

"THE FEUD THEIR PETS STARTED!"

Dramatic LONG COMPLETE
Cliff House story inside.

THE SCHOOLGIRL

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EVERY 2^D SATURDAY

Incorporating
"SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN"



AMUSING THE PATIENT!

And everyone hoped that this clever little act would bring two old friends together again.

(See this week's story of
Barbara Redfern & Co.)

Magnificent LONG COMPLETE story of Barbara Redfern & Co.



Too Anxious for Her Pet?



"**F**ETCH it, Brutus! Bring it, boy!" cried Barbara Redfern, and threw the ball down the woodland glade.

Woof-woof! barked her golden retriever pet, as he went streaking joyfully in quest of the bouncing ball.

And after Brutus scampered another furry shape—a little chap whose stumpy legs worked furiously as he endeavoured to keep up with his bigger pal.

"Good old Ting!" shouted plump Bessie Bunter excitedly. "Bib-beat him to it, you know!"

But Ting-a-Ling, Bessie's adored and clever Pekingese pet, was a good dozen yards behind when Brutus, slithering wildly on all four legs to stop himself going past the ball, made an eager snap at it with his gleaming teeth.

"Bring it, boy!" called blue-eyed Babs again.

And triumphantly Brutus brought it to his beloved mistress, warding off Ting's yapping challenges to make him drop the ball.

Fondly Babs and Bessie stroked their pets. While golden-haired Mabel Lynn, the third member of the party, looked on smilingly.

"Goodness, how they're enjoying themselves!" she laughed.

And so, for that matter, were the three chums of Study No. 4 of the Fourth Form at Cliff House School.

For it was Wednesday afternoon—a half-holiday—and Babs & Co., taking

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advantage of an unexpectedly warm burst of February sunshine, had decided to give their pets—and themselves—a brisk walk through Friardale Woods.

"Of course they are, bless them!" Babs said gaily. "But where," she added, glancing behind her, "are those Study No. 7 chumps? We seem to have lost them—"

Which was Babs' impolite, if chummy way of referring to Clara Trevlyn and Janet Jordan.

"Hallo, here comes Pluto!" remarked

"Well, of all the cheek!" she exclaimed. "There's Janet getting Topsy to do his tricks and she didn't call us back to watch! But look—oh, isn't he clever?" Babs finished, admiringly.

For, strutting towards Janet, was a little brown and white dog. Along on his stumpy hind legs he solemnly strutted—and cleverly and delicately balanced on his nose was a large rubber ball.

"Marvellous!" applauded Clara Trevlyn enthusiastically. "Bravo,

Tomboy Clara Trevlyn of the Fourth Form loved her pet Alsatian, and thought him the most wonderful dog in the world. Janet Jordan, Clara's study-mate and chum, felt exactly the same way about Topsy, the clever little dog from her father's circus. And yet it was their very love and admiration for their pets that now came between the two friends.

Mabs, as at that moment a handsome Alsatian came bounding up towards them, ears beautifully erect, pink tongue lolling, his coat glistening in the sunshine.

Pluto it was, the pride of Tomboy Clara's heart.

"Bib-better stroll back and see what they're doing," suggested plump Bessie.

Laughingly, Babs nodded. They turned and wandered back down the path. And then, a moment or two later, catching sight of Clara and Janet, Babs pretended to be indignant.

Topsy! My hat, Janet," she added, turning to her friend, "he's certainly a marvel!"

"Yes, isn't he?" Janet Jordan's olive cheeks were radiantly aglow with the most terrific pride. "But that's only one of his easy ones—" And then she broke off with a little gasp of alarm. "Pluto, be careful!" she cried.

But Pluto, in his sudden excitement, was not looking out. For Pluto, having just come up with Babs, Mabs, and Bessie, had spotted the large rubber ball which Topsy, having completed his trick, had dropped to the ground.

Pluto made a playful, pouncing dive at that ball. Which was unfortunate for little Topsy, who happened to be standing right in his path.

Before Janet could scoop him out of the way, Topsy received a broadside shove from the big Alsatian that sent him flying.

It was quite a harmless shove in all truth—playful Pluto had a habit of thoughtlessly treating smaller dogs than himself with scant respect. But Topsy was unused to the Alsatian's burly ways.

Surprised rather than hurt, he sat up and pathetically gave vent to a series of wailing little yaps.

In a moment Janet had rushed anxiously forward, picking up her dog tenderly in her arms, and pushing Pluto aside.

"Oh, Topsy! Poor little Topsy, then! Did clumsy old Pluto hurt you?" she cried concernedly.

But Clara, making a grab at Pluto's collar, only laughed merrily.

"He's not hurt," she scoffed, rubbing Topsy's furry head in that boisterous way of hers which Pluto loved.

"Clara, don't!" cried Janet, as Topsy yelped again.

"Oh, sorry!" grinned Clara. "But the little imp's only putting it on! Put him down on the ground, Janet, and let him give old Pluto one back."

"No!" Clara saw that Janet, in her concern for little Topsy, was upset. She looked sternly at Pluto.

"Say you're sorry to Janet for bowling over little Topsy," she commanded.

Pluto looked up, his large eyes anxious, his tail slowly waving. Then, with a soft whine, he made to raise himself and plant his two big forepaws on Janet's shoulders.

But quickly Janet drew back, as though fearful that the Alsatian's claws might touch her precious Topsy.

"No; down, Pluto!" she said, her voice still rather cross. "And you mustn't be so rough. Topsy doesn't like it!"

"Oh, Janet, don't push Pluto away like that!" A hurt look came into Clara's grey eyes suddenly. "After all, he was only trying to say how sorry he is."

Janet flushed.

"Oh, I—I know. Sorry, Clara," she said contritely now. "There, good boy, Pluto!" And she patted the Alsatian's head, for she had always had a great admiration for her chum's handsome pet, and really loved him almost as much as Clara herself did. "But Topsy's such a little fellow, you know—"

"Well, so was Gyp," put in Clara, "and you never minded him playing with Pluto—now, did you?"

For a moment Janet's eyes softened at mention of Gyp. Gyp, of course, was her very own beloved little Pomeranian pet, but at the moment Gyp was staying with an aunt of hers—and how she had missed him!

"Yes; but Gyp was different," Janet replied. "He knew Pluto and his ways. And—and I'm so anxious that Topsy shouldn't be hurt. He's not really mine, as you know, Clara. Topsy's most frightfully valuable—aren't you, little black-nose?" she added, caressing Topsy's face against her own cheek.

Valuable Topsy certainly was. He was, indeed, one of the star turns in the famous travelling circus owned by Janet's father. Topsy, with his repertoire of astoundingly clever tricks, was one of the most popular acts ever to appear in the sawdust ring.

Now, for a week or two, he had been given into Janet's charge; and Janet, knowing that Topsy was worth a small fortune to her father, felt her

responsibility keenly. Which was, perhaps, a reason why, quite unknowingly, she was inclined to be just a little bit over-careful with him. Babs & Co had noticed it once or twice before.

But they could understand her concern and anxiety for Topsy's safe being; and now Clara suddenly laughed. "O.K., Janet!" she smiled, squeezing her chum's arm. "Yes; you must be frightfully worried about Topsy. All right, we'll have to tell Pluto to be more of a gentleman. Hear that, you old blunderbuss?" she added, ruffling her beloved pet's long ears. "A little less of the rough stuff in future, my lad."

Pluto wagged his tail, woofed—and promptly went bounding away to investigate a rabbit trail that Brutus and Ting-a-Ling had found.

Clara watched him affectionately. Janet, a tiny, anxious frown still puckering her brow, stroked Topsy.

Barbara Redfern gave a hearty sigh of relief. With Mabs and Bessie, Babs had been a silent and somewhat uncomfortable witness of that little scene between Janet and Clara. For a few moments Babs had almost feared that the two friends of Study No. 7 were going to quarrel. Clara was so frightfully touchy about her adored Pluto—and so, too, evidently, was Janet about Topsy!

Babs, like the young diplomat that she was—and she needed to be that, as captain of the Fourth Form and Junior

By

HILDA RICHARDS

Illustrated by T. LAIDLER.

School at Cliff House—hastened to create a diversion.

"And now," she laughed gaily, "I think it's about time we turned back for Cliff House—and tea! Who says tea?"

Bessie Bunter's eyes immediately gleamed.

"I dud-do! Oh, rur-rather, Babs! Jolly good idea!" said the plump one, promptly. "I sus-say, did you get those muffins from the tuckshop, Mabs?"

"I did," smiled Mabel Lynn.

"Ripping! I'll tut-toast them while you and Babs get the table laid, you know," said Bessie, her eyes sparkling hungrily.

So back along the woodland path they all strolled, Clara whistling the dogs. Up they came racing, and Babs merrily threw the ball.

Away streaked Pluto, and Brutus, and Ting.

Topsy, still in Janet's arms, squirmed excitedly, plainly asking to be allowed to join in the frolic.

For a moment Janet hesitated, but then, holding him firmly, snapped on his leash before putting him to the ground.

Babs looked a little surprised.

"Oh, I say, Janet, aren't you going to let him run loose?" she asked. "It'll do him good."

Janet shook her head.

"No; I—I don't think I'd better," she said. "I—I'd rather not take any risks with him, Babs."

And then she flushed as she saw Clara looking at her.

"You mean Pluto?" Clara asked quietly.

"Er—yes."

Just for a moment Clara looked

offended. There was a hurt expression in her eyes. Loving Pluto as she did, convinced that he was absolutely the most perfect dog she simply could not understand how anyone could cast even the slightest reflection against him.

But then, remembering Janet's responsibility, the sunny smile came back to her lips.

"Oh, Janet, you chump!" she exclaimed. "Now, don't spoil Topsy's outing for him. Look here, Pluto will be all right; I'll keep my eye on him. Now, come on, old thing. Take Topsy off that lead. Here, I'll do it for you and—"

"No, Clara—please!" And quickly Janet stretched out her hand as the Tomboy bent down to unfasten the clasp. "Please, don't! Topsy will be safer with me."

Clara straightened up, flushing a little, throwing a comically resigned look at Babs, Mabs, and Bessie.

She did not see the unhappy look that came into Janet's eyes. If Clara found it a little difficult to appreciate that any blame could be attached to Pluto, Janet was wishing with all her heart that her Tomboy chum would realise just how imperative it was that Topsy should run no risks of being injured.

Topsy was small; he was tough, true, but being bowled over suddenly might injure one of his little legs.

And what would her father say then? A silence fell over the Fourth Form juniors as they wended their way back towards Cliff House.

And then suddenly there was an exclamation from Janet.

"Bother!" she muttered.

Clara, who was just in front of her, turned.

"Hallo, what's the matter?"

"My shoelace—it's come undone," Janet said. "I say, hold Topsy's lead for me while I do it up."

"Right-ho!" grinned Clara, who had quickly lost that vague sense of irritation she had felt a minute or two before.

She took the lead, while Janet stooped.

Farther on down the path Babs Mabs, and Bessie were having a fine old game with the dogs. Babs had just thrown the ball, and Pluto and Brutus and Ting were streaking after it.

Clara watched, grinning cheerfully. Good old Pluto! He'd beaten the others to it. He'd got the ball—and then she chuckled.

Her Alsatian pet suddenly dropped the ball and went shooting deeper into the wood. He had obviously just struck the scent of a rabbit.

Clara quite forgot Topsy in that moment. She was holding the lead firmly, as she thought—not as firmly, of course, as when she had Pluto in leash. But then, Pluto was as strong as a young lion, and Topsy, after all, was only a small fellow.

But next moment Clara gave a gasp of alarm.

Topsy, at her feet, gave a sudden jerk. Eyes wide with interest, he had been watching the other dogs, a soft whine in his throat, eager to be with them and joining in the fun.

Yap, yap! And excitedly he leapt forward.

The lead ran swiftly through Clara's fingers. Desperately she tried to stay its progress, but too late.

The lead was trailing on the ground, and Topsy was scampering away as fast as his little legs would take him.

"Topsy, come back!" shouted Clara. "Janet!"

Janet jerked up as if she had been shot.

"Clara—Clara, what have you done?" she cried. "Oh goodness! Topsy! Topsy! Come here, Topsy!" she shouted.

But Topsy, free, meant to stay free. Through the undergrowth he flew, pelting after Pluto.

"Clara! Oh, Clara, you did that on purpose!" cried Janet wildly. "You wanted him to run loose!"

The Tomboy stiffened as she ran alongside Janet.

"Janet, that's not true—"

"It is! It is! You think you've been clever!"

"Janet, it was an accident, I tell you."

"Topsy!" shouted Janet desperately.

"Janet, you must believe me!" Clara said, almost angrily.

"You let him go on purpose—you did!" Janet panted, hardly realising what she was saying in her anxiety. "Oh, Clara, if Topsy gets lost I—I'll never forgive you!"

Clara bit her lip. Anger had flushed her face, but it vanished as she saw the distress in Janet's eyes.

"He won't get lost!" she said fiercely. "We'll soon find him!"

But Topsy had vanished among the trees now. Together all five girls plucked on in the direction he had taken.

"Pluto!" shouted Clara at the top of her voice. "Pluto! Here, boy! You watch," she added to Janet. "Topsy will come bowling back with Pluto, as safe as houses!"

But Clara was a bad prophet. Pluto, obedient to his mistress' command, appeared among the undergrowth, came trotting up to her. Brutus followed close at his heels; then Ting.

But no Topsy came.

They shouted; they scoured among the trees. Still there was no sign of Topsy.

For half an hour the chums continued the search. All in vain. Topsy had gone off somewhere in these woods, but Topsy did not come back.

Wildly Janet swung round on Clara Trevlyn.

"This is all your fault!" she accused. "Oh, it is—is! You know it is, Clara! You thought it was funny to let him go after what I'd said—"

"Janet! Janet, old thing, you mustn't say that!" Clara said, striving to keep her voice calm.

"I do say it!" cried Janet passionately. "You let him go deliberately. And now look what's happened! But you don't care! This is your idea of a joke. Oh, how you must be laughing to yourself! You're enjoying this—"

"Janet!"

But Janet didn't care what she said now. Anger and anxiety for Topsy had overmastered her. For the moment she forgot what splendid chums she and Clara had always been during their terms together at Cliff House.

"Oh, don't try to pretend! It doesn't matter to you what's happened to Topsy!" she rushed on fiercely. "You don't care—"

But now Clara was stung. Now the Tomboy's quick, impulsive temper bubbled up.

"Janet, you're being unfair!" she cried. "You're calling me a liar, and I won't stand that from anyone—not even you, Janet. I'm most dreadfully sorry Topsy got away, but I tell you it was an accident—"

"Look here, you two!" It was Babs who hastily stepped between the two girls. "Don't be silly, arguing like this. And, Janet, don't go jumping to conclusions, old thing. Why should

Topsy be lost? He knows his way back to Cliff House. I expect he's run straight home there," she went on soothingly. "We'll find him waiting for us by the gates. Now, come on; let's hurry back."

But Babs' optimism was not justified. Reaching Cliff House, there was no sign of Topsy awaiting them. Nor was Topsy in the Pets' House; nor had anyone seen him.

Only too dismayingly clear now the truth had to be faced. Topsy was missing.

Janet Jordan, standing by the gate that led into the pets' enclosure, seemed as a girl stunned, as sickening realisation forced itself upon her.

Her father had left Topsy in her charge, and she had failed him. Topsy had been her responsibility, and now that he was missing she must take the blame, even though another girl, her own dearest chum, was really the cause of it all.

In those moments of panic-stricken despair Janet was convinced that Clara had acted deliberately, and bitter was the look she turned upon the Tomboy, while Clara, standing beside her, seeing the misery in Janet's eyes, felt her angry resentment at the accusation her chum had made suddenly vanish. Impulsively she laid a hand on her chum's shoulder.

"Janet, I'm awfully sorry this has happened!"

But in a flash Janet had contemptuously swept that arm away. Furiiously she faced the Tomboy.

"Oh, don't dare touch me!" she burst out, with passionate vehemence. "It's too late to be sorry now, after what you've done. I—I think you're horrid, Clara—horrid!"

And as Clara stiffened, that angry resentment returning to her; as Babs and Mabs and Bessie stared in startled dismay, Janet rushed blindly away, the tears brimming to her eyes.

Topsy Returns, But—



TOPPY whined. His expressive brown eyes were filled with fear.

"Shut up, you tyke!" snarled a hateful voice. "Do those tricks I

saw you doing for that gringo girl, or you'll get this stick round your hide!" And there was an ugly swish as the stick whistled viciously through the air. The leash, still fastened to Topsy's collar, was jerked with savage force.

Topsy cringed and cowered, his small heart palpitating with terror. Always had Topsy known kindness; always had he been petted; always since puppyhood had he been one of the best-loved favourites in Jordan's Circus. Never had he received such brutal treatment as this, and the little chap crouched there, shivering, on the ground, filled with mortal terror of the stranger who towered above him so threateningly.

"Do those tricks! Up—up!"

But Topsy remained on the grass, his limbs twitching.

Swish!

The stick cut across his sides. Topsy whimpered.

"Up—up!"

Still Topsy lay there, eyes dull and blinking.

"The brute is stubborn, Zara; but never fear, he shall do those tricks for us, or I'll break every bone in his body!" And Pietro Gomez, his heavy black brows drawn together, stared across at the woman who watched from beside a spluttering wood fire.

It was an untidy scene in that dim, unfrequented recess in Friardale Woods. Near by stood what had once been a gaudy-painted caravan, its colours now drab and blistered. A few rags and bits of clothing hung from a line stretched between the caravan and a tree. A tin bath stood by the steps, and tins and other refuse lay scattered about.

Zara, the gipsy woman, looked across at her Roman husband.

"Have patience, Pietro," she advised. "In a day or two, when he has got used to us, then he will do his tricks."

Pietro's swarthy face broke into an ugly grin.

"He shall earn us much money, Zara," he gloated. "Twas a lucky chance that I saw him through the trees with those girls, and luckier when he strayed from those other brutes and came running towards me." The gipsy laughed harshly. "A few dabs of stain on his coat as a disguise, and none shall know that we stole him."

Gloatingly he looked down at the whimpering Topsy—poor Topsy who had fallen into the hands of as rascally a pair of vagrant gipsies as roved the country; a precious pair who had been disowned by their tribe and made outcasts.

It had been a sad, fateful moment for Topsy when he had broken free from Clara and, disobeying Janet in the excitement of his freedom, gone rushing through the woods.

It had been disastrous when, losing sight of the other dogs, Topsy had scampered on by himself. Little had the Cliff House chums realised that Pietro Gomez had been watching them through the trees, his eyes fixed greedily on Topsy, his scheming mind already planning to steal the marvellously clever little chap by some means or other.

Fate had played into his hands. In a flash he had pounced on Topsy as he came running in his direction, and quickly vanished into the depths of the woods, taking his prize with him.

Thus was explained the mystery of Topsy's disappearance. And now—

Once again Pietro stared down at the dog, the stick swishing in his hand. But Zara hurried beside him.

"Pietro, those girls may come back looking for him," she warned. "We must hide him until we move on to-morrow."

The gipsy nodded.

"You're right, Zara. Put him in the caravan. But give him no food or water, nor shall the brute have any until he does his tricks for us!"

Zara loosened the lead which had been fastened to the wheel of the caravan. Topsy crouched fearfully on the ground. Roughly the woman picked him up, then thrust him inside the grimy vehicle, closing the door and snicking the catch.

Topsy, out of sight of the couple, felt his pluck returning. With a low whine deep down in his throat, he began sniffing round.

In Topsy's clever little brain was the one dominating desire to escape from these strange humans who, unlike everyone else with whom he had ever been in contact, treated him so cruelly.

And then, looking up, his eyes gleamed bright with intelligence. Above him was a space through which he knew he could just squeeze his little body. It was one of the small windows in the caravan, and that window was partly open.

Topsy almost yelped aloud in his excitement, but something within him warned him that he must remain silent.

Up on to a rickety chair Topsy jumped; from that on to the collapsible table that was hinged to the side of the

caravan. An unwashed cup went rolling, but fortunately did not fall off and clatter to the floor.

But now Topsy was at the window; now, little nose quivering with excitement, he was squeezing his body through the narrow opening.

He could just do it. Just for a moment he hovered on the edge, and then dropped, the lead trailing after him. But it was a big drop. Topsy, landing on the grass, rolled over. One of his legs pressed against something sharp—the jagged edge of the lid of a discarded tin.

The sudden pain made Topsy yelp. From the front of the caravan came an angry shout, then running footsteps.

"The dog—he has got away!" yelled Pietro.

Face ugly with rage, he charged forward, Zara at his heels. Topsy, forgetting his pain, streaked off. Pietro jumped, trying to land on the trailing lead, but missed it by inches. In a flash Topsy was among the trees and racing to safety.

"The clever cur!" snarled Pietro. "We'll never catch him now!"

But Zara's dark eyes gleamed with cunning.

"He is not lost yet, Pietro," she hissed. "He will run back to that school where those girls live. 'Twill be easy to find him there if we watch. You understand, Pietro?"

Pietro stared, and then laughed exultantly, the large, flashy rings in his ears glittering as they caught the sun.

"I understand. But you are clever, Zara—clever!" And he laughed again.

A LONELY figure stood at the gates of

Cliff House School, gazing with wide, frantic eyes down Friardale Lane.

Desperate indeed was Janet Jordan feeling at that moment.

Topsy—where was he? Surely, if he were only running in the woods, he would have come back by now?

She must find him—must! She must go out into the woods again, scour the whole countryside, if needs be. She must spare no effort to trace the clever little dog who meant so much to her father.

There was an hour or two yet to darkness. She'd go back to Friardale Woods now. And perhaps some of the other girls would come with her—Babs, Mabs, Leita Carroll, Jean Cartwright, and—

and Clara. And as that last name crept unbidden into her mind, a little flush suddenly ran up into Janet's olive cheeks.

She remembered those last angry words she had flung at the Tomboy just a few minutes ago. Before her eyes rose a vision of Clara's face, hurt, stunned, and somehow helplessly bewildered that Janet, her chum, should have spoken to her like that. And then, finally, Clara's anger.

Janet suddenly felt ashamed of herself.

"Oh, I—I shouldn't have said those things! I shouldn't," she muttered feverishly now. "I—I didn't know what I was saying. I must have been mad to accuse Clara of deliberately letting Topsy go—"

She broke off as another thought shot into her mind.

"But—but she was careless. She must have been," Janet told herself a little fiercely, "or Topsy wouldn't have got away."

And once again she felt a surge of anger rising within her. After all, Clara, who was used to holding Pluto back on his lead, should not have found it difficult to restrain Topsy.

And there, though Janet did not

realise it, lay the cause of the whole trouble. For Clara, accustomed to hanging on to Pluto's lead with both hands when he was in a frisky mood, had not thought it necessary to keep a very firm hand on a little fellow like Topsy.

Careless, yes; that could not be denied. Yet, in normal circumstances, Janet would have been the first to appreciate the difference and make allowances. But here—here the loss of Topsy had been the result, and Janet could not forgive that.

Her heart hardened. No; she wouldn't apologise. Why should she? Clara was to blame—

And then Janet's thoughts abruptly

of alarm as, looking at her palm, she saw the red smear. "Oh goodness, you're hurt!" she cried. "Topsy, what's happened to you?"

Feverishly she examined the damaged leg, breathed a sigh of relief as she saw that it was very slight.

Excited now, feeling deliriously happy, Janet almost danced her way back to the school gates and up the drive. Straight across to the Pets' House she went.

"Babs! Mabs!" she cried. "He's come back! Look, here's Topsy! Isn't it wonderful?"

From inside the enclosure came a little scuffle, and out rushed Babs, Mabs, and Bessie, their faces wreathed



BEFORE Janet could realise what her pet was doing, Topsy had started waddling on his hind legs in the wake of Miss Bullivant—a perfect imitation! The girls were convulsed with laughter.

ceased. Her eyes suddenly became riveted on a small limping object that had just turned the corner in the lane.

Janet's heart leaped, and then began to race. Her cheeks turned fiery red with excitement.

Suddenly, as one possessed, she was tearing through the gateway and up the lane.

"Topsy! Topsy!" she shouted. "Oh, Topsy!"

Topsy it was. He gave an eager little whine as he saw the girlish figure racing towards him, and, capering excitedly, leapt into his mistress' ready and outstretched arms, dabbing a moist, pink tongue over her flushed, radiant face.

"Oh, Topsy!" Janet was almost sobbing in her joy. "Where have you been? Oh, you naughty boy, to worry your mistress like—" She broke off, a little startled as her hand came into contact with something warm and sticky on his leg, and then gave a gasp

in smiles; and behind them, beaming delightedly, Clara herself, one hand gripping the collar of Pluto, who had not yet been bedded for the night.

"Oh, Janet, old thing, I'm so glad!" the Tomboy said, warmly and sincerely, any resentment she had felt against her chum vanishing immediately in her great joy in seeing Topsy safely returned.

A little awkwardly Janet gazed at the Tomboy over Topsy's perky head. She saw the genuine relief and pleasure in the Tomboy's face, heard that relieved ring in her voice.

And, in a moment, gone, too, was Janet's own animosity.

"Thanks, old Clara!" she said a little huskily. "And—and I'm sorry I said those horrid things to you!"

Clara's eyes shone.

"Oh, forget it, old thing! I know how you felt. The main thing is that Topsy's come back all safe and sound!"

Babs, Mabs, and Bessie beamed. Janet and Clara were laughing now.

"Well, not quite sound," said Janet, a little ruefully. "Poor old Toppo's hurt his leg somehow. But we'll soon put that right."

Babs bent forward to examine the injury.

"Just a cut," she announced. "I'll run along and get some hot water and boracic powder—"

And she sped off. Mabs, meanwhile, had been stroking Toppo.

"Can he walk all right, Janet?" she asked.

"Oh, rather! Just a slight limp—that's all, eh, Toppo?"

And, stooping, Janet put him on the ground. Toppo wagged his tail and went up to Pluto. Then, raising himself on his hind legs, he very solemnly licked the Alsatian's muzzle.

Pluto pranced. His tail waved furiously.

Clara laughed tenderly.

"Oh, isn't that sweet?" she asked. Janet smiled, but once again, fleetingly, that anxious little frown crossed her face.

"Y—yes," she said hesitantly. "But, Clara, I wonder if you'd mind promising me something?"

"Why, of course, old thing," said Clara quickly. "At least, providing it's a promise I can fulfil."

Janet coloured slightly.

"Well—well, yes, it is," she said, somewhat awkwardly. "It—it's about Pluto, you know—"

Clara looked at her quickly. Janet turned redder.

"I—I get just a little worried when he's playing with Toppo," she went on. "You know I love old Pluto, but—but he's inclined to be a bit rough—not that he means any harm, of course," she added hastily. "So—so I was wondering if you'd always keep Pluto in check when Toppo's near him, you know. Will you promise Clara—please—just to avoid any risk of accidents? And, please, you—you do understand, Clara?"

So pleading, so wistful her expression as she said that Clara, who had momentarily felt the old hot resentment welling up within her, smiled instead.

"Right—ho, Janet," said the large-hearted Tomboy. "Of course I understand. I know you love old Pluto—everybody does—and I love little Toppo, too. It's a promise, then. In future, Pluto shall be the perfect little gentleman when—"

There was a sudden scuffle from the dogs. Toppo and Pluto, in their own doggy language, had been having a friendly battle of words, and Toppo's last remark had been definitely cheeky.

"Gr-r-r-r!" retorted Pluto, with a mock ferocity that did not deceive Toppo. And he made a little pounce forward.

At which Toppo scuttled off in great glee, anticipating a merry game of chase. And Pluto did not disappoint him.

On after the little fellow he bounded. But Janet, hearing that growl, seeing the sudden flight of her pet and the pursuit by Pluto, went pale with alarm.

"They're fighting!" she cried. "Pluto's frightened Toppo. Quickly, call him off, Clara!"

Clara laughed, however.

"That wasn't Pluto's fighting growl, Janet—that was only one of his playful ones!"

"Clara, remember your promise!" Janet spoke sharply now

Clara sighed resignedly.

"O.K.!" And, raising her voice, she shouted across the quad: "Pluto, here—at once!"

Pluto stopped dead in his tracks. He turned, gazing in surprise across the quad.

"Toppo!" shouted Janet.

But if Pluto had heard, Toppo did not. Clara's voice had a carrying quality that Janet's did not possess.

While Pluto trotted back, Toppo streaked on, under the impression that the game was on and his large pal was still chasing him.

Towards the school building he raced—and then Toppo's eyes gleamed.

Something stood propped against the wall leading to an open window. That something was very familiar in appearance to Toppo. In actual fact, it was a ladder, leading up to the window of Miss Bullivant's study.

For a ladder figured in one of the clever tricks Toppo performed in the ring of Jordan's Circus. And always, when Toppo climbed that ladder, he received the applause of the watching crowds, and a piece of sugar from his master when he reached the top.

Toppo liked applause, and he liked sugar.

On to the first rungs of the ladder Toppo now jumped. In his doggy mind he was back at the circus.

Up, rung by rung, he went—surely, unflinching. Now he had reached the top. Hallo! This was unfamiliar. Where was the platform he usually reached? Where was the waiting lump of sugar? Where was that thunderous sound which always greeted the completion of this trick? All he could hear were one or two shouting voices behind him.

Toppo was disappointed, but he was also intrigued by the open space in front of him.

Toppo decided to investigate. He leapt; he landed on the polished top of Miss Bullivant's desk, and was startled to find himself slithering along it with a rush.

Papers—examination papers—over which the mathematics mistress had spent many laborious hours went flying in all directions; there was a sudden clatter as a bottle of ink fell on to its side and rolled towards the edge of the desk, its contents pouring in a blue-black flood on to the brand-new carpet and on to the examination papers which strewed the floor.

Toppo, unable to save herself, slithered off the desk and landed with a thud.

At which exact moment the door of the study swung open. Framed in the doorway stood a thin, angular figure, whose piercing eyes behind the pince-nez, widened and goggled in scandalised horror.

It was Miss Bullivant, the sour-tempered maths mistress, herself!

"The Bull" is Not Amused!



"YOU—you wretched creature! You—you—"

Miss Evelyn Bullivant was finding it difficult to find words to express her opinion of Toppo.

Always a grim, forbidding figure was the acid-tempered mistress. Now, as she surveyed the scattered papers, the dripping ink, the big black, spreading stain on her new carpet, she became, indeed, a terrifying figure in her fury.

Shaking with rage, she stormed across the study.

Toppo looked up at her, head cocked perkily, inquiringly, on one side.

Miss Bullivant, who had little love for animals at any time—and certainly none at all at this particular moment—so far forgot herself as to make a lunge at the little dog with her foot.

Toppo adroitly dodged, and, realising that he was not popular with this shouting human, made a bee-line for the door.

He arrived there just as there was a rush of footsteps down the corridor outside.

Janet Jordan came running up breathlessly. Close behind her were Barbara Redfern, Mabel Lynn, Bessie Bunter, Clara Trevlyn, Leila Carroll, Rosa Rodworth, Diana Royston-Clarke, Margot Lantham, and a number of other Fourth Formers, who, from various parts of the quad, had seen Toppo make his startling ascent into Miss Bullivant's study.

Also in the crowd were a number of youngsters from the Third Form, led by Madge Stevens and Doris Redfern, Babs' younger sister.

Miss Bullivant's voice, upraised in vibrant anger, had reached their ears. They knew something drastic had occurred, but curiosity drove them on.

"Toppo!" cried Janet, as the little chap streaked through the open doorway. "Toppo, you bad lad, what have you been doing—"

"What has that wretched creature been doing?" thundered Miss Bullivant's voice, and there was the mistress herself standing grimly on the threshold of her study. "Is that animal yours, Janet?"

"Yes, Miss Bullivant."

"Oh, indeed!" The mistress' eyes blazed. She became bitingly sarcastic. "Then, in that case, Janet, I have no doubt that you are interested to see just what has happened. Come here, girl!" she stormed again. "Look!"

Janet, holding Toppo firmly, looked. The other girls, crowding round, looked, too. And then everyone gasped as they saw the damage that Toppo had brought about.

Janet's cheeks went pale.

"Oh! Oh, Miss Bullivant—" was all she could say.

"Miss Primrose shall be informed of this outrage!" the Bull grated. "If you cannot keep control over your dog, Janet, then—"

"But, Miss Bullivant," broke in Janet desperately. "it wasn't Toppo's fault. It wasn't my fault. Toppo was frightened by—by another dog who chased him—"

"Janet!" burst out Clara incredulously, her cheeks flaming scarlet.

"Silence!" rasped Miss Bullivant. "That excuse is no excuse at all, and does not interest me. You will write me five hundred lines by to-morrow evening, Janet, and you will be confined to school bounds on Saturday."

The onlookers, hovering now at a respectful distance away from the mistress, eyed each other. The Bull, they had known, would come down heavily; and she certainly did.

Janet bit her lip. Miss Bullivant turned to stride away. And then it was that Toppo, alas! took it into his head to take a further part in the proceedings.

Toppo knew his mistress had been scolded. Peering up, he saw her troubled face. And Toppo, in the sweetness of his little heart, suddenly decided it was up to him to cheer her up.

An eager whine came from his throat. Then, before Janet realised what he was

doing, he had raised himself up on his hind legs and strutted solemnly along—right in the wake of the irate Miss Bullivant as she flounced away.

The effect was comical to the extreme. "Oh, my hat!" muttered Babs. "Look at Topsy!"

"I say, what a scream!" tittered Rosa Rodworth.

That titter was taken up. It rose to become an unrestrained laugh as the girls stared.

Miss Bullivant, of course, heard it. Round she swung, saw Topsy, and immediately her eyes blazed. Nothing incensed the acid-tempered, unpopular mistress of the Third more than to be made to appear ridiculous in front of her pupils; and coming on top of what had already happened—

"Janet, how dare you! I will not tolerate such outrageous insolence!" she raved, stamping her foot.

"But—but—" stammered Janet. "How dare you make fun of me! You told your dog to behave in that ridiculous fashion—"

"But, Miss Bullivant, I didn't—" "Silence!" stormed the mistress. "Instead of being confined to school bounds on Saturday, Janet, you will remain in detention in the class-room and work upon a task which I myself will set you. And furthermore—" her voice grated harshly—"when I report you to Miss Primrose, Janet, I shall recommend that the headmistress withdraw her permission for you to visit your relative next week-end. Now go!"

Silently Janet went, leading a dejected Topsy after her.

"JANET—"
"Clara—"

"I say, you two, stop it, for goodness' sake!"

"Look here, sillies, you can't go on like this, shouting at each other—"

"Leave me alone!" cried Janet Jordan. "It was Clara's fault and I'm going to have it out with her!"

"My fault be blowed!" Now Clara Trevlyn's voice, exasperated and angry, stridently added to the hubbub. "My hat, Janet, why on earth can't you be reasonable! I know how you must be feeling about this afternoon, and it was unfair of the Bull to come down on you so heavily. But it was just unfortunate, and I was no more to blame than Pluto!"

"Pluto frightened Topsy—"

"He didn't, Janet—"

"I say he did. And if Pluto hadn't chased Topsy, there wouldn't have been all the trouble there was. You jolly well know that, Clara," Janet flared.

"And you jolly well know," Clara retorted hotly, "that nothing would have happened if Topsy had come back when you called him. Topsy's disobedient, that's the trouble—"

"If Topsy's disobedient, then Pluto's uncontrollable and a oolly!"

"My giddy aunt! Look here, Janet, I'm not standing for that—"

Barbara Redfern sighed, ramming her hands over her ears.

"Oh, my goodness, there they go again!" she exclaimed, and looked round helplessly at the other girls.

The scene was the Fourth Form Common-room, and the time was after tea. Practically the whole Form had congregated in their cosy recreation-room to spend a quiet hour before prep, reading or playing indoor games, or listening to the radio.

But those quiet pleasures were

impossible. The peaceful atmosphere of the room had been sadly shattered with the advent of Janet Jordan and Clara Trevlyn.

Janet, fuming and furious, and bitterly antagonised by the disastrous incident before tea in which her precious Topsy had been involved, had started the quarrel.

Clara, understanding how her study clum must be feeling, genuinely sorry about the whole business, had tried to avoid the argument.

But there really had been no avoiding it. Janet, seeking to find excuses for Topsy, convinced in her own mind that Pluto had been the primary cause of the trouble, had heatedly said what she thought.

For a few moments Clara, showing remarkable restraint, had stood it. But then finally her own temper, always an uncertain quantity, easily provoked, especially when the reputation of her beloved Pluto was at stake, had flared up.

Barbara Redfern had tried to pour oil on the troubled waters. So had gentle Marjorie Hazeldene, who shared Study No. 7 with Janet and Clara, and who was becoming most deeply distressed by this split between the two chums, who, with herself, had always been such a happy, cheery, and contented little trio.

"Clara, dear! Janet, please don't argue like this," Marjorie pleaded now, her sweet, gentle face very concerned.

"Sorry, Marjorie," said the Tomboy

gruffly, "but I'm not letting anyone say that Pluto is a bully and uncontrollable. There's no better disciplined dog in this school—or anywhere."

"And I," broke in Janet hotly, "am not standing for Topsy getting into trouble because of Pluto—"

"Gee!" came a despairing groan from Leila Carroll, the American junior. "Say, how long is this going on? Isn't it about time somebody changed the record?"

"Yes, I think it is," agreed Babs firmly. "Now, pack it up, you pair of duffers. Let's go and get our prep done. Perhaps you'll have cooled down by then—I certainly hope so," Babs added.

"Yes, do come along," put in Marjorie Hazeldene anxiously, and linking one arm in that of Clara's, the other in Janet's, she drew her two chums towards the door.

Janet said nothing. Clara, too, was silent.

They went along the passage, Babs, Mabs and Bessie following in a group with Leila and Jemima Carstairs. But outside the door of Study No. 7, Janet had halted, gently but firmly disengaging her arm.

"I'm coming in," she said, lips compressed, "but I'm not stopping!"

"Oh, Janet!" cried Marjorie distressfully. "Please don't start all over again—"

"I don't intend starting again, Marjorie, that's why I'm clearing out," Janet replied. "I'll do my prep in the

No. 29 of our delightful series for Your "Cliff House Album."

CLIFF HOUSE CELEBRITIES

ONE of the brightest girls in the Junior School of Cliff House is Joan Sheldon Charmant, the sister of Miss Valerie Charmant, the popular mistress of the Fourth Form.

Joan, like Valerie, has a history. Perhaps you remember those stories which introduced her to Cliff House, in which it was related how Miss Charmant and Joan had been separated since Joan's childhood. Perhaps you remember then that other girl who tried to take Joan's place in the affections of her sister, and even stole Joan's name to do it. If so, you will also remember the part Babs & Co. played in the unmasking of that schemer, and how, eventually, Joan and Miss Charmant found each other after their long separation. It is not surprising, after that, to find that Joan is one of Babs & Co.'s most loyal friends.

Neither Joan nor Miss Charmant has parents of their own, and as I told you when I wrote about "the Charmer," the name Charmant was given them by Mr. and Mrs. Charmant, the couple who first adopted Valerie and then, when Joan turned up, her younger sister also.

Joan was born in Canada. From there she came to England to take up a situation as a maid at Cliff House School. She is quite a pretty girl, though not strikingly so, and has curly brown hair, like her sister's, and attractive grey-blue eyes.

A good all-round little sportswoman, Joan has made her own place in both the hockey and the cricket teams of Junior School. It is quite likely that next season she will be one of Clara Trevlyn's choices for the Junior School's tennis team. As you know, she shares Study No. 11 with Bridget O'Toole and Lucy Morgan.

Bright, vivacious, Joan, in spite of her



Joan I. Charmant

comparatively short stay at Cliff House, has rapidly endeared herself to all her Form-fellows. Ever ready with a smile or a cheery word, and always refusing to look on the black side, her happy nature is a tonic to her chums.

A clever scholar, Joan occupies the eighth position in class. She is fond of acting and also of the cinema, her screen hero and heroine being Ronald Colman and Jeanette MacDonald.

Her favourite flower is the marigold, and her favourite colours orange and jade green.

A great reader, she likes most good books, but finds H. G. Wells and Charlotte Brontë her favourites.

Very interested in old pottery—particularly Roman—Joan has made the collection of these relics her hobby, though it must be admitted she has few specimens yet.

She is also tremendously fond of her diary, in which most of the happenings at Cliff House and her own experiences are recorded.

Is 14 years and 6 months old.

Common-room, and I think that the less I see of Clara in the future, the better for both of us!"

"And that," swiftly retorted Clara, "goes for me, too, if that's the way you feel about it."

Into the study hurried Janet, hurriedly collected her books and papers, then, without another word, swept out again and strode on down the passage.

"Clara, you're not going to carry on the quarrel—" pleaded Marjorie.

But the Tomboy, too, was on her high horse now, and Clara, once there, stubbornly stayed there.

"You heard what Janet said," she replied bitterly. "Well, let her get on with it. Bother her, in fact!"

And Clara stalked into the study.

For the rest of that evening Clara and Janet spoke not a word to each other. And that grim, stony silence between them was still unbroken that night when, in the Fourth Form dormitory, the juniors clambered into bed and, with lights out, settled down to sleep.

PLUTO, curled up in his wire-fronted compartment in the Pets' House at Cliff House School, stirred into wakefulness. His long ears pricked up alertly.

Still and tense he lay there, then suddenly his handsome head shot up, those shapely ears quivered, and in one swift movement Pluto was on his feet.

Pluto could hear movements—soft, slithering sounds that came from the direction of the gate that gave entrance to the dogs' compound.

He growled. Then he barked—barked on that deep baying note of his that cut through the silence of the night.

There was the sound of an angry exclamation in a man's voice.

But now all the dogs were astir. Now they were clawing and jumping against the wire-netting.

All save one. Topsy covered and trembled as he saw a face leering at him through the wire.

A face that he knew, that he hated, and sight of which filled his little heart with panic-stricken fear.

The brutal face of Pietro the gipsy.

A Night Alarm—and Friendly Advice!



WOOFF! Woof-woof!
Woof-woof!
"That's Pluto!"
cried Clara
Trevlyn, jerking upright in
her bed.

"And Brutus!" came Barbara Redfern's voice through the darkness of the Fourth Form dormitory.

Woof-woof! Yelp! Yap-yap!
"My hat! Sounds like the whole giddy dog tribe!" said Rosa Rodworth.

"But say, what's the rumpus for?" Leila Car oil wanted to know.

Woof-woof! Woof-woof! Woof!
Woof-woof!

"Something's disturbed them. Babs," exclaimed Clara, and, pushing back the clothes, sprang out of bed. "Old Pluto wouldn't bark like that for no reason at all!"

She crossed over to the window and peered out into the darkness.

"See anything, Clara?" asked Jean Cartwright.

"No, it's too dark!"
Woof-woof! Woof-woof!

The din coming from the Pets' House was certainly sleep-shattering. Barks and yelps of all descriptions and on all keys howled out into the night.

Clara hurried back alongside her bed. "I'm going down to have a look," she

announced, slipping on a dressing-gown over her pyjamas. "Coming, Babs?"

"Yes, rather!"

"And I'll come, too." It was Janet Jordan who spoke, and there was an anxious ring in her voice. "I must see if Topsy is all right. Oh goodness, I hope nothing is wrong—"

Half a minute later four girls—Babs, Clara, Janet, and Mabs—slipped out of the dormitory. Three minutes later they were running across the quadrangle, their dressing-gowns wrapped tightly about them to keep out the cold night air.

In the Pets' House the dogs were still barking, Pluto's deep bay rising above the others, but it seemed to be lessening a little now Babs thought.

Clara was the first to reach the gate of the enclosure. She reached out her hand to unfasten the latch, then saw, with a little start of surprise, that the gate was already swinging loose, and open a few inches.

Piper, the porter, she knew, had the strictest instructions from Miss Primrose to see that that gate was properly secured when he made his nightly round; and Piper always carried out his orders to the last letter.

Then how was it that the gate was open? Had someone been in the Pets' House? But even as those thoughts flashed into Clara's brain, they became forgotten again as a renewed chorus of barking came from the dogs at the girls' approach.

Swiftly Clara passed into the compound, and then she and the others were running down the concrete path towards the dog section. Janet saw the van now.

Suddenly Janet pulled up, switching on the small torch which she had brought with her.

"Topsy!" she cried. "Topsy, what's the matter? Oh, you poor little chappie, what's been happening?" And there was an anguished note in her voice as she stared through the wire-netting.

"Topsy—"
"He's all right, isn't he?" asked Babs, running up.

"Look at him!" Janet said, frowning worriedly.

In the light of the torch they saw Topsy, cowering at the back of his wired-in pen, trembling and moaning, clearly very frightened. And in the next pen there was Pluto, frantically scratching at the floor by the dividing-wire, obviously trying to get into Topsy's pen.

An angry gleam came into Janet's eyes then.

"Stop it, Pluto!" she cried. "Oh, I can see now what's been happening. It's your dog again, Clara! He's been frightening little Topsy again! He's trying to get into his pen to fight him—"

Clara immediately bristled.

"Don't be ridiculous, Janet!" she answered shortly. "Pluto wouldn't want to fight Topsy. He likes Topsy, although for some reason you don't—or won't—realise that—"

"Then why's he trying to get into Topsy's pen?"

"Well—well—" Clara broke off. She looked puzzled herself then.

Certainly it never occurred to her—not in that moment, at least—or to Janet, or Babs and Mabs, that Pluto, sagacious and splendid fellow that he was, was merely endeavouring to get to Topsy to comfort and guard him!

Wonderful old Pluto! He it was who, by his alertness, his frantic barking which had set off all the other dogs, had caused the rascally Pietro to take fright and bolt before he could steal little Topsy. The intruder gone, Pluto

now wanted to be beside his little pal and protect him.

If only dogs could talk! If only Pluto could have explained that! As it was, Janet instantly leapt to the conclusion that Pluto had ferocious intentions towards her small charge.

"Clara," she said curtly. "I must ask you to remove Pluto to another pen, away from Topsy!"

The Tomboy stiffened.

"Oh crumbs! Janet, for goodness' sake do try to be reasonable," she replied.

"Are you going to?"

"Well, I don't see why I—"

"Then in that case I'll move Topsy," Janet said decisively.

Babs and Mabs were gazing at the two girls from Study No. 7 rather apprehensively. They saw all the signs of another quarrel breaking out.

"My hat! I say, Clara, let's have a quick scout round to see that everything's O.K., and then we'd better hurry back to the dorm," Babs said persuasively. "I'm getting cold, and in any case we don't want to be caught out here by a mistress or someone—"

She swung round suddenly. "Oh golly! Here's the Charmer!" Babs added ruefully.

And Miss Charmant, the pretty and adored mistress of the Fourth, it was, who appeared on the scene at that moment. She frowned sharply.

"Girls, I'm surprised at you!" she exclaimed. "What are you doing here?"

"Well, Miss Charmant, we heard the dogs barking and came along to see if anything was wrong," Babs explained. "We—we hope you won't be too awfully cross—"

"I am cross, Barbara," the mistress replied. "You know very well you should not have left your beds. And gracious me, you've only got dressing-gowns over your pyjamas. You're asking to catch colds. Please return to your dormitory at once, and if ever you do this again I shall punish you."

Babs began to move away, thinking how adorably sweet the Charmer was. She could not imagine any other mistress treating them so leniently.

But Janet hung back.

"Please, Miss Charmant, may I stay behind a few minutes to move Topsy into another pen?" she asked.

The mistress' eyes opened in surprise. "At this time of night, Janet? And why on earth do you want to move him, anyway?"

Janet coloured.

"Well, he—he might get mixed up in a fight with—with another dog, you know, Miss Charmant."

"But there's only Pluto near him; the pen on the other side is vacant!" expostulated Miss Charmant, in bewilderment.

"That's what Janet means, Miss Charmant!" broke in Clara bitterly. "She thinks old Pluto wants to fight Topsy. As if he would!"

"Pluto?" The mistress smiled. "No; not Pluto, Janet. You must be mistaken."

But Janet doggedly shook her head.

"We came down here and found Pluto trying to scratch his way into Topsy's pen," she said. "And he had frightened poor Topsy terribly—"

"Janet, that's not true! Pluto wouldn't frighten him!" Clara broke in angrily.

"Then who did?"

Quickly Miss Charmant held up her hand. Curiously she was regarding both the Tomboy and Janet.

"Be quiet, girls!" she said sharply. "I'm surprised at you both quarrelling in this absurd fashion, especially when



THE moonlight revealed Topsy cowering at the back of his cage, and Pluto frantically scratching at the floor. "Oh, Clara, it's your dog again!" Janet cried angrily. "He's trying to fight Topsy!"

you have always been such splendid friends together! Now, listen!" she went on. "If you wish to move your dog, Janet, you may do so, but you will do it to-morrow morning. But I must say, Janet, that I am very surprised! I confess I know little about Topsy, but I do know Pluto, and I am sure he's the friendliest fellow imaginable!"

"Oh, thank you, Miss Charmant!" said Clara proudly, while Janet flushed. "I—I know that, Miss Charmant," she admitted. "I—I've always loved old Pluto. But he doesn't seem to like Topsy."

"The point is, Janet," said the mistress quietly, "that there have never been any complaints about Pluto before. If any trouble has started, then it has started since Topsy came to the school. I happen to have heard what occurred this afternoon in Miss Bullivant's study," she added.

"Yes, and that was Pluto's fault!" burst out Janet hotly. "Janet, it wasn't!" retorted Clara, equally warmly.

"Really, do stop this arguing!" protested the pretty Fourth Form mistress. "I can see that your dogs are causing trouble between you two, and that is most regrettable. I think, Janet, I had better give you a few words of friendly advice—or call it a friendly warning, if you like. And this applies to you, too, Clara."

Babs and Mabs, listening silently to the conversation, looked quickly at their mistress.

"Miss Bullivant," said the Charmer, "has reported this afternoon's incident to Miss Primrose, who is extremely annoyed. As you know, your head-mistress has always been perfectly willing for you girls to have your pets housed here, but it is a great privilege not allowed at many other schools. As I say, Miss Primrose is very, very cross, and what I am telling you now is in the strictest confidence. If the head-mistress receives any more complaints about Topsy Janet, or if she learns that there is bad blood between him and Pluto, then I'm afraid one or both dogs

will have to be sent away. Now, bear that in mind, both of you, and do, for goodness' sake, patch up your absurd little quarrel! And now, girls, off to bed with you! Good-night!"

"Good-night, Miss Charmant!" And the juniors hurried back to their dormitory. But Babs, as she went, noticed that once again there had fallen that stony silence between Janet and Clara.

She wondered thoughtfully how Miss Charmant's friendly warning would affect these two girls who had allowed their pets to come between them and split what had been so happy a partnership.

The Pets Play Their Part!



"SOMETHING," said Barbara Redfern, "has got to be done!"

"You mean about Janet and Clara?" asked Mabel

Lynn.

"Yes," Babs nodded. "And, what's more, girls, something is going to be done! I've spoken, and now lend me your merry ears, large or small!"

There was quite a crowd of Fourth Form juniors gathered together in Study No. 4.

Babs, Mabs, and Bessie, as the normal and rightful occupants of that daintily cheery apartment, were there, of course. So, too, were Marjorie Hazeldene, Leila Carroll, Jemima Carstairs, and Jean Cartwright.

In other words, it was quite a representative gathering of that happy company of Fourth Formers who were Babs' staunchest supporters and her closest friend.

But two prominent members of the Co. were missing—Clara Trevlyn and Janet Jordan.

It was the following day—immediately after morning lessons, to be exact.

"Babs, you've thought of some way to bring them together again?" Marjorie Hazeldene asked eagerly. "Oh dear!

I do hope so! It's so miserable in the study now, Babs. Janet won't come in if Clara is there, and Clara is quiet and moody—so unlike her usual boisterous self, you know."

"Oh, what a couple of duffers they are!" Babs cried. "Janet, perhaps, was wrong in the first place—at least, hardly wrong exactly, but over-concerned for her precious Topsy. She says things she doesn't really mean about Pluto, with the result that Clara becomes antagonised."

"Agreed, fair one of wisdom!" nodded Jemima, carefully polishing her monocle. "Neatly put, if your so humble servant may venture an opinion. But what," she added, "is the notion buzzing around in the upper regions?"

"Well, the idea is that we should try to use that love for their pets to bring them together again," Babs announced.

"How?" demanded Leila. Babs paused thoughtfully.

"You know, of course, that little Dolores is in the sanny," she remarked.

They stared, bewildered by that sudden reference to little Dolores Essendon of the Second Form.

"Oh, I sus-say," stammered Bessie, with a blink, "what's that got to do with patching up the quarrel, Babs?"

"It may have a lot to do with it," Babs continued calmly. "Listen, kiddlets! Dolores is just mending from a nasty fall she took when playing in the quad the other day. But I happen to know she's not recovering as she should. She wants cheering up—she wants amusing. Right! Then my idea is," she went on, "that we should get Primmy's permission to allow Janet and Clara to take their dogs into the sanny and perform their tricks!"

"My hat!" gasped Mabs. "Well, Dolores will certainly love it, because she's awfully fond of dogs. But how's that going to patch up the quarrel?"

"Well, naturally, there's no certainty that it will," Babs admitted. "On the other hand, I'm quite hopeful. Can't you see the scene?" she added enthusiastically. "Dolores, sitting up

in bed, absolutely delighted, saying what clever fellows Pluto and Topsy are. Clara and Janet will love that. Clara will admire Topsy doing his tricks, and Janet will admire Pluto doing his. And that's what I'm hoping will work the whole thing—that their love and admiration of the dogs will make them see what chumps they've been, and draw them together again. Don't you think it's feasible?" Babs asked, her blue eyes shining.

And her chums did. A brief silence as they followed their leader's reasoning, and then no doubt about their enthusiasm.

"Good!" Babs laughed. "Then I'll go along and see Primmy straight away. Everything depends on her really, of course. She's most strict about not allowing dogs into the school buildings; but if I explain everything, I think she'll give her O.K.!"

Two minutes later Babs had quitted Study No. 4, and was on her way to the headmistress' study.

Miss Primrose, looking a little weary and overworked, Babs thought, listened attentively as she poured out her suggestion. But then she frowned.

"Really, Barbara," she expostulated, "you are asking me to grant a very big concession. Normally, I assure you, I should refuse the request without hesitation. And yet"—plainly the headmistress was indeed undecided—"and yet, Barbara, I am most anxious to do anything that will assist Dolores to make a speedy recovery. Certainly she would love watching the dogs—H'm!" Again she paused. "And you say, Barbara," she added, "you are of the opinion this—this performance might end the absurd quarrel between Janet and Clara?"

"Yes, Miss Primrose," answered Babs, who had rather vaguely mentioned the latter fact.

"Very well." The headmistress nodded. "You have my permission, Barbara, but kindly remember that I am only granting it because of the most unusual circumstances."

"Oh, thank you, Miss Primrose!" Babs said gratefully. "And—and may I suggest, Miss Primrose, that you yourself should put the suggestion to Janet and Clara?"

The headmistress nodded understandingly.

"Very well, Barbara," she said again. "You may leave it to me."

And murmuring her thanks, Babs excitedly left the study, and rushed back to the Fourth Form quarters to report to her chums.

They nodded eagerly and significantly to each other as first Clara, and then Janet, were approached by Dulcia Fairbrother, the idolised school captain, and told that Miss Primrose wished to see them.

They gathered round delightedly as, just before the bell rang for dinner, Clara was seen hesitatingly to go up to Janet.

"Oh—er—Janet," said the Tomboy stiffly. "I—I've just seen Primmy!"

"Yes; so have I."

"And—and she said—"

"I know."

There was an uncomfortable silence between them. Clara bit her lip.

"Primmy suggested that our—our dogs should give a performance in the sanny for little Dolores. You—you agreed?"

"There was no alternative for it, was there?"

"No, that was how I felt about it."

"I hope," said Janet stiffly, "that you will keep a tight hold on Pluto, Clara. In fact, I—I shall insist that

you do. I don't want him anywhere near Topsy so that they fight."

Clara's eyes flashed.

"Very well, Janet. Not that Pluto would fight; he's obedient."

For a moment they locked gazes—these two girls who had been chums for so many happy terms at Cliff House, who were now drifting away from each other.

Then Janet strode off in one direction, Clara in the other.

"Oh, my goodness!" whispered Mabs. "If that's the spirit they're going to show in the sanny—"

"I guess it's going to be easier said than done to get that couple of mules together again," Leila opined.

Even Babs looked dubious.

"**L**OVELY FLOWERS! Buy some lovely flowers, young lady!" called Zara the gipsy woman.

Barbara Redfern was already fumbling in her handbag.

"How much are they?" she asked.

"Sixpence a bunch to you, young lady! Just fresh from market!" lied Zara, who knew perfectly well that Pietro, her rascally husband, had stolen the daffodils in her basket.

"Then I'll have a bunch, please," said Babs, and smiled at Mabel Lynn and Bessie Bunter, who were with her at the gates of Cliff House School. "We'll give them to Dolores, shall we?"

"Oh, I sus-say, that's a ripping thought, Babs!" Bessie said. "If you'll lend me sixpence, you know, I'll bib-buy a bunch, too."

"Here you are, old Bess!"

"Pretty flowers for pretty ladies!" said Zara, her dark eyes flashing greedily, as she took the money. But then she drew back, as from the direction of the gateway came a low growl.

Babs swung round. Clara was standing there, with Pluto on his lead. Again Pluto growled, sniffing suspiciously, his eyes upon the gipsy woman.

Clara frowned.

"Quiet, Pluto!"

The Alsatian obeyed; but his crest had bristled.

Zara's eyes gleamed uneasily. Pietro had told her of an Alsatian dog who had baulked him in his attempt to kidnap that performing little dog the previous night. Was this the same Alsatian? Was his keen scent connecting her with Pietro?

Hastily Zara moved off down the lane. These girls must not suspect her, must not know that she was here to watch for that clever little animal whom she and Pietro still coveted.

"Well, come on," smiled Babs. "Off we go to the sanny now. Seen Janet, Clara?"

Clara, frowning down the road after the gipsy woman, puzzled by Pluto's behaviour, started round.

"She's waiting over there already," the Tomboy replied.

Five minutes later they were all inside the sanny. Miss Primrose herself was there with the matron, talking to little Dolores, who was sitting up in bed, her face pale, but her eyes bright with excited anticipation.

"Oo, this is lovely!" she gurgled. "Oh, thank you, Barbara—thank you, Bessie!" she rushed on, as those two girls handed her the flowers they had bought. "And now can I see the doggies? I want to stroke them, please."

Clara promptly led Pluto across to one side of the bed. Janet brought Topsy forward; but very carefully,

very significantly she took him to the other side of the bed.

Babs' blue eyes clouded for a moment as she noticed that.

But now the little invalid, having fondled the dogs, was clapping her hands excitedly.

"And now can they do their tricks, please?" she asked eagerly.

Clara looked at Miss Primrose. The headmistress nodded.

"Will you start, Janet?" the Tomboy asked, somewhat gruffly.

"Very well." Janet's tone was rather cold. "But please hold Pluto tightly, Clara."

Clara reddened, but made no reply. Miss Primrose shot the two girls a somewhat quizzical glance, while Babs and Bessie sighed.

But little Dolores, peering excitedly towards Topsy, noticed nothing of the strained atmosphere between the two erstwhile friends.

Rather pointedly Janet waited until Clara gripped Pluto firmly by the collar; then, stooping down, she unleashed Topsy.

Topsy immediately sat up and begged, much to Dolores' delight. Then, at a brief word of command from Janet, he cleverly executed a couple of backward somersaults. Dolores gave a little squeal of pleasure.

"Babs, will you help me turn this rope, please?" Janet now asked, producing a tiny skipping-rope, and extending one end towards the junior captain.

Babs took it. Together the two girls spun the rope, and Topsy proceeded to skip. Very solemn, very dignified, was the little chap as he bobbed up and down on his hind legs with never a mistake.

"Oh, clever—clever!" applauded Clara involuntarily.

Clever it was; but a few moments later Topsy showed that he could be even cleverer.

For from her pocket Janet now took out a number of white cardboard discs, on which were printed large single letters of the alphabet. She split these higgledy-piggledy on the floor.

"What's your name, Topsy?" she asked.

Topsy seemed to grin. Then he made a dive at the pile of discs. With one outstretched paw he sorted them out, while Dolores watched wide-eyed and spellbound.

One by one he drew some of the discs from the heap, carefully pushing them into position. Then, with a satisfied little woof, he sat down and gazed up at Janet. On the floor, the letters formed the word: "Topsy!"

"Marvellous!" exclaimed Miss Primrose.

"Oh, j-jolly good! I must tut-teach Ting that trick, you know!" stuttered Bessie excitedly.

"Oo, that was lovely, Janet!" enthused little Dolores. "But now let me see my lovely Pluto do his tricks!"

Clara, with a grin, unhooked her hand from Pluto's collar. Immediately Janet snatched up Topsy into her arms, moving back alongside Dolores' bed.

"Tell Dolores how old you are, Pluto!" Clara instructed. "But quietly, mind!"

The intelligent Alsatian cocked his head on one side, ears pricked up beautifully.

Woof—woof! he went, twice; but very softly.

"Correct!" grinned Clara. She held up a piece of sugar. "Up!" she commanded.

Pluto squatted on his haunches, sat up begging. Carefully Clara placed the lump of sugar on his nose. For a couple

of seconds he sat erect, balancing it; then, at another word from Clara, tossed it high into the air and caught it neatly in his mouth as it came down.

"Oo, clever doggie!" shrilled Dolores, her little face red now, and flushed with excitement. "More, Clara!"

The Tomboy turned to Babs.

"Will you cover his eyes for a few moments, old thing?" she requested.

Babs obliged. Clara drew out a handkerchief, allowed the blindfolded dog to sniff it and then tiptoed across the room. Here was a glass-panelled door, leading into an adjoining ward, empty, at the moment. Above the door was an open fanlight. Clara screwed up the hankie and tossed it through the fanlight into the next room. Then she tiptoed back to Dolores' bed.

"O.K., Babs, let him see!" she said, with a grin; and as Pluto trotted up to her, added tersely: "Find, boy!"

They all watched, fascinated. Certainly, Pluto had been set a difficult task. But the handsome Alsatian was equal to it.

Slowly, snuffing as he went, he made his way across the room. He came to the door, sniffed again, gazed up at it, then back at Clara inquiringly.

"Find it!" Clara repeated.

Pluto whined. He raised his head, opened his mouth, and fastened his magnificent white teeth on to the handle of the door. Then slowly, a little awkwardly, he turned it, pulled back. The door came open. Pluto was through in a flash, to appear a moment later with the handkerchief in his mouth.

Little Dolores simply shrieked her delight. Miss Primrose nodded approvingly. And, for the first time since she had come into the room, Janet smiled.

"Pluto, you wonderful lad!" she breathed.

And, hearing that, Babs felt a sudden little thrill shoot through her. Quickly she looked across at the Tomboy. She saw the little flush of pleasure that ran up into Clara's cheeks, saw the rather hesitant smile which she directed at Janet. And—wonder of wonders!—Janet returned it.

But just then Miss Primrose spoke.

"I think, Dolores, that is enough excitement for you to-day," she said kindly. "Are you feeling better, my dear, after that lovely entertainment?"

"Oo, yes, Miss Primrose, thank you," Dolores replied, sparkling-eyed. "They are such clever, clever doggies. It was just like being at a circus. Oh, thank you, Clara! Thank you, Janet! And Pluto and Topsy—they were both wonderful! May—may I give them each a little present from me?" she added eagerly.

"Oh, that's sweet of you, Dolores!" said Janet, while Clara beamed.

From the bedside-table Dolores picked up two brown-paper parcels—one small, one large. The large one she handed to Pluto.

Pluto sniffed it. Then his bushy tail wagged furiously. For Pluto's keen scent told him that within the wrapping was a lovely, juicy bone. His mouth opened wide; he gripped it between his teeth, and then nuzzled his cold nose into Dolores' hand, which was his way of saying "Thank you!"

Then it was Topsy's turn. He had to reach up to receive his parcel; and his delight was certainly no less than Pluto's. For his, too, contained a bone—which, with her usual kindly forethought, Miss Primrose had obtained from the kitchen, knowing what pleasure it would give little Dolores to make the two dogs a present after their performance.

And again Babs thrilled as she watched the ceremony. For now both dogs were standing side by side; and Clara and Janet, too, were standing close together, happy smiles on their faces.

"And now, girls," said Miss Primrose, "we must be going. Thank you very much, Janet, and you, Clara. I do declare Dolores looks better already. And I must congratulate you both upon possessing such remarkably intelligent dogs!"

"Oh, Topsy was wonderful!" enthused Clara, as, with a cheerful "good-bye" to Dolores, they all passed out of the sanny. "He was, really, Janet!"

"And so was Pluto!" Janet warmly responded. "Oh, Clara—"

And then Babs stepped forward.

"We'll just put the dogs away," said Clara boisterously, grinning in her old happy way.

"Oh, one moment, Janet!" came Miss Primrose's voice. And the headmistress, who had been walking ahead, turned. "I'd like you to come to my study for a few moments, please. I wish to speak to you about your trip next week-end."

"Yes, Miss Primrose," Janet said, and started forward. "But—oh, what about Topsy?"

"Clara can put him away for you as she has to go to the Pets' House," decided the headmistress.

"Oh!" Janet halted. "But—but—"

"Come, Janet!" the headmistress said, a little impatiently.

Janet turned to the Tomboy.



"LOOK!" Clara cried excitedly, waving a piece of material. "I believe I've solved it! Topsy's been stolen by that gipsy woman—!" She did not see the look of contempt forming on Janet's face.

"Well, having got so far," she said bluntly, "what about you two chumplets making it up and shaking hands?"

Clara and Janet coloured. Then, rather sheepishly, they looked at each other.

"Well—," said Clara.

"Well—," murmured Janet.

Then simultaneously both girls thrust out their hands, clasping warmly.

"Oh, I thuth-think that's fine!" beamed plump Bessie.

"Yes, rather!" agreed Babs. "And now, what about some tea, girls? Goodness, we must celebrate this! Who says a party in Study No. 4?" she laughed, elated at the success of her little plan to bring her two chums together again.

"I dud-do!" said Bessie Bunter promptly. "Rur-really, Babs, I think that's a jolly fine idea. I was just going to suggest it myself!"

"Oh goodness!" she said dismayedly. "Clara, you—you'll make sure he's put away safely, won't you?"

"Why, of course I will," said Clara heartily. "Come along, Topsy, old chap!"

With an anxious, backward glance, Janet hurried on after the headmistress.

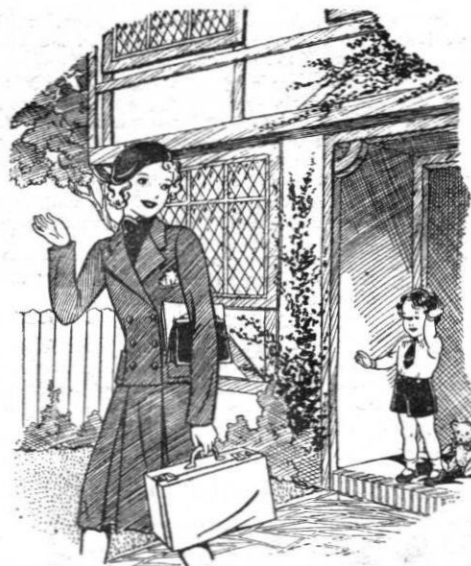
While Babs, Mabs, and Bessie made their way to Study No. 4 to prepare tea, Clara, with Topsy and Pluto in tow, strode off to the Pets' House. There she made both dogs comfortable for the night, leaving them to enjoy the bones which they had so well earned.

Then back to Study No. 4. And half an hour later a merry little party, consisting of Babs, Mabs and Bessie, Clara, Janet, and Marjorie Hazeldene, sat down to the delicious spread which Babs had provided.

(Continued on page 14)

OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS

PATRICIA is a friend after your own hearts, cheery, and yet full of understanding. She writes to you week by week, chatting of things to interest all schoolgirls.



THE month of March may have been named in honour of Mars, the god of war—but I think it's a jolly nice month for all that.

At home, your Patricia rejoices to find that she can leave a window wide open without feeling as if an Arctic blizzard is invading the room.

It's cheering to have some real flowers to put into the family vases—as a change from those dull "everlastings," or ever-greens.

Have you noticed what a task it is to arrange tulips artistically in a bowl? They simply won't stand up by themselves!

Well, the solution of this problem is to treat the tulips as you are supposed to treat a naughty child. Take no notice of them!

Just place them in the bowl—one with a fairly small opening for preference—and leave them.

In under an hour, you'll find that the tulips have most magically arranged themselves! Some stand up like soldiers, some arch their backs like cross cats, and some droop like graceful ballet dancers. And they look lovely!

● All About Tulips

So never worry about tulips—they have a knack of looking after themselves and knowing in just which attitude they look their best, the vain things!

But what they do like—is a spot of pocket money!

Drop a ha'penny—or a farthing will do!—at the bottom of the bowl, and the tulips will last much longer.

Also, tulips are not keen on having the water changed—which is very comforting to lazy people.

Now do you wonder that tulips are popular!

Talking of this bright spring flower, I've never heard of a girl named Tulip, have you? I know a girl named Hyacinth, and another named Iris.

I've read a story in which the heroine's name was Daffodil—but I've yet to meet a Tulip!

While we're still on the subject, do you know that catch about the penny? You hold one out to a friend and say: "What flower is on that penny?"

"None!" she'll say flatly—unless, of course, she knows the catch.

"Wrong," say you. "See, there are tulips!" And you indicate the "two lips" on the King's head.

Don't blame me, though, if she doesn't laugh; I assure you I didn't invent the trick.

Swagger—or three-quarter-length—coats are so smart, aren't they?

I'll admit you won't think so if the temperature is something below zero when you read this, but as I write, there is definitely spring in the air, and swagger coats seem to be quite a suitable topic of conversation.

If you have a light coloured spring coat from last year that is now hopelessly short for you, it could easily be turned into a three-quarter-length one.

The hem would have to be cut off—about four inches of it—and a new hem made. Then it would be the fashionable length.

But you mustn't waste the material you have cut off. This can be cut again to make four very smart—and very useful—patch pockets. Two on the upper part of your coat, and two on the lower.

Press the new hem and pockets next, under a damp cloth, and you'll look charming in it—particularly if you wear a dark skirt under it and a dark scarf at the neck to match.



It was my friend Esme's birthday last Friday, and she had a big party to celebrate.

Lucky Esme is my rich friend you know, and is a perfect dear.

Because the party wasn't starting until seven, she asked me to stay the night in one of her family's guest rooms—not "spare room," please note, as ours is at home!

When I arrived one of the maids carried my small case up to the Blue Room (these guest rooms each have a name) while I talked to Esme and her mother, and when it was time for me to go up and change into my party dress, off I went quite eagerly.

The room was sweet. The walls were plain white, and there was a lovely blue carpet on the floor. On the rose-coloured bed-cover my dress was all beautifully laid out, ready for me to slip into.

Such luxury!

No wonder I enjoyed Esme's party. In fact, I nearly forgot to give her the present I had brought her, which was a snapshot album—for Esme is very keen on photography, you see.

When I reached home again, on Saturday evening, mother wanted to know all about everything, of course—and I told her.

"I hope you thanked Esme and her mother," mother said.

"Of course," said your Patricia.

"And the maid?" mother said.

"Yes." I'd remembered that too. "As a matter of fact, I left half-a-crown on the dressing table for her, mother," I said. "That was right, wasn't it?"

Mother nodded in relief.

"Good girl, Pat," she smiled. "I'd meant to remind you. You see, there's no need to leave a maid anything when you make a visit, but when you stay the night, it always means extra work—and they do appreciate it."

I agreed entirely.

"But what about younger girls?" I asked mother. "What should they do, if they haven't half-a-crown?" I was thinking of my nice schoolgirl readers, of course.

"Oh, naturally, it's different for them," mother said. "They needn't leave a tip—but they must say 'thank you' to the maid. And if they stay at a friend's house often where there is a maid, it's a nice thought to give the maid a little unexpected present—at Christmas-time, say."

● For Best Shoes

Wouldn't you like a handy little case like this for keeping your very own shoe-cleaning things in?

It can be made very quickly from an oddment of material measuring about eighteen inches by ten—or even from a nice new duster.

Fold the bottom edge of the material upwards for about six inches, and then stitch all round in brightly coloured running stitch.

Divide the pocket into three parts by two lines of running stitch, as you can see in the sketch.

Sew tapes at each of the top corners. Tuck duster, brush, and tube of polish into the pockets.

Now the handy shoe-cleaning case is all ready to hang up in your wardrobe, to give your best shoes a rub-over before you go anywhere very special.

Good-bye until next week, all.

Your friend,

Patricia



HOW WELCOME YOU ARE—

—IF you call to see your friends at a convenient time. Most people are busy in the mornings, and grown-ups often have a little snooze after lunch, so the "surprise" visits should take place after three o'clock.

—IF you arrive punctually when you're invited at a certain time. The girl who arrives too early may find her hostess in the middle of taking a bath, and the one who arrives too late may find her rather cross because the toast for tea has been spoiled!

—IF you leave a dripping umbrella in the porch, or take it straight through to the kitchen, rather than allow it to make a pool in the hall.

—IF you take some flowers occasionally to your friend's mother, just as a little thank-you for having you.

—IF you visit an old invalid, and make her feel you're really happy to see her.

—IF you tuck the cushion behind the old lady's back, and fetch a hassock for her feet. Ask her also if she'd like to be moved into the sun. They're such little things to do—but are so much appreciated.

—IF you offer to run upstairs to fetch a missing handbag, or shut the door that has been left open by the baby of the house.

—IF you light a cigarette for your chum's mother. But there's an art in this. You must hold the match away for just a second, before holding the top of the flame to the cigarette tip.

—IF you look as if you're enjoying yourself. You mustn't do all the talking, of course. On the other hand, you mustn't be silent, for you weren't invited just to be a looker-on.



—IF you know the right time to go. For then you'll be asked to come again—and again.

—IF at tea-time you "help yourself" when invited to do so. Don't be afraid that you will eat too much. All grown-ups know what healthy appetites schoolgirls should have.

—IF you do not hesitate to admire a thing that may catch your eye—whether it is a new cushion cover or a home-made cake. All hostesses love to have such things commented on.

CAROL DOES SOME WASHING

Carol learns Housewifery at school, so she knows quite a lot about "How to Wash."



SHE tries to remember the best of these school washing rules when she's at home—even though her washing this morning only consists of two pairs of mother's stockings, her own school blouse, and a wool cardigan.

"Whites first" murmurs Carol as she tests the water to make sure it is only warm—neither too hot nor too cool.

Her blouse isn't silk, so she may rub soap on it, particularly at the neck and cuffs where it's extra grubby.

There, that's done. Now she rinses it in two lots of warm water. She doesn't leave it until the other washing is done, for otherwise the blouse will lose some of its fresh whiteness. Then on to the line to dry—in the sun, if possible, since there are no colours to fade.

GENTLE HANDLING

Fresh water for the cardigan. This is warm again, and has a handful of soap flakes thrown in and splashed around before the cardigan is immersed.

"Knead and squeeze" Carol burbles to herself as she suits the actions to the words, for woollies must never be pulled, wrung or twisted, if they are to keep shape. They must be washed quickly, too.

The water is still fluffy, so it will do for the stockings. These are squeezed gently and patted, with a slight rub at the heels.

Carol gives two rinsings to the cardigan and stockings, both in lukewarm, clear water. The cardigan goes through the rubber ring.

The stockings are hung up by the toes, so that they don't lose shape while drying.

The cardigan is laid flat to dry, after having been gently pulled into shape. She places it on a tea-cloth in the kitchen—or out in the garden when bright.

Since Carol just adores dabbling in soapy, fluffy water, she can't bear to throw away the still-quiet-clean water in which she washed cardigan and stockings.

So she decides to wash her brush and comb in it—and perhaps mother's, too.

Her own brush isn't a very special one, so she pats this up and down in the soapy water, as if smacking the water with the brush-bristles.

But mother's brush is a beauty. Carol first smears a little "Vaseline" all over the back and round the silver sides to protect it from splashes, and then makes the same dabbing movements, being careful not to immerse the back.

The combs are scrubbed with a nail-brush, and both brushes and combs rinsed in cold water, before the brushes are shaken and stood up on their handles to dry.

WOULDN'T this be a favourite toy of a small person?

If you've a baby sister or a small cousin whom you love very dearly, do make Tommy the Cat as a birthday present.

You'll want some black material first. Velvet would be grand, but a black stocking would do just as well.

Cut out two pieces, measuring ten inches by three and a half inches. Place both together and cut upwards from the bottom for about four inches. (Just look at the diagram attached to the sketch, will you?)

Now sew these pieces together all round, except at the top.

Turn your sewing inside out, so that the seams are inside, and stuff the material with flock or pieces of wool and rag. Tie a piece of cotton tightly round the neck part, and then stuff the head. Sew this up.

Next, make two arms from pieces

"I'm TOMMY the CAT!"

Wouldn't you like to make me for a very small friend?

measuring three and a half inches by three inches and sew these in position. The ears are just two triangles of material sewn on.

Make a little pair of trousers for Tommy, in coloured gingham. Mother will help you cut these out, I'm sure. They have two buttonholes at the tops to fasten on the buttons that are sewn on to Tommy himself!

Mark the puss-cat's face and whiskers with white stitches. Tie a red bow round his neck over the cotton. Make his tail from a piece of old fur, some frayed felt, or some lengths of plaited wool.



(Continued from page 11)

A merry gathering it was in all truth, with everybody in the gayest of spirits. And how delightful to see Clara and Janet on such friendly terms again.

And how gentle Marjorie's face glowed as she gazed at her two chums, feeling immeasurably happy in the thought that the conflict in Study No. 7 had ended, and peace reigned once more!

"We were a couple of chumps, Janet," Clara grinned.

"Just my sentiments," agreed Janet. "Oh, I know it was all my silly fault, but I was so anxious about Toppo. By the way, Clara, you did shut him up properly, didn't you?" she finished.

Clara burst into a great roar of laughter.

"That being the third time of asking," she chuckled, "and the answer's still 'yes.' He's as safe as—"

But that sentence was destined never to be finished, for suddenly—

Woof-woof! Woof-woof!

"Pluto!" gasped Clara. "What's he barking for?"

Woof-woof! Woof! Woof-woof! Urgent, compelling, that bark. But now it had been taken up by others. From the direction of the Pets' House came a crescendo of barks in every possible key.

Janet leapt to her feet, her face pale. Face suddenly accusing, she was gazing across at the Tomboy.

"Clara!" she cried vibrantly. "It—it's Pluto again! Oh goodness! He must be trying to get in after Toppo like he did last night. If they're fighting—"

"Eh?" Clara's face was all indignation in a moment. "Of course they're not fighting!" she scoffed.

But like a whirlwind Janet was rushing for the door.

"Come on—quickly!" said Clara, springing to her feet. "Something's happened!"

They all flew in the wake of Janet. Down to the Pets' House they tore. And then, at the entrance to the kennels, they pulled up with a jerk. For there stood Janet, her face chalky white, staring with horror-stricken eyes at one of the pens, the door of which was swinging wide on its hinges.

"Janet!" Clara gasped. "Janet, old thing, what's happened?"

Janet Jordan swung round.

"You should ask that, Clara Trevlyn!" she blazed, her voice quivering with angry consternation.

"Why, what the dickens do you mean?"

Janet shook in the fear and fury that consumed her. She pointed towards the kennel which confronted her. Then suddenly tears welled up into her eyes, rolled unheeded down her cheeks.

"Oh, you—you awful thing!" she sobbed. "I—I might have known you would do something like this. You—you did it on purpose! You did—you did! You left Toppo's pen open, so that he could get out, and now—now he's gone!"

"Good Old Pluto!"



WITH stunned horror five pairs of incredulous eyes stared into the empty pen.

Janet's words were only too true. They could see the straw, still bearing the imprint of Toppo's little body; there was the bone which

Dolores had given him, only half-chewed; there was his rubber ball, ragged and tooth-marked.

But no Toppo himself!

Babs was the first to break the almost paralysed silence which held the six girls in its grip.

"Oh, my goodness!" she gasped. "How on earth could he have got out?"

"How?" The word came bitterly from Janet's lips. "Ask Clara—she's the only one who can answer that question."

But Clara, clenching her hands, striving to choke back the hot words that struggled for utterance, shook her head with an almost hopeless gesture.

"Janet—Janet, old thing, you're wrong! I swear that I locked Toppo up securely. And anyway," Clara added reasonably, "why on earth should I want to let Toppo out?"

"That's just the point!" flashed back Janet. "Oh, you needn't stand there trying to look so innocent! You know what the Charmer said last night—that if there were any more trouble about the dogs one or both of them would have to go. You were going to make sure that it wasn't Pluto that went, weren't you?" she went on, her voice rising hysterically.

Clara staggered back a step, almost as if she had been struck.

"Janet, you—you can't mean that I—I—"

"Well, I do mean it! I—!" Then once again Janet's voice broke. She dissolved into a storm of tears. "Oh, Babs—Babs," she cried frantically, "what am I going to do? What can I do?"

Babs stood there, biting her lip. She felt an overwhelming flood of sympathy for Janet. Only too well did Babs know what Toppo meant to that girl.

But, at the same time, Babs felt a pang of pity in her heart for Tomboy Clara, who stood there now so proudly erect, her face pale and wretched, hurt by Janet's accusation, but her gaze unwavering as if defying anyone to believe her guilty of such a despicable trick.

And nobody did believe her guilty—not Clara, who was utterly incapable of anything mean or underhand, and would not have done such a thing even to her worst enemy. Even Janet herself, had she not been so panic-stricken and distraught, would have realised that. But this was not a time to reason with Janet, as Babs realised only too well. Something had got to be done, and

suddenly she became her usual active self.

"Now, Janet, old thing," she said soothingly, "buck yourself up! Let's see, there's six of us here. Toppo's only a little chap and can't have got far. I propose we all scout round for him."

And as the first evening shadows began to creep across the quadrangle Babs & Co. began their search. Everywhere in the vicinity they scoured, whistling, calling, listening, straining their eyes through the deepening gloom.

Clara Trevlyn, searching by the hedge which bounded the Pets' House and gave on to an adjoining meadow, searched diligently, desperately.

For Clara's heart was filled with a deep and genuine anxiety for little Toppo—not because she herself had been wildly accused by Janet of engineering his escape, but because somehow deep within her was a queer foreboding.

She had locked Toppo's kennel—most carefully had she done that. Impossible for him to have worked his way out by his own efforts. And that bark of Pluto still lingered in her mind—urgent, compelling it had been, as if he were trying to give a warning of danger.

What had Pluto been trying to tell her? If only, she thought desperately, he could speak!

She moved on down the high hedge, looking for a gap through which she could pass into the field. And then suddenly she stopped.

Here was a gap; but it was something else that had caught her keen gaze—a tiny scrap of orange material caught on an overhanging branch.

She reached forward, plucked it off, and then she stared at it, her eyes narrowed, forehead puckered.

The material was a piece of silk—only a tiny scrap, as if it had been torn from a fluttering scarf or dress as its owner squeezed through the narrow gap.

But somehow it seemed familiar to Clara. She'd seen that piece of material before. Then in a flash it came back to her.

She remembered that little scene at the gates of Cliff House; she saw again Babs purchasing daffodils from that gipsy woman.

Clara's eyes snapped. That was it! That gipsy woman—she had been wearing an orange-coloured silk scarf tied about her black hair. And she remembered, too, Pluto's strange behaviour at sight of the woman.

Suddenly a quick thrill shot through the Tomboy. Goodness, could it be possible that that gipsy flower-seller—whom Pluto with his sure doggy instinct had mistrusted—had taken Toppo, had stolen him?

It was a wild theory; Clara herself realised that the evidence to support it was practically negligible. But the idea stuck, and, suddenly swinging round on her heels, she went racing back to the Pets' House.

Darkness was descending rapidly now. The others had already returned and were grouped by the entrance to the Pets' House. One and all they had made the same report—not a sight or sound of Toppo.

Excitedly Clara rushed up.

"Janet, I believe I've got it!" she cried. "Toppo's been stolen—by that gipsy woman who was outside the gates this afternoon. Look—"

But Janet, absolutely distraught now, did not look. She stepped forward, her eyes burning.

"So, that," she said, her words cutting like a lash, "is how you've spent the time looking for Toppo, trying to find excuses for your own beastly behaviour! It's your fault Toppo's gone,



and I hope one day you'll be sorry for what you've done to-night!"

And then, without another word, without waiting to hear the torrent of hot words which rushed to Clara's lips, she turned and fled across the quadrangle towards the school.

And as she went there floated back to the stunned group of Fourth Formers an echo of her heart-breaking sobs.

But Clara, left standing there, screwed the piece of material up in her hand and flung it passionately to the ground.

"And that," she muttered fiercely, "is the last time I try to help Janet Jordan!"

She made her way back into the school. There she saw Babs, and told the Form captain of all her suspicions.

Babs whistled and looked a little excited.

"I'll have a word with Janet," she told Clara. "There may be something in what you say, old thing. Now you come to mention it, I believe there are some gypsies encamped in Friardale Woods. Tell you what, Clara. We'll get up early to-morrow morning—before the others. We'll look for that material then have a scout round on our own. What do you say?"

"O.K. with me!" Clara nodded enthusiastically. "If Janet will come with us

somewhere in that darkness, lost, wandering, hurt perhaps, at the mercy of this biting wind. Or—was he— Janet tossed restlessly.

Back to her came Clara Trevlyn's words:

"Janet, I believe I've got it. Toppo's been stolen—"

Stolen?

In her scathing anger and dread Janet had brushed aside that suggestion.

But now, in the peace and silence of the dormitory, her thoughts had become less chaotic.

Now, what was it that Babs had said? Babs had got the story from Clara; and Babs, though herself some-



IN a body the chums rushed towards the scene. For there, cringing at the end of a lead, was the missing Toppo. But a furry shape soon shot ahead of them. It was Pluto—streaking to the rescue of his little friend!

BUT LATER that evening—

Then did the stout-hearted Tomboy rather regret those angry words spoken outside the Pets' House.

Not Clara to bear malice, certainly not against the girl who had long been one of her greatest chums—even if that girl was acting unfairly towards her and Pluto. And the sight of Janet's white, agonised face wrung Clara's heart in a way that the unemotional Tomboy had never known before.

And, dog-lover that she was, Clara, too, was becoming frantic about the fate of little Toppo.

Several times, unbeknown to Janet, she went out into the dark quadrangle, whistling and calling Toppo's name. But no Toppo answered.

And again Clara went down to the Pets' House to recover the piece of orange material which she had flung down so passionately. Convinced was Clara in her own mind that in that piece of material lay the clue to Toppo's disappearance.

But, alas! That scrap of material was nowhere to be found, search as she might!

Clara grimaced exasperatedly. "Blow and bother!"

all well and good. But if she won't—then, as you say, Babs, we'll act on our own."

And, feeling much easier in her mind now, Clara drifted off to the Common-room, while Babs went to see Janet.

But Janet, as they had feared, would not listen in her distraction.

Bed-time came. The Fourth trooped up to their dormitory. Clara, in the act of climbing into bed, paused and looked rather hesitantly across at Janet.

"Good-night, Janet!" she said gruffly. And then flushed.

For Janet, deliberately ignoring her, had pulled the sheets over herself.

Dulcia Fairbrother of the Sixth came in to switch out the lights. A deep silence settled over the Fourth Form dormitory of Cliff House School—a silence broken only by the rhythmic breathing of the sleeping girls, and an occasional snore from fat Bessie Bunter.

In her white bed Janet lay still, staring into the darkness, with hot burning eyes.

She thought of Toppo—Toppo, who was still missing. Where was he? What had happened to him?

She shuddered as she heard the wind howling outside. Was Toppo out there

what dubious, had told Janet of the Tomboy's suspicions just before turning in to bed.

That fragment of material—yes, yes, it might easily have come from the gypsy woman's scarf. And it was peculiar that she should have been outside the school only an hour or so before Toppo's disappearance. And the way in which Pluto had growled at her—

Feverish now, Janet sat up in bed.

Had Toppo been stolen—by that gypsy woman?

Fiercely Janet's eyes gleamed in the darkness. That she would find out. She knew there was a gypsy encampment in Friardale Woods—little doubt that the woman had come from there. To-morrow morning, then—to-morrow morning, Janet resolved, she would go to that encampment, would search it, come what might, to see if her precious Toppo were indeed there.

And when, half an hour before rising bell the following morning, Babs awoke in the cold grey light, it was to discover that Janet Jordan's bed was empty.

JANET JORDAN stopped, peering through the trees.

In a little clearing she saw the gypsy

encampment. She saw the grimy caravan, and the bony, dreary-looking horse.

Near by smouldered a feeble wood fire, with a blackened saucepan topping it.

As Janet glanced round searchingly, the door of the caravan opened, and down the short ladder lithely stepped a swarthy, dishevelled-looking woman.

Heart thumping a little, Janet stopped forward. The woman's keen ears caught the sound of her footsteps, and she spun round.

"Good-morning," said Janet, not knowing quite how to begin.

"Good-morning," the woman replied civilly, but her bold black eyes bored into Janet piercingly. "You wish Zara to tell your fortune? Come, cross my palm with silver and that I will do."

But Janet shook her head.

"Oh crumbs! No thanks!" she said. "As—as a matter of fact, I am looking for my dog—a little brown and-white dog. I—I was wondering if you might have seen him."

Zara's face did not change, but somehow Janet had the feeling that those black eyes had grown even more piercing.

"Nay, my pretty one, you have come searching in the wrong place," she said a little mockingly. "There is no dog here—you may look for yourself." With an insolent swagger, she strode to the caravan and swung open the door. "See!" she mocked.

Janet's heart fell at that. Certainly, there was no sign of Topsy inside the dirty, untidy caravan.

"And now be off with you!" Zara said impatiently. "I have food to prepare for my husband."

And, with a swirl of her green skirt, she flung towards the smoky fire. But even as she turned Janet's heart knew a thrill. For, as the woman flung round, the two ends of the scarf which bound her head floated out—and from one of those ends a small jagged square was missing.

For a moment Janet stared incredulously, then suddenly anger welled up within her. She took a step forward.

"You're not telling me the truth!" she cried vibrantly. "You know more about Topsy than you care to admit. Your scarf—there's a piece missing, and that piece was found in the hedge at Cliff House School last night. What were you doing there—"

Like a panther the woman flung round.

"Be off, I say—be off!" Her voice rose harshly. In sudden ungovernable passion, she seized hold of a thick sapling lying on the ground and leaped towards Janet.

With a little shriek of fright, Janet backed away. But that shriek was answered in an unexpected fashion. For suddenly there came a rush of footsteps and three girlish figures broke into the clearing—a lithe, furry shape bounding ahead of them.

"Janet!" cried a voice.

Janet swung round, then gave a gasp of relief as she saw Barbara Redfern, Clara Trevlyn, Mabel Lynn—and Pluto.

Up to the woman Pluto bounded. Zara cringed, waving the stick threateningly.

"Steady Pluto!" called Clara anxiously. "And don't hit him with that stick—"

"Then keep him off!" shrilled Zara.

But Pluto was not heeding the woman. Nose to the ground he was sniffing round excitedly. And suddenly, with an excited, high-pitched "Wuff!" he went streaking across to the

farther side of the clearing and disappeared among the trees.

"After him!" cried Babs excitedly. "I believe he's found something. Quick, girls, he might be on the scent of Topsy!"

Janet, her heart leaping, was off in a flash. Babs, Mabs, and Clara on her heels. While Zara, the gipsy woman, left behind and forgotten now, shrieked after them.

Through the trees Pluto bounded. The girls chased after him madly, his excited barking guiding them when all sight of him was lost.

For perhaps half a mile they ran, panting now, but filled with a great excitement, and an even greater hope.

"Oh, Babs, do you think he can smell Topsy?" Janet gasped.

"Let's hope so," the Form captain panted. "But come on. My hat! Listen!"

Through the trees came a sudden terrific commotion—Pluto's growling bark, mingling with the shouts of men.

"There's the road!" cried Mabs.

"And there's— My hat! Look!"

shouted Clara.

On the fringe of the wood an amazing scene was taking place. In one swift, all-seeing glance, the chums took it in. They saw two caravans drawn up by the side of the road; they saw two swarthy gipsy men—one about to hand to the other a lead on the end of which cringed a small shape—Topsy!

And then— Through the air hurtled another furry shape. It was Pluto.

Straight at the rascally Pietro he launched himself, landing on the gipsy's back, sending him staggering.

With a hoarse yell of terror, Pietro fell forward on hands and knees, the lead flying from his hand.

Desperately the other man made a grab at Topsy. But in a flash Pluto had turned, crest bristling, teeth bared in a snarl. Quickly he placed himself in front of Topsy, muzzling the terror-stricken dog aside, and there he stood, growling defiance.

And even as she saw that scene—as she saw the vicious blow which one of the men aimed at Pluto; saw the way he received that blow in order to save Topsy—a sob rose in Janet's throat.

"Oh, Pluto—Pluto!" she cried.

"Pluto—"

"Come on!" yelled Clara recklessly.

"My hat! I'll teach that ruffian to hit Pluto—"

They rushed on. But now the gipsies, terrified of Pluto, seeing the approaching girls, suddenly fled.

And then a moment later, Janet was sweeping Topsy into her arms, and Clara was hugging Pluto.

"Topsy! Oh, Topsy you precious darling, everything's all right now!" Janet crooned, stroking her pet. "But, Topsy, we owe everything to brave Pluto, don't we—and—and to Clara."

Topsy wriggled in her arms, trying to get to Pluto, who was looking up at him.

Janet stooped. Topsy's pink tongue lolled out, caressing the Alsatian's muzzle.

Janet's eyes misted as she looked across at Clara.

"Clara—Clara, old thing," she said brokenly, "how can I ever—ever ask you to forgive me?"

Clara flushed.

"Don't try!" she said gruffly. "It's all over now, Janet, and—and— As long as you're convinced that Pluto doesn't mean Topsy any harm—"

"Oh, Clara, how could I after all he's done? I'm so ashamed of myself!" Janet said in a low voice. "And I hope Pluto will forgive me, too."

Pluto barked excitedly, waved his tail, and licked Janet's hand. Then off through the wood he bounded. Topsy, seeing him go, whined again.

Janet laughed.

"Do you want to go with Pluto?"

she asked, with a smile.

"Woof!" said Topsy.

"Then you shall!"

And, bending down, Janet unclipped the leash.

Like a small whirlwind, Topsy hurtled off in the wake of his big pal. And presently the wood echoed and re-echoed to their joyous, happy yelps.

While Janet, glancing at Clara, shyly linked her arm in that of the Tomboy's.

"Oh, just look at them rollicking about," she said. "They're such pals now, and—and so are we, aren't we, Clara?" she finished anxiously.

"You bet!" replied Clara, with a large grin.

While Babs and Mabs, strolling behind the reunited chums, looked at each other and smiled happily.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.



And what a Headmistress, too! How different from just and kindly Miss Primrose. Harsh and tyrannical, the newcomer speedily causes discontent throughout the school. And because Babs & Co. stand up for their rights against injustice they come in for the tartar's most vindictive treatment. But that is not all, for this new Headmistress is also treacherous against Miss Primrose. And that is where Babs & Co.—and that strange Fourth-former, Jemima Carstairs—reveal their loyalty to Miss Primrose by rallying round at one of the most critical stages of her career.

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TERESA FORRESTER, self-possessed and resourceful, and **LUISE RAYMOND**, her more timorous chum, are on their way to meet Teresa's parents in Africa when they become stranded with a quaint native girl, **FUZZY** as guide, they set off by canoe. The canoes were stolen by Fuzzy from a warlike tribe, who come in pursuit of the chums! They escape, but miss their steamer and continue by canoe. Landing in the jungle, they see a white man with native porters. These are planning to rob him, as he is ill. Teresa wants to help him; Luise thinks they should bolt!

(Now read on.)

wicked. If we can help him, we must. But—but if they leave him, we could find him."

Teresa thought quickly. She had a cool head, and knew quite a lot of African ways and customs. For instance, she realised now that the porters would be carrying food, arms, and equipment.

"We might be able to find him," she said slowly. "But the word of a white person will soon put them in a panic, believe me. Hark!" she ended. "I think they're coming nearer."

Fuzzy trembled. "Dey come," she agreed. Adolphus, the baby chimp, who had stood by, listening intently, suddenly whimpered and clutched Fuzzy. Although he naturally hadn't under-

would go forward to meet them. That would show that she was not afraid. And, once she had shown them that, they would be the ones to feel fear, especially if they had indeed planned to desert their master. Throughout Africa the white man has made his mark and earned respect, especially from those peoples who have subordinated themselves to become his servants.

So ignoring Luise's protest, Teresa hurried forward, resolving to be calm, however shaky she felt inside.

The porters, crossing from the mainland, had halted on the narrow bridge of land. The singing had ended, giving place to discussion.

Teresa, taking out her torch, flashed the rays through the dark patches

Teresa Takes Command!

SWIFTLY Teresa racked her brains. If Fuzzy had heard correctly, there was every likelihood that the men would try to steal the canoes—and some of their luggage as well!

To escape now would be easy. The three girls could quickly re-pack the canoes and be away before the black men knew that they were about.

But Teresa was not the kind of girl to run away. She was not afraid of any porters, known generally as "boys." Luise might be afraid of them—Fuzzy being of their race, might be alarmed, too. But Teresa had confidence that if they were handled in the right way they would be respectful to white girls.

"Luise, you don't really mean we ought to run?" she asked in a gentle tone that did not quite conceal a note of reproach.

"But why stay?" said Luise fretfully.

"Because they're going to desert a white man. He has fever. Think of it—fever, and abandoned in this jungle! Could we leave him? Could we ever feel right about it?"

Luise did not hesitate, though her cheeks were pale.

"Oh, Terry, of course not! I—I'm sorry. I didn't think. It would be

"Mongolu! Must get there!" breathed the ill white hunter. The Jungle Hikers promised to take him, not knowing of the strange mystery that surrounded the place!

stood one word of their conversation, he had sensed that there was alarm in the air. Something was wrong, and he believed in crying well before he was hurt.

"There! He knows something's wrong!" gasped Luise. "He knows they're dangerous."

Fuzzy comforted him, picking him up in her arms, and he hugged her, chattering.

Teresa stepped forward. It was not a time to be afraid. Unless these black boys were different from any others she had known, they could be quelled by stern words and confident tones.

Instead of waiting for them, she

where the thick leaves of the trees cut out the moonlight.

From the boys came an anxious murmuring and muttering.

"Hey, there!" she called.

There was no reply, and she moved on with her heart in her mouth. She was alone, and there would be half a dozen of the black boys, at least. She was taking a very grave risk.

But the die was cast now: The torch rays had been seen. Her voice had been heard, and already one of them was replying.

"Who dere?" he cried sullenly.

The White Hunter!

THE rays of Teresa's torch cut the darkness ahead, throwing twisted shadows from trailing creeper and bush, and fell upon the leading group of boys. Two of

By
**ELIZABETH
CHESTER**

them bore a long pole, over which was slung a rough hammock; another, standing in front, carried a large bundle on his head.

Behind them were others, dimly seen, though the flash of metal reflecting the light of the torch showed Teresa that they were armed.

Now was the testing-time. Teresa was afraid. She would not have admitted it, but her throat felt dry, and she wanted to turn and run.

But if she ran they might run, too, in pursuit.

"Where are you going?" she asked in an unnaturally harsh tone. "Where is your master?"

The boys did not reply, but exchanged looks and whispered softly.

From behind Teresa came a rustling, and she swung round sharply.

"Me come!" whispered Fuzzy's voice.

There was loyal Fuzzy, and, holding hands with her, although nearly sick with fright, was Luise.

As she saw them, Teresa felt a warm glow. It was so wonderful to know that she had such loyal, splendid friends. Luise, fearful though she was, had come rather than that Teresa should face peril alone; and loyal Fuzzy would have faced a dozen lions rather than desert her white friends.

Teresa braced herself. "Where is your master?" she repeated sternly.

She knew, of course, that he was in the hammock; but she did not want to venture forward until she was quite sure of their attitude.

"Him go sick," said the foremost native sullenly. "Him lib for die soon."

"Him not lib for die," said Teresa sharply. "Bad fever mebbe, yes?"

"Yes. Him talk all time. Mutter, mutter," said the surly black boy.

"Well, that's no reason for you to leave him to die in the jungle; steal

his things, and go away," said Teresa. "And that's what you meant to do!"

The black boys were startled. They exchanged looks, and then, with rounded eyes, fixed their attention on Teresa.

Thrilled, she knew that they were impressed by the strange fact that she knew their plan. As they had spoken softly, and she had only just met them, how could she know?

"That's what you were going to do, isn't it?" she repeated angrily. "You'll be lucky not to be punished. Bring your master here to me, you two."

Teresa's commanding tone brought obedience, and the two bearers stepped forward as though they dared not disobey.

When they approached, Teresa parted the netting that surrounded the sick man. She saw him, pale, and fever-racked, his eyes closed as he muttered in delirium.

He was a man in early middle-age, lean faced, and wasted with fever. Dressed in white shirt, breeches, and riding boots, he lay limp and completely exhausted. But before this dread fever laid hold of him, he had surely been a strong, virile man of some importance.

Teresa, looking at his left wrist, saw that there was a white mark not yet tanned by the sun. Yet the rest of his arm was brown.

"The mark of a wrist-watch," she told herself. "And it was there until recently."

Drawing herself up, she looked at the boys who gathered round, and pointed accusingly.

"Who stole watch from boss?" she asked.

Once again there was that fearful exchange of glances and rolling of eyes.

They did not know that Teresa was

guessing. But it was a good guess, all the same.

Without uttering a word, one of the black boys stepped forward, pushing past his fellows, and held out in a trembling hand something that gleamed in the light from Teresa's torch—the watch.

"Thank you!" said Teresa. "If you had kept it, I would have had you punished."

That remark was made to make them think that she had some power and authority—that she had but to say the word, and they would be punished.

Teresa had made the impression she wanted. Refitting the watch to the sick man's wrist, she gently put his arm across his chest, and then turned to Luise.

"We have medicine?" she asked anxiously.

"Yes. There are some fever remedies in the medicine-chest," nodded Luise, her fear lessened now that she saw how confidently and successfully Teresa was handling the situation.

"Very well. Bring your master along!" commanded Teresa.

Luise tugged her arm.

"To our camp?" she breathed.

Teresa nodded.

"Yes," she said softly. "They've got plenty of stores here, tents, and full camping equipment. If we can bring this poor man round a little, he can tell us who he is, where he is going, and what he wants us to do."

Luise did not demur. There wasn't a kinder-hearted girl in the world, and she knew that it was not a time to think only of themselves. This unfortunate white man was needing their help, and they must give it.

Fuzzy proudly led the way, and Teresa and Luise stood aside while the whole procession passed.

There were seven porters in all, and each had a bundle to carry. There were guns, binoculars, ammunition, and other equipment that told pretty clearly that this man was a big-game hunter.

Fuzzy was swaggering now, and giving orders herself. She told the porters to halt, and refused to let them get within a dozen yards of the girls' stores and canoes.

"Me princess," she told them, in language they understood. "Father big chief cross river many warriors. Head-hunters," she added.

Teresa had no idea what Fuzzy was saying, but she could not help noting how respectfully the men were gaping at her.

Fuzzy had found someone else to believe her stories, and she did not stint herself. These were particularly simple natives, so Fuzzy did not bother even to make her exaggerations credible.

"I'll bet she's telling them a yarn," murmured Teresa to Luise.

"Boasting?" Luise asked. "M, I suppose so. Oh, Terry, do you think they're really safe? They won't turn on us?"

Teresa shook her head.

"No; we've impressed them. And for all they know we may be in touch with a main party of white men. In fact, that's the impression we'd better give. We'll have to take a leaf from Fuzzy's book, and spin yarns."

The bearers, carrying the hunter, had reached the camp, and halted.

Teresa, finding the most suitable spot, told the porters to lower the sick man, and erect his tent.

Luise supervised the making of the bed, and found their medicine-box.

In the business of being 'nurse she



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SUDDENLY, Teresa spun round to the native porters. "Who stole watch from white boss?" she demanded. The "boys" were astounded and scared. How had she discovered the theft?

forgot her fears—especially as her patient now began to mutter a little.

Luise bathed his forehead, gave him chlorodyne and quinine, and was immensely relieved and pleased to see him blink at her, and to hear him mutter: "Thanks!"

His rambling became less, and when Teresa looked in some time later, he was uttering his first coherent sentence.

"That's a great help. Thank you. Who are you?"

Teresa and Luise looked down at him as, with wrinkled forehead, he studied them.

"I'm still delirious," he added, before they could reply.

"No, you're not. We're friends," said Teresa. "You're on a small island in the river. We are on our way across country, and we've halted here, too."

"We missed the steamer," Luise explained, "and we're going on by canoe."

He opened his eyes wide, and then, his mind clearer, he asked questions. Teresa's father was known to him by name, and he knew where he lived. Unfortunately, his own destination was in quite a different direction.

"You're going on by river?" he asked, still shaky and weak. "No; not possible—river drying up fast!"

"Drying up?" said Teresa, in dismay. "Then how are we to go?"

He lay back, closing his eyes, and it was some moments before he could speak.

"Overland," he said. "My boys take you. Take me—Mongolu. Go on with boys."

He breathed deeply, and made no reply when Teresa spoke. Obviously, he was again in the grip of fever.

"Don't worry him," said Luise softly. "There's a map, and I dare say Fuzzy knows where the place is."

"Mongolu," murmured Teresa. "That the place?"

"That's how it sounded to me, yes," said Luise.

"Then we'll have to go there. I'll look it up on the map, and, as you say, probably Fuzzy knows where it is," said Teresa. "The sooner he gets somewhere where he can stay for a while and have attention, the better."

Teresa went out of the tent, and Luise was left as nurse.

Fuzzy, meanwhile, had been talking about the black boys, who were gathered about a newly-lighted camp-fire, deeply impressed by what she was saying.

"Here, Fuzzy!" called Teresa.

Fuzzy gave a haughty signal to the boys to let them know that they could relax for a minute while she was gone, and, eyes shining, joined Teresa.

"What did they tell you?" asked Teresa. "Any news of where they have been, who he is exactly, and where he is going?"

Fuzzy looked a little guilty. "Dey not say tings much," she murmured.

"You mean you've been doing all the chattering?" said Teresa. "I hope you haven't told them a whole mass of fibs, Fuzzy?"

Fuzzy looked down at the ground and wriggled a little, swivelling on her heel to and fro.

"Me make um tink us plenty pow'ful," she said. "Make dem 'fraid. Dey bad people."

They did not look bad to Teresa now, and she had lost her own alarm of them; for they had none of the cunning and fire of the more savage warriors' type.

"We'll have to take it in turns, keeping awake Fuzzy," she said. "And that really means keeping awake. In the morning we're moving to a place called Mongolu. Know it?"

Fuzzy gave a little start of surprise. "Mongolu?" she said sharply. "Bad place."

"Well, bad or good, that's where he wants to go," answered Teresa. "And, anyway, how do you know it's bad? Bad in what way?"

Fuzzy shook her head. "Me hear um talk, say 'bad place.' People in my village dey all say it. All know eberywhere—Mongolu him plenty bad place."

"Oh, well, even if it is, I'm afraid it can't be helped," said Teresa. "We'll have to go there."

As Fuzzy did not know why it was a bad place, and admitted that it might have gained that reputation because lightning had struck a tree there—or for almost any other reason—Teresa was not dismayed.

She looked for it on the map, and found that it was not too far out of their way—at any rate, it did not entail their going back.

Out of their way or not, they had to go there. They could not desert him here; and they could not trust the black boys to take him on.

Luise came from the man's tent a moment later, and reported that he was asleep.

"Good! Now you'd better get some sleep, dear," said Teresa. "We'll take it in turns keeping awake. Two hours awake, and four asleep."

They drew lots, and it was Fuzzy's turn to start. So Teresa and Luise, having made quite sure that their patient was comfortable, turned in, wrapping themselves snugly in rugs.

"You're sure Fuzzy will keep awake, Teresa?" Luise asked.

"Yes; Fuzzy's all right," nodded Teresa.

She was sleepy, and glad to be settling down.

"If you say so, then I'll sleep," sighed Luise.

Outside, Fuzzy remained on guard, arms folded. Conscious of her own importance, she kept her ears alert, listening to the muttered talk of the boys.

And Fuzzy listened all the more intently because now and again they lowered their voices, as though they did not mean her to hear. There was rebellion in their tones—and, what was more, now and again the name of a place was repeated—Mongolu!

Fuzzy could not catch what it was they said, but actually, the words that passed from one to the other were: "Not go Mongolu."

Panic!

"HAIL, smiling morn!" Teresa awakened, stretched, and immediately jumped up.

She had taken her turn of watching during the night, and when Fuzzy roused her now she was really quite sleepy. But Teresa could always pull herself together.

"Nothing happen?" she asked.

"Nothing happen," nodded Fuzzy.

"How is white man?" "Him talk plenty quick," said Fuzzy. Teresa pulled on a jacket, and, as she had slept in her blouse, breeches, and boots, that completed her dressing.

When she went to the patient she found him rambling. Words would tumble out, uttering disconnected phrases, sometimes sharply in anger, at other times mumbled so that they could hardly be heard.

"Mongolu—must get to Mongolu—Mongolu!" he said, turning over restlessly. "They've left me—the rats—deserted me!"

"No, you're all right," said Teresa gently, and hoped that he could hear. "And we'll take you on to Mongolu. Is there any special reason why you must be there?"

"Must get Mongolu," he muttered.

Teresa turned her head, hearing Luise enter. Luise rubbed her eyes, blinked a little, and then crossed to the small medicine-box.

"I'll give him some more," she said. "It's doing him good, I'm sure. Is it catching, do you think, Terry?" she added anxiously.

"Not this particular one. It's carried by beastly little flies of some kind," said Teresa. "So keep netting well about you at night, and when you hear a zing-zing sound, see that you don't get bitten. Shall I leave you in here while I see about breakfast?"

Luise remained as nurse, and Teresa went out. Fuzzy was already supervising breakfast. The boys were getting their own, and Fuzzy was sampling it, but giving orders in regal manner.

They had found some asari honey made by the wild bees, and some other honey, known as isoma, which was Fuzzy's own special favourite.

"All well, Fuzzy?" asked Teresa.

Fuzzy nodded her head.

"All well," she said. "Sept—"

And then, with a somewhat wary look at the black boys, she rose and approached Teresa.

"Dem not want go to Mongolu," she said. "Dem say not go."

Teresa gave a slight start of dismay, and glancing at the black boys, she knew that they had heard Fuzzy's words. They had stopped eating, and were looking at her, sullen and resentful.

"We've got to go to Mongolu," she said firmly. "And that ends it."

A murmur came from the boys, and Teresa faced them.

"Listen," she said. "After eat we go Mongolu."

A tall, thin boy jumped up. He had a round bullet head, a broad, flat nose, and a somewhat aggressive look. He was clearly their leader and spokesman.

"We'm not go Mongolu," he said. "Bad place."

"Why is it bad?" said Teresa. The boy rolled his eyes.

"Honeted," he said.

"Haunted?" asked Teresa sharply; and then she laughed. "What nonsense! It's not haunted!"

"Him haunted," insisted the boy, and a murmur came from the others. "Bad tings gone happen dere Bad ju-ju place."

"Ju-ju?" said Teresa. "Black magic. You're not afraid of ju-ju, surely?"

But they were, and they tried to make Teresa understand that anyone who went near the place would die plenty quick in a terrible way. Evil ju-ju spirits haunted the place. It was bad.

"All the same, we're going," said Teresa.

And she turned her back on them. It would not do to give in. Why the white man wanted to go to Mongolu she did not know. But he did; and she meant to see that he got there.

As for the story of ju-ju and haunting, she did not believe a word of it.

With Fuzzy's help she got breakfast, and Adolphus joined them. Luise made slops for the patient, and he revived for a minute or two. In fretful way he again urged the necessity for reaching Mongolu, and then fell to rambling talk of hunting, of London, of friends.

Teresa, examining his luggage, discovered that his name was Simpson, that he had been a captain in the Army, and had trained lions. She tried to find some address of people who might be told that he was ill; but unless the need became urgent, she did not want to pry into his correspondence.

The hot African sun beat down fiercely, and they were glad of the shade afforded by the thick leaves of the trees. But there was no time for loitering. As soon as the meal was over they had to wash up and move on.

Teresa studied the map and found that Mongolu was only five miles distant inland. If the going were at all good, they should be able to do it in a little more than two hours, before the sun was really on high.

"We go to Mongolu?" asked Fuzzy anxiously.

"Yes. Whether they like it or not," said Teresa. "Sorry, Fuzzy. But there's nothing to be afraid of."

Fuzzy glumly nodded her head, and helped to pack the things. They had to leave the canoes, and somehow they would have to make do carrying the stuff.

Luckily Fuzzy knew the load the boys usually carried, and Teresa discovered that the boys, taking advantage of their boss' sickness, had dumped some of the luggage. They could easily enough carry the girls' in addition to their own, without hardship, therefore.

Captain Simpson was lifted on to the hammock, and the bearers shouldered the pole. Not one word did any of them speak, and Teresa, in growing alarm, knew that they were planning rebellion.

"Luise," she whispered, taking her friend aside. "We've got to carry the guns."

"Guns?" gasped Luise.

"Yes. We can't risk letting them have the things. And for all they know, we may be able to use them."

Teresa, pretending to be very cool and calm, took charge of the two guns, and fitted a belt of cartridges to Luise, finding another for herself. Fuzzy was given a gun, too, but no ammunition—and as it was the first time she had ever held such a weapon, her eyes shone, and she fairly strutted along.

Adolphus, with a scowl, tried to snatch Teresa's gun, but he had to be content with a stick which Fuzzy gave him, as consolation.

"You know the way to Mongolu, Fuzzy?" asked Teresa.

Fuzzy pursed her thick lips. "Mim—me know," she said.

Teresa looked up at the sun and took her bearings. According to the map they had to go slightly eastward.

"Right. Move on," she said.

The porters, in silence, moved on, following the beaten track to the mainland, and then left.

Teresa and Luise, shouldering the heavy guns, brought up the rear, just behind the two men bearing the sick captain.

"My word, Terry," said Luise admiringly. "How you've done it, I don't know. Just a white girl against all these black men—and they're taking your orders."

Teresa smiled a little wryly.

"So far, yes," she said.

And then, even as she spoke, the boys in front sang out a word, which was echoed by those behind in turn.

Without any more ado they ran, swerving in all directions amongst the trees; while the two bearers of the sick man dumped him down heavily and bolted as well!

As quickly as she could Teresa loaded the gun. There was no thought in her mind of firing it at the men; but she knew that it was the one thing in her possession that could fill them with fear.

They would not know whether she intended to shoot them or not, and the sound of the gun's discharge might bring them to a halt.

"Stand clear, Fuzzy!" she commanded.

Luise, on her knees beside her patient, looked up in alarm.

"Terry, you aren't going to shoot at them?" she cried, in horror.

"Of course not. But they need scaring," said Teresa. Then, at the top of her voice, she called: "Halt, or I'll fire!"

The men had run a short distance, and then halted. They were scattered in all directions, so that chasing them, rounding them up, would be almost impossible.

But they were in range of the powerful gun.

Teresa, making quite sure that there was no one in the line of fire, took aim at the upper branches of a tree, pulled the gun tightly against her shoulder, and pressed the trigger.

The report of the gun was deafening; the recoil was such that Teresa, although prepared for it, staggered.

A bullet whistled away through the trees, clipping twigs and sending leaves fluttering down.

Then Teresa tucked the gun under her arm and walked forward to the place where she had seen four of the runaway porters rush into hiding.

Luise, supposing that Teresa was quite unafraid, admired her friend's lion-hearted courage, and yet hoped that she would not be too daring.

But Teresa was not nearly so unafraid as she seemed. Inside she quaked as she moved forward. Armed with a gun though she was, she was no match for a dozen strong natives. And if they had only the ability to combine, and the cunning to plan an attack, they could very quickly have wrested the gun from her.

Teresa knew that, and was alert. Yet she did not creep forward, looking right or left, since that would have betrayed her anxiety and alarm. Her manner was outwardly calm and unperturbed.

"Go on, Terry!" she urged herself. "They're more frightened than you are!"

They did not move; none of them ran on, and Teresa came to a halt.

The silence of the natives might mean almost anything—that they were planning a sudden attack, or, on the contrary, that they were afraid that some movement might betray their hiding-places and so bring a bullet.

"Don't try to move!" called Teresa in a voice that surprised herself by its steadiness. "The first one to move before I give the order will be shot!"

COURAGEOUS Teresa! But will she be able to prevent further panic among the porters and make them continue the journey? On no account fail to read next Saturday's dramatic chapters.

COMPLETE this week. Another delightful fun-story featuring happy-go-lucky—



JOY SHARPE, rich girl, and lover of fun and freedom.

NAKITA, whom Joy becomes to gain her liberty.

Getting There First!

"TINKS, as you can't come to the party this afternoon, you can have your fun now."

And Tinker, Joy Sharpe's puppy, was certainly having his fun. In point of fact he preferred the fun he was having to the fun he might have if he went to the party with his mistress. For Tinker could not waltz or fox-trot, and would have been shooed away from the refreshments.

At the moment he was prancing and frolicking, chasing a red ball, retrieving it, chasing it again when it was thrown, and having the time of his life.

But Joy Sharpe was having fun too. She was just as excited as Tinker by this short spell of freedom.

Joy spent most of her time cooped up in the large house, the Gables, with her governess, Miss Retcham.

Joy's parents had died some years ago, and now she lived with her rich grandfather. But although he was so rich and kind, she really did not have fun in the old house; for her grandfather had put the governess almost in sole charge of her, and Miss Retcham was stern.

If the governess had known Joy at this moment was larking in the woods, instead of swotting lessons in the school-room at the Gables, she would have turned pale with anger.

But she did not know; and there was no reason either why she should know.

Even if she walked along the lane and spotted Joy, she would not recognise her. And that would not be merely because the governess was rather short-sighted.

At this present moment, Joy Sharpe was disguised—as a gipsy girl!

Dressed in a gay frock, her face suitably dyed, Joy had become Nakita for a while. There was no such person as Nakita really—only Joy in different clothes. Yet so far, no one but Tinker had ever learned her secret—and Tinker, of course, had sworn not to tell.

Hearing someone coming, Nakita looked anxiously down the road. But a glance eased her mind. That someone was not her governess, but a portly lady with waddling walk.

"O.K., Tinks," she said.

She turned back from the road, for that person was a Mrs. Mumphy, the village busybody, so there could be another spell of freedom.

But Tinker dodged, seeming to think that Nakita had gone out into the road as a hint to him. And he made for the road, too.

"Tinker——" cried Nakita. "Come here, you rascal! Here, Tinks!"

Then she pulled up, hand to mouth in dismay.

She could have bitten off her tongue at that moment. For in her excitement she had called out, not in the husky tones that she used to disguise her voice, when she was Nakita, but in Joy's voice. And she had called Tinker by his own name!

At that moment Mrs. Mumphy came level with the gap in the hedge that bordered the lane. She halted there, and frowned at Nakita.

"I heard Joy Sharpe's voice!" she said grimly.

Her keen little eyes fixed upon Nakita, who shrank back. The sheer intensity of the gaze was frightening.

Automatically, in self-defence, Nakita put a hand to her face. For all she knew there might be some flaw in her disguise. Mrs. Mumphy might recognise her.

And if anyone did recognise Nakita as Joy Sharpe, then what a terrible bust up there would be! It did not bear contemplation. A hundred and one different pranks of Nakita's would be brought home to Joy.

"I—I—Miss Joy's not here, lidy," said Nakita hoarsely.

"Don't prevaricate," snapped Mrs. Mumphy. "Where is she? I'm sure Miss Retcham would not approve of her playing with a common, nasty little gipsy girl like you. I shall make it my business to inform her of this."

Nakita paled under her dye. "Oh—I—don't do that, lidy," she whined. "I—I'm just giving the dog a run for Miss Joy, but—but——"

"Don't try to tell me that Miss Joy is not here," said Mrs. Mumphy. "I'm not a woman easily fooled. I heard the girl's voice, and I know she is skulking somewhere in hiding. However, I do not intend to waste time. I shall report this instantly. I will ring up Miss Retcham the moment I get home."

With that, Mrs. Mumphy turned aside, and went her way. She lived up the lane to the left, and her house was so near that she would easily be home first, even if Nakita ran all the way to the Gables.

"There, Tinks. That's done it," she said dismally. "What are we going to do? She'll sneak—and we can't deny it."

Nakita's brain was in a whirl. If she denied that Joy had been there, then Mrs. Mumphy might wonder how it was that she had heard Joy's voice.

By IDA MELBOURNE

She might even—shocking thought—guess that Joy and Nakita were the same girl.

"Oh, Tinks, if only we can do something," she said frantically. "We've just got to stop old Mrs. Mumphy from reporting us. We've got to stop her speaking to——"

She broke off, for she had heard footsteps that were quite unmistakable.

"Miss Retcham!" she gasped. "Oh golly! Just one word from Mrs. Mumphy, and no party for me! I've got to do something!"

She turned and ran. The first and most important thing was for her to be at the Gables, dressed as Joy, before the governess arrived.

Tinker followed her, barking excitedly until she begged and implored him, as a pa., to be quiet. Breathless, she ran on until she could run no more, and then, holding her side where she had a slight "stitch," she lowered her pace to a walk.

BETWEEN OURSELVES



MY DEAR READERS.—Claudine's been at it again! By which I mean that my charming but rather light-hearted young niece has had another adventure with her trim two-seater car—involving your helpless and completely innocent Editor!

You probably remember that I told you some weeks ago how Claudine and I got in a terrible tangle with a herd of cattle, not to mention a brief but very exciting encounter with a ferocious bull, and all because my young niece insisted upon taking what she described as a short cut.

This latest adventure took place far from peaceful by-ways. It happened, in fact, in the middle of London.

Claudine wanted to go to a circus. I, being not only a dutiful uncle—so people tell me!—but an ardent circus "fan," fell into the trap. For taking Claudine anywhere—in her car—seems to be a trap no matter how careful you are.

We left the two-seater in the huge car-park outside the hall where the circus was appearing, and went inside. My goodness! It was a grand show. From start to finish we both enjoyed ourselves immensely, and were really sorry when it was all over.

If only we'd realised that, so far as we were concerned, the proper excitement of the evening hadn't even begun!

It soon did, however. It began the moment we drove out of the car-park. It was no easy matter finding our car, for there were rows upon rows of them now, a large number of them bewilderingly like one another.

"I say, Claudine, are you sure—" I began, as she clambered in.

But you know what my niece is! "Come on, uncle!" she urged impatiently. "Before all the others come out!"

She started up the engine. That decided me. I sprang in beside her, and away we went. We had gone twenty yards when I heard a voice shouting from behind us. Another twenty yards farther on several voices were shouting. By the time we turned out of the car-park into the main road it seemed that the entire audience had assembled to give us a send-off.

"Cheering one of the stars," remarked

Your Editor's address is:—Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Please send a stamped, addressed envelope if you wish for a reply by post

Claudine brightly. "That topping trapezist, I expect—"

"Er—I was wondering, though, my dear—" I began uncertainly, when we reached some busy cross-roads, and Claudine stopped with a jolt.

"Wondering what, uncle?" asked my niece, watching the red light.

"Why, all that noise! Are you quite certain we—"

I was unable to say any more. The noise had overtaken us! More than that, a great crowd of people swarmed around our car, including attendants from the car-park, two policemen, and a plaintive-looking little man with a bowler hat.

"Thieves—robbers—bandits!" he panted, brandishing his fist in my face. "Stealing my car—"

"Your—your car?" Claudine gasped, and then gave a violent jump. "Oh, my goodness! So it is. This isn't mine. Mine's got a little mascot on the front. Oh dear!"

It was just as I had begun to suspect. Claudine, so anxious to be first out of the car-park, had taken the wrong car!

Fortunately, we managed to explain things sufficiently to smooth everything out. The fact that we had a car of our own almost identical with the one we had driven away did the trick. There were no arrests!

But we were both very red in the face, and decidedly uncomfortable, for most of the way home. Every Belisha Beacon seemed to be leering at us!

No, Claudine, I like you very much, and your car runs smoothly, but—not another ride for me until I've got over the last!

And now to tell you, very briefly, about next Saturday's fine story programme. First of all, the grand **LONG COMPLETE Cliff House story: "Cliff House's New Headmistress."** It tells what happens when a temporary headmistress comes to that famous school to relieve Miss Primrose of most of her duties.

But what a difference between the two women! Miss Primrose, so just and kind, the newcomer so utterly tyrannical. At once, she antagonises Babs & Co. But that is not all. She also attacks Miss Primrose. And that is where the Fourth Form chums, rallying to their old headmistress, unwittingly make matters worse.

On no account should you miss this magnificent story; nor all our usual grand features.

With best wishes,

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

All the while she had been thinking busily. Several plans had come to her mind, and one and all been dismissed. But suddenly she stopped short, and her eyes lighted up.

"My golly, it might work!" she gasped.

To Tinker's surprise she turned back to the lane, and, ordering him to stay where he was, hurried back until she was but a hundred yards from the approaching governess.

Miss Retcham, walking along deep in thought, gave a start as she saw Nakita, for the gipsy girl was never a welcome person.

"Well, and what do you want?" she demanded.

Nakita came to a halt, and racked her

brain for something to say. She knew what she meant to say—presently—but she could not start off with that. She had to think first of some reasonable excuse for stopping the governess.

"Lidy, please hev you got a pair of old shoes?" she asked.

Miss Retcham looked down at Nakita's sandals.

"Sandals! Just the rubbishy things I should expect you to wear—cheap, tawdry, unsuitable. No, I have not got a pair of shoes. If I give things away I give them to deserving people."

Miss Retcham always spoke in a tone that carried a sense of virtue. She was always rather smug and self-satisfied, and there was now a curling sneer on her face.

"Any old shoes, then, lidy? Perhaps the young lidy, Miss Joy, has a pair," said Nakita, in a whining tone. "You've got a strong character, lidy," said Nakita. "Nobody can get round you. I know that, lidy, and I'm not trying it on. Fair's fair, and I'll tell your fortune—straight I will—if you'll give me a pair of shoes."

Miss Retcham liked to score off people, and she removed her glove.

"Very well," she said. "I will give you an opportunity of proving yourself a fraud."

Nakita took her hand and looked at it. "I see a quarrel," she said. "A quarrel with a faddish lady with reddish hair and little bird-like eyes."

It was a fairly good description of Mrs. Mumphy, although Nakita was careful not to say enough to reveal that fact.

"H'm! I wonder who that is!" said Miss Retcham, more interested than she would ever have admitted.

"Beware!" warned Nakita urgently. "Don't have anything to say to her. If you do you will regret it, mark my words, lidy. I'm telling you for your own good."

That little glimpse of the future given, Nakita stood aside, and Miss Retcham, pulling herself from her brown study of thought, drew up.

"What nonsense!" she exclaimed, with a short laugh. "I'm afraid you will not get those shoes."

And she walked on in deep thought. Nakita did not walk; she ran. She ran like a hare, with Tinker behind her, and reached the back entrance of the Gables just as the governess reached the front.

Then by stealth she went in by the tradesmen's entrance, and up the deserted servants' staircase to her own room.

Only just in time she changed, removed the dye from her skin, and hurried down to the school-room.

The Wrong Kind of Complaint!

IN the school-room was the housemaid.

"Oh, here you are, Miss Joy!" she said. "There's been a lady telephoning, asking if you was here, and I've looked everywhere for you."

"Mrs. Mumphy?" said Joy, her heart leaping.

"Yes, miss, that's the lady."

"Thanks, Nellie! I—I've seen her," said Joy.

"All right, miss. And she wanted to speak to Miss Retcham, too."

"Oh, it won't matter now!" said Joy hastily. "Won't matter at all. I'll mention it to—Miss Retcham."

Nellie went away, and had only just banged the green-baize door of the servants' staircase when Miss Retcham approached the school-room.

"What was Nellie doing here?" demanded the governess.

Joy shivered a little. She was trapped. The telephone call had to be mentioned.

"She—er—Mrs. Mumphy rang up. Nothing important, though," she said.

Miss Retcham gave a violent start.

"Mrs. Mumphy—Mrs.—why—good gracious! Bird-like eyes, faddish, reddish hair," she murmured, half-aloud.

Joy held her breath.

"H'm!" mused Miss Retcham, and sat down at the table. "I wonder what she wants—I just wonder! That is certainly queer." Then she turned to Joy. "And now, how have you been wasting

your time? The old story, I suppose, about the mice playing?" she asked, with a grim, humourless smile.

Joy went a little pink and shifted her position.

"Do not suppose, Joy, that just because you have been invited that you will necessarily go to this party," said Miss Retcham. "Your conduct of late has not been exemplary."

Joy's heart thumped; for the governess' words had made it quite clear what line she would take if she found out that Joy had been out of the house.

And Mrs. Mumphy would make it her business to sneak.

"Apparently there is to be a clown at the party this afternoon," said Miss Retcham. "Really people spend too much money amusing youngsters. Clowns, television—"

"Television?" said Joy eagerly.

The more she heard about the party the more exciting it sounded; it would be one of the best parties ever.



"In my young days," said Miss Retcham, "a magic lantern was a novelty."

"But electricity hadn't been invented then, Miss Retcham," remarked Joy, just to be chatty.

Miss Retcham glared. "Indeed, are you so ignorant that you do not know that there has been electric lighting for nearly a hundred years? Or are you being insulting, Joy?"

"Oh dear! I mum-mean, no—no wireless," stammered Joy.

And then, glancing out of the window, she went rigid.

For down the drive came Mrs. Mumphy, head in air.

When Joy looked back, her cheeks pale, Miss Retcham noticed.

"Good gracious! Joy, what is the matter?" she asked.

Joy swallowed hard.

"I—I—" she muttered.

She gripped the table hard. In a moment the doorbell would go. Miss Retcham could hardly refuse to see the busybody, and then the fat would be in the fire.

"Oh dear! I hope I haven't caught anything," said Joy feebly.

She wondered if she could create a commotion so that Miss Retcham would be too busy to see visitors.

"Caught anything? There is whooping cough in the village," said the

governess. "There is usually some complaint at this time of the year—"

The word stirred Joy's thoughts.

"Complaint? Oh yes! Why, Mrs. Mumphy has some complaint," she said.

"Mrs. Mumphy?" exclaimed Miss Retcham. "But how could you have caught some complaint from her?"

Joy could not admit that she had seen Mrs. Mumphy that morning; but, luckily, they had both seen her the previous morning, when shopping in the village.

"In the shop yesterday," said Joy.

Miss Retcham, lost in thought, suddenly gave a jump.

"Oh dear, oh dear! This is terrible! Joy, go to bed at once! I will get the doctor."

Joy blinked, for she had not expected such a violent reaction as this.

"Go to bed?" wailed Joy.

There seemed no escape, for Miss Retcham took her firmly by the arm. But as they entered the corridor the parlourmaid appeared.

"Mrs. Mumphy, miss," she said. "Mrs. Mumphy has got a complaint and—"

"There!" cried Joy wildly. "What did I say?"

Miss Retcham frowned upon the maid.

"Am I a doctor?" she said. "Go to Mrs. Mumphy and tell her, with my compliments, to attend Dr. Spurge. I do not want to be involved in any scene with Mrs. Mumphy. I regard her as a busybody, in any case—"

A strangled cry came from the far end of the corridor.

There stood Mrs. Mumphy in person. "Miss Retcham," she screeched, "did I hear you call me a busybody?"

The governess waved her hand impatiently.

"If you had not mounted the stairs in this most unusual manner—"

"Good gracious!" said the appalled Mrs. Mumphy. "What impertinence! And did I hear you tell me to keep away from this house?"

"Until you are better," said Miss Retcham.

Mrs. Mumphy could take a hint.

"Very well I will go," she said in trembling tones. "I will go—and I shall be very glad not to return here! But the matter will not end here, Miss Retcham. I see now why Joy is so im-

pertinent, why she mixes with common people. It is your influence—"

Miss Retcham went quite white.

"Show Mrs. Mumphy the door," she said to the parlourmaid, and whisked Joy back into the school-room until such time as Mrs. Mumphy had departed.

Two minutes later Joy was taken along to the bed-room, where she proceeded to prove that her temperature was normal, her pulse was normal, her tonsils unaffected—in short, that there was nothing wrong with her.

"Odd!" said Miss Retcham. "Do you feel any pain anywhere?"

"No, no, none!" said Joy sweetly.

"I feel perfectly well. I think perhaps—perhaps it was the sight of Mrs. Mumphy coming up the drive. She—she rather frightens me."

Miss Retcham gave a little start.

"Ah! That may be so. She was rude to you once. H'm! Yes, I shall have to see that she does not come into contact with you."

"Yes, Miss Retcham," said Joy, heaving a sigh.

"But what on earth made her come here?" wondered the governess. "Just because she has a complaint—why consult me?"

It was puzzling. The woman appeared to Miss Retcham to be eccentric. And yet, had not the gipsy given warning?

Despite her prejudices, Miss Retcham was forced to admit that the gipsy girl had had a dazzling glimpse into the future.

"I rather fancy we shall hear from Mrs. Mumphy again," she said.

And that was what Joy rather feared, too.

Twenty minutes later she knew that the fear was justified. Mrs. Mumphy, she learned, had left a note to her grandfather, explaining everything!

Joy went hollow inside. For now it certainly was all U.P. And Miss Retcham would learn why she had turned pale, and just what Mrs. Mumphy's complaint was.

There would be no party, then, however clever she was!

"Buried Gold!"

DIRECTLY after lunch Miss Retcham went up to her room. It was her usual practice to stay there until half-past two, and Joy knew that, as her governess lived her

"LOOK," said Joy. Her governess did look—and nearly fell out of the window as she saw Mrs. Mumphy digging up the lawn! Nakita's ingenious little scheme was working out well.



life according to the clock, she was free until that time.

She needed to be free, for now more clearly than ever she saw that there was to be very big trouble ahead. In some way she would have to wriggle out of it.

All through luncheon Joy had been thinking, and a daring idea had slowly unravelled itself in her mind. To put it into operation she had to become Nakita again.

There was some risk in that, for, if Miss Retcham should leave her study earlier than usual, she would start a search for Joy, and find that she was missing!

Joy took the chance. She changed swiftly as Nakita, slipped out of the house, leaving Tinker behind, and went at once to the public telephone booth along the lane.

Slipping twopence into the box, she called Mrs. Mumphy.

The harsh voice answered.

"Oh, ma," said Joy in altered tone, "can you come along to see Mr. Sharpe at the Gables?"

"What? Yes—at once!" came the snapped reply. "I certainly will!"

Nakita stepped out of the box and moved along the lane towards the bottom of the hill leading to Mrs. Mumphy's house.

It was only a moment later that Mrs. Mumphy came down the road, and Nakita, with her back to her, started waving frantically to someone supposed to be in the wood.

Mrs. Mumphy halted. Joy's guess that she would stop and watch could hardly be wrong. Mrs. Mumphy would not have missed this for a fortune.

"Ooo—Miss Retcham!" called Nakita in a hoarse, confidential tone.

Mrs. Mumphy walked softly forward, and then, as Nakita disappeared into the wood, quickened her step.

She could hear the gipsy girl's voice addressing Miss Retcham, and then another voice whispering in reply, the words inaudible.

As Mrs. Mumphy, pressing forward intently, heard what was said she sharply drew in her breath.

"So—caught?—Trapped?" she exclaimed. "Luck has smiled on me at last. This, I think, will be the end of that Miss Retcham."

And she almost ran on to the Gables.

Joy, BREATHING hard, tapped on the door of Miss Retcham's room. She had returned to the Gables at her best speed and broken her own record for changing back from Nakita to Joy.

The governess, busy at her table, looked up.

"What is it?" she said testily.

Joy opened the door.

"Oh, Miss Retcham," she said, "there's someone digging up the lawn under the cedar-tree!"

"What!" cried the governess sharply.

"I think it's Mrs. Mumphy!"

Miss Retcham leaped up and went to the window. One look she gave, then shrieked, snatched her coat from behind the door, and hurried it on.

"Indeed—digging up our lawn!" she said in fury.

Downstairs she raced, with Joy behind her. But they had been forestalled. The gardener was already accosting Mrs. Mumphy when they arrived.

"You can't do that there here," said the gardener. "Stop it!"

"Silence, man!" said Mrs. Mumphy. "You doubtless do not know why I am

doing this. I am looking for a thousand pounds' worth of ornaments."

"What—here!" gasped the gardener.

"Here," said Mrs. Mumphy. "And I want you to be witness."

"You wait till the master comes back—" began the gardener, and then broke off as a car swept through the gateway and came to a halt. "Here he is, too! Now you'll cop it!"

Joy's grandfather had halted his car just inside the gates, and, utterly amazed by what he saw, he approached, raising his hat to Mrs. Mumphy.

"Good-afternoon!" he said. "Er—are you uprooting this tree? I do not remember giving permission for it to be transplanted."

"I am not digging up the tree; I am digging up gold," said Mrs. Mumphy.

"What—under this tree? Gold—"

"Gold idols and things," said Mrs. Mumphy. "You will be anxious to know how they got here?"

"Well, yes. But—"

"Then ask Miss Retcham."

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Joy's grandfather turned as Miss Retcham herself arrived with Joy. The governess wore a look of mingled surprise and rage.

"Mrs. Mumphy, what are you doing?" she demanded.

"Ah, so you are brazen enough to carry it off!" said Mrs. Mumphy.

"Kik-carry what off?" asked the governess.

"Do you deny that you have hidden gold under this tree? Do you deny that you have purloined your employer's valuable Eastern idols and buried them here?" demanded Mrs. Mumphy.

Miss Retcham gaped. Joy's grandfather blinked.

"You—you are accusing me of stealing—of stealing and burying things here?" cried Miss Retcham hoarsely.

"Why, great goodness, I—I'll have you arrested! How dare you!"

Mrs. Mumphy gave the spade to the gardener.

"Dig, man, and go on digging until you find the hoard! I heard this woman say—that she buried the things here—she and her confederate! I just heard them discussing it in the lane!"

"What? I haven't been in the lane for hours!" said Miss Retcham.

"Denial is useless! I saw you!" snapped Mrs. Mumphy.

Miss Retcham turned to Joy.

"Fetch the parlourmaid! She is witness that I have been in my room! This is preposterous!"

Joy's grandfather looked blankly bewildered.

"Why should Miss Retcham bury the things here, even supposing for one lunatic moment that she would stoop to theft?" he asked.

"So that the gipsy girl could come at night and dig them up. Miss Retcham was talking to her in the lane ten minutes ago—just after you phoned to ask me to come here."

"I? I haven't telephoned you!" gasped Joy's grandfather.

Mrs. Mumphy nearly tore her hair.

"Do you think I am barmy?" she hooted.

No one answered, but the gardener put his tongue in his cheek.

"Oh, very well," said Mrs. Mumphy—very well! I didn't hear Miss Retcham talking to the gipsy girl in the lane!"

"What was I wearing?" asked the governess.

Mrs. Mumphy shrugged her shoulders.

"I did not actually see you," she admitted, after a pause. "But I heard your voice—just as I heard Joy's voice—"

"Joy, too, now!" said Miss Retcham. "Did you see her?"

"I did not see her, no! But I heard her voice."

Joy's grandfather coughed.

"Er—um—er—I think we will dig later. Mrs. Mumphy," he said. "I am indebted to you for your endeavour, but I feel that you have blundered. Possibly you heard a voice that sounded like Miss Retcham's, and another like Joy's. Possibly you jumped to conclusions."

"Possibly!" sneered Miss Retcham.

Mrs. Mumphy looked dazed. She opened and shut her mouth, and then, red in the face, she swung round and stamped to the gates.

The gardener filled in the earth, and Miss Retcham insisted on Joy's grandfather's idols and objets d'arts being checked. They were all there.

"That woman," she said—"how could she imagine she heard my voice—and Joy's, too! Really! And talking to the gipsy girl! Ah!" she ended.

"Ah!" said Joy anxiously.

"Yes, I have it! I must have mentioned that the gipsy girl warned me of the quarrel, and this is her revenge. That horrible, spiteful woman! Joy, I do not want you to speak to her again! I will give orders, with your permission," she added to Joy's grandfather, "that she does not enter this house again."

That permission was granted.

"Let that be a lesson to you, Joy! Never jump to conclusions!" said Miss Retcham.

"No, Miss Retcham," said Joy.

"Go to the school-room! Time has been wasted, and you will have to start dressing for the party soon," said Miss Retcham.

Joy Sharpe suffered no pangs of conscience at the party. It was a grand affair. There was a clown, there was television, a wonderful buffet, and prizes and presents.

It was a party she would not have missed for worlds—and yet how nearly she had missed it!

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

BE sure to meet our irrepressible fun-maker again next week. She'll be here once more, as full of mischief as ever.