, and every half-hour I shall assign you a domestic task. As for the dog, what will happen when Mr. Lyke complains to the police, I do not know. I trust they will take a very serious view of such a matter. But in any case, I refuse to have the dog in the school any longer. You must make arrangements, Clara, to have him taken away. Now you may go."

But the Tumbler did not go. She was rooted to the spot with agonized horror.

So that awful man was carrying out his threat. He was complaining to the police—making that dreadful charge against dear, pretty old Phoe. Miss Frimrose had said that they would take a very serious view of the matter. That meant—A wave of horror swept through her. Oh, no, no! Not that—

"Miss Frimrose, you must listen!" she burst out, suddenly finding her voice. "Phoe didn't do it, I tell you! That man Lyle is frightened of her—she's got her left trying to get him into town—Lyle trying to—she have his children—Her eyes brayed on a sob. She hardly knew what she was saying now. She would tell Miss Frimrose anything—anything—she care for her—she care for Phoe. That—that man has got some power. There's something shady going on at Stone Island or at Stone House. Phoe knows all about it. He found something on the island the other day. That's why the man's so frightened of her—"

In other amazement Miss Frimrose had been listening to this wild outburst. Now her lips came together in a thin, straight line.

"Clara," she said brightly, "you must be out of your mind! The man you speak of—Lyle—what connection against Mr. Lyle's? Enough of this nonsense!"

The Tumbler's white hair went even more pulled. She gulped, then stumbled helplessly out of the study. Oh, Phoe—Phoe! What had she done?

Madly she scolded herself. What would the police do? A terrible fate awaited at her hands. What would she do?

Suddenly she stopped, stopped, stopped, laughing through the Tumbler's smiling head. Almost unconsciously she tossed her steps in the direction of the classroom.

But hush—what a mockery they were!

Lines appeared upon the Tumbler's face and hand. But she did not care. What could she think of Phoe?

Ground her, her Frimrose, having heard someone of what had happened in the kindergarten study, sent some sympathetic glances towards her. But Clara did not even see them.

Only one thought, one dread, was in her mind. Frimrose would they do to her?

Sometimes she beginning to stir deep within the Tumbler's eyes. That old lightning of love was coming once more to the surface. Phoe should not suffer! She would not allow anyone to touch her.

He loved her, trusted her, and she was not going to let him down. Nobody should take him away from her!

Up went her head, her mouth firm, determined.

Her gaze went to the window, as if through it she were trying to read her thoughts to Phoe in the "pet" house. And then she looked at her wrist. Her eyes widened. A silver stream came to her lips.

Yes, dripping through the silver veins was a shimmering police constable. And with him the Frimrose tertiary organ!

She stared and stared, and then shrieked miserably.

A policeman—of the sort!

Then she turned—

Clara's pallid lips slowly moved to a hoarse whisper.

"Oh, my goodness—"

What else could it mean, but that order had been given for Phoe to be destroyed!

The Only Chance!



FOR A moment Clara Tumbler sat stock-still, a cold, a cold, a cold shivering, her hands, her hair was broken. What she did was broken. What she did was broken!

Then she turned to her feet.

"Clara?" called the constabulary Miss Frimrose. "Oh, what are you doing?" But Clara, who at the first word, tugged nervously at the handle. The door swung open, revealed right back against the wall, and announced, clattering with a most appalling bang.

There the policeman charged the Tumbler. Out of the school and across the lawn towards the "pet" house, with one hand reaching at those two figures smothering up from the gate.

So they'd come to take Phoe, had they? These thoughts they were going to destroy her—destroy beautiful old Phoe, that dear, wonderful pet of hers whom she loved so much!

But she wouldn't let them. Never, never!

They shouldn't take her away—because they would not be able to find her! She was going to hide Phoe—hide her somewhere in the house they could never lay hands on her!

That was the desperate plan racing through her mind. Even in those few fleeting seconds Clara had it all worked out.

Now she'd reached the "pet" house, now she'd got Phoe out of his hands.

"Not a sound, Phoe!" she breathed. Phoe, down to back his mistress, his head and jaw stretched tight at the morning, here she came. But indignantly his large brown eyes regarded her.

Holding him by the collar, Clara led him out, crawling back at the policeman and the vet passed into the school, then on across the quadrangle and round to the chapter. Down the metal-covered steps she took her pet, and into the study.

Phoe sniffed at the study air.

"Come on, boy!" whispered Clara.

Leading out from the study was an underground passage, which led to a tiny room, which was situated behind the wall of Clara's own study in the Fourth Form passage. But even more completely fortunate for Clara was the fact that this room could also be reached from Study No. 1 itself. By means of a narrow hole in the wall, the entrance into the tiny secret room could be gained.

And it was to this tiny secret room that Clara got took her pet. It was in this room that she was going to hide Phoe.

"You wonder what's happening, don't you, Phoe? You wonder—You wonder—You don't see that nasty dark man, do you? But it's for your own good, and it won't be long because I've got to prove that you didn't attack that man Lyle last night. Once I've proved that they can't say you're dangerous, they won't have any grounds for wanting to destroy you. And I will prove it, Phoe—I will!"

Phoe's tail swept the air, as if he understood every word his mistress was saying.

"Now, now, old boy, you must stay here. You'll be a very good old doggie, won't you? You mustn't make a sound, you know. And I'll come and see you as often as I can, and bring you some nice bones. But, boy! And remember—no a sound!"

She stretched his ears, kissed his soft, fuzzy head. Then she turned to the wall, found the secret knob.

Back among a section of the wall, revealing Study No. 7 beyond.

Phoe, his nose twitching eagerly, whined a little as he saw his mistress slip through the opening.

"Quiet, Phoe!" breathed Clara softly.

Obviously Phoe became silent. The wall swung to, leaving him in darkness. In Study No. 7 Clara breathed a sigh of relief.

She went out into the Fourth Form passage, and almost unawares into Dublin Park-terrace, who was passing.

"Clara, I was just going to the classroom to bring you," said the head girl.

"Miss Frimrose wants to see you in her study." She eyed the Tumbler indignantly. "There's a policeman and the Frimrose with him too!"

"I know!" interrupted Clara bitterly. She went along to Miss Frimrose's study. The headmistress looked grave, but her voice was rather gentle in the words.

"These gentlemen have come to take away your dog, Clara."

"The policeman stopped forward." "There's some man, Mr. Lyle of Stone-Island that your dog is a danger to the public. Your dog strongly attacked him last night."

"He didn't—he didn't?"

"We think otherwise," said the policeman gravely. "He produced a form from his pocket. 'I have here a magistrate's order saying that your dog must be destroyed. Where is he?'"

Clara whimpered aloud.

Miss Frimrose frowned.

"You will find him in the 'pet' house, I'm sure," she said.

"He's not there now, Miss Frimrose," Clara said quickly.

"Clara, what do you mean?"

Definitely Clara gasped at the headmistress.

"I mean, Miss Frimrose, that I have hidden Phoe. She's not there, and he didn't attack Mr. Lyle."

Miss Frimrose's lip set.

"Clara, you will tell us immediately where you have hidden Phoe."

"I'm sorry—"

"Clara—"

"The Tumbler stood there, silent and motionless.

"Phoe—oh, Phoe, you're being very foolish," said the constable. "You're defying the law. There'll be serious trouble for you if you don't tell me where you've hidden the animal."

"Yes, come, young lady," get in the net. "I know how you must be feeling, and I sympathize with you; but these things happen, and you must accept them. Where is the dog?"

But Clara remained silent.

"Very well, I shall search for him," said the constable.

"Frimrose if you can tell me of any likely places the girl may have hidden her dog."

The headmistress nodded.

"I will come with you, constable," she said, "and I will give orders to my people to assist in the search."

They went out. Clara followed them slowly.

Oh, Great Faith, what was she to do now? She had hidden Phoe, but where was she to hide the girl?

She couldn't hide him, for ever; that came sooner to her thinking now. And once he was spotted—

She'd got to do something—something to prove that Phoe was not the dangerous dog they took him to be. But what—what?

And that—

Only one thing could be done. Discover the secret of Stone Island.

Denial the Lytle—saw that they had been lying about Plato.

"You're doing me ill—the only way. But how?"

Down the passage rushed Clara. Lenses were still over; girls were coming out of the stair-rooms.

"Babe!" cried Clara, as she saw the Form captain.

"Clara, what's been happening? Why did you rush out of the classroom like that?"

"Just Study No. 7 Clara, which the moment Form captain faced her disappeared."

"Babe!" she said, "you're simply got to listen to me. Plato's very life is at stake! A policeman and the Firebrand got here once to take him away. They're going to leave poor old Plato destitute."

"Listen, Babe! Listen!"

And Clara pressed out her story, telling Babe how she had hidden Plato, how she would use only one way to save him.

"But I need your help, Babe," Clara rushed on. "She eyed her dress, extracted a pin. "You must help me, Babe—you help!"

"But what can I do?"

"Come to Myrtle House with me. Get the Lytle out of the place on any pretext or other, so that Plato and I can come to school. Tomorrow's a day in and out—remember. Tomorrow's a precious chance—the island professor's presence there; but I've got that sheet, girl or no sheet. But I've got that sheet, and if Plato can only peek up the wall and find his— Babe, my girl, you'll help me!"

And Babe, impressed by Clara's frenzied imploring, agreed, rushed started in spirit of haste.

"Oh, Babe, I'll help you, Clara!"

"Oh, Babe, thank goodness! You're a darling. But come on—we must hurry!"

"And how they did!

"A" **AS** CLARA, Babe?"

"Nobody in sight at the moment, Clara. But hurry!"

"You had! Come on, Plato!"

And Clara emerged from the crypt, leading Plato by the collar in very eager and pleasant mood.

They followed the window when she made it take him away from the neighbourhood of darkness in the second room behind Study No. 7.

With Clara and Babe on either side of the window, trying to shield him from view so best they could, they all three hurried across to the ledge separating Cliff House from Lane's field.

In the school and in the grounds of the school grounds were awaiting the policeman and the Firebrand out to search for the missing Form No. 7.

On the other side of the wall, and behind, one of them might spot him; and they were all in a state of nervousness.

"Done it!" she breathed. "And now, Babe, tell speed ahead!"

But, now for Clara's opinion.

From a little window at the top of the stack toward the long-way platform, she saw Clara watching them for the dog, saw Clara and Babe and Plato, and she hurried swiftly down the Firebrand's ledge.

They were some distance away by then, but the policeman recognized Clara, and sight of an American dog with her tail up all he wanted to know.

Girls of Lane, he glimpsed hastily through the crevices of the stack walls, repeated his observations to the top, then hurried swiftly in pursuit of the disappearing trio.

THEMOMENT WITH assistance, Clara watched from her place of concealment by the ledge watching Steve Brown.

Behind her remained Plato, Babe was talking to Mr. and Mrs. Lytle now. Would she succeed? Would she be successful in having the couple see?

She was almost choked for joy.

Mr. and Mrs. Lytle were striding down the garden, talking animatedly to Babe. They reached the river bank, were walking away.

"She's done it!" breathed Clara. "Now's my chance. Come on, Plato! It's time for you to do your bloodstained work!"

Quickly she slipped down to the ledge, Plato bounding off her side. Into the house Clara went. From the pocket of her blouse she took out the satin slip.

At sight of it Plato whined eagerly. Clara held it to his nose.

"Track it down, old boy!" she whispered into his ear.

Down went the Firebrand's head to the floor. He snuffed down the passage he went on alone. Clara watching him closely, again and again holding the dog to his nose.

Then—

Suddenly Plato stopped. A short, excited bark came from his throat.

"What is it, boy?" asked Clara.

Plato barked again, and came to the door, snuffing down the passage, to come to another stop by a door.

"Search, search! Work his pores at the woodwork."

In a moment Clara had flung open the door, saw beyond a light of stars leading downwards.

But Plato was already racing down there, barking more and more excitedly.

Clara thought as she followed him.

"My hat, this is the collar! Good boy, Plato! Track it down, old chaps!"

He barked and snuffing. Then he hesitatingly crossed the stone floor of the cellar, and stopped at another door.

Beyond it more steps, narrower this time, but again steps that led downwards.

Clara brought out a torch, switched it on.

And down the steps she and Plato clustered, to reach a passage that stretched ahead of them into the darkness.

"Sweet Scott!" exclaimed Clara. "We must be under ground level now! He must be under ground level now! He must be under ground level now!"

On the other side of the grille, just below it, was gently lapping water. The River! There!

This passage had led her right under the river, and now over them was Steve Brown's island. The passage at this point, now parallel with the bank of the island, ran to that bank had been fixed this way.

Looking through it, Clara could see the shimmering surface of the river. On the opposite bank was Steve Brown's island.

And then Clara caught in her breath.

Running up to the house were Mr. and Mrs. Lytle. Babe was there, too. The dog, being here at the ground, then Babe, being here at the ground, then the dog and her husband rushed into the

house, slammed the door in Babe's face as, quickly packing herself up, she rushed about them.

"My hat, they've found me! They have! It's a trick!" Clara panted. "They've come down here!"

She turned. From further along the passage, Plato was barking frantically. Steve Brown after him, pulled up dead on the ground her way barred by a stout oak door.

Plato was scratching frantically at the door. Then, amazingly, came a sound from the other side.

"Who's that? Help—help! I'm a prisoner here! Let me out!"

A girl's voice.

"I'm a friend!" shouted back Clara, in a voice that cracked with excitement. "I'm here to rescue you—"

She hung forward at the door, tapped at the handle. But it was locked.

"How can I get the door open?"

Clara, then, swung round with a group of friends.

Footsteps were coming down the passage. Mr. and Mrs. Lytle came padding up, their faces distorted with rage.

"Open her!" shouted the man.

"She's locked out—"

"Keep back!" cried Clara. "Plato—here, boy! Keep back, or I'll—"

Plato had kept to his mistress's side. His fierce glare softened and revealed in it.

Mr. Lytle swung back with a cry of fear, but with standing beside him helplessly.

"Help—help!" came a shout from the other side of the door.

Clara stood there, panting, her back to the door.

She saw that she was in a tight corner, was in fact—on the third of triumph snuffed and barked through her.

She discovered the secret of Steve Brown's island!

All her suspicions of the Lytle had been justified right up to the very life. There was a prisoner here. Steve Brown, too in rescue her!

And then a ray of hope came to Clara.

Babe!

Where was Babe? What was she doing? Babe must know how that something was going in Steve Brown's island.

If only she came—

"Look, we've got to do something!" pleaded Clara, Lytle. "That man's locked her—"

Plato's teeth were bared. There he crouched on ground beside his beloved mistress, ready to defend her, ready to be in quivering fury to the attack at her slightest word of command.

The man's eyes were sparkling frantically at the dog. The last of desperation flashed in them.

And then—

Down the passage came racing footsteps. Two figures appeared—Babe, accompanied by a policeman. "The man outside who had followed the dog, and Plato from Cliff House!"

(Continued from page 15.)

secretly. "These visitors must have kidnapped her, or something. Make them open the door—they've got the key."

"What?" exclaimed the policeman. He started on Lyle. "Open that door, or I'll come in!"

Like a trapped rat, the man glared at the policeman. His wife had collapsed against the wall in a sobbing heap. But they knew they were losing. The game was up. As Clara called Phoebe aside, Lyle produced a key and unlocked the door.

A girl stumbled out into the passage—a child of about twelve, her pretty face haggard and white with suffering. She looked directly toward Clara before her mother's arms caught her in a sobbing clasp.

Mabel, even as she held a watchful eye on Mrs. Lyle, stared in amazement. But so did the constable. His face showed incredulous wonder.

"Who?" he exclaimed. "Who are you? I seem to know your face!"

"The child's mother."

"The Mrs. Lyle?"

"Clara Dewsbury," yelled the policeman, and made a sudden grab at Clara's arm. "The missing person there's been all this time about!"

"These—these—nasty people have been keeping me here. I've been locked in that horrible room for days. Please take me back to my mother, please!"

The words reached off. With a lightning glance, the child looked deep in Clara's eyes.

Two more days.

Mr. and Mrs. Lyle were still at the Southend Police Station—and Mabel's presence there had the form of Clara's trial, not substantially, they would pay the penalty for their sin.

While Clara, Mabel, and Phoebe had returned to Cliff House School.

Clara was in the headmistress' study now, telling Miss Fyfe how an astounding story.

Mabel was recounting that same story to an amazed and excited Fourth Form.

In every detail the account of Stone Island had become unfolded. Now the Lyles had kidnapped pretty, twelve-year-old Gloria Dewsbury, how they had imprisoned her in that underground room on the island while they had attempted to extort money from Clara's very wealthy and illustrious parents.

But now, thanks to Clara, Gloria was safe and sound.

And Phoebe?

Phoebe's life, too, was saved.

The unmaking of the Lyles, of course, had a very different complexion on things as far as he was concerned. And it was little Gloria who was able to tell the police how Charles Lyle had really committed the injury to his hand. For she had heard the man tell his wife that the locked wire had been released.

The Police's reputation was vindicated. Mr. Phoebe became a hero, just as his mistress had become a heroine!

Undoubtedly, it was Phoebe's intelligence that had helped his mistress to solve the secret of the island. Phoebe had been the first, indeed, to discover that there was a secret at all.

They had been on the morning of Mabel's last visit to Stone Island, when Phoebe got had rambled into the wood, had walked and barked, and returned with the mysterious message.

For Phoebe then had seen Gloria—seen her through a grille which had been

the only means of ventilation and light to her underground prison. How to get a grille in that passage leading down to the island, it had been laid in the length of the river. In his intelligence, Phoebe had realized something was wrong, had tried to scratch away the grille, had taken the message which Gloria had thrown out to him.

And again it was Phoebe who had discovered the kidnapped girl's main door had obviously taken a look in his mistress's giving her the valuable clue which had eventually brought about the exposure of the kidnappers.

"Good old Phoebe!" cheered the Fourth Form.

"And good old Clara!"

In an excited, animated crowd the Fourth had gathered in the headmistress' passage to await the Fourth Form.

"My hat, how she is!" yelled Miss Bostwick.

"Give her three cheers!" cheered Miss Cunningham.

Clara came out of the headmistress' study. In a moment she was surrounded.

Mabel, Mabel, and Mabel pushed their way forward.

"We owe you an apology, Clara," laughed the Fourth captain.

Clara grinned.

"My apology? What ever for?"

"For making you a duffer and all sorts of other funny names! You were right and we were wrong about the Lyles.

Clara. We heartily apologize, and cross your hearts!"

"Oh, ho, ho!"

"Right!" shouted Clara. "Apology, then. I want to thank you for the way you came to the rescue! If you hadn't brought that gaily polished stick—"

"Then we'd all be quids!" suggested Mabel.

Clara laughingly agreed.

"And now," she said, "let's all go down to see old Phoebe! I want to give him a big hug and a big kiss—and a big present."

So down to the post-house all the Fourth Form tramped.

And there was Phoebe, all agog with joy, and very proud of himself at having such a large audience to congratulate him upon his triumph. And there Clara did not miss the excitement but her and the big kiss—and the big present.

From the pocket of his blazer she took out a brown paper parcel. She unwrapped it.

"A reward from a very good mistress to her very clever and darling old doggie!" she said.

Phoebe had wagged frantically.

And, placing his forepaw on Clara's shoulder, he solemnly took his present—the biggest present Miss Clara had been able to buy!

and so was Mabel's story.

Dead of night. Barbara Roberts lifts a warning finger.

"Ssh!" she whispers. Her companions tense, hands tighten on pillows, faces are set—grim as sentinels. The Fourth are on the war-path. Very soon they'll reach the Fifth Form dormitory, and then they'll show those rascals who's the lazier Form!

But—the late party suddenly halts, strikes with amazement, mumbled with shock. It has come face to face with—

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HILDA
RICHARDS

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Who is it? Why is it roaming Cliff House by night? Nobody can answer that problem—not even Mabel Lynn, who, through the activities of that strange messenger, finds herself condemned by the headmistress, and finally,—under the shadow of espionage.

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THE MADCAP REMAINS LOYAL!

By
MARJORIE STANTON



FOR NEW REASONS.
JACK LINTON, Georgetown attorney and

POLLY LINTON, the mother of Morcov School girls, is accused of abducting a man. He took refuge in the

BETTY BARREN, Polly's first cousin came at Morcov, where he made Polly's mother see the error of her ways. He is Jack's "double."

Morcov Meeting

"I've lost him!"
That, first breakfast, Polly Linton suddenly came to the window of the open apartment house, at least two miles from Morcov School.

Only a few moments ago she had been engaged in conversing the other day her brother's double.

Her leaving her keys and walking across the street at last, she had expected to find him off, but his steps had been too light. She reached the abandoned road along which he had been walking in a dazed stupor just a few minutes before he vanished.

"Damn! this damned!" Oh, what a shame! There he goes—out of sight like a ghost now!

A dip in the abandoned road hid him from her, and next moment her feet were upon the ground, because her head had dropped dejectedly.

A better effort no girl could have made at the time was painstakingly trying to find him. Two miles, an eight, and she found him in the same dazed condition.

That that breathless spirit seems across ground to reach a far away portion of the road, where it sweeps round in a wide curve, her feet had been in vain. She'd lost him.

What was she likely to back another chance of confronting the fellow, to find out exactly who he was?

At last, giving one heavy sigh after another, she that she had lost her brother back, Polly turned to dawdle away in the direction of her over-embellished room.

And, it must be true— Oh, with a kick he could turn up in Morcov at Morcov from either end, miles away! And the worst of it is, I'm going to be for it now, when I get back. Shouldn't wonder if mother has turned up, she's expected. And I'll be simply sold to go and park, to go home with her!"

Starting thought, that! This was the time when Jack looked her over. What would he do, really doing, if she were no longer able to help him?

"Well, I'll never stick such a neck-piece from London to Morcov. I ought to be whole time, it does! How can Jack go on looking at that way? And if he's forced to come out of looking, then he'll also get out long! His wheel won't have him back. We'll both be at home and good-bye then to the hope of getting her assistance. We'll never meet here but that double of her that never stops."

And here her mind was shocked in its woody thoughts as abruptly as if she had been dealt a shaggy blow.

A warning "Be!" had been suddenly blazed at her, from close at hand, then a guard—"Polly!"

JACK LINTON IN HIDING! POLLY LINTON IN REVOLT!

And that means—turned for everyone at Morcov, especially Betty Barren & Co.

In the wheeled road, struck to a standstill by surprise, her eyes glancing towards a nearby group of girls, she prickly stalks were moving steadily in some way across creeping out from their path of cover.

Jack?

It was her brother again, facing her for a second time this fearful day. Less than ten minutes ago there had been her sister's interview with him at the lonely empty house on the coast, Barnard's Polly. Now to see him—and why!

Deafened out of that world of things, because man's-parting was his own, his eyes!

"Oh, Jack, how is the wind, couldn't you stay—where I left you?"

"You could see with me you doing out, but you're asked, with a greeting, out of hand, "aren't you going to school today, Polly?" I'm so surprised! You should be—"

"I know I should. But just now I see your double at the school. I dashed

out to try to do, well, really him, but—oh, Jack I look him! I did to good, why?"

"I can believe you," he said, under his breath, "but I saw the fellow first!"

"You did?"

"Yes. From an upper window at Barnard's Polly. I was keeping a lookout, in case of people coming up night in search of me. I saw a chap like you, in the road, going Morcov way. He was not you. I might have guessed him to be a Georgetown fellow—Dave, or some of my other pals, and this way or some other means to get by. But the fellow wasn't wearing Georgetown clothes. I think it was his not being in school, but that made me suddenly wonder if he was—the very thing I want to collect!"

"And you did so good, either?"

"Would I be lying?" Jack gladly answered. "No, I see him. The fellow came back by a different road. I was going to wait for him on one road, and suddenly I saw him taking along the other. That was I wanted, Polly!"

"So do have the returned back, Jack?"

"That about about when you get back to the school presently? I don't see you being looked up for this, Polly."

"Oh, never mind about me!" She was not going to tell him about the expected that it meant having to go home with her straight away. "Don't know, Jack—but my mother's mind about for long!"

"That we mean's," he grumpy agreed. "I must slip back to the Polly."

"Then, to see I—I'm not able to see you again now," she replied on. "Remembering to this about that fellow. Remembering to keep on bringing him over to Morcov, another thing, I'm positive the George never knew all about him. They're friendly with him and her people. He has a name, I know, and that's how Fay and Eliza happen to know him."

Jack was talking to all this with eager ears.

"That's Polly," he said quickly. "What's her name? From Barnard's Polly I might be able to do some useful watching out for him when he

taken to Moscow. I'll send him one of these lines!"

"If only you can stay in hiding," was Polly's rapid rejoinder. "I might be able to work things from Moscow, able to work things from Moscow."

"Instead of which, resignation for you. I can see it coming. I tell you!"

"No. Get that line right out of your head," Polly suddenly insisted.

For, just as suddenly, her mind was made up. Moscow should never find her home! She would run away first, joining Jack in hiding. She'd make it known to dad and mother, by means of a note left behind for them, after the hiding, that there was a good reason, the best in the world.

"Take it from me, Jack, you won't have to find me, but you will."

"But, my dear old girl—"

"Oh, I am not going to say any more!"

For did she, concerning her desperate mother. That remained a secret, kept from him even. He and she whispered together for a few minutes longer, then parted, Jack stealing off across the moor to repair the shelter of their common walls, while Polly, supporting her robe, padded back to Moscow School in a mood of no surrender!

Betty Will Take the Glass

TOWARDS her school, Fern opened Betty Barton typed at the door of the headmistress' private room for the second time since afternoon school.

"Oh away, Betty! I can't see you now!" That had been Mrs. Somersfeld's cry a quarter of an hour ago. "Come back later!"

Ah, but what a difference it was to meet, this coming back even fifteen minutes later!

Polly, having returned from her hiding place of Jack's studio, had been ordered to the headmistress' study the moment she returned. There, as the class would guess, a party had some more have taken place, but surprisingly enough when Mrs. Linton had driven off, a few minutes ago, Polly had not been with her.

Betty & Co., watching from their study window, had made one of that. But Polly had not come to them from Mrs. Somersfeld's study. Where, was she at this moment? What was she up to now? Betty was puzzled at the various Ferns' replies.

"Yes, Betty, I can attend to you now," the headmistress said, with an air of wanting to be as cordial as ever, in spite of a most trying day. "I'm sorry, but so you probably know, I've had Mrs. Linton and Polly with me."

"It's about Polly that I've come to you, Mrs. Somersfeld," Betty said.

"She's not being—being reported, is she?"

"I had quite made up my mind, Betty, that Polly should be expelled, but when I realized what were her mother and anxiety it would be for her parents, I decided to give her one more chance. She understands. It is absolutely her last chance. She heard her own mother tell me not to breathe a word of it if anything fresh comes. She will go by the first possible train."

Betty's face became radiant.

"Then Polly will be back amongst us girls at once, Mrs. Somersfeld! She'll be up, up in Study No. 22 in time for tea!"

"No! Polly is now in the old detention-room. I fancy my father to return to that place, putting her under lock

and key! But she would give me understanding to which by my three getting under and—"

Resistance to say the rest caused Miss Somersfeld to pause for a long moment.

"And on Betty, what I am going to do in this. I am going to give you, my sympathies to Polly, for her to sleep three days more for the present. By day, she will attend school, and go late meals with you others, but I cannot leave her as large, as it were, in the school. I personally will have to keep an eye on her."

"Yes, Mrs. Somersfeld, I'll be responsible for Polly," was Betty's desperate

offer. "Only let us have her back in Study No. 22, and I will!"

"No, Betty—no! The mood she is in—more reckless than ever we have known her to be—"

And yes, Mrs. Somersfeld, if only you'll let me go, I'll stick to her like hot iron shavings—"

"I know what it will mean, Betty, my having to be angry with you as well in the end! Your sympathies are with Polly, of course they are!"

"But I am a Fern captain, and after all, I do, as a rule, think of the school, don't I?" was Betty's earnest plea.

"Mrs. Somersfeld, will you do it on the understanding that if Polly does anything such that I ought to have reported—then I lose the captaincy?"

"Yes, Mrs. Somersfeld—yes!"

"It is a special offer that does you great credit, Betty. You go away for Polly, to that extent! If I place her in your special charge, and you fail me—you resign the captaincy!"

"Yes, Mrs. Somersfeld—yes!"

"Very well, she can be with you from eight in the morning and I will—then I shall arrange to have a key made to my dressing-room about Polly having my dressing-room for the night. Let her leave, Betty, and it may have a big deterring influence upon her that you have become agreeable to her past behaviour. The key is in the detention-room door, as I wouldn't come with you."

"Yes, Mrs. Somersfeld—thanky!"

And Betty, with looking back to smile so gratefully, and being in such a hurry to get outside the room, very nearly fell over a chair. She could hear, in fancy, the jubilation cries of Polly's other chums, when she came into their midst again.

Along a ground floor passage opened the passage, to which she slipped outside a door where, painted transparent—

"Detention Room—No. 22—No. 22—many long ago, never to be repeated. It was a gloomy room, with barred windows, belonging to a far worse age."

Exactly Betty turned back the next day in its long-drawn lock. Then, finding the door wide round, she laughed to a Polly Linton who was looking towards her doorway, her face as blue as thunder.

"Come on out of there, Polly darling!"

"What?" Betty yawned in amazement. "Betty, I—I thought it was only one of the punishments, bringing me in!"

"Study No. 22—that's where you're going to have tea, Polly!" Betty told her gently.

"You're crazy! The work here—"

"No, you're not! You'd try to be about the School House, Polly, and then to go out to the garden. Being punished! What nonsense! I'll be wonderful for you from this month onwards—except by night. It's a bargain, Polly, between me and Mrs. S. If I see you when I should be keeping hold of you—then I lose the captaincy."

Polly, pointing towards the door, stepped back. She gasped and she

"Oh—oh. Oh, Betty, why did you do it? Why did you go and tell me like that? You know I'm promising not to break and again, if I want to. I'd rather stick here, I would! Oh, dear!"

And Polly stamped a foot, chuckled

"Thank away!" the captain, thinking up, at the same time, saying for Betty that, by the way, she was to dash together—to Study No. 22!

For once, however, Polly was to be

hurry to get to that intercolled shade of

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Happiness. Her every step was an unwilling one. And when in the end, exhausted, she reached the long, narrow window, she greeted her mother upon the scene as being quite justified for—

"If you want to cheer anybody, cheer Betty," she waiting company was advised. "I can't be in bed that I'm not on my feet, Madam, but becoming accessible for me!"

"You really can't expect to have a monopoly of all the goodness," remarked Madam, "the last, when I see do something quite insane pretty soon now, I shall have to vent my conviction with the G's."

"No, no," stilled Madam. "Fakin, what is digging, I am distressed! You have been playing truant from classes all day. Polly—and will you see me unappreciated! So, I think I shall go out walking, get fresh air on my own, with a prayer of good!"

"You'd better," Polly quietly warned. "That's why I am so familiar with Betty here! I don't want any of you getting mixed up in this business. It isn't as though it were nearly paid!"

"I propose," cried Madam, "to see for Polly unless the very worst Jack is hidden. There is heaven!"

"Oh, he, he,"—vain hands about aprons.

"But, Polly," Miss Willoughby seriously pleaded, as they sat down to table, "I'm home on my legs in no worse afternoon. Now, wouldn't that be a nice dinner for us to—work, leave?"

"No," Polly snapped. "You can all shut up, for I'm not in the dinner!"

"As a matter of fact," Betty said gently, "I haven't said a word, but I think I know where Jack is hiding. A very good place, too, because he has the silver spoons. Even if she knows as sure, it should be quite possible, but I don't know. You run the game, but I would do it well in the game by the way, or you can talk it to a single water-bell in the attic, or behind a tank, or— Oh, boys of 'em!"

"That sounds all right!" You too, having commented, with Polly and started at Madam. "Where is the wonderful hiding-place, then, Betty?"

"The best hiding-place, Madam! Polly, get—like and here on the spot!" Then, as Polly's light went back and she closed up tight, Betty changed to a lamentation. "Oh, he! He, he, he! He's lovely! I was only making a very, very, bright face!"

"Harmony," Polly! When I gazed around of the stairs. "Oh, of course! I should, you know!" Betty warned, pointing to the closed door.

"That was for helping Polly to let all the team, boy!"

"The photo Polly can go to Bernard's Polly. I won't let Jack!" was all Polly could say distinctly.

And then a shrewd one had her face. An hour and a half later, she came down the stairs with eyes for being in order to lead a hand. But the companion to avoid herself of each willing old man's went, she left to be content.

She implied to much by tapping into a green ribbon, from which she did not remove even when Betty, suddenly, had changed to wear Madam. Polly, of course, had been slowly to think about, while the conversation slipped from hands to cracks, and then in returning and the work led, and other topics before.

That group-photograph in the possession of the largest store!

Polly was thinking about it very despatchingly when Madam and she to a general. And a certain number, she to do the next best thing—try to trace him by means of that photograph.

He was in the group, and Polly's mere



POLLY was passing a clump of bushes when a warning "ho!" brought her to a halt, forcing round. Her eyes lit up as she saw a perch among ferns hiding. "Jack!" she cried. "My fugitive brother!"

of the picture had left her with the belief that it was the enlargement of a "snap" taken at the ball in summer. There was a certain likeness in the background, and one might be able to recognize the house as being in the neighborhood.

How low to get that all-important look at the picture! It was no more a case of peeping into the drawer just under a pile they were all the morning. The object would merely be well examined upon the mantelpiece. For a certainty, they had got it away soon.

A midnight creeping down to the study—that would have been the thing that next-day again—look was water garden to sleep every night in Miss Stensfield's dressing-room. No stealing away from there, when a world might go through Miss Stensfield's own

"Content!" Polly mentally repeated. The crew, some of her things scattered about. Two or three were all in Bernard's on their bicycles. Others were going to get some tennis. Madam, as usual, gratified in the hall-room game.

"After all, what do you do, Polly?" was Betty's first inquiry. It looked really that they had got to be together. "How about music?"

"But Polly did not answer. Not because of sickness, but because, as she stood staring out of the study window, she was absorbed over some long-drawn picture at two Madam's picture, resembling her the day before, looking very different of one girl's. Following and she felt sure that it was the same and her own dress.

"Thanks!" Polly called, turning round at last. "I don't mind, Betty. But there's something I want to do first. It won't be so late, you previously sleep at the spot."

"How odd!" Betty felt bound to ask, with a good smile as he led by his own feelings. "The picture!"

"Now look here," Polly blew up. "You don't suppose I'm going to look at again, what it would mean your

losing the picture! You've got me, Betty. I'm as ready and to you as if you had seen it before. If the money going to see you the picture, never fear!"

"Don't I know it, dear? And doesn't it make me feel for you all the more, Polly—your own, coming, darling!" Betty explained, earnestly, standing close to her room. "But I did it for the last, Polly. We couldn't have any more left, even from us. Besides," she whispered, "I don't want to see what you'd do for what I've done, and you'll be the better."

It was like Betty to go away quickly after saying this, leaving the window to look into Polly's room. And for a full minute Polly sat staring very reflective. There certainly she went out into the corridor, looked carefully at the found it quite deserted, and slipped half-way down it to the lowest drawer under Madam's wardrobe and Polly was in the room, with the door safely closed behind her.

Now! Just as she had expected, the photograph in its damaged frame was no longer upon the mantelpiece. It had been put away. Where?

At first she searched in safest places, such as under cushions, any tray standing upon the mantelpiece of the room, etc. But she did not find the photograph, and in the end, despairing every further, she pursued the quest more desperately.

"I mean—I must get hold of it!" was her state of mind. "One night of it now, and Jack's troubles and mine may be over in a few days! You've that doubt of his, and all the rest must follow."

But she still did not find the photograph. She looked under drawers three times, and in the end she was forced to give up and searched. And that drawer she could not open, because the door had been locked.

She stood, for perhaps some longer than she realized, staring tragically at the locked drawer. It was there, it was somewhere at all in the study.

Oh a sudden, her name was being called down the corridor, from the

stain and, by mistake you had come running up from below.

"Folly! I want you, Folly! Are you in Study No. 121? Here, quick!" It was Betty, greatly excited about something.

Folly ran out into the corridor, and saw her classmate's letters going up in response at her having come away from the study and Eddie's study.

"Have you been having a talk with those two girls, Folly?"

"No. They're away, as it happens! I can't explain," Folly explained. "What were you wanting me for, Betty?"

"A phone call that I had to take, a minute ago," the captain said evasively. "From your mother, in Barncombe. We have to go and see her there, at once!"

Telephone Trick!

POLLY was sure the call to greet her mother with amazement. "Mother coming up from Barncombe?" she gasped in astonishment.

"Yes, I don't know if it's something all at once, about Jack, but she's in the hall."

"You mean—the police have got him, perhaps?"

"Keep calm, dear. All I know is, I was invited in to take the call. Your mother and she knew that Miss Bonserfield would have gone up, and so would I get somebody to give me permission to come along with you. I've seen Miss Harlow, and it's O.K. So we'd best get away at once!"

Folly answered that by starting to run to the stairs. Betty held her after she did and Betty watched, and within five minutes they were well beyond the Museum gateway, pushing hard for the train.

"I don't know!" Folly presently explained, in a still puzzled tone. "Mother was going home via Grosvenor," she said. "I suppose she went Barncombe way to get to Jack's school. But what's happened her in Barncombe?"

"It may be only a sudden idea of hers to give you a jolly good talking, away from Harlow and Miss Bonserfield," was Betty's reassuring suggestion.

"How did her voice sound, Betty?"

"Oh, just as usual! Quiet and nice. Anyway," the captain added a hesitating explanation, "we'll soon be there, then. We've half-way now."

But Folly, glancing along at a speed which kept her head low near the handrails, perceived a heavy figure. It had been only of her, she was thinking, to ask what mother's voice sounded like. Mother would speak gently, never mind what the truth about had been.

"After all, Folly, we've been told to find your mother at the Grosvenor—and at the police station."

"That's not true!" She wouldn't get up to meet her at the police station. Only, if they have caught her—Oh, dear! Folly pulled, as a sleep-grip mounted under her shoulders. "There goes my back tyre! Ugh!"

Although there were the two of them to avoid the policeman, by means of a "cut" with which Betty's bicycle was equipped, it meant a fifteen-minute delay. Being on again, they could go on faster than they had been riding before. Never yet had they got down from their positions to avoid identification in front of the Grosvenor's striped windows, than they did this evening.

And, after all, Folly's mother was not waiting for them.

Her car was to be seen nowhere in the square and High Street. They were into the Grosvenor and inquired. No, there had been no lady answering that description, waiting at one of the downstairs lodges.

"Gosh, this is awful!" Folly raged, not so the policeman again, with her equally bewildered shrug. "You say she was going to expect us at my school—and now she's twenty-four! If she'd checked it in, longer we would, I could understand. But she hasn't been waiting for us at all!"

"Perhaps something dropped up just as she was going into the Grosvenor?"

"Oh, I don't know! I get all worked up, thinking it must be something about Jack. I mean this happens, to keep me in suspense! What do we do now, Betty? What do we do?"

"Why, wait, of course!"

"Oh, waiting—waiting about! All right," Folly heavily sighed. "And then go back and have jump to tackle!"

"Let's go in and have an ice, for the sake of a bit. Betty, nothing suggested. "And we might get some ice for Study No. 121 while we're about it."

So they did that, coming out of the laboratory a good half-hour later, with reinforced evidence to hang upon the handrails. Mrs. Linton had still not turned up. Some other Misses girls, out and about in the term, had seen nothing of her, they said, when they stopped for a word with the waiting party.

They were still waiting, keeping a sharp lookout when suddenly a heavy car drove in to the bank, just where they were standing.

It stopped with the heaviest only a few feet from their bicycles, which were leaning against a lamp-post, and down to the pavement stepped—Miss Bonserfield.

Betty and Polly, although astonished, were not a bit surprised. They quickly left the two ladies, who were waiting to ask them how and why they came to be there. And it was quite all right, they had only to explain!

"You know, Betty, I didn't give Folly permission to go about with me beyond tonight," Miss Bonserfield began, after striving up to them.

"Mrs. Linton went up," Betty answered, "asking me to accompany Folly to the train. I was in an extraordinary, and then Folly said I went to meet Mrs. Linton, and she was at the Grosvenor. But she hasn't turned up. Miss Bonserfield looked only at Betty.

"At what time did the call come through?"

"Oh, I would be about half-past five," Miss, the paragonist, looked me to from the bank courts.

Betty came with sudden assurance they seemed to be directed with "correct"—it is impossible! I was at Grosvenor School between five and six, and Mrs. Linton was there at six, and I was together, talking with the Misses's with Mrs. Linton did not ring up Harlow, Betty."

"But there is Miss at the school, to prove that Folly's mother did ring up!" was Betty's forcible protest.

"That may be so. I am not doubting that somebody telephoned Harlow; but I am sure that some one would be at all, and that I had been a rather an awful place—that is obvious. And when she saw I to explain consisted of a last year, Betty!"

"No," Betty shook her head. "Nothing of the sort," Debbie, Polly, she was going dead! "I have nothing about it and I was called to the phone."

"That, I am afraid, I cannot believe, Betty. I have found you outside this shop, where obviously you have been making purchases. It seems strange that you should be at Folly's mother, still in hiding in the night hours, supposing I had not come by in my car! Presumably you would have been going back to Harlow, and I have not the slightest doubt but that somewhere on your way back you would have left those things for the lad at some agreed upon spot."

"Gosh, the Folly, stamped again."

"It isn't in connection with all that has been happening today," Miss Bonserfield looked. "And so, give me those purchases of yours!"

The reinforced evidence, helping with itself, brought at the Grosvenor's corner, came off the handrails of both bicycles. Miss Bonserfield, having received them, took them to her car and showed them upon a seat.

"Now take your bicycles to the tobacconist's yard," she commanded.

It was a surprising thing for Harlow girls to "lock" their machines in the tobacconist's yard, as Betty and Polly took those bicycles into the yard, they subconsciously each other, but they did not speak. Betty could tell that Folly was waiting to ring, nonchalantly, however she, Betty, was "catching it."

It is obvious they returned to the High Street's pavement.

"Now get in!" Miss Bonserfield said, pointing them to the car. "You are going back with me. And to mention, Folly Linton, for the first time since this, you go home! No more of it! And you, Betty Harlow, you will await the Form captain to night!"

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