

"THE LONELIEST GIRL IN THE SECOND!"

Dramatic LONG COMPLETE  
story of Cliff House School  
inside.

# THE SCHOOLGIRL

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EVERY SATURDAY

Incorporating  
"SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN"



## THE PERFECT FAIRY PRINCESS!

Little Dolores Essendon was certain to be the "star" of Babs & Co.'s play.

An appealing Long Complete story of the Cliff House Chums, featuring the youngest



### Trying to Force Mabs' Hand!



"DOLORES ESSENDON!" golden-haired Mabel Lynn said, with

decision, and looked at the five girls who surrounded the table in Study No. 4 in the Fourth Form corridor of Cliff House School.

"Are we agreed?"

"Rather, Mabs!" said her great chum, Barbara Redfern, captain of the Fourth.

"You really mean, Mabs, you're going to give little Dolores the chance?" Marjorie Hazeldene asked, her soft, brown eyes aglow.

"Well, who else?" laughed Barbara Redfern. "Who could possibly fill the bill like little Dolores? The kiddie's got dancing in her blood. I was watching her yesterday in the Second Form Room, and—well, there's something in the way Dolores dances—so fairy-like, somehow, that she just selects herself."

"But does she?" Tomboy Clara Trevlyn asked. "What about Eunice Hunter? Mabs, didn't you promise Eunice's sister that Eunice could have the part?"

Mabel Lynn paused at that. Leila Carroll and Jemima Carstairs, who were the other two members of the committee of Cliff House School's Junior Dramatic Society, gazed at her quizzically. For a moment a little cloud overshadowed Mabs' face, then she shook her head.

"No," she replied. "I never promised Helen Hunter anything. When Helen heard that Lord Courtfield had asked me to produce the sketch at Courtfield Towers she did mention Eunice, and I said that when we went into the matter I'd bear Eunice in mind. But I never made any actual promise."

"Eunice can dance, of course; but she's not in the same street as Dolores. Marjorie, will you come with me to see Dolores, as you're her special heroine? I don't think we'd all better go. The little thing might be nervous if six of us descended on her."

Marjorie gladly arose at once. The others nodded. A wise and considerate move, that, for little Dolores Essendon, the youngest, the shyest, the most shrinking little girl in the school's lowest Form—the Second, Lower

Division—was rather apt to be overwhelmed in the company of older girls.

Even Marjorie, whose heroine she was, and who probably knew the mite better than any other girl in the school, was regarded by Dolores with awe. Dolores, after all, was not yet nine, and very, very young for her age, and Marjorie fifteen—or nearly.

But there was no mistake that Dolores was the girl they required.

The whole committee—which had met in Study No. 4 to discuss matters—was most enthusiastically unanimous on that point.

Mabs ought to know, anyway, for it was Mabs who had written the play; Mabs who, as usual, was producing it.

Until yesterday there had been no urgency to get a move on with the concert, end of term still being some

is such a sweet little thing—so serious, so lonely, too! Most of the other girls in the Form seem so much older than she, that she's too shy to mix with them, and she is left rather severely alone. And you know, Mabs, she does think an awful lot of you!"

Mabs smiled.

"And I," she said, "of her. But here we are!"

What a lovable kiddie little Dolores Essendon of the Second Form was! Sweet, fairy-like, very, very young for her age, she hadn't an enemy in the world until a bullying older girl set out to put her Form-mates against her. Then came difficult times for little Dolores. Barbara Redfern & Co. of the Fourth did all they could to help her, but even so . . . . .

weeks off. Somehow, however, news regarding the sketch had percolated to the world outside Cliff House, and one of the people who had got to hear of it was Lord Courtfield, a friend of Barbara Redfern's.

It was he who had suggested to Mabs that the cast should give a preliminary performance next week at Courtfield Towers, where his youngest daughter, Lady Anne Courtfield, was to give a house party to celebrate her eighth birthday.

Mabs, earnestly enthusiastic producer as she was, had jumped at the chance, of course.

"Oh, Mabs, it's awfully sweet of you to give Dolores a chance!" Marjorie breathed, as they made off to the Play-room, by which name the Second Form Common-room was known. "Dolores

She halted outside the door of the Play-room, which the two divisions of the Second Form used together. She knocked. A voice from behind the door piped "Come in, please!" and Mabs and Marjorie entered. And at once a silence fell.

"Hallo, kiddies!" Mabs laughed.

There were, perhaps, a dozen small juniors in the room. Dolores Essendon, big-eyed, black-haired, was among them. As usual, she sat by herself in one corner, paying no attention to the activities of the girls about her, and they apparently caring not one whit for her.

Most of them had been either playing games, or drawing on odd scraps of paper. Little Dolly Drew, indeed, was working on a house of bricks, but Dolores was carefully dressing a doll.

girl in the school.

By  
**HILDA RICHARDS**

Illustrated by T. LAIDLER.



# Loneliest Girl in the SECOND!

Dolores was the only girl in Cliff House who still played with dolls. She was also the only one who still clung with implicit faith to the truth of fairy tales.

"Oh, hallo!" Eunice Hunter, the first to find her voice, said. "Do—do you want me, Mabel?" she asked eagerly.

"Not this time," Mabs returned. "I want Dolores. Dolores," she said softly, and the child, looking up, smiled embarrassedly. "Now, kiddy, don't look scared; I'm not going to eat you! Dolores," she added, "how would you like to dance in our play?"

"At Courtfield Towers," Marjorie enticingly put in.

Large became Dolores' dark blue eyes. From china-pink to beetroot-red the colour in her face changed. It was easy to see that Mabs, with the very first words, had scored a direct hit. If there was one thing intended to make Dolores forget herself and banish her self-consciousness, that word "dancing" was it.

Dolores came of a world-famous dancing father and mother. She had dancing in her blood.

"Oh, Mabel! Me?" she cried.

"Yes, of course!"

"And—and can I wear shoes with red heels?" Dolores asked breathlessly.

"Yes, and a lovely fairy dress," Mabs laughed. "And a wand with a silver star on top—just like the real fairies, you know. We'd like you to come along and practise now," she added.

"But what about me?" Eunice Hunter cried, coming forward.

"You, Eunice?"

"Yes, me!" Eunice looked so indignant that she was almost on the verge of tears. "My sister Helen told me that I was going to dance in your play," she shrilled protestingly, "and it's not fair to ask Dolores first. After all, I am older than Dolores," she said defiantly—

and she was, for if Eunice hadn't been such a duffer and a dunce she would have been transferred to the Lower Third a term ago—"and my sister Helen is a prefect. If you give Dolores that place I shall tell Helen, so there!"

There was a murmur of sympathy from her Form-fellows. Dolores shrank back a little.

Mabs, regarding Eunice, shook her head.

Very defiant and very truculent Eunice looked. She was strangely like her sister Helen of the Sixth, save in the plumpness of her face. There was the same slyness in her eyes, the same pouting curl to her lips, the same unhealthy pallor in her cheeks.

Because of her age, and because of her size, she was rather acknowledged the leader of the Second Form, and was accustomed to having her own way.

"Now, Eunice, please!" Mabs pleaded. "I never promised Helen anything. I just said that I'd bear you in mind when we had a meeting, and—well, we've had the meeting, you know, and the meeting has decided that Dolores shall have the part."

"But she can't dance like I can!" Eunice pouted.

"Eunice, really you must let us be judges of that," Marjorie said gently.

"She's only a silly baby!" Eunice glowered, red-faced.

"Dolores, come along," Mabs said, and took that kiddy's suddenly hot hand. "Eunice, that's enough!" she rapped sharply. "Please don't make a scene over nothing!"

And tugging Dolores, who still hugged her doll, by the arm she marched towards the door.

There was a momentary silence as the door closed. Everyone in the room was looking then at Eunice, some with sym-

pathy, most with uneasiness, some with positive fear.

"The—the cat!" she broke out. "She's got my place—my place! It was promised to me. She—she—" and while her chest rose and fell she glared at her frightened Form-mates. "But she's not going to have it!" she vowed shrilly. "I'll jolly well see that she doesn't have it! I'm going to see my sister!"

She flounced towards the door. The Second Formers uneasily gave way to her. Out through the doorway her small frame raged.

Meantime Dolores, Mabs and Marjorie had reached Study No. 4.

"Well, here we are," Mabs said cheerfully. "Come in, Dolores, dear, and there is no need to be nervous, you know. Babs, have you got a copy of the script?"

"Here we are," Babs said cheerfully.

"Right-ho! Now where's the page? Dolores, sit down, dear—next to Jemima there. Now then! There are a few lines that go with the part. You'd like to say a few lines in the play, wouldn't you?"

"Yes please, Mabel," Dolores said earnestly.

"But you won't forget to learn them?" Mabs asked with a shade of anxiety. "I suppose you can learn lines?"

"Oh, yes," Dolores said proudly. "I know 'There are Fairies at the Bottom of our Garden' ever so well. And 'Christopher Robin'!"

"Friend of yours, what?" Jemima Carstairs beamed.

"Oh, no," Dolores said seriously. "He's just a little boy we learn poetry about. I don't really know him."

Jemima sighed. Mabs shook her head.

"Well, that's not quite what I—"

she began, when Marjorie threw her a warning look. "Oh, what were you saying, Marjorie?"

"I said," Marjorie replied, though she hadn't said anything, "that we'd all like to hear Dolores recite 'There are Fairies' and 'Christopher Robin.' It will give her confidence," she whispered aside to Mabs, "and help her to understand what she's got to do."

Mabs nodded. She felt ashamed of herself for not having thought of it. Of course Marjorie was right. Trust Marjorie to understand.

And so while they all listened Dolores stood up and in her clear eager little voice repeated her poems. They all clapped, while Dolores glowed with pleasure.

"Something like that," Mabs said. "Now, Dolores, as you're so jolly good at Christopher Robin, let me hear you repeat some of the lines from this book. Now say this like I say it: 'Your Majesties, I come with good news.'"

"Yes," Dolores said. "'Your Majesties, I come with good news!'"

"Jolly nice," Mabs said. "Now for the next line. 'Let us all rejoice.'"

Dolores repeated it. The chums smiled.

"That's topping!" Mabs beamed. "When you say those words in the play, you know, you'll be dressed as a fairy princess. You'll dance on to the stage, stop before the king and queen—"

"Oh, a real king and queen?" Dolores asked in awe.

"Well, no," Mabs laughed. "Babs will be the queen, you see. Clara will be dressed as the king. Babs, you come here. Clara, you sit beside her. Now just pretend, Dolores, that they are the king and queen on their thrones. This door is the entrance to the stage. Now you're the fairy princess. Give Jemima your doll first!"

"Yes," Dolores said eagerly.

She had never played games with big girls before, and this sounded as if it was going to be delicious. Carefully she handed her doll to Jemima, who blinked down at it rather helplessly through the monocle she always wore.

Almost tremblingly Dolores went to the door as Mabs took her hand.

"Now," Mabs said, "we'll start. You dance your way in, Dolores. When you get to Babs and Clara, drop on your knees and then say—"

"Your Majesties, I come with good news," Dolores said eagerly.

"That's right! That's fine!" Mabs cried enthusiastically. "I say, she's got the hang of it already," she added, for Dolores' encouragement. "Now, Dolores—"

Dolores laughed. She had completely forgotten herself now. While the chums watched admiringly she raised herself on her toes. In a trilling little toe dance she quivered across the room, flung herself round once and in a curtsy that was the picture of childish grace, dropped before Babs and Clara.

"Your Majesties—" she piped.

Then crash! Dolores jumped. Round with a start the six Fourth Formers swung as the door burst open.

Helen Hunter of the Sixth scowled into the room.

"What's going on here?" she demanded.

Mabs flushed.

"Rehearsal," she answered, nettled.

"Anything wrong?"

"What are you doing with Dolores?"

"Dolores is taking part in the rehearsal."

"Oh!" Helen paused. Her eyes

glittered. "And what about Eunice?" she asked. "Isn't she in it, too?"

The chums exchanged a glance. It was plain then what purpose had brought Helen Hunter on the scene.

"There is only one part," Mabs said steadily. "I think you rather misunderstood what I said about Eunice. That part," she added finally, "goes to Dolores."

Helen's eyes narrowed. She had understood perfectly, of course, that the dancing fairy part in the play would be determined by the committee, but Helen, having given the nod to Mabel Lynn, expected that Mabs would take the hint.

The prefect was rather proud of her younger sister's dancing, and Helen, with most pleasurable anticipation, had been looking forward to Eunice taking the fairy part in the play, simply because it would give her an excuse to get herself invited to Courtfield Towers.

Not yet had Helen succeeded in scraping acquaintance with the elite of the locality and Helen, by nature a toady and social climber, very badly wanted to get "in" with the worthy Courtfield aristocrats. Eunice had seemed her hope.

"I see!" she said now. Her lips came together. "Then Eunice is out of it, eh? All right! However, I didn't come to talk about that. I came to see Dolores. Dolores, where is the impot I gave you this morning?"

Dolores' eyes opened wide. "But, please, Helen, you didn't give me an impot!"

"Didn't I?" Helen's eyes narrowed. "Didn't I tell you to write out 'I must be quiet' twenty times, because you were making a row in the Second Form corridor? Where is it?"

"But, Helen, you didn't give me an impot!" Dolores tearfully protested. "And I wasn't making a noise in the Second Form corridor."

"Are you calling me a fibber?" Helen frowned.

"Oh, no, please, but—"

"Wait a minute!" Babs rose. There was contempt on her face. Easy enough to see that Helen had invented that crime and punishment on the spur of the moment. "Don't you think you're rather mean, Helen?" she asked.

"What? Barbara, how dare you interfere? Take fifty lines!"

"But—"

"Take a hundred! And speak," Helen snapped furiously, "when you're spoken to! Dolores, you will go back to the Play-room at once and write out those lines!"

"But what about the rehearsal?" Mabs demanded angrily.

"Bother your rehearsal! Dolores, do as I say!"

"Yes, Helen!" But Dolores' eyes filled with tears. "I—I—"

"And be quick about it!" Helen snapped.

"Yes, Helen; but Jemima has got my doll!" declared Dolores bluntly.

"Jemima, please—"

She took the doll from Jemima as that girl handed it to her. She threw a glance round the study—such a woeful, yearning glance that they all felt, somehow, as if they had betrayed her.

Grimly Helen stood by while Dolores went to the door. There she paused.

"Mabel, may—may I come back, please, when I've done the lines?" she asked wistfully.

"Why, of course—"

"When you've done those lines you'll bring them to me," Helen broke in irritably, "and I'll tell you then

whether you can come back or not. Eh? What was that you said, Clara?"

"I said," Clara repeated, red-faced, "that you're a cat!"

"Take fifty lines!"

"And I also said," Clara went on, unabashed, "that you ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourself!"

"Clara, how dare you? Take a hundred lines! And if any one of you dares to say another word I'll gate the lot of you," she added savagely.

The chums gazed at each other grimly as Helen swept out of the study.

"Sweet thing!" Jemima murmured.

"I've a jolly good mind to go to Miss Primrose!" growled Clara.

Mabs shook her head.

"What's the good?" she asked.

"Helen's within her rights. We've got no proof, after all, that she didn't give Dolores an impot. The cat is just upset because her sister is out of it, and this is how she's getting her own back! Still, never mind, there's plenty of time yet. We'll collect Dolores after tea and have another rehearsal. Yes, come in!" she added, as there was a tap at the door.

The door opened. The plumpish, rather unhealthy face of Eunice Hunter peered into the room. She smirked.

"Oh, I say, Mabel—"

"Well?" Mabs asked coldly.

"Will you want me to act the part, now you can't have Dolores? H-Helen said you might, you know."

"Did she?" Mabs' eyes glimmered. "Then you can go and tell Helen that she made a mistake! We can have Dolores, and we're jolly well going to have Dolores! Now scoot!"

"But what about—" hooted Eunice.

"Oh, scram!" Leila Carroll said contemptuously, and shut the door in the little sneak's face.

### Eunice Sets the Ball Rolling!



"I MUST be quiet! I must be quiet! I must—"

Little Dolores sighed as she looked up at the beloved doll which, perched up on the desk, gazed with glassy eyes at the work on which she was so painstakingly labouring.

The scene was the Second Form Play-room again, and it was ten minutes later.

Writing lines was not an easy task, even to those bigger girls in the middle school, who could dash them off swiftly. Twenty lines to little Dolores was a big task, especially as handwriting was Dolores' most backward subject.

But it had to be done. She sighed again. Really, it had been lovely in Study No. 4. She had been so deliciously enjoying herself. It was horrid of Helen to spoil things like that, and it was more dreadfully horrid to have told that fib about having given her these lines which she didn't deserve.

Dolores bent her head to her laborious task once more. She finished a line, and she looked up smiling at Peggy, the doll, as if for encouragement. Then the door came open.

Into the room strode Eunice Hunter, her face flushed, her eyes a-glitter. Straight to Dolores' desk she strode, and there, quivering with the wrath that was consuming her, suddenly flung out a hand.

"There!" she blazed.

And sweeping the doll from its perch on the ledge of the desk, she sent it crashing to the floor.

In a moment Dolores had jumped up with a cry. In a moment the rest of the girls in the Play-room had twisted round.

They had not seen the action which sent the doll crashing, and which lay now with its head smashed into three separate pieces. They had no idea of the quivering spite within Eunice, which, failing to find expression in words, had found it in that most spiteful and vindictive action.

But they saw Dolores—a transformed and utterly astonishing Dolores—who had risen from her seat; who, with a choking cry of bitter dismay, had suddenly jumped up, and—whiz!—had passionately aimed her sheaf of impot papers full into the face of the bully of the Second.

Even gentle, shy, and timid Dolores could, apparently, forget herself at times, though it is true that action had been blindly spontaneous.

Blow calls for blow. The destruction of the beloved doll, given to her as a parting present by her mother and father, and which had been Dolores' most cherished treasure, had called up some terrific impulse in the elf of the Second which never before had been given expression.

All the girls saw was Eunice staggering back, fighting off those sheets which scattered about her head; the flushed and fiery-eyed Dolores, with arm outstretched.

Then a cry went up. "Dolores!" "You—you—" choked Eunice, and, flaming, rushed to the attack again. "I'll pull your hair for that!" she shrieked. "I'll give you what for! You awful thing! You—"

And then Dolores cried aloud as, suiting action to threat, Eunice grabbed a handful of her hair and viciously tugged.

"Oh, don't!" Dolores cried, twisting round. "You're hurting! You're—" The door came open, but in that moment of excitement nobody saw the fat, bespectacled figure which stood there. The figure was that of Bessie Bunter of the Fourth Form, Babs' chum, and co-sharer of Study No. 4, with herself and Mabel Lynn. She blinked.

"Here, I say, stop that!" she cried wrathfully. "Eunice, you little wretch, I—"

"Say you're sorry!" Eunice cried, still tugging at Dolores' hair.

"I—I won't!"

"Say—"

"Here, you know," Bessie said, and ambled across the floor. "Eunice, you little bully, let her go!"

And plump Bessie indignantly grabbed Eunice, who turned with a scream, and, lunging out, viciously hacked Bessie on the shins. Up from Bessie went a yell. In sudden agony she staggered back. Crash went the blackboard as she reeled against it, and up from Chrissie Wadhurst arose a frenzied howl as the board, toppling from the easel, clumped upon her toe.

Chrissie, stung by the pain of the moment, blindly grabbed up a handful of chalk, passionately aiming it at Bessie. Missing Bessie, the chalk rushed on to rain about Jessie Smithers' head. It was Jessie's turn to shout.

And then—what a shindy! The normally peaceful Play-room became bedlam all at once! Caught by the infectious spirit of sudden battle, all the girls joined in.

A shower of missiles flew from one end of the room to the other. Everybody was shrilling, shrieking; everybody roused to the highest pitch of excitement.

It would have been strange indeed had

the uproar not brought authority on to the scene.

It did! It came in the shape of Miss Bullivant, who furiously flung open the door and as furiously recoiled as a rag ball intended for Thelma Beare by little Ivy Finch, smote her full on the nose. Then—

"Children!" she quivered. As if the combatants had all been turned to stone, strife ceased.

A dismayed shudder ran through the whole assembly.

"My—my word!" Miss Bullivant gasped, and came into the room. "Bessie, get up there. How dare you make yourself look ridiculous? I presume," she added, her needle-like eyes beginning to glint, "that you are the cause of this disturbance?"

"Oh crumbs, no, Miss Bullivant!"

"What are you doing here?"

"Well, I—I just looked in, you know," the dear old plump duffer said feebly. "I—I happened to be passing the door, and—and I heard a row. I dud-didn't start it, Miss Bullivant! I only came in to—to keep order, you know."

"I cannot congratulate you upon your success," the mathematics mistress said tartly. "Eunice, you are the oldest girl in the Form. What do you know about this?"

"Well, it was Dolores! She threw her lines at me," Eunice said defensively.

"Dolores!" Dolores, her broken doll in her arms, faced up.

"Please, Miss Bullivant, Eunice broke my doll."

"Oo, the fibber!" Eunice cried, in shrill indignation. "Miss Bullivant, I didn't! She did it herself!"

"I see!" Miss Bullivant frowned. "The quarrel arose between you and Dolores," she said. "I cannot imagine for one moment, Eunice, that Dolores



**LITTLE** Dolores had just finished her dance when the door opened. Helen Hunter of the Sixth scowled in. She had come to make trouble because Dolores had been given the part in the play she had wanted her own sister to have

would break her own doll. You will write out fifty lines 'I must behave in the Play-room.' All you other girls, for being involved in this disgraceful scene, will write the same sentence twenty times each. Bessie, as you seem to have blundered into this without intending to make mischief, I will excuse you, but please remember I do not like older juniors interfering in the affairs of the Second Form. You may go!"

"Oh crumbs! Th-thank you, Miss Bullivant!"

"And please," Miss Bullivant added, "let there be no more noise here."

She rustled out, Bessie going with her. Then there was silence as the flushed and dismayed combatants took stock of themselves. Dolores, on her hands and knees, was picking up the broken pieces of her shattered doll, doing her best to stem those tears which seemed to be welling up from her bursting heart.

Dolly Drew groaned.

"Twenty lines!" she grumbled. "Oh dear, I've got twenty lines!"

"And what about me?" Eunice flamed. "I've got fifty! And who got them for me? That cat there!" She pointed a finger at Dolores. "She started this—"

"I—I didn't!" gasped Dolores indignantly.

"Yes, you did! You threw your papers at me. It was the papers which hit your silly doll, wasn't it? It was you who broke your silly doll, and then blamed it on to me! And a fine thing you've done for all of us, haven't you?" she added scornfully. "We've all got lines because of you, while you get off free. Look at her!"

The Form was looking at her. Dolores, the shattered Peggy in her arms, stood tremblingly but bravely facing them.

Size and age gave Eunice dominance. The fact that she was the sister of a prefect also invested her, in the unprobing minds of the Second Formers, with some authority.

Bully and spiteful sneak as she was, the whole Form was rather scared of Eunice Hunter, and Eunice, out of the very fear the Form held for her, was always sure of getting her own way.

Apart from that, however, the Form at this moment was smarting under the punishment which it had received.

"Beastly sneak!" Eunice said scornfully.

"I—I'm not!"

"Yes, you are! You got us the lines! Look at her," she said derisively, "hugging that silly dolly! Now she's going to cry, aren't you, little sneak?"

"No, I—I'm not!" Dolores said, in a voice choked with tears.

"Cry-baby!"

Dolores glanced at her. She glanced at the stern faces of her Form-fellows. Tremblingly she bit her lip. She knew in another moment she would burst into a flood of tears. But she wasn't—she wouldn't let Eunice have the satisfaction of seeing that!

She dashed towards the door.

"Where are you going?" Eunice cried, trying to head her off.

But Dolores did not reply. She reached the door and wrenched it open. Gasping, she hurled it to behind her as she leapt into the corridor. Trying nobly to keep the bursting sobs back, she blundered blindly along, her little heart filled to wretched and most fulsome overflowing.

Then suddenly a hand stretched out.

"Dolores! Dolores dear, what is the matter? And, my gracious, your dolly!"

And she looked up into the kind, gentle face of Marjorie Hazeldene.

Dolores, though she desperately tried to fight it off, had to cry then. In a great quivering gulp, accompanied by a flood of tears, the answer came:

"Oh, Marjorie—Marjorie, they—they all hate me so! Oh, Marjorie!"

### The Unkindest Deed of All!



"WELL, here we are, Dolores!" Marjorie said brightly. "Who said all the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put Humpty-Dumpty together again? Not," she added, with a merry laugh, "that we ought to compare sweet little Peggy with Humpty-Dumpty! What do you think of her?"

Dolores' big eyes shone.

"Oh, Marjorie, she doesn't look as if she's been broken at all!" she breathed ecstatically.

And Peggy, otherwise the broken doll, certainly did not. Thanks to the tube of china glue Marjorie always kept by her, and thanks to her skill in little accidents of this sort, the three broken fragments which had formed dolly Peggy's face were assembled once again in all their smiling, red-cheeked glory.

Dolores' eyes were filled with delight as she took her beloved Peggy from Marjorie's hands, as carefully she drew its little silk shawl around it. She was very, very much a child.

"Oh, Marjorie," breathed Dolores, "I do think you're clever! Will you teach me how to mend dollies some time?"

"Of course!" Marjorie said fondly. "Just whenever you like, Dolores. But now," she added, "I'm going to teach you those lines you have to learn for Mabel Lynn's play, and after you've said them through for me we'll have a little rehearsal all on our own. We—"

And she started then as a knock came at the door. The handle rattled, and Helen Hunter came in. "Oh!" she added, rising.

"Dolores!" Helen rapped.

"Oh dear! Oh, yes, Helen, please?" Dolores said apprehensively.

"Have you done those lines?"

Dolores bit her lip.

"Well, I did most of them," she said, "and I would have done them all, but—but there was a fuss in the Play-room, and—and—"

"I know! I've heard all about that!" Helen sneered. Marjorie, watching her, felt her anger mount. "But that doesn't explain away those lines! Get off, and do them now! And this time," she added spitefully, "you can make them thirty!"

Dolores' lips parted in dismay. Marjorie flushed.

"Helen, please," she begged, "can't you let her off—just this once?"

"And who," Helen glared, "asked you to butt in? Take fifty yourself! Now, Dolores, get out of it—at once!" she added angrily.

Dolores gave her a scared glance. Marjorie stiffened a little. Very, very rarely did Marjorie lose her temper, but she was dangerously near then to telling Helen Hunter exactly what she thought of her. She probably would have done, indeed, but for the beseeching "please-Marjorie-don't-get-yourself-into-a-bother" look which Dolores fixed upon her as she nervously shuffled towards the door.

She returned to the Play-room and got on with her lines, very conscious of the hostile stares of the other Second Formers. Eunice Hunter made several jibing remarks, but Dolores took no

notice. Then Miss Gilbey, the mistress of the Second, came in.

The lines they had done for Miss Bullivant were collected. By this time it was their hour for bed. Led by Miss Gilbey, the little Second Formers marched up to their dormitory. Miss Gilbey stood aside while they all undressed, and some donned white nighties, some pyjamas.

"Now, children, your prayers!" she said.

Dolores put Peggy on the bed. Every night Peggy went to bed with Dolores, and so did something else—that cherished photograph of her father and her mother which was always kept by Dolores on the locker at the side of the bed.

A charming photograph it was, of a very beautiful woman and a handsome man.

Quietly she knelt down.

"And please God bless mummy and daddy and Peggy," she finished her little prayer. "And help me to be a good girl. Amen."

Miss Gilbey, hearing that, smiled very tenderly. She watched Dolores as she went to bed. First Peggy was laid down with most tender and reverent care. Then the photograph of daddy and mummy, which Dolores always tucked under the pillow. Then, finally, Dolores' fairy-like little self.

"All in bed now?" asked Miss Gilbey cheerily. "Now be very good, won't you? Good-night!"

She switched out the light. From Eunice Hunter's bed came a voice:

"Dolores!"

"Oh, yes, Eunice?"

"Good-night, cry-baby cat!"

Dolores, sighing, hugged Peggy closely to her. What an unkind girl Eunice Hunter was!

"POOR DOLORES! She looks as white as a sheet," Mabel Lynn said sympathetically. "And it's pretty obvious, Babs, that Helen Hunter's going to give her no peace. You've heard the latest, I suppose?"

"No," Babs asked. "What?"

It was after breakfast next morning, and Babs and Mabs were in Study No. 4, collecting their books for first lesson. Mabs had just returned from the Play-room.

"Well, Helen's making her do her lines again. Apparently there was a dirty thumb-mark on the sheet. That little sneak Eunice made the mark when she was collecting the sheet—at least, that is what Dolly Drew, who saw her do it, says."

Babs frowned.

It was pretty obvious now that Eunice was very much like her unpleasant sister. It was obvious, too, that both of them, disappointed because Mabs had not chosen Eunice for the part of the fairy princess in the play, meant to make life as miserable as possible for the successful little candidate for that honour.

"Oh, it's a beastly shame!" she broke out. "Helen just won't leave the kiddie alone. When she's not going for her that other little wretch is! It almost does seem, Mabs, as if they've made up their minds that Dolores shan't rehearse. Still, wait a minute," she added, her eyes suddenly glowing, "I've got an idea!"

"Yes?" Mabs asked.

"This afternoon is a halfer," Babs went on. "What about going into Courtfield and getting Dolores' dress? She'll just love that. And as it's such a lovely day, there's no reason why we shouldn't have tea in the woods coming back."

"I sus-say, that's a jolly good idea," Bessie Bunter beamed, coming into the study. "Shall we have sausages, too? Aunt Jones has just got a fresh lot in." "Sausages we will have," Babs agreed. "Bessie, you and Leila and Jimmy and Clara take the hamper off to the woods this afternoon. Mabs, Marjorie, and I are going to Courtfield with Dolores. We'll come back through the woods and meet you at the hollow oak. And a jolly good chance then," Babs glowed, "for having a rehearsal at the same time!"

Didn't Dolores love it—or the idea of it! How her big blue eyes shone when Mabs, getting hold of her just before lessons, whispered the pleasing news into her ear.

The spirit of Dolores, which had been rather troubled and distressed before that news, soared happily. She felt she had something big and tremendous to look forward to then.

Happily she returned to the ranks of the Second Form at assembly, happily she marched into class after assembly was over. Very proudly she tripped to her desk, unaware for the moment of the covert look which Eunice Hunter cast at her, not understanding the sneering snigger which came from her as she stepped into her own desk.

But a moment later she did understand. Standing quivering with indignation and horror, she stared down at the thing which at one blow tore her childish joy to shreds.

"Oh!" she cried in a stifled voice. For there, looking up at her, was the cherished photograph of her father and mother. But what a mutilation, what a caricature it presented now!

Ripped from its frame, it glared up at her, her father now boasting a moustache and beard in coloured crayons, with a clumsily drawn clown's hat upon his head, on which was written the word "Dunce." Her mother also with a moustache and wearing a pair of hideous spectacles on a nose which had been coloured red.

For one moment Dolores stood rooted in horror. Then, with swift fury shaking her frame, she spun round.

Instinctively she knew the author. In trembling anger she flung upon her.

"Eunice, you—you dreadful thing!" she panted. "You—you—"

Eunice scowled. "Here, don't you call me names, you little cat!"

"You—you did this!" And Dolores quiveringly held up the photograph. "You—you did it!"

"Ha, ha!" tittered Thelma Bearé. "I didn't do it!" Eunice lied.

"You did! You did! You know you did!" Dolores choked. The tears were near to her eyes then. "If you didn't, who did?" she panted.

"Why, you did, of course," Eunice sneered. "Aren't you always doing things like that? Look here, if you're trying to blame that on to me," she said, with a hot indignation, too patently put on to be convincing, "I'm jolly well going to tell my sister about you! You broke your own silly doll yesterday, and now—"

"Cave!" whispered a voice.

Dolores choked. With the photograph in her hand, she turned, biting her lip. That anyone could have been so callous as to do a thing like that! That anyone could mutilate the faces of her beloved mummy and daddy so!

Hot, stinging tears came welling into her eyes.

Then she became aware of Miss Gilbey standing beside her. Miss Gilbey who, without a word but with a sudden frown, gently took the photograph away from her.

Quietly she asked: "Dolores, who did this?" "I don't know! It—it was in my desk!" Dolores choked. Very angrily Miss Gilbey glanced at the Form. "Sit down, everybody," she said. "Dolores, you, too, my dear." She held the photograph up in front of the Form. "Does anyone know anything about this?" Silence! "Eunice!" Eunice stood up. "Did you do this, Eunice?" "No, Miss Gilbey," Eunice said glibly. "Did you, Thelma?"

No. 4 of our delightful Series for Your "Cliff House Album."

## CLIFF HOUSE PETS

Barbara Redfern's BRUTUS

When Barbara Redfern celebrated her twelfth birthday she received many presents, and among them was one which has since given her increasing pleasure and pride. The present was Brutus, her pet Golden Retriever!

Major Arnold Lynn, Mabel's father, was its donor, and it must be confessed that Babs at first was rather overwhelmed by the playful, long-legged puppy, for Babs had never had a dog of her own before. Nevertheless it was not long before Brutus became Babs' dearest possession.

From a rather ungainly puppy with an incurable streak of mischief and a worrying habit of chasing every cat he saw, Brutus grew up into a splendid, handsome, intelligent dog.

His golden coat is much admired wherever he goes: his affection and devotion to his mistress is equalled by only that of Alsatian Pluto for his mistress, Clara Trevlyn. Many are the prizes Brutus has won for his young mistress, and last year he was awarded the prize for the Best-Looking Dog not only at the Cliff House Pets' Show but also at the much bigger and much more important event at Courtfield.

High spirited and energetic, Brutus



never tires; not even after the most thrilling rabbit-hunt and cat-chasing day. If he has a fault in Babs' eyes it is just that tendency to chase cats—not, of course, that Brutus means cats any harm, but simply because Brutus cannot resist chasing anything that runs away from him. But you would think, wouldn't you that this cat-chasing tendency made Brutus look upon cats as some sort of enemy? You would? Then let me tell you a little secret. Brutus' best friend is—a cat!

The cat is Miss Primrose's grey tabby, Minnie. There is, I think, rather a nice little story to be told of the friendship between Brutus and Minnie.

Some time ago Miss Primrose became very worried because Minnie most unaccountably disappeared, and Babs, at the same time, became very worried, too, because good-tempered Brutus, who had never been known to be anything but playful and docile before, suddenly developed most astounding characteristics. He snarled when anyone came near his kennel. He actually attempted—or pretended to attempt—to bite Piper when he came to clean it out! Even at his own mistress, Babs, he growled! And when he was given meat or bones, he sulkily retreated into his kennel.

Poor Babs! Finally she ventured to clean Brutus' kennel herself.

And what do you think she found there? The missing Minnie, with a litter of six fat kittens gazing proudly from them to her kind protector, Brutus!

"Oh, please, no, Miss Gilbey." "But somebody did," Miss Gilbey said. "I mean to find out. You all know how Dolores treasured this photograph. Whoever has spoiled it like this has done a dreadfully wicked thing. If the girl who did it will own up now I promise to be lenient."

No reply. "Very well!" Miss Gilbey looked grim. "I will question you all in turn."

And she did. But in each case she received the same negative answer.

"I give the culprit one last chance," Miss Gilbey said. "I do not want to punish the whole form for the naughtiness of one girl, but I am determined to stop this sort of thing! One of you is guilty, and if that one has not the courage to own up and save the rest, I am afraid that I can do nothing else but detain you all. And that," she added, "would be dreadful on an afternoon which is half-holiday, wouldn't it? Now please—for the last time!"

### All Against Dolores!



"IT was that little cat! She got us into this!" Eunice Hunter said savagely.

"This is her artful way of paying us out for what happened in the Play-room yesterday. Of course, she messed up her silly photograph. I jolly well saw her doing it! And why? Just to get us all into this scrape!"

The faces of the diminutive Second glowered. They were neither at an age nor at a state of reasoning to work that out for themselves. Led and swayed by Eunice as they were, it did not occur to them that even if what Eunice said was true, Dolores Essendon must have a brain mightily above their own average to think up a plot like that.

The Second, indignant, upset, could only think, on a bright sunny afternoon like this, of what had befallen them as a result of Dolores' mutilated photo.

Feeling, resentful before against Dolores, was bitter now in the Second Form class-room.

"And just," Thelma Beare shrieked, "look at her now!"

She pointed to the class-room window. That window afforded a view of the sunny quadrangle and the green playing fields beyond.

Already girls were out on the playing fields, some, dressed for tennis, others ready for cricket practice, some still in the winter outfit of the hockey player. Some in gay frocks were already trotting off towards the gates, obviously bent on making the most of this glorious afternoon. Others were wheeling out cycles from the cycling sheds.

Galling, on such a day, to be in detention! But more galling when the presumed author of all their troubles was to be seen, as Dolores was to be seen now, joining in the happy freedom of the merry-makers outside.

For Dolores, looking more fairy-like than ever in a pretty frock of pink fastened with a white sash, had just tripped out of school, one small gloved palm resting in Marjorie Hazeldene's hand, and with beside her, Bessie Bunter and Leila Carroll, swinging a picnic hamper between them. The rest of the chums were there, too.

The Second saw her stop. They saw her laughing at some remark that Bessie made.

Jealous, glaring, they watched as Dolores, still laughing, tripped off towards the gates—Dolores happy then to feel herself free of her resentful Form-mates, even the tragedy of mummy's and daddy's photograph eclipsed by the promise of joys which the afternoon held.

"Swanky thing!" Eunice said bitterly. "Anybody would think she owned Marjorie and Babs. But wait till she comes back! We'll jolly well show her! Look at her!"

"No, please look at me," came a voice from the door, and they all jumped round, scuttling breathlessly for desks as Helen Hunter walked in. "All right, kids, sit yourselves down," Helen said. And even the Second wondered at the note of sympathetic cordiality in her voice. "Eunice, shut the door, will you?"

"Oh, yes, Helen," Eunice simpered.

The form sat still, wondering.

"I'm taking you in detention," Helen explained. "No, don't trouble to get out your books. You know, kids," she added, "I'm jolly sorry this has happened—and all because of that little sneak Dolores. I've tried to get you off with Miss Gilbey, but Miss Gilbey won't hear a word of it. All the same, it's a shame!"

The Second gulped, feeling sorrier for itself than ever. Such sympathy coming from such a high source of authority!

"And so," Helen said with a smile, "I'm going to do my best to let you down lightly. I'll read to you, shall I?"

"Oh, yes, please!" Thelma Beare put in eagerly.

"And afterwards," Helen smiled, "just to make up for what you're having to suffer now, you shall have a feed at my expense! Eunice, here's five shillings! Make sure that everyone enjoys herself!"

The Second blinked at that. They could hardly believe their good luck. Wasn't Helen just splendid! Wasn't Helen just the most adorable of all prefects! In a moment that vague terror with which she had always inspired them was swept away.

New worship of Helen automatically increased Eunice's prestige among them. And in contrast, Dolores, now painted as the ogre of the Form, sank to depths of scorn unutterable!

Yet the Form as a Form did not realise they were playing artful Helen's game. Only Eunice, who knew her sister, guessed that, and Eunice, after detention was over, tackled her sister straightforwardly on the point. Helen smiled.

"Leave things to me," she said. "You want to take Dolores' place in Mabel Lynn's play, don't you? Well, of course—and I want to go to Courtfield Towers at the same time! Do as I tell you, and everything will come out fine! Now listen!"

Eunice listened.

"Now about the feed for which I've given you the five shillings," Helen went on.

"Oh, I thought there was a catch in it! You want it back?" Eunice pouted.

"Don't be an idiot! I don't want it back! I want you to spend it—now. Take the Form along with you to do it. But I don't want you to have the feed in the Play-room. I want you to hold it in the dormitory to-night—you know, have a dormitory feed like the big girls do. And keep Dolores out of it! Understand?"

Eunice did. The mere suggestion filled her with joy. Copying the bigger girls of the school was a favourite pastime with the imitative Second—but never yet had they run the exhilarating risk of having a dormitory feed of their own—principally because Second Form pocket-money allowance did not permit of such reckless extravagances.

If anything was required to consolidate Eunice's position as the unquestioned leader of the Second, and to make the Second itself more excitedly thrilled than ever, that was it! A dormitory feed caught the imagination of them all!

"But remember," Eunice said, when breathlessly discussing the great adventure with her Form-mates, "there's going to be no feed for that beastly little cat Dolores! She's not in this!"

WHILE DOLORES, all unconscious of the happenings in her Form, was enjoying a very, very happy afternoon.

As with most kiddies of her age, the trying-on of new clothes had a tremendous thrill for little Dolores. Standing before the mirror at Hollands' Stores, in her new fairy dress, she could hardly speak for excitement. Told to stand still while the assistant pinned up the frock for the necessary alterations—to be later effected by Marjorie Hazeldene—she was almost dancing.

Her own reflection in that delicious garment set her feet absolutely twitching. Gone utterly, for the time being, her worries, her troubles, her awe of the bigger girls.

Mabs, Marjorie, and Babs smiled at each other as they watched her.

Happy, excited little Dolores! With what a sigh of regret she at last doffed the frock, now pinned and ready for alterations! How anxiously she watched as the smiling assistant carefully wrapped it in layers of tissue and placed it in the box which Dolores, in spite of the fact that the box was almost as big as herself, insisted upon carrying.

And then what a blue-eyed stare of delight when, going back through the woods, they happened upon Jemima, Bessie, Clara, and Leila at the Hollow Oak, with tablecloth laid on the grass

beneath the trees, with the kettle boiling away on the primus stove and beaming Bessie cooking sausages on a wood fire near by.

Ah, yes! A breathlessly rapturous afternoon for Dolores, all that! For the time being she was in another world. What a thrill, too, when nice Barbara allowed her to pour out the tea, and what a jolly, pealing laugh she let out when eager Bessie, leaning too far forward over the table, over-balanced and only saved herself by plop-flopping her plump right hand into the middle of the strawberry jam!

How funny it was when Jemima let her look through her monocle, and then just laughed and made funny remarks when she accidentally dropped it and broke it!

What fun afterwards, helping Marjorie to wash-up in the stream! And after that, with the last vestige of awe and self-consciousness now completely vanished in the big girls' company, the really great thrill of all! That was when Marjorie allowed her to don her pinned-up frock again, and Leila, who had brought her camera, insisted upon taking a snapshot of her.

Then the rehearsal in a glade of the woods, daintily tripping her steps to the tune of the portable gramophone which Jemima had brought along! How they all enjoyed that! The woodland glade seemed such a natural setting for such a fairy sprite!

But all over at last! The routine of school called. Though older girls were allowed out until seven o'clock, Cliff House laws decreed that Dolores should be within school bounds by six.

Reluctantly Dolores gave up the frock to Marjorie in Big Hall, and then, with her excited little mind still whirling with the wonder of the afternoon, feeling she really must tell somebody all about it, she darted off to the Play-room. Her face bright and radiant, she pushed open the door—and stopped, suddenly uncertain. For every girl in that room had turned at her entry. A deathlike silence descended. Amid that silence Eunice Hunter came forward.

"So you've come back, sneak!" she said unpleasantly, and, halting, stood in front of the hesitating little girl, her face twisting with spite. "Well, this is what you get for sneaking and crawling to that Fourth Form crowd!" she added, and suddenly darting out an arm, caught Dolores' shoulder and pinched. "Now then—"

"Oh!" Dolores cried. "Eunice, let go, please! You're hurting!"

"I hope I am!" Eunice said vengefully. "There! And there! Are you going to run after those Fourth Formers again?"

"Eunice, please!" Dolores cried, white with pain.

"Well, are you? Answer!" Pinch! "Answer now, you cry-baby!" Pinch! "Jolly well say 'No!'" And she pinched terrifically. "Say— Oh!"

She did not intend Dolores to say "Oh!" It was herself who said that as suddenly, sharply, with no little force, her hand was struck downwards by a girl who had swiftly entered the room.

And Marjorie Hazeldene, her gentle face quivering with anger, gazed at her in utter contempt.

"You cruel, horrid little thing, Eunice!" she said. "Why can't you leave Dolores alone? Dolores, my dear, come with me," she added gently, and while the Second reddened and Eunice's eyes gleamed her spite, she put a hand round the shaking shoulders of the youngest girl in the school and led her away.





“LET me go!” Dolores cried. “What are you doing to do?” The bully of the Form whirled her towards the door. “I’m going to throw you out!” she said spitefully. “Nobody wants you here!”

**Dolores Thrown Out!**



**D**OLORES ESSEN-DON, hugging her doll to her as she lay in bed, wistfully sighed.

It was ten o'clock that same night.

Long ago the school, except for a few prefects and mistresses, had retired. Had the Second Formers been doing all that was expected of them, they, too, would have been asleep. But the Second at this moment was having the giddiest time of its young life!

With great and breathless glee, the risky dormitory feed had been smuggled up to bed, Eunice, of course, giving all the orders. Giggling excitedly, the youngsters had got up, lit candles, spread the feed on Eunice's bed, and now, thrilling in the dare-devil realisation that they were doing something they had never done before, were squatting around the feast.

Only one member of their number was not included. That was Dolores!

From her own bed Dolores watched. Her little heart was full of admiration. Dolores, too, wanted to join in the fun of that feed—simply because it was such a fine thing to do, simply because it was such a new experience!

Here was the Second Form having a dormitory feed just like the big girls of the Fourth and Fifth.

Again Dolores sighed. If somebody would only speak to her! If somebody would only invite her! To think of something like this going on under her nose, and she not in it! She plucked up courage. She coughed. Nobody took any notice.

Dolores coughed again—louder this time.

“Thelma, have a tart,” Eunice invited. “Whoops, there! Pass one of those cream puffs, Chrissie! I say,

these are topping, aren't they? Like another apple, Dolly?”

“Oh, yes, please!” Dolly Drew piped excitedly.

Dolores bit her lip. She got out of bed, and timidly approached the group.

“Hallo!” she said.

Nobody took any notice.

“Could I have an apple, please?” Dolores asked nervously.

Eunice twisted round.

“Oh, ha, ha!” she jeered. “Look who's here? Push off, cry-baby!”

“But I want to be in the party, too,” Dolores said beseechingly. “Can I have a drink of ginger-beer, please?”

“No, you can't!” Eunice pouted, and then thought. She winked at her companions. “Oh, well,” she added, “perhaps just this once. Here you are, meany! Put that silly doll down and hold this glass.”

“Oh, yes!” Dolores cried eagerly.

She put the doll on the nearest bed. Eunice, with a grin, grabbed up a bottle of ginger-beer. Vigorously, while Dolores back was turned, she shook it up and down, causing the gassy liquid to generate terrifically.

Dolores took the glass.

“Here we are,” Eunice said, chuckling. “Kneel down, ninny. Now come nearer to me. You don't expect me to run after you, do you? Nearer.” She winked at her companions again, while Dolores, all smiles, held the glass forward.

Eunice chuckled. Dolores was within six inches of her then. Rapidly she unscrewed the cork, and at the moment it parted company with the bottle. She jerked the bottle towards Dolores' face.

The effervescing liquid shot out in a stream, and Dolores, spluttering, reeled back.

From Eunice went up a stifled shriek of laughter. From one or two of the others there came a titter. Only little

Dolly Drew and Ivy Finch looked sorry.

“Oh!” gasped Dolores. “Oh dear!” And she staggered up, and, blinded by the ginger-beer, groped for the washstand. “Oh, oh!” she gasped. “I—I'm all wet!”

“Ha, ha, ha! 'Nother ginger-beer, sneak-cat? How—” And then it was Eunice's turn to splutter—Eunice, who then jumped up with a howl. For Dolores, stung, hurt, had flung what ginger-beer had gone into the glass full into the sneering little bully's face.

Dolores hadn't meant to do it. Something stronger than herself had impelled that action. But now it was done she wasn't sorry; almost, indeed, she was glad. Defiantly she faced Eunice as that girl, spluttering furiously, sprang up; desperately, but unavailingly, she flung up her arms to ward Eunice off as that girl ferociously sailed towards her.

While the wondering, half-scared Second watched, Eunice laid two violent hands upon Dolores' shoulders.

“You—you beastly little spitfire!” she hooted. “You'll pay for that! Chrissie, open that door!”

“Let me go!” Dolores cried. “Oh dear! What are you going to do?”

“I'm going,” Eunice snapped, “to throw you out! As you can't jolly well behave in the dormitory, you can jolly well stand outside in the dark till we've finished! Nobody here wants you! Now then!” she said grimly, and, with a twirl, Dolores was pitched into the passage. “Now dare come in!” Eunice panted.

The door closed.

Dolores gulped. For one moment she was minded to attack the door. Then she paused, trembling a little. Very sad and very forlorn Dolores felt then. What a dreadful climax this to the lovely afternoon she had spent with nice Mabs and Marjorie and Barbara,

and all those clever girls from the Fourth Form! And what a dear Marjorie was compared with this horrid Eunice. If only Marjorie was here now!

Dolores longed with most dreadful yearning all at once for a friend she knew would be sweet; for somebody who understood, and wasn't afraid of Eunice like all those other girls were.

Just another moment Dolores paused. Hers was a nature which was guided by impulses. Thoughts of Marjorie somehow made the necessity for seeing Marjorie very vitally urgent all at once, and, thinking not at all of the length of dark corridor which lay between her and the Fourth Form dormitory, she hurried off.

She did not see the figure which at that moment had turned into the corridor from the Third Form end of the passage. The figure of Helen Hunter.

Helen, on her way to the Second Form dormitory to see how the baiting of Dolores was faring, had seen Dolores' expulsion. Unsuspectingly Dolores went off down the corridor. Silently Helen followed. In her own bed in the Fourth Form dormitory Marjorie Hazeldene, thinking of Dolores, was just in the act of falling asleep, when a pair of soft feet came padding across the floor, and a voice whispered her name. She started up.

"Who's that?"

"M-me," said a shaky little voice.

"Dolores!"

"Yes, Marjorie," Dolores whispered. "I—I"—and she stopped, realising that having arrived on the scene to which her impulse had guided her, she had no real reason to put forward for having come—"I—I—" She gulped.

"Dolores, what's wrong?" Marjorie said. She sat up, staring. "What's happened?"

"Eunice," Dolores gulped—"Eunice threw me out of the dormitory. Please, Marjorie, I don't want to tell tales about her, but she is a nasty horrid thing. Oh, Marjorie, can I sleep with you?"

But Marjorie, getting out of bed, shook her head at that. All the same, her heart was hot with anger against Eunice.

"Dolores, I'm sorry," she said gently. "You know it's not allowed. But look! There's an empty bed next to mine, and you can get in that. And when that dormitory feed is over, I'll take you back. Now, there, dear—is that comfy?" she added, as she tucked the little one up. "Don't worry any more about Eunice. Just think of that lovely frock. And do you know, Dolores, it's all ready for you. I've worked ever so hard this evening, and I've done all the alterations."

"Oh, Marjorie, aren't you clever!" Dolores sighed. "I—I do love you, Marjorie, ever so much."

Marjorie smiled tenderly. How young Dolores was for her years, and yet how sweet.

"Now you just lie still for a while and everything will be all right, dear," Marjorie said gently.

Meantime, Helen Hunter had presented herself in Miss Gilbey's study. That mistress, finishing her work for the night, looked quite startled at receiving such a late and unexpected visitor.

"Well, Helen, what's wrong?" she asked.

"I think you ought to know, Miss Gilbey," Helen replied smoothly, "that little Dolores Essendon is out of her dormitory. She is sleeping in the Fourth Form dormitory!"

## Sent to Coventry!



"DOLORES, please, my child! You know it is forbidden to leave your dormitory. Why did you come here?"

Miss Gilbey was very unsuccessfully trying to make her voice stern. It was so impossible to remember that she was a mistress, when the big, terrified blue eyes of the child were looking at her, when Dolores, hugging her beloved Peggy, formed such a fairy-like little figure in the middle of the Fourth Form dormitory.

Marjorie, anxious and flustered, was sitting up in bed with half the awakened and wondering Fourth Form looking on.

"But please, Miss Gilbey, I don't want to go back," Dolores said. "Can't I stop here—with Marjorie?"

"Dolores, I'm sorry—but no," Miss Gilbey said. "It's against the rules of the school. Why did you leave your own bed?"

Dolores stared at her again. Young as she was, she knew that it would be wrong to tell the real reason. She just said:

"Please, Miss Gilbey, I wanted to see Marjorie."

"Well, now you've seen her," Miss Gilbey said with a faint smile. "So please come back with me, Dolores. Really, you know, I can't have you keeping all these other girls awake."

Dolores threw a desperately beseeching look at Marjorie. But there was no help for it. Gently Miss Gilbey led the youngster towards the door, turned there for a moment with a "Good-night, girls, I'm sorry you've been disturbed," snapped out the light and went out, Dolores, thinking of Marjorie, obediently trotting by her side.

The Second Form dormitory was reached. Miss Gilbey, still holding Dolores by the hand, threw open the door. And then she jumped.

"Girls!" she cried.

The Second Form fairly spun round. In terror Thelma Beare knocked over a glass of lemonade, which at once soaked into Eunice Hunter's bed.

"My word!" Miss Gilbey's cheeks flushed. "Dolores, go to your bed," she said, and while the Second Formers shivered, she stepped into the dormitory. "All you girls—eating and drinking at this time of night!" she cried. "And lighted candles, too! You might have burned the place down! Whose idea was this?"

A silence, but the eyes directed towards Eunice were sufficient. Eunice was looking very pale.

"Eunice—"

"It—it wasn't my idea," Eunice protested.

"Then whose?"

"I—I don't know anything about it!" Eunice blurted desperately.

"No?" Miss Gilbey eyed her grimly. "You didn't know anything about Dolores' photograph either, did you? Yet this afternoon, Eunice, I found pieces of coloured crayon in your desk. I also found a torn-off corner which had belonged to that photograph. Now then, please own up!"

Eunice turned red.

"Well, the Fourth Form have dormitory feeds," she said sulkily.

"And that, I suppose, is a reason for your doing likewise?" Miss Gilbey's lips compressed. "When the Fourth do this sort of thing they break the rules, as you know. You're breaking the rules! Now clear up this mess, all of you. Put it in the empty linen-basket there, and I will take it away. And Eunice, for being the ringleader in this

escapade, you will be detained. You will do an hour's extra detention until the end of the week. The rest of you will take fifty lines each."

Eunice looked bitter.

"And Dolores," she asked, "what about Dolores?"

"That is my business," Miss Gilbey said quietly. "Do as you are told."

And while Dolores climbed back into bed, the Second Formers collected the remains of the ill-fated feed. Miss Gilbey stood grimly watching as they dumped the relics into the empty linen-basket. Then with a nod she left them.

"And please no noise," she said as she went out.

But that warning, at least, was utterly disregarded. For almost as soon as the door closed an angry hiss went up from Eunice Hunter.

"Sneak!" she said bitterly. "Sneak! Telltale cat! Who went and fetched the mistress because we wouldn't let her come to the feed?"

"Dolores!" Thelma Beare bit out.

"I didn't!" Dolores cried, starting up.

"Shut up! You did," fumed Eunice. "Didn't you bring her here? If you didn't tell on us, why did she come back with you?"

"But—but I didn't," Dolores tearfully protested. "I didn't!"

"Yes, you did!"

"And who got us gated to-day?" Eunice cried bitterly.

"Dolores!"

"Ur-r-r-r!" put in an angry voice.

"I didn't get you gated," Dolores cried.

"Yes, you did! Shut up," mouthed Eunice Hunter. "Shut up, you little cat! Here, look here, my bed's all wet! Dolores, you little prig, are you listening? Ever since you've taken up with those girls in the Fourth Form we've not been good enough for you. Every time there's a chance of getting us into a row you jolly well go and do it! Well, you've gone too far now, young Dolores! You think you can show the Form what you think of it, but this time the Form's going to show you. I vote, you girls, we send her to Coventry!"

"Hear, hear!"

"It's not fair," Dolores protested. "I don't want to go to Coventry!"

"Shut up! Coventry," Eunice not very lucidly explained, "doesn't mean going to Coventry. It means that we shun you. Everybody shuns you. We don't talk to you, see? We don't have anything whatever to do with you. Everybody's agreeing on that from this moment, and if they don't agree they'll jolly well have me to deal with! Is everybody listening?"

"Yes, Eunice!"

"Then Dolores is in Coventry?"

"Yes, Eunice!"

"But please—" Dolores tearfully protested.

"Don't anybody dare answer her," Eunice threatened.

"But I want to tell you—"

Silence!

"Dolly—"

"You speak to her, Dolly, and you get sent to Coventry too."

"Oh, dear! But—but I want Dolly to speak to me. Dolly—"

Silence!

"Ivy—"

Silence from Ivy Finch's bed.

"Jennie—"

No answer!

Dolores gulped. In the darkness her big blue eyes were very troubled. Hugging Peggy to her, she turned over. But she didn't sleep for a long, long time, and when finally she did drop off, her pillow was soaked with tears.

Such a Little Spitfire!



"IT'S that little beast, Eunice, who is responsible for it all!" Barbara Redfern said angrily.

"And until she's stopped, Dolores' life will go on being made a misery. What Eunice needs is a jolly good smacking!" Marjorie Hazeldene heaved a sigh.

"But that," she pointed out, "is hardly possible."

"And, Babs, anyway, would be the last to give her a smacking, even if it were possible," Mabel Lynn said. "There's one other thing, though. We might get Eunice along and have a talk to her. Perhaps she doesn't realise what a little beast she is being."

"Well, that's a good idea," Marjorie said. "Yes, a very good idea," she voted, after a second's consideration. "Where shall we talk to her—here?"

"Why not?" Babs asked. "Will you fetch her, Marjie?"

Marjorie nodded. At once she left Study No. 4, where this conversation next morning was taking place. Very concerned, and very distressed had Marjorie been about little Dolores. She was so desperately anxious to do something.

Mabs, thinking of her play which was due to be produced at Courtfield Towers, and the necessity of having a happy Dolores to take the lead in the juvenile part, was no less worried.

Babs, who was very fond of the kiddie, and always up against unfairness and injustice anyway, was equally anxious to put matters right.

But none of them knew yet about the Second Form's latest campaign against Dolores. None of them knew that that innocent little youngster had been sent to Coventry.

Five minutes elapsed before Marjorie returned. She brought in her train a rather eager-eyed Eunice, who had decided in her own mind that this summons was the forerunner of an invitation to take Dolores' part in Mabs' play. She came in almost jauntily, indeed.

"Hallo!" she said. "Want me?" "We do!" Babs stifled her annoyance at the pert offensiveness of the youngster. "We want to talk to you."

"You mean you want me to dance in the play?" Eunice asked interestedly.

"Why, no!" "Oh! Well, look here—" Eunice shrilly began.

"Eunice, please," Babs begged. "We sent for you because we want to talk to you about Dolores."

"I thought it was the play," Eunice said sulkily. "Well, what do you want to say about her?"

"Eunice," Mabs said, "you know Dolores is the youngest girl in the school."

"She's a little nit-wit, you mean," Eunice said disdainfully.

"You know," Babs broke in, "that she isn't as big or as strong as the rest of you, Eunice."

"No; she's just a silly cry-baby carrying a doll around," Eunice said scornfully.

"And I do think," Babs went on, finding it difficult to control her temper, "that at times you forget Dolores is so much younger in every way than most of you. All I'm asking is that you be a little bit kinder to her!"

Eunice's eyes narrowed. "And if I am, what will you give me?" she asked.

"What?" "Well, you want me to do something for you," Eunice said boldly, and sud-

denly she stopped, cocking a sharp ear towards the door. Unheard by the three Fourth Formers, those keen ears had recognised the slow footsteps approaching, the footsteps of Miss Bullivant. "One good turn deserves another. If I'm kind to Dolores, will you give me her part in the play?"

"Why, you little wretch!" gasped Mabs.

"You won't?" "Certainly not!"

"Then"—Eunice said, and suddenly raised her voice with such startling suddenness indeed, that Babs, Mabs, and Marjorie all jumped simultaneously.

"You big bullies!" she cried tearfully. "You awful things! You've just got me in here to ill-treat me! Let me out! Let me out!"

tearfully, "they were saying horrid things to me. Barbara was going to hit me when you came in."

"Oh, you awful little fibber!" Babs gasped.

"Be silent, Barbara!" Miss Bullivant exclaimed angrily.

"But—but, Miss Bullivant—"

"Really, Miss Bullivant," said Marjorie, looking rather worried. "Barbara wasn't going to do anything of the sort!"

"Of course not!" said Babs shortly.

"Barbara, that is enough!" Miss Bullivant said starchyly. She gazed at the sobbing Eunice. "Why did you come here?"

"Please, Miss Bullivant, I—I didn't come here. Marjorie fetched me."

"Why did you fetch her, Marjorie?"



**EUNICE** suddenly hurled herself at the door. She banged on the panel and cried out: "You big bullies! You've just got me in here to ill-treat me!" Babs & Co. stared in blank amazement. Considering they hadn't touched the little sneak, Eunice's behaviour was baffling.

And before anyone could stop her she rushed to the door. But, amazingly enough, she never even attempted to touch the handle. She banged upon the panels.

"My hat!" gasped Babs. "Here, you little ninny, what the dickens is the idea?" And, jumping forward, she caught the youngster by the shoulder, just as the door came open, and, with a grim expression on her face, Miss Bullivant stood on the threshold. Her eyes widened angrily.

"Barbara, release that girl at once! How dare you! What is going on in here?"

"Pip-please, Miss Bullivant, they were ragging me," Eunice said, her voice choked with sobs.

"Indeed!" "We weren't—" Mabs began.

"Mabel, please. I am speaking to Eunice. Eunice—"

"Please, Miss Bullivant," Eunice said

"Well, in order to talk to her, Miss Bullivant," Marjorie said, flushing.

"I see!" Miss Bullivant drew herself up. "And you didn't want to come, Eunice?"

"No, Miss Bullivant," Eunice sobbingly fibbed.

"Very well, you may go! And in future," Miss Bullivant said grimly, "I forbid you older girls to visit the Second Form quarters. I am growing rather tired of all the commotion which is occurring between the Fourth and the Second, and it is obvious the line has to be drawn somewhere. That also applies," she added, with a warning glance at Eunice, "to girls in your Form visiting girls in the Fourth. Now go, Eunice!"

And Eunice went—gladly. While the chums, thinking of Dolores, looked in dismay and anger at each other.

(Continued on page 14)

# OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS



Your friend PATRICIA has been very busy this week, but not too busy to write to her schoolgirl friends. So she tells you of her activities—of something to do, and when to wish—in that cheery way so typical of her.

**A**LTHOUGH it seems a pity to talk about—or even think of—such an unexciting subject as housework when Easter is so near, the fact remains that your Patricia has been busy helping with the spring-cleaning at home.

I'm afraid my ideas of spring-cleaning are not the more serious ones. To wear a pretty overall and to wrap a three-cornered scarf around my locks is the first important step when I contemplate work. (Which makes me look more ornamental than energetic, I'm afraid.)

But seriously, I do help quite a bit. In fact, our family spring-clean is got through in a week. It should, too, I suppose, for there are four of us to help—and two to hinder.

The chief helper is mother. She doesn't appear to be working her fingers to the bone, but actually she has the very rare gift of being an excellent organiser. She plans each day's work the night before, and has the knack of supervising really skilfully during the work itself.

Olive, our happy young maid, is the next helper. And for spring-cleaning week she is ably assisted by a "woman"—a Mrs. Entwhistle, who came from the Midlands originally, and really loves scrubbing.

The last helper is your Patricia, who does things like tidying chests of drawers, helping to shake curtains, turning out wardrobes, and washing china and glass.

The hinderer-in-chief is small brother, called Heatherington when he is naughty, and Heath most of the time.

The family kitten, young Minkie, is the other hinderer—who will play with tissue paper, which he adores, chase soap bubbles that infuriate him, and leave the dearest little paw-marks over every well-scrubbed floor.

But in spite of the two "pests" the work goes on, and we shall have a bright and shining house in time to eat our breakfast hot cross buns on Good Friday.

## ● So Fresh

Isn't it wonderful how a white collar can freshen up an everyday dress? And they're always so youthful-looking, too. No wonder that the simple collar is called a "Peter Pan"!

If you've not already made the discovery, I must tell you that you can buy the sweetest plain white collar for only sixpence from our favourite shop-of-many-counters, which would cheer



up a navy or brown (or green or yellow or red, for that matter) frock wonderfully.

Then, if you have a moment to spare, you can give this collar an original touch that will make your frock look more spring-like still.

You can all do buttonhole-stitch, now, can't you? Of course!

So thread your needle with a bright embroidery cotton—yellow, red, royal blue, or pink—and buttonhole all round the edge of your white collar. Sew a little bow of coloured ribbon to match in the front—and the result looks like something from Paris or Vienna. (Lots of smart fashions come from Vienna these days, you know—especially those connected with embroidery.)

You'll be so very pleased with this new collar that you'll probably like to try the other notion in the picture here, which is every bit as simple.

Buy a yard of silky cord—not too thick—in any gay hue, which should cost twopence. Then stitch this all round the edge of the collar, leaving a few inches over at each end. These two ends tie in a knot when the collar is in position.

Your frock will look charming now when you wear it without a coat.

## ● Very Puzzling

Aren't you often puzzled when you hear grown-ups discussing such things as "costumes," "two-pieces," or "suits"?

These expressions used to worry me when I was a schoolgirl, for so often it seemed that the same articles of clothes were known by different names.

Actually there is a difference.

The popular "two-piece," for example, can be a silky frock with a coat over, sometimes lined with the same material as the frock is made of. It can be a skirt with a long coat to match. It can be a frock with a short jacket made of the same material, or it can be a frock with a long coat of the same material.

A "costume" is generally a fitting skirt worn with a coat which can vary in length.

Sometimes the jacket fits closely to the figure, sometimes it is nipped in at the waist with a belt. Pockets may be many and buttons and zips may be used for ornament.

But the tailor-made "suit" does not vary nearly so much. It fits the figure closely and for fastening has only plain buttons. These buttons vary in number from one to four—seldom more—and the number of pockets varies only with the number of buttons. (The rules, as a matter of fact, are similar to those for a man's suit—the smartness of the tailored "suit" relying entirely on the material and perfection of cut and fit.)

In addition, there is, of course, the three-piece and even the four-piece outfit,

but I'll leave you to think out for yourselves what these are composed of.

## ● Wishing Time

Do you like to know on what occasions you may have a wish? It's fun, even if the wish doesn't always come true. "Once a wish" applies to a sneeze, of course, but here are some more "wishing-times" I have collected for you.

You may wish—

When you hear the cuckoo for the first time in the year. (You'd better start listening right away, if you've not heard him yet.)

When you pick your first violet.

When you find a four-leaved clover.

When you arrive at a "kissing gate" (one of those gates set inside a half circle) just as someone else also reaches it from the other direction.

When you have an egg for breakfast which contains a double yolk. (So look out for this on Easter morning.)

When you find your first grey hair and pull it out. (Yes, even schoolgirls have an occasional stray hair which just dies for no apparent reason!)

When you pick a cotton off a chum's frock.

When you retrieve scissors or knife that have been dropped by someone else.

## ● Cross-Stitch

And now, if you have a spare moment and some spare wool, I want you to try your hand at decorating a plain cardigan with cross-stitch. By looking at the picture here and cross-stitching as shown you'll get a very pretty effect of yoke and cuffs on your ever-useful woolly.

Bright colours on a fawn cardigan would look very smart.



And now just a little joke to make you smile—particularly for you who have freckles.

Small Betty was getting so tired of everyone commenting on her freckles.

"What a lot of freckles you have, Betty!" said the girl who had recently come to live next door.

"They're not freckles," said Betty icily. "It's my iron constitution—gone rusty!"

Your friend,

PATRICIA.

# THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A GOOD WALK—

*For health, good looks, friendship—and enjoyment.*



**T**HERE is such a lot I want to say about the Wonders of Walking at this, perhaps, the most beautiful season of the year, that I think I must divide the Wonders up into little chapters, just to be sure we don't miss any.

Chapter One shall be all about how good walking is for your health.

## FOR HEALTH

To get the utmost benefit from your walk, you should wear light but warm clothes. For this time of the year, I suggest a pleated or full skirt (I don't think the weather's reliable enough yet for shorts), with a short—or long—sleeved jersey over it.

But do avoid a tight belt around your waist, even if it does look nice. You see, your circulation will work more freely if you have as few restrictions as possible.

Wear a cardigan or a light coat over your jersey and skirt if the day is chilly, and roll a mac into your haversack—just in case it should rain.

Shoes, of course, must be sturdy. Not only do dainty shoes look silly among the cows in the country, but they're jolly uncomfortable, too, and make your feet terribly tired.

Wear stockings if you like them, by all means, but if you don't feel the cold too much, then I should give them a miss. Instead, wear wool ankle socks, but do see that they are marked Pure Wool on the feet. (You can buy them in all wool for a shilling a pair.)

Not only do ankle socks look very nice, but they are wonderfully soothing to the feet, and afford that little extra comfort which makes the difference between finishing your last mile in light-hearted joy, or with a weary limp.

A stick is an excellent companion for a walk—almost as good as a third leg. But don't take one unless you intend using it, otherwise it will only get in the way.

There, being all set, you must now walk beautifully for health. That is, your head should be up as if trying to reach the clouds—but the chin in, please.

Move your legs in sweeping strides from the hips. If you get the feeling that a wire spring runs from the very top of your leg, right down to the ball of the foot, giving you "bounce," you are walking gracefully and well.

Keep your tummy tucked well in, and "tail" well down; let your arms swing naturally and you'll have that top-o'-the-world sensation.

Chapter Two is concerned with the Good Looks of walking.

## FOR GOOD LOOKS

Providing you follow the instructions in Chapter One, you'll already be looking pretty marvellous as you start on your walk.

But just to add charm to the picture, I want you to take off your beret, or the scarf you have brought to wear around your hair, and tuck it into your haversack.

Providing there is not a piercing wind, the air and sunshine will make your locks gleam and shine.

A fresh, warm wind will brush it even better than your birthday present hair-brush does. The sun will give it glints that a costly shampoo could not impart.

I need hardly tell you that the wind and

sun will also bring a rosy glow to cheeks that have been bent over lesson books all the term, and give a sparkle to eyes that have been overworked with home-lessons.

But to make cheeks even rosier and eyes even brighter, I want you to take deep, deep breaths as you walk. It may make your eyes water and your nose tickle—but with your hankie you can soon deal with these, and feel wonderfully freshened as a result.

## FOR FRIENDSHIP

Whether your walk is to be a mere three-mile one, or an energetic ten-miles, it can be a wonderful test of friendship.

## TRY YOUR SCARF THIS WAY

*—if you want it to fit into the neck of your coat without slipping*



So many schoolgirls find difficulty in tying a long scarf so that it keeps neatly in position in the neck of coat or blazer without slipping about and requiring re-tying every few minutes.

If you follow the diagrams here, you'll find a solution to this problem.

Throw a long end of the scarf over your left shoulder and a short end over your right.

Bring the long end right round your neck and round to the front again, so that there are two thicknesses of the scarf at your throat. Then take the long end, tuck it over the short end which should still be on your left shoulder, and UNDER the two thicknesses as well.

Bring it over into the front of your coat, and arrange it to fall as you'd like it. It'll stay that way for as long as you want it to.

If you have a triangle scarf that's on the small side, it will look its best if you wear it cowboy style.

That is, you take the two long ends over your shoulders and knot at the back.

This leaves a graceful fold of the triangle in front—which will show the pattern, if any, to its best advantage.

Get your very best chum to accompany you if you can, then you can chatter when you feel like it, and be silent when no words are needed. At the end of the day she'll be an even dearer friend than before.

If, however, you are going to ask a new-ish friend to accompany you, it's a good idea to select one of about your own height and age, who is as keen on walking as you are.

There is nothing more tiring in a walk than for one girl to have to run now and then to catch up with a longer-legged chum, or for the other to have to pause. If the steps of two people fit, so that they swing along in rhythm together, the joy of the walk is doubled—and much, much less tiring for you both.

Another good plan is to spend an hour or so before the walk, poring over maps of the district you intend to explore, so that you know beforehand just how much distance you intend to cover in the time you allot yourselves.

Fix a likely-looking spot where you will buy a lemonade and stop to eat your sandwiches. Look out the coach-stops and railway stations so that you can get home comfortably.

Talk over what tuck you will take, and see if the chums do not agree that a hard-boiled egg, some bread-and-butter, two apples and a bar of chocolate, with perhaps a cake thrown in for luck—are ideal fare for the hungry walker.

## FOR ENJOYMENT

With the right clothes to wear, the right walk planned, the right chum for company, and a delicious "snack" you can't help but enjoy yourself, now can you?

But there are one or two "aids" to happy hiking that you might like to add to your equipment.

A map first. This really is a boon, particularly if you can read it well.

A reliable watch is almost a necessity, so that lunch time is not forgotten—as if it would be!—and no trains home missed.

A dog is a perfect joy on a hike—once he sees the country. He may be a bit of a pest in the coach or train or bus on your way out, but you'll be amply rewarded for your patience as he scampers after bunnies and tries to climb trees after squirrels.

Don't keep him on the lead in the open country, will you? He'll simply revel in his freedom. But keep your hand tightly on his collar as he crosses roads or passes through fields with cows in.

It's fun to have a compass with you on your walk, which will tell you in which direction you're going when the map grows a little bewildering.

Don't forget to have a little spare cash in your haversack. You needn't spend it, but it may save you some worry in case you should lose the return half of your rail or coach ticket.

(Continued from page 11)

## Advice from Eunice!



"I VY," Dolores said wistfully, and then stared in blue-eyed surprise as Ivy Finch, biting her lip, walked right past her. "Ivy—"

Ivy, however, broke into a run.

Dolores, hugging Peggy, gazed after her and sighed. Not even yet could Dolores understand that she was in Coventry.

Though it was after morning lessons at Cliff House, not a single girl in her own Form had spoken to Dolores that morning. Nobody had answered her cheerful and forgiving "Good-morning" when she had awakened in the dormitory. Nobody had spoken to her at breakfast.

It was all very puzzling to Dolores—all rather worrying, too.

"They—they don't like me!" she told herself. "Oh, Peggy, what shall we do?"

She paused a moment. Fragile and timorous though she was, Dolores did not lack spirit. If persistence would win back the Second Form to her side, then it should not be for want of trying. With a little pucker of determination on her small face, she tramped off in the direction of the Play-room.

There were only two girls there, however—Priscilla Pacey and Jennie Smithers. They were playing snakes and ladders.

"Oh, hallo!" Dolores said brightly.

Two pairs of eyes looked up; two pairs of eyes stared at her as if she were not there. Priscilla said:

"Your move, Jennie!"

"Can I play?" Dolores asked hesitantly.

"Give me the dice, 'Cilla!" Jennie Smithers replied.

"I'm awfully good at snakes and ladders," Dolores volunteered hopefully. "Oh, look, Jennie! You've thrown a six!"

Jennie looked up. Impatiently she glared at Dolores. Then, without speaking, she stretched out a hand, pointing towards the door.

Dolores turned and blinked.

"But what's the matter?" she asked. "Why are you pointing at the door? I didn't make that dirty mark on it, you know."

Jennie breathed hard and deeply. She flung a look at her partner. Then deliberately she rose. She crossed to the blackboard and grabbed up the chalk. On the board she wrote:

"GET OUT!"

Dolores blinked at that. She understood then. For a moment her lips quivered. Then, a forlorn and lovely little figure, she drifted out of the Play-room.

At that same moment the bell went.

Dolores stopped, listening to it. That meant that the big girls would be free now. Her face broke into a sunny smile all at once. Well, if the other girls in her Form wouldn't speak to her, Marjorie would! If these girls didn't want anything to do with her, Marjorie would talk to her. And, besides, there was that lovely frock.

Dolores glowed with sudden joyful eagerness as she remembered that Marjorie had told her last night that the frock was ready. Wouldn't it be lovely to try it on again!

She laughed then, sorrow immediately forgotten once again. With a pleased

hug for Peggy, she trotted off towards the Fourth Form corridor.

Breathlessly she rounded the bend that led into that corridor, and then pulled up sharp as a surly, scowling figure came towards her. It was Helen Hunter.

"Hallo!" Helen said. "What are you doing here?"

"Please, Helen, I'm going to see Marjorie," Dolores volunteered.

"Oh, are you!" Helen sneered. "Then you've got another think coming to you! You can't see Marjorie, nor any other girl in the Fourth! And if," Helen added threateningly, "I catch you in this corridor again, I'll report you to Miss Bullivant! Now go to the Play-room!"

Dolores' face turned red.

"But, please, Helen, I want to try my frock on," she protested; "and if I can't see Marjorie I can't take part in the play, you know. I want to take part, and Marjorie wants me to take part."

Helen grinned.

"Then," she said, "both you and Marjorie are in for a disappointment! Orders are that no Second Former is to be allowed in this corridor; likewise no Fourth Form girl in the Second Form quarters!"

She caught Dolores by the arm. Unresistingly Dolores allowed herself to be led away. She understood then, and, understanding, felt dazed, numb, and forlorn. She was not to see Marjorie or Barbara or any of those nice girls! She was not to act in the play or wear her pretty frock!

Something seemed to go right out of little Dolores. Within her her heart became lead. With the Second Form all against her, with this perfect persecuting her, with Babs, Mabs, and Marjorie forbidden her—what could she, the Coventry-branded outcast of the Form as she was, do now?

A choking lump came into her throat. Everything which had made life supportable and endurable at Cliff House, everything which had spelt for her happiness, had been stolen from her! She felt strongly in that moment that she hated the school.

"Well, here you are!" Helen said, as they reached the Play-room. "Get inside there, and stop inside! And don't you dare go near the Fourth Form quarters again!"

"N-no, Helen!" quivered Dolores.

She trailed into the room. It was empty now. Forlornly, miserably she sat herself in her desk, staring at those words "Get out!" which still remained upon the blackboard.

She wouldn't cry, she told herself, though in that moment she had never felt more wretchedly like crying in her life. Instead, she propped up Peggy, fluffed out the hem of her little skirt, and shook her head.

"Peggy, they don't want us!" she said brokenly.

Even Peggy's fixed smile seemed for a moment to melt into an expression of tender sympathy and compassion.

Then suddenly the door opened. Dolores started. For it was Eunice who entered—Eunice alone. Straight towards Dolores she came.

"Are you going to speak to me?" Dolores asked.

"Yes, I am," Eunice said. "I'm going to tell you something. It's something you ought to know!" she added spitefully. "This is it! You know you're in Coventry! You know the Form doesn't want to speak to you, nor ever will speak to you until I give them the word! And you jolly well know

now that you can't go whining to your grown-up pals in the Fourth Form, because they're not allowed to come here, and you aren't allowed to go and see them. You're a disgrace to the school, that's what you are! Everybody just hates you—yes, hates you!" she added, gloating at the sudden wince Dolores gave, and at the consequent whitening of her face. "And if you want my advice—Do you want my advice?"

"No, thank you!" Dolores said, stiff-lipped.

"Well, you can jolly well have it!" Eunice snapped. "And this is it—the best thing you can do, with everybody hating and not liking you, and ready never to speak to you again, is to get out of this school! If you want my advice—and I am a bigger girl than you are, and I can make your life a misery if you don't take it—you'll get out while you can! There," she added, "now you're in Coventry again! Good-bye!"

And bang! went the door as stormily she crossed the room, slamming it behind her.

But she left Dolores very still, very startled—a Dolores whose big blue eyes were full of horror, whose pink-and-white cheeks were now as pale as paper.

She wasn't wanted! Everybody hated her! Everybody disliked her, and from those very girls who would have been her friends she was now completely cut off!

Only then did she really visualise the awfulness of the future which lay before her. Proud, if heartbroken, that rallying little spirit of hers rose to combat the misery which so floodingly overwhelmed her.

Suddenly she rose, with a grim, almost fiercely resolute expression upon her face. Well, if she wasn't wanted, if they hated her all that much, she would go. Yes, she'd go now!

Where? Dolores did not stop to think of that. What would she do? That did not occur to her. Her mind in that moment was made up. She'd go away from this cruel crowd who disliked her so. Somehow, somewhere, she would find her mother and her father again, and she'd be happy with them.

But Marjorie and Barbara?

She bit her lip. It would be awfully bad-mannered of her to go away without saying good-bye to Barbara and Marjorie. But how could she say good-bye when she was forbidden to see them?

Then suddenly an idea occurred to her. With trembling fingers she opened her desk and took out a sheet of note-paper. Five, ten minutes she wrote, painstakingly and carefully.

Five minutes after that, in her hat and coat, and hugging Peggy to her, she was hurrying down to the gates. Piper, the crusty old porter, coming up the drive, paused to smile at her. Even Piper was not proof against the childish prettiness of little Dolores.

"Which it's going to rain, Miss Dolores," he said.

"Oh, is it?" Dolores asked abstractedly. "I think it's a very nice day, you know." She paused. "Please, Mr. Piper, will you do something for me?"

"Which anything I can do for you, Miss Dolores, is a real pleasure," Piper said benevolently. "What may it be that you'll be wanting done?"

"Please give Miss Marjorie Hazeldene this," Dolores said shyly, and held out a note. She paused, thinking of the time when she had seen the telegraph-boy deliver a telegram to Miss Bulli-

vant, who had opened it while he stood there. "Tell her there'll be no answer," she added primly. "And thank you awfully, Mr. Piper, for being such a nice kind man. Good-bye!"

"G-good-bye!" Piper stuttered, and watched, scratching his head, as Dolores very firmly walked towards the gates.

"Dolores Has Gone!"



"STORM blowing up," commented Clara Trevlyn. "Yes," agreed Barbara Redfern, rather abstractedly.

"Looks as if it's going to wash-out our cricket practice after rehearsal."

Clara was standing by the window in Study No. 4. Mabs was at the table, reading through the lines of her play. Marjorie Hazeldene was there, too. She had been talking to Babs about Dolores, and Babs was desperately casting about for some means of getting into touch with Dolores.

"I've got an idea," Babs said suddenly. "It's true we're forbidden to go to the Second Form quarters, and Dolores is forbidden to come to us. But nobody's mentioned the music-room or the gym, and I don't see one earthly reason why we shouldn't have the rehearsal in one of those. Marjorie, you cut off and get the frock, will you? I'll get hold of Sally, the maid, and ask her to go and tell Dolores to meet us in the gym."

"Oh, I say, that's a good idea!" beamed Mabs. "We— Yes, come in!" she added, as a tap sounded at the door.

They all blinked as the door opened to admit an embarrassed Piper. It was not part of Piper's duty, as a rule, to deliver messages to girls' studies.

"Which I hopes you'll forgive me for intruding, like," Piper said; "but I've got a note for Miss Marjorie 'Azeldene. Miss Dolores Essendon of the Second Form asked me to give it to her."

"Oh, thank you, Piper!" Marjorie smiled as she wonderingly took it.

"Which it's a pleasure, Miss Marjorie," Piper said gruffly, and withdrew.

Marjorie smiled. She opened the note, and then a startled look came into her eyes.

"Babs!" she cried falteringly.

"What is it?"

"Look!"

She passed the note to the captain of the Form.

Babs jumped as she read:

"Dear Marjorie,—I am sorry Peggy and I could not see you before we went away, but we both do love you very much, and Barbara and Mabel and Clara, and Bessie as well. We are going to try to find mummy and daddy, and will see you again when we have found them.

"All our love,  
"PEGGY AND DOLORES."

"But her mother and father are in Germany or somewhere," Babs breathed, and looked at the startled faces of her chums. "What does she mean?"

Marjorie's face was white.

"She means," she said, with the sure knowledge of one whose instincts are right, "she's run away!"

"Oh stuff!" cried Clara.

"She's run away," Marjorie said. "I know—I feel it, somehow!" She jumped a little as there came a sudden heavy clap of thunder "The poor little thing's had such a beastly life in the

Form that this is her way out of it."

Babs set her lips.

"All right," she said. "We'll get at the truth of this. If Marjorie's right, Eunice knows something about it. I shouldn't be surprised if she didn't put the idea into Dolores' head. Clara, get maes and hats! I'm going to see Eunice!"

"But the rule—" Marjorie cried.

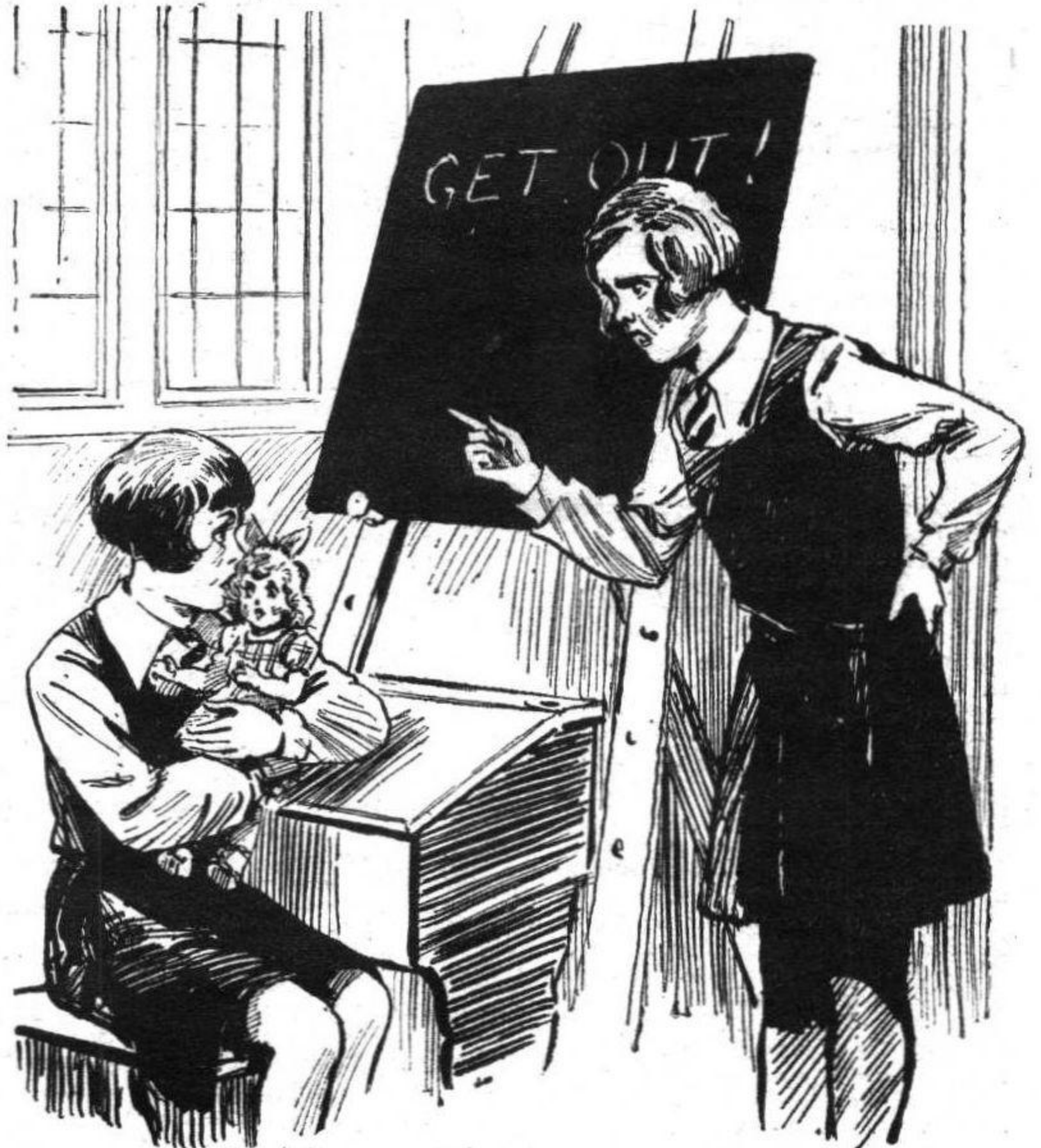
"Blow the rule!"

And Babs went off at once. She reached the Play-room and hurried in. A group of rather terrified youngsters all in the darkest corner of the room, jumped round at her entry.

Dolores, whom she had persecuted, whom she had caused to run away! Fear of the storm, the paralytically weakening effect such a phenomenon always had upon her, caused her to break down.

"It's not my fault," she protested wildly. "I didn't tell her to run away! I didn't know she was going to run away, did I? How should I think, because I told her she ought to get out of it, that she'd go off? I—oo—oo!" she quavered, and almost sobbed, as a reverberating rumble seemed to shake the whole building.

Babs' face turned white. She glared.



"THE best thing you can do," snapped Eunice, "is to get out of this school. If you want my advice—and I'm a bigger girl than you are, and I can make your life a misery if you don't take it—you'll get out while you can!" White-faced, Dolores listened to the little bully's tirade. Eunice was trying to force her to run away from Cliff House.

Eunice was among them—Eunice, with her eyes, terrified, fixed upon the window, her fingers stuffed into her ears. There were many things of which Eunice Hunter was frightened, but the most fearsome of all was thunderstorms.

"Eunice!" Babs cried.

"Oh!" cried Eunice, and gazed in fear at the window again. "Oh!" she moaned.

"Eunice, speak to me!" Babs cried sternly. "Where's Dolores?"

"Dolores?" Eunice stared. "How should I know?" she blustered, and jumped as another lightning flash zig-zagged at the window. "Oh dear! Let's get out of this!"

"Answer my question," Babs said quietly. "Eunice, listen! Dolores has run away. Dolores is somewhere out there in this storm! What do you know about it?"

Eunice gulped. Dolores had run away! Dolores was out—in this!

"So you did it! You little spitfire!" she gasped. "You dreadful little bully! Goodness knows what might happen to her in this—and if anything does happen it'll be your fault, you awful thing!"

Eunice broke down and dissolved into large howls.

But Babs was not waiting for her then. Babs was off. Up to Study No. 4 she dashed.

"Marjorie's right," she panted. "Dolores has gone all right, and it was Eunice who caused her to go. But where on earth shall we look for her?"

"In the woods," Marjorie said.

"Why?"

"Because," Marjorie smiled a little, though her heart was anxious, "I've got an idea she might have gone that way. It's just a hunch. Anyway," she added, "if she's taken to the road, somebody is bound to find her and pick her up. But come on, let's hurry," she

added. "Clara's getting our things." Hurry they did. Outside, the storm, reaching crescendo, raged furiously.

And inside, in the darkest corner of the Play-room, Eunice Hunter, stricken with horror, crouched in a corner and wept.

### The Return!



**D**OLORES had gone to the woods.

Why she went to the woods Dolores did not know. It may have been instinct; and it was

instinct that guided her to the place where yesterday she had danced for the first time in her new frock.

Not till the first blinding flash and its following clap of thunder came did Dolores think of the weather.

Her heart broken, she stumbled on blindly.

But with the flash she stopped, her little face turning white, her heart pounding at the terrifying roll of thunder which succeeded it. Fiercely she hugged Peggy to her.

All in a moment it seemed to Dolores that the sky became dark. The trees began to rustle.

Then came the wind roaring into her face, making her catch her breath; and with the wind the rain, drenching down.

For some moments she stood paralysed with fright. Another flash, a crash that caused the ground to rock beneath her feet! Terror came then, and with terror the heart-stopping realisation that she was alone in this great wood; alone at the mercy of the wind, the rain, the thunder and lightning.

Panic took her in its grip.

She turned. She flew.

Her foot caught against a broken branch, and she went sprawling. Even in that moment her instant thought was for Peggy's welfare, and as she fell she held the doll above her head so that she at least, would not suffer from that fall.

Then up again, and on again, caring little for the cuts on her knees.

She sobbed as she ran. Where was she? The trees all shuddering and shaking. Those nightmare flashes revealed their waving branches—almost as if to seize her as she sped.

Somewhere there was a crash. Something whizzed past her face.

Then—what happened? Dolores did not know. But as she ran with pumping heart and weakening strength, it seemed to her that a great jagged flame leapt before her eyes.

She fell, hugging Peggy, and knew no more until, with the storm still raging about her, she opened her eyes to stare wonderingly into the faces of Marjorie, Barbara, Mabel and Clara!

**T**HE WORST of the storm had spent itself. The fury which had raged about Cliff House for a while had passed on.

Remote and muffled in the distance now, the thunder rumbled. Flickering only, the lightning still played. A glistening grey light had given place to the gloom which had come with the storm. It still rained, but less pitilessly.

At the window of the Play-room in the Second Form a white face gazed out into the streaming quadrangle. Eunice Hunter.

Eunice was still palpitating, but not because of the storm. Oh, if only she could undo the mischief she had done! If only now she could know that Dolores, whom she had sent out into that storm, were safe and sound.

Her fault—her fault!

Just supposing that something had happened to Dolores! It seemed impossible to her panic-stricken mind that anyone could have been out in that dreadful storm and lived!

The other girls in the Second watched her from a distance. They did not understand this quivering Eunice. They were amazed by her.

And then suddenly a shout sprang from Eunice's lips. To everybody's astonishment she left the window. Helter-skelter, like the wind, she was making for the door. While the Second gave back wonderingly, she had wrenched it open, had flung herself through it.

Down the stairs she ran.

Girls in Big Hall stared as she dashed through them and went out through the big doors.

Up the quad four girls were approaching. The tallest and the sturdiest—Clara Trevlyn—carried a figure bundled in her arms. Marjorie, next to her, carried a doll. The huddled figure was Dolores.

"Barbara!" shrieked Eunice.

The procession came to a stop.

"Barbara"—Eunice's face was stricken—"Barbara, is she—is she—"

Babs stared at her.

"Oh, please don't—don't say she is!" Eunice whimpered. "Don't say it! It wasn't my fault. My sister Helen put me up to it. She wanted me to have Dolores' part in the play, so that she could go to Courtfield Towers. She arranged everything. I—I only did what she told me to do. I—"

And then she jumped as a hand fell on her shoulder, and Miss Gilbey, who had followed her out, stared sternly into her face.

"Eunice, what are you saying?"

"It—it's true," Eunice whimpered—"it is true! I didn't mean it. I didn't, really. Everything I did Helen put me up to. Miss Gilbey, please—please see if—if—"

"Is Dolores all right, Barbara?" Miss Gilbey asked.

"Yes, I think so," Barbara said quietly. "We found her in the woods. Lightning struck a tree just in front of her. Poor little thing! She's absolutely exhausted. She's asleep now."

"Very good! Thank you—all of you! Will you take her to the sanatorium, and hand her over to the matron? Eunice," she added grimly, "you are coming with me."

"Oh dear! Where—where are we going?" Eunice quavered.

"To see Miss Primrose. And I think," Miss Gilbey added angrily, "we had better find your sister, and take her, too. It seems to me she has some explaining to do."

**S**HE HAD, but explanations did not avail. Eunice, caught and cornered, with no thought but for her own skin, wriggled out. She did not stick up for Helen, and, as a result, Helen Hunter was suspended from the prefectship for the rest of the term.

While Eunice, for her share in the plot against Dolores, was gated for the same period.

But Dolores—next morning she was her own happy self once more. Next morning Miss Primrose, having listened to the story Babs & Co. had to tell, lifted the ban which had been the last straw in the stack of Dolores' despair, and Fourth and Second were free once again, to mingle and mix. And no more Coventry for Dolores. Dolores, thanks to her adventure, found herself a heroine from then on.

And then—rehearsal! What fun, what joy! And after that, on Saturday, the great party at Lord Courtfield's marvellous house, with dozens and dozens of other little girls and boys to play with and talk to, and heaps of the loveliest things to eat and drink, and with Mabel and Marjorie, and all her cheerful chums from the Fourth, looking after her, and being ever so happy, too.

Such a day that in the memory of little Dolores Essendon!

And the play—wasn't that a success! And didn't everybody just love Dolores from the moment she tripped on to the stage!

Lord Courtfield declared that he'd never seen a fairy dance before, but now he had, by Jove! He'd carry that memory to his grave! Lady Courtfield gave delighted Dolores the biggest and loveliest bunch of flowers that Dolores had ever seen in her life before.

Little lipping Lady Anne Courtfield, so utterly pleased was she, that she insisted upon giving Dolores one of her own "birthday" presents, which, strangely enough, was an exquisite doll's wardrobe full of doll's clothes made, it seemed, just to fit the smiling Peggy! And when, joyfully tired, Dolores was escorted back to Cliff House by her grown-up chums of the Fourth, she looked at Babs, and she shyly said:

"It's been—oo, so lovely! And it was all through you, wasn't it, that I went to the lovely party. I think, Barbara and Marjorie, please, if you don't mind very much, that I'd like to kiss you."

Which, of course, was done. And Dolores, with a happy little laugh, scampered off to the Play-room, to meet her admiring Form-mates, no longer the outcast of the Second, but the heroine of the whole school.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

**"MYSTERY ABOARD  
the MADCAP'S YACHT!"**

The Madcap is Celeste Margesson, a very old friend of Babs & Co.—the yacht is Celeste's grandfather's—and the mystery—well, the mystery is something that not only completely baffles the chums of Cliff House, when

they set out to use the yacht for charitable purposes, but involves them all, especially Clara Trevlyn, in the most thrilling adventures. What IS the mystery of the Madcap's yacht? And why should certain people be determined to ruin the chums' efforts on behalf of the local lifeboat fund? You'll learn the answer to those intriguing questions NEXT WEEK, when this magnificent LONG COMPLETE HILDA RICHARDS story makes its appearance—on THURSDAY, April 14th, instead of Saturday, the 16th. Don't miss it.



More fascinating chapters of our wonderful adventure serial—

# The JUNGLE HIKERS



**FOR NEW READERS.**

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 on foot. When they help a white hunter, he gives them a talisman ring to show a native king. Later, a villainous trader tries to get the ring, but Teresa pretends to throw it away.

(Now read on.)

## Tricking the Trader

"WE'LL go through alone." As Teresa whispered the words to Fuzzy, the little black girl's eyes lit up. She had really believed that it was King Nompanyo's precious ring that Teresa had thrown into the thicket. But now joy filled her. There was nothing she admired more than artfulness.

Without a word, she turned and ran back to Luise, trying to drag her away from the trader's wife.

"Come, come—we go through," she whispered.

Luise shook her head. "No. We can't. I have promised Mrs. Garston we won't."

Mrs. Garston clung to Luise's hand. "No, no. At worst we shall be turned down river," she said. "I do not mind that."

But Fuzzy tugged at Luise's arm frantically.

"Way down ribber—we go fifty miles wrong way," she said excitedly. "Wrong way—fifty mile. Bad, bad." Then she lowered her voice to whisper in Luise's ear. "We go alone—easy. Teresa she know."

Luise was bewildered; for she did not know what had happened at the ford. All she knew was that she and Teresa and Fuzzy wanted to go on to their destination—to Teresa's African home—and that at the moment their

lot was cast in with this trader Garston and his sick wife.

"If we go into King Nompanyo's country," insisted Luise, "it will mean arrest. Mr. Garston has secret plans—he has been spying on the king—the luggage may be searched—"

Fuzzy fretfully whispered again. "No, no. We go without him. We go 'lone. You, me, Miss Teaser—Bambo, 'Dolphus."

Luise stiffened. "Alone? But Mr. Garston—he wouldn't agree."

Fuzzy almost stamped with impatience, and now Teresa came hurrying back. But behind her was the trader.

Mr. Garston's face was dark with rage, and his eyes were blazing.

"This crazy girl has spoiled everything," he cried. "She has thrown

TWO LITTLE LION CUBS,  
LOST IN THE JUNGLE,  
WERE AWFULLY SWEET—  
BUT THEY PUT THE CHUMS  
IN TERRIBLE DANGER!

away the one thing that would get us past King Nompanyo's guards—the ring. Threw it away! It's got to be found. Come, all of you—search!"

"Me search," said Fuzzy quickly, with a wink at Teresa.

Then Teresa managed to get word to Luise.

"I haven't thrown away the ring," she said. "I have it here. We three can get across."

"Oh!" said Luise, and understood that Teresa had fooled the trader, cunning though he was. But she glanced with compassion upon his wife, who lay on the litter, so ill-looking.

On the woman's face now, however, was a smile of immense relief.

"My dear, go," she said softly. "I understand. The ring is not lost, but

my husband thinks it is. Now he and I will be sent down river. I am so happy—oh, so happy! My fears are gone—"

Her eyes filled with tears, but she smiled, and Luise clasped her hands, a lump in her throat that forbade speech.

"You mean that?" Luise asked tenderly. "If you would rather we stayed with you, then we will."

"I am not as ill as all that," was the gentle reply. "And when my fear is gone, I shall get better. Leave me a few tablets, that's all I ask."

Luise could not desert anyone in distress, but now she could see that Mrs. Garston was already changed, the heavy look gone. She was ill, yet not desperately ill. It was fear that had so tortured her before; that had made her hands twitch, her face work so—fear that they would get into King Nompanyo's land, and there be arrested, their luggage searched, her husband's treachery brought to light.

The great black King Nompanyo, master of many thousand spears, would know no mercy. Traitors would be punished without more than a nominal trial.

But now, without the ring, they would not be able to get across the ford that formed the barrier to the king's country.

So Mrs. Garston was happy, even though they would be turned aside down the river.

Luise decided. She could see which was the best thing to do, and very tenderly she made Mrs. Garston comfortable, gave her more tablets for her fever, and wished her good-bye.

"You have been sweet to me, dear. Fear nothing—all will go well," said Mrs. Garston.

Then Luise turned away, her eyes

By  
ELIZABETH  
CHESTER

filled with tears, for although her own path might be smooth, she knew what a hard route might lie before the trader's wife. Yet there was nothing she could do to help.

Already Fuzzy was urging Bambo forward. Teresa, still acting a part, was standing by the bush where the supposed ring had been thrown.

At any moment, Teresa knew, the trader might find that what she had flung into that bush was a hair-slide.

There was no time to waste.

Sure that Luise was in front of her, and that Bambo, the young elephant, had a clear path ahead, she stepped towards the waiting warriors.

Those warriors were King Nompanyo's guards, and had orders to let no one cross the ford into his country.

But there was an exception. Anyone carrying the king's ring would be allowed passage, and honour. And Teresa had such a ring.

Teresa had hidden it in her left riding boot, and now she took it out and turned to the tallest warrior.

She showed him the ring, and Fuzzy whispered that it was King Nompanyo's, but that only they had the right to it.

The warriors looked at it, and then they stiffened. The leader threw up his right hand and solemnly bent low, twice.

"He say—honourable friends pass through. The king will greet with much welcome," translated Fuzzy.

It was enough. Teresa took back the ring and slipped it on her finger.

At the same moment there came a shout from the trader.

"Tricked! Fooled!"

He had found the hair-slide!

Teresa, looking back, saw his blazing eyes, his flushed cheeks. He was in a wild rage.

"So you had the ring! You fooled

me! But you're wrong! I'm coming with you!"

He marched forward, but instantly the spears were lifted to bar his way. Savagely he punched and struggled, but he was pushed contemptuously back.

"All right!" shouted the trader, in livid rage. "You'll rue this, my girls! You're walking right into the thick of danger and don't know it; but you'll find out."

But the warriors stood there, effectively guarding the ford. One of them only moved, to hurry after the girls.

"We're through," said Luise. "Oh, Terry. I am so glad!"

Teresa smiled and hugged her.

"Hurrah! We're in luck—in King Nompanyo's country, and wearing his special ring!"

### Into the Danger Zone!

**B**AMBO did not like the ford. He was not a circus elephant, and had not been taught tricks such as this.

Balanced shakily on wobbly stones, which sank gently into the river, he whimpered sadly.

"Come on!" urged Teresa. "Close your eyes!"

Bambo did not close his eyes. He looked left at the river, and then right. There the water was quite deep, and ruffled. It came rushing over the stones at his feet, and frankly he did not think it safe.

"Perhaps he doesn't like getting his feet wet," said Luise.

Bambo started to back. He had made up his mind. It was just not good enough. For all he knew he might be up to his neck at any minute.

"Bambo, we can't go back now," said Teresa anxiously.

They certainly could not. They had

no wish to face the angry trader, and that was what it would mean if they went back.

"This is the only way into King Nompanyo's country," insisted Teresa. "You've got to get across, Bambo; we can't do without you."

Of course, it was quite useless to argue with a young elephant who did not understand words, but only knew when he was getting wet and sinking.

"Poor old fellow!" said Teresa. "If it were really dangerous I wouldn't let him do it; but he can't sink."

Fuzzy did her best, whispering and fondling his trunk, and it gave Bambo pause. He was willing to reconsider his decision, but, all the same, he did not go forward.

Teresa thought hard. Some way out of this difficulty had to be found, for if Bambo stayed where he was the stones would start to sink under his weight, and then he would get really scared.

The warrior clearly meant to give him a jab with the spear, and although that might have encouraged poor Bambo, it was not a method that appealed to the girls.

"No; I have it," said Teresa suddenly. "We'll bandage his eyes."

"Bandage eyes?" said Fuzzy, puzzled. "Him not hurt?"

"Oh, not a real bandage!" smiled Luise. "Just a cloth over his eyes."

But Fuzzy shook her head.

"Den Bambo him go back. Elephant not go forward if not see; him go back."

It was likely enough, but Teresa was not daunted by that, for as she said, if that was the only difficulty, then they could turn Bambo round.

They turned him round first, while Fuzzy climbed on to his back beside Adolphus, the baby chimp, a large silk handkerchief of Luise's in her hand.

Dropping it down so that it covered Bambo's eyes, she shut out his entire view. Startled at first, Bambo lifted his trunk.

Then slowly he backed away, fearing to go where he could not see. But what he did not remember, even though an elephant never forgets, was that he had turned round. He was perhaps in too much of a dither to attach importance to it.

Slowly and carefully he backed until he was more than half-way, and there he boggled. Going back seemed unsteady and uncertain.

"All right; it's as near the right side as the wrong now," said Teresa. "Let him see, Fuzzy."

When the covering was removed, Bambo, blinking, saw the far shore, where the trader stood jeering. He made up his mind to act. This had gone far enough, so he wheeled, thinking that just behind must be the firm land from which he had unguardedly allowed himself to be lured.

But alas! It was almost as far as the other bank.

Bambo looked right and left sadly. Deep water. Then, with a funny little trumpeting sound, he hurried on.

Not long afterwards Teresa gave a shout.

"Home! We've landed! Three cheers for brave Bambo!"

"Well done, Bambo!" cheered Luise, patting his trunk. "Here's something nice."

And she gave him a lovely juicy fruit—just what he needed. Bambo took it gladly, and plonked his mighty feet down, with evident satisfaction, on the firm ground.

"King Nompanyo's land," said Teresa. "Well, here we are. And thank goodness I've got that ring. Because there are no white people now

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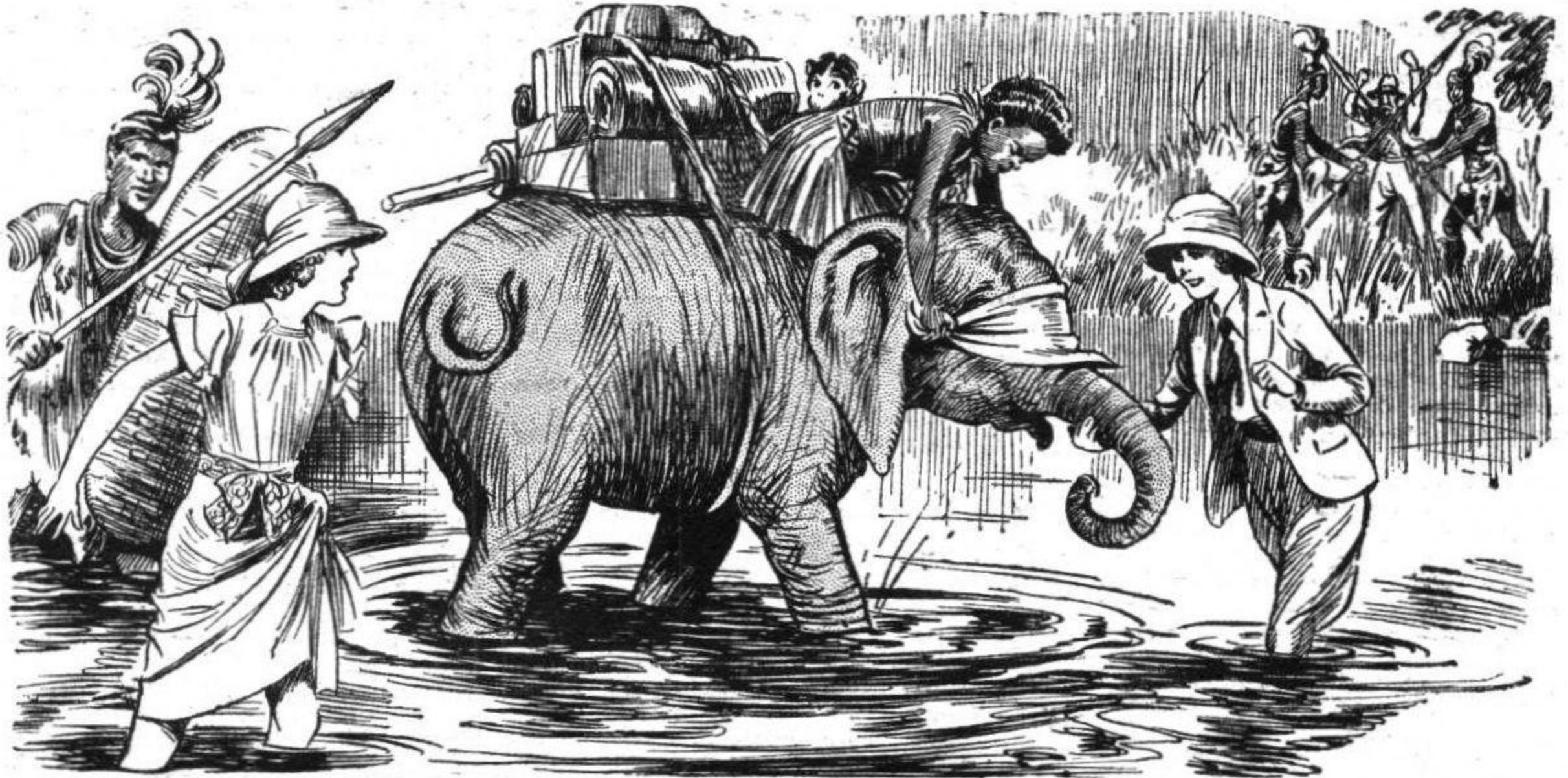
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**WHILE** Fuzzy draped the handkerchief over the elephant's eyes, Teresa and Luise urged him through the river. They had tricked the trader so far, but they had got to reach the other bank.

for miles and miles. Very few white people have ever been here."

Fuzzy nodded her frizzy head.

"Um. Black people and many white people dey go into Nompanyo's land, but dey do not come out."

It was a remark that made Luise and Teresa quiet for a moment, but Fuzzy did not seem to think that she had said anything at all odd!

"Oh, well, let's hope we're the exception!" said Teresa. "And don't you talk bosh, young Fuzzy! This ring will see us through—and we've got a warrior with us, too!"

She looked back at the warrior then, who marched with a spear over his shoulder, a splendid guard. At least they would not need to fear challenge from other warriors now!

They followed the path in silence for a while, each busy with her own thoughts. They had endured many dangers and difficulties, and it was a wonderful feeling to know that they had friends.

"I wonder what King Nompanyo's like," mused Luise at last. "I do hope that ring is all right. It certainly seems to be. But he may not have meant the hunter to give it away."

Fuzzy did not know, but she liked to pretend, and to show off a little. Being a black girl, she pretended that she knew all about King Nompanyo and the local customs.

"Him glad," she said. "Him mighty glad. Gib ring to friend. Friend gib to us—so we am friends of friend ob King Nompanyo."

Although only a river divided one part of the country from another, the scenery here seemed to be brighter and gayer. The foliage was thicker, and luscious fruits more in evidence.

But some of those tempting fruits were poisonous, as Fuzzy warned them, and must not be touched.

"Bambo knows—if Bambo take one, it good," she said.

And Bambo cast a side-glance at the girls almost as though to say, "a bit of luck you've got me with you, or goodness knows what might happen."

Then suddenly Teresa looked up at the luggage loaded on his back.

"I say—Adolphus is being very quiet, isn't he? Is he still there?"

"Yes—I can see one foot," said Luise.

The baby chimp had one foot wriggling in the air, but his face could not be seen.

"Adolphus!" called Teresa.

The baby chimp looked up, and Luise let out a squeal of horror.

"He's been hit—he must have been hit by a bough. Oh, my goodness—Terry! His face is covered with blood!"

"Stop!" cried Teresa.

Poor Adolphus made a whimpering noise, and Fuzzy ordered Bambo to halt. Then all three girls made a rush to the luggage.

Teresa was the first to reach Adolphus, and she stared at him anxiously. Then of a sudden she let out a shriek of laughter.

"Teresa—what is it?" asked Luise, amazed.

"Jam!" said Teresa. "Ha, ha, ha! It's jam! No wonder he was quiet."

Adolphus brought out his right paw, which until then had been hidden, pressed it to his face, and licked it. That paw was red—but so is raspberry jam! And that is just what it was.

"Adolphus, you awful spoofer!" laughed Luise. "And we really thought you were hurt."

"Jam!" echoed Fuzzy, and tried to wipe some from his face, but Adolphus fought back indignantly.

"That settles him," said Teresa. "He comes down and walks. Next thing he'll be eating some tablets, and will really be ill."

The food-tin was concealed, and Adolphus was lugged down to the earth where, despite his protests, the jam was wiped from his face.

For two more miles they progressed. Then the warrior, catching them up, spoke to Fuzzy, and since what he said seemed to be of importance, Teresa halted Bambo.

Fuzzy, listening intently, translated, when the warrior had finished his speech.

"He say he not go more on," she said. "Him go way back. Dey gone sound um drum say we am coming, so King Nompanyo he know."

The warrior bowed low, and the girls bowed low to him, taking care not to smile.

Then the warrior departed, and the girls pushed on alone. Soon night would fall, and before then they must find a suitable camping-spot; but they

had not gone far enough yet, and Teresa, after a short rest, suggested another stretch before the final night halt.

To-morrow they might meet the escort the king was sending, but not before, and the only thing to do was to find the best possible camping-spot at the last possible moment before night.

### Lion Cubs in Distress!

**T**HE jungle was in darkness. Teresa and Luise lay together under blankets in a hammock Luise had cleverly slung between two trees. They had a separate hammock each, but they were touching, and one blanket went over both, while their tent, supported by small tree stems, was above them.

Luise had not liked the idea of being on the ground itself, for fear of snakes, and Fuzzy, who could do clever things with creeper, had made the hammock, very neatly.

She herself was content to sleep on the ground with Adolphus, who was warm and cosy and really glad to be near her.

Bambo had settled down contentedly, although he had quivered once with nightmare, no doubt imagining himself sinking into the river.

But it was a peaceful scene, with the stars twinkling through the thick leaves of the trees and the whole jungle asleep.

Presently Adolphus stirred and pushed back the blanket. He had caught a faint sound that worried him, and now blinking, wide awake, he listened.

It was an odd noise he heard, a cry of distress, and he looked right and left. For a moment he could not decide whence it came, and then, locating it more accurately, he pushed his way through the undergrowth towards it.

Bambo had heard it, too, and his ears twitched, his trunk went up and down.

Adolphus, swinging from tree to tree in his skilled way, soon came to the source of the sound—or, rather, two sources. For, half hidden by thick leaves, were two lion cubs, whimpering piteously.

Adolphus listened for a minute, and then dropped to the ground near them. He dropped so near that they were scared.

One of them snarled courageously and flicked a paw, though he was hardly the size of a fox terrier. The other just stood there and cried "Mamma!" as clearly as a lion cub can.

But there came no answering roar—no tawny shape came rushing to their aid. The cubs were alone.

Adolphus surveyed them reflectively, scratched his ear, and called "Mamma!" in his own way. But that brought no response.

The lost lion cubs wandered about for a bit, and then huddled together for comfort. They were babes in the jungle, and Adolphus seemed to them the wicked uncle.

But Adolphus, after a thoughtful silence, suddenly turned and went off at speed by means of his overhead system, and in a minute or two was back with Fuzzy again.

Adolphus was not a chimpanzee who stood on ceremony at all. He took a grip on Fuzzy's hair and tugged—hard. Fuzzy awoke with a squeal, and Luise almost fell out of the hammock.

"Wh-what was that?" she quavered, nudging Teresa, who sat up. "It sounded like the awful screech of some horrible bird. And it was close to us, too."

Fuzzy rubbed her head and blinked. "Me—me make noise," she said, only half awake.

"You did? What's wrong?" asked Teresa.

"Adolphus him pull me hair," grumbled Fuzzy.

Teresa chuckled softly. "Pull his and see how he likes it," she said. "And I did tell you not to have him in bed. He's too restless."

Adolphus now tugged Fuzzy's hand. For a moment Fuzzy argued and tugged back. Then her senses warned her that Adolphus was agitated.

"Someting wrong," said Fuzzy, scrambling up. "Dolphus, him warn us."

Teresa swung down to the ground and flashed on her pocket torch, focusing it on to Adolphus, the chimp.

"What's wrong?" she asked.

For reply Adolphus swung through the trees, paused, chattered, went on, and then paused again, chattering even more excitedly.

## OWING TO EASTER

next week's issue of **THE SCHOOLGIRL** will be published on **THURSDAY, APRIL 14th** instead of Saturday.

Order Your Copy Now.

"Hallo! He's trying to lead us to something," said Teresa.

Fuzzy stepped forward, and then stooped, listening intently.

"Hist—hark!" she murmured. "Me hear sound."

There were precious few jungle sounds that Fuzzy did not know, and she recognised the whimpering instantly.

"Lion cubs!" she exclaimed. "Dey go cry for help."

"For help? Oh, they're hurt?" gasped Luise.

If cubs were in distress there was only one thing to do, in Luise's estimation—to help as quickly as possible.

They pulled on boots, and, with Fuzzy leading, went through the thick undergrowth. By this time Adolphus was with the cubs again, and his chattering directed Fuzzy, who, presently reaching them, shouted back to Teresa and Luise.

Fuzzy gathered up the cubs, unafraid, for they were the friendliest little creatures and quite harmless.

"Oh, the darlings!" gasped Luise, and took one from Fuzzy. "But what you doing here alone, silly tings, um?" she said to the one in her arms. "Where's oo's mumsy?"

The cub clung to her and seemed glad to find a friend; but still it wanted its mother.

"They've wandered from home," said Teresa. "But surely the mother can find them again?"

Fuzzy did not reply. She was searching the ground near by, and after a while she found what it was she sought.

"Den close along by," she said. "Cubs dey not go far. Modder she not come back."

"Oh!" said Teresa, understanding what that meant. "She's—"

Luise went quite white for a moment. "Not killed?" she asked softly.

"Trapped more likely," said Teresa anxiously. "And that's just as bad."

"You mean near here?" asked Luise eagerly.

"I should say so," said Teresa. "These little chaps couldn't have come very far by themselves. They'd soon get tired in this long grass."

"Then let's try to find the mother—please," Luise urged.

Teresa, smiling, laid a hand on Luise's arm. She knew and understood her chum's sympathetic heart. And, besides, she herself could not bear to think of such darling, cuddly little balls of fluff as these being parted from their mother.

"All right," she agreed. "Come on, Fuzzy! You'll be useful here. Let's see if we can find a trap."

But though they searched around in quite a wide circle, they came across no trap whatever. Then Teresa got an idea.

"I know, Fuzzy. You listen on ground."

Fuzzy knelt and put her ear to the ground, listening carefully. Then she sprang up.

"Yes, yes—dere am trap near by!" she said excitedly. "Dem modder she am caught."

"Oh, we must save her!" gasped Luise, and turned eagerly to Teresa. "We can't leave her trapped away from her babies."

"Not if we can do anything to help," agreed Teresa slowly. "But can we? If the pit's too deep for her to get out of her own accord we can't help her out."

"We can try—or, anyway, we could take her babies to her. Better for them all to be together," said Luise. "They want her."

Teresa turned to Fuzzy.

"Any chance of saving the lioness?" she asked. "Can you find her even?"

Fuzzy pursed her lips, and then nodded eagerly.

"Um. Me find her," she said. "Yis, yis. Me know way sound come. Follow Fuzzy!"

Luise kept close to Teresa as they set off, realising that now they were indeed taking a chance. For the lioness would be in a savage state of fury. She might think they were the cruel hunters who had set the trap.

"There it is!" exclaimed Teresa suddenly.

She pointed along the path to a spot where leaves and twigs had been scattered, and in the middle of which was a gaping hole. The lioness, treading on what had seemed to be firm ground, had gone plunging through into the pit.

Now, exhausted with frantic efforts to escape and go to her cubs, it was as much as she could do to go on growling and snarling.

But the sound of steps brought forth more desperately angry cries, which ended, however, when the cubs gave answering tongue.

Fuzzy went forward on all fours to see how deep the pit was. Peering over, she saw that the lioness, standing at full stretch, was well short of the lip, and that even by the wildest jumping could not scramble out.

The great animal's eyes glowed red, and her mighty voice, reverberating in the pit, was terrifying.

Fuzzy crept back.

"Lion cubs, dey go fall and get mebbe hurt," she said. "No drop dem in to modder."

Teresa's eyes gleamed.

"A log—a sapling—something to lower the cubs on," she said quickly.

She had not far to look, for close to the pit was a stout pole which had recently been cut down, and was part of the trapper's equipment.

"Fuzzy, put a cub on the end of this and get him clinging to it. Then we'll lower it in," she cried.

Fuzzy carried her cub to the end of the pole, and it clung there in alarm as it was lifted clear of the ground.

Between them Fuzzy and Teresa carried the sapling to the edge of the pit, and the lioness gave a high-pitched cry of delight.

In went the pole with the cub on it. Then suddenly the pole was crashed from their grip. The end slid into the pit with the squealing cub on it. The pole swayed and rocked. Next moment the head of the lioness came into view.

"She's climbing out—on the pole!" gasped Teresa. "Look out! Put the cub down, Luise! She'll go for you!"

But the other cub was clinging to Luise, its claws in her shirt. Teresa, knowing that the lioness would not understand their good motives, rushed to her friend. For without a doubt the lioness, seeing her cub, would rush straight at Luise, felling her with a single blow.

**WHAT** a dramatic situation the chums are in! Will they be able to escape from the lioness in time? On no account should you fail to read next week's enthralling continuation of this fine story.

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COMPLETE this week. Another topping laughter-story featuring irrepressible—



"No gymkhana for you!" snapped Joy Sharpe's governess, Miss Retcham. "You would merely make a fool of yourself!" But Joy—disguised as Nakita, the gipsy—saw to it that both she and the governess went, and that it was Miss Retcham who looked silly!

### Joy's Governess Decides!

"COULDN'T I just canter for a little way, Miss Retcham? I'm sure Miranda would like to stretch her legs!"

Joy Sharpe patted her pony, Miranda, on the neck as she spoke; but although Miranda gave a little whinny of pleasure, Joy's governess, Miss Retcham, did not.

Joy's governess held the bridle, and Miranda had as much chance of a merry romp as Joy herself had. And if the pony had been able to write, she would have earned fifty lines long ago.

Sadly Joy sighed.

It was a spring morning—a gay morning—and she wanted to hear Miranda's hoofs thumping on the grass, to feel the thrilling movement of a gallop. But it was not to be.

"I'm afraid, Joy, that you are not sufficiently grateful for small mercies," said the governess icily. "It should be pleasure enough for you to be riding the pony. But no! At once you want a further privilege. You want to canter. Never content!"

"Yes, Miss Retcham," Joy said meekly—for it was best to placate the governess.

In silence they moved on towards the village, past the pleasant, tempting fields. But Joy, looking down the road, saw that she was not the only horse-rider in the lane, for approaching was a fine hunter, ridden by a man with shiny boots, dashing breeches, and rakish bowler.

"Mr. Hardinge!" said Joy, recognising him.

"Ride on!" said Miss Retcham curtly.

But Mr. Hardinge wheeled his horse and reined up level with them, so that had Miss Retcham walked on she would have rubbed noses with his horse.

"Good-morning!" he said, in his breezy way. "Good-morning! Good-morning! Good-morning!"

"Good-morning!" responded Miss Retcham icily.

"A jolly good morning!" added Joy.

"Isn't it grand, Mr. Hardinge? Just the morning for a canter."

"Joy!" snapped Miss Retcham. "I have told you that you are not cantering."

"Not cantering?" said Mr. Hardinge, a man with glimmering blue eyes and a dashing moustache. "Why not, eh? That's a smart little pony. Fine critter!"

Miss Retcham eyed him in steely manner.

"I do not doubt that the pony is capable of cantering," she said, "but I have already told Joy that she is not cantering this morning. So long as I remain her governess, she will obey me."

"Oh, quite—quite!" said Mr. Hardinge quickly. "All the same, it is a good pony. I suppose you'll be entering it on Saturday?"

Joy gave a quick start of surprise, for she did not know that there was anything exciting taking place on Saturday.

"Why, what's happening on Saturday?" she asked eagerly.

"Just a mild gymkhana," he said. "And that pony would collect a few prizes, what's more. I suppose you can jump?"

"Yes, rather!" said Joy eagerly. "Oh, Miss Retcham, what fun! I'd love to enter in a gymkhana. And so would Miranda; and I know she could get prizes, too!"

But as she looked at her governess she knew instantly that the answer was definitely "No!"

"In no circumstances whatsoever," said Miss Retcham, "would I dream of allowing you to enter a gymkhana, Joy, so put the idea right out of your mind, now and for ever."

"Oh!" said Joy dismally.

Miss Retcham made as though to move on, but as Mr. Hardinge did not draw aside, she was trapped.

"Well, perhaps someone else could

# Gipsy Joy

The rich girl romany



ride the pony," Mr. Hardinge suggested. "I think I've seen a gipsy girl riding it!"

Joy's heart gave a jump, and to her eyes came a bright shine of eagerness.

"Nakita—yes!" she exclaimed.

"Nakita," said the governess in a quite different, bitter tone. "That girl! I have forbidden her to ride Joy's pony. And if I ever catch her doing so—"

"Oh, well, that's off, too, then," said Mr. Hardinge. "And I think I'd better be," he added, with a slight grimace.

Lifting his hat, he smiled at Joy, gave the governess a solemn look, and then trotted the horse forward.

"If only people would mind their own business, and not interfere!" said Miss Retcham angrily. "Another morning you shall not even ride the pony to the village, Joy."

Joy did not answer, neither did she look dejected. For a sudden idea had come to her mind.

Why should not Nakita ride the pony in the gymkhana?

Suppose Miss Retcham did not know? Joy, thrilled and excited, rode on without another thought of cantering, for she was too busy thinking about the gymkhana.

Nakita the gipsy girl could do just as she liked—canter, gallop, turn somersaults—any old thing. For she was only a gipsy girl. There was no governess to restrict her.

"I only hope," said Miss Retcham, breaking the silence, "that the next time Nakita rides Miranda I shall catch her red-handed!"

Joy did not reply, but she smiled.

"There is nothing to smile about, Joy! I know how to handle that girl, and, impudent, defiant, though she may be, she is also afraid of me. I have forbidden her to speak to you, and you may as well know that although I have

By IDA MELBOURNE

asked many people in the village, she has never been seen by anyone talking to you."

Joy giggled at that.

For there was a reason, an excellent reason, why Nakita and she had not been seen together. But, obvious though it was, it had never occurred to Miss Retcham—fortunately for Joy!

For the fact was that Joy Sharpe and Nakita were one and the same person: Joy, with her face dyed, and wearing a gipsy frock, was Nakita—and Nakita, without the frock or the dye, was Joy Sharpe!

But Miss Retcham could not see the joke.

"That settles it," she snapped, her eyes glittering. "We will return home. You can go into the school-room and write an essay, while I go to the village alone."

And, with a strong tug, she wheeled Miranda round.

Joy's face did not even fall, and although she tried to keep the glimmer of fun from her eyes, she failed. For the gay thought that took possession of her mind was that if Miss Retcham went down to the village she herself could become Nakita—and when she was Nakita all she had to do was to jump on to Miranda and just gallop away!

Which was exactly what Joy intended to do!

### "Stop That Girl!"

**J**OY SHARPE, fifteen minutes later, looked out of her bed-room window and watched her governess going towards the gates down the drive.

Beside her was Tinker, her pup, also watching; and by the way his tongue lolled out and his tail wagged it seemed that he and his mistress were thinking the same thought.

"There she goes, Tinks—now's our chance," whispered Joy.

Tinker jumped back from the window and rushed to the wardrobe, clawing at the door. For inside were the gipsy frock and the bottle of dye. And he knew what that meant.

"Tinks, stop! My goodness, you'll claw that door to splinters!" protested Joy. "And then what'll Miss Retcham say? She'll want to know why you're so eager to have the door open. And as likely as not she'll think that we keep buns and things there. If she ever searches inside—"

It was a possibility too awful for words, and Joy shuddered.

However, when she opened the wardrobe door she was too gay at sight of the gipsy frock really to mind about the danger. She took it out with the bottle of dye and started to change. Tinker, his tail thumping the carpet, an occasional impatient yelp rending the air, could hardly wait.

"All right, impatient, I'm being as quick as I can," said Joy. "I'm changing in record time if only you knew."

She covered her face, neck, and her arms with the stain, put on the frock, and then looked at herself in the mirror. All well? No! She had forgotten the sandals. In haste she put them on, and then she was ready. She had become Nakita, the gipsy girl.

No one would have recognised Joy Sharpe at this moment. They never did. Even though Miss Retcham had seen Nakita face to face many times, she had never guessed that she was her own charge Joy.

"Now, Tinks!" said Nakita. "I mean Slinks—"

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.

## BETWEEN OURSELVES



**M**Y DEAR READERS,—A very short chat this week, I'm afraid, but not too short for me to be able to thank you all very much indeed for the lovely letters you've been sending me. I do appreciate them, you know, and all of them will be answered in due course.

Well, now I think I'd better tell you something about next week's topping programme of stories—before Mr. Printer finds there's no more room.

First of all, the Cliff House story. A most intriguing one, as the title—

### "MYSTERY ABOARD THE MADCAP'S YACHT,"

will tell you. And it features not only Barbara Redfern & Co., but a very likeable friend of theirs whom many of you have met before.

I refer to Celeste Margesson, that high-spirited, happy-go-lucky girl who, despite being every whit a madcap, has the kindest heart in the world. Celeste's grandfather's yacht is lying off Pegg-Babs & Co. are invited on board. They go—first, for pleasure, and then for both pleasure and profit, the profit to go to the new lifeboat fund.

For what could be better, the chums enthuse, than to decorate the yacht, turn it into a floating fairyland of lights and bunting and fluttering flags, and take people for trips at so much per time? A grand idea, they all agree! The lifeboat fund will benefit no end.

A grand idea it undoubtedly is—except from the point of view of several people connected with the yacht, and they are dismayed, then furious. For Babs & Co. are quite innocently interfering with certain queer plans of these people.

And that is where the mystery commences—not to mention the thrills and excitement of a lifetime!

Don't miss this fascinating story—Clara Trevlyn plays the leading role, by the way—but make certain of your copy of THE SCHOOLGIRL well in advance. As usual, of course, next week's issue will contain all our other features, another delightful "Gipsy Joy" adventure, more magnificent chapters of "The Jungle Hikers," together with two more pages of Bright, Useful and Interesting gossip from Patricia, and another Cliff House Pet.

Now before I say au revoir, here are two "Little Letters."

**Hannah C. (Jerusalem).**—Delighted to hear from you again, Hannah. You need never worry about your English. It's splendid. And your letters are always most interesting. Very best wishes.

**Ethne Brownell (Belfast).**—I hope you will understand, Ethne, when I say that the reason I cannot do as you suggest is that I must naturally please the majority of my readers. Write again soon, won't you?

Well, cheerio, everybody, for another week. With best wishes,

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

For when Joy became Nakita, Tinker became Slinker, and had to have a dab of brown stain on the side of his coat so that he could look as though he were his own brother instead of just himself.

Nakita went carefully and cautiously down the staircase, followed by Slinker, who seemed to appreciate the need for care, even going to the length of putting his ears down and lowering his tail.

But once in the garden, where there were bushes and trees giving concealment, she skipped with joy.

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" she chirped. "Come on, Slinks!"

Now for a wonderful ride on Miranda—and now to go down to the village and enter her name—Nakita—in the gymkhana.

Nakita crept along to the stable where Miranda was housed; and the pony, hearing the approaching steps, whinnied.

Miss Retcham might not be able to recognise Joy in this kit, but Miranda had horse-sense and knew those footsteps.

Unfastening the stable door, Nakita crept in, saddled her pet, and in a few minutes, having got into the field, was riding away down the lane, while Slinker, barking excitedly, ran alongside.

Nakita arrived at the village at a pleasant trot, and, tethering Miranda to the pump, left Slinks on guard, and walked down the High Street.

But suddenly she stopped.

Miss Retcham was only a few yards away, talking to Mrs. Munnings.

"It is very strange that I have not heard about the gymkhana," Miss Retcham was saying.

"I do not happen to have seen you," was Mrs. Munnings' reply to that. "Besides which, I didn't know you were interested in horses."

Nakita strolled forward quite openly, not afraid of being seen by her governess now that she was confident of her disguise.

"Joy has a pony," Miss Retcham retorted.

"Oh, well, if Joy wants to enter, of course—"

"She does not," said Miss Retcham.

And Nakita nearly giggled; for the expression of triumph on the governess' face suggested a "Yah! See, clever?" score off Mrs. Munnings.

There was no love lost between Mrs. Munnings and Miss Retcham.

"Then the gymkhana can hardly interest you, although, of course, I shall be delighted to sell you a ticket, Miss Retcham. I am organising the sale of tickets."

Miss Retcham did not reply, because at that moment she saw Nakita.

"Morning, lidy!" said Nakita politely. "Sorter hinter spring in the air, like."

Miss Retcham gave her a cold glance. "Good-morning!" she said stiffly.

"It's a lovely morning, gipsy girl," said Mrs. Munnings most pleasantly.

She did not as a rule speak to Nakita, and it was obvious that she did so now just to make the governess seem aloof.

"That's right, lidy," said Nakita amiably. "And I hope it keeps fine for the gymkhana on Saturday."

"H'm! Even the gipsies know about the thing," said Miss Retcham petulantly.

"Oh, well, lidy, gipsies know everything!" said Nakita sweetly. "They don't need to be told, or to read things on the posters. There's nothing going on that a gipsy doesn't know. And mebbe I'll win a prize myself."

"You?" said Mrs. Munnings in surprise.

"Gipsies are not wanted," sneered Miss Retcham.

Nakita's heart sank, and for a moment she thought that her dream of riding in the gymkhana would come to nothing. Although Joy was inclined to be timid at times, Nakita was not.

"So you don't want a gipsy to win any prizes—eh?" she said, with a wink. "Still, I suppose you're bossing the show, lidy?"

Miss Retcham did not answer, but went a little pink.

"Miss Retcham is not connected with it in any way," said Mrs. Munnings quietly.

"Coo, you don't say?" gasped Nakita. "Why, I thought as she was the one who ran everything here—the sort of dictator."

Mrs. Munnings nearly sniggered, and certainly smiled behind her hand; but the governess, gritting her teeth, turned away.

"I do not intend to stay here to be insulted by a common gipsy girl! Good-morning, Mrs. Munnings!" she said.

"Good-morning, Miss Retcham!"

The governess stamped away, and Nakita turned to Mrs. Munnings.

"Won't she let you have gipsies in the gymkhana?" she asked.

It was the right way to talk to Mrs. Munnings.

"Miss Retcham does not give me orders," the woman replied quite grimly. "And I see no reason why you should not compete. It would add colour to the event, perhaps. But you will have to provide your own horse, or pony. Which will it be?"

"Pony," said Nakita excitedly. "Oh, thanks, lidy, you're a proper pal! Put me name down."

"The fee is five shillings, though," warned Mrs. Munnings. "And the entry list closes this afternoon at five o'clock."

Nakita had sixpence on her—no more—but she gave it to Mrs. Munnings.

"That's a sorter deposit," she said. "And I'll bring the rest—honour, I will!"

Before she could say any more, Miss Retcham, who had gone into the library, came hurrying out in a state of excitement.

As a rule, the governess was demure, restrained and dignified, and Nakita had quite a shock to see her running in this manner.

"Stop that girl!" Miss Retcham cried to Mrs. Munnings. "Hold her! Don't let her go! She's a thief—a—a horse-thief!"

Nakita dodged sideways. In a flash she guessed the truth. Miss Retcham had seen Miranda at the pump!

But Nakita did not mean to wait for capture.

She raced to Miranda, untethered her, sprang on her back, and clattered away before anyone could move a hand to stop her.

### "Spotting" the Winner

"JOY, where are you?"

As Joy Sharpe heard her governess' voice, she closed the wardrobe door in her room with a bang. Having got safely back to the Gables, leaving Miranda in the field, she had only just removed the make-up from her face, and whipped off the gipsy frock.

Miss Retcham's voice came nearer

in the corridor, and Joy tugged on her ordinary day frock. She was still fastening it when Miss Retcham pushed open the door.

The governess was in a blazing temper.

"That gipsy girl—Nakita? She has stolen Miranda!" she grated.

"Oh, surely not!" protested Joy, thinking swiftly. "I told her she could borrow Miranda, but—"

"Good gracious!" gasped the governess. "You—you gave that girl permission? How—how dare you!"

Joy set her lips.

To save Nakita, she would have to take the blame for that, but it was better than having her gipsy self accused of theft!

It had to be done, however angry Miss Retcham might be.

"I—I— She rides awfully well, Miss Retcham."

"That is beside the point!" Miss Retcham grated. "Have you no respect for my wishes?"

"But I—you see," said Joy uneasily, "Nakita—"

"I see a very disobedient, wilful, defiant girl!" the governess stormed. "You will stay in this afternoon, and now you most certainly will not go to the gymkhana on Saturday!"

Joy was silent. Her one hope was that the governess would not tell her grandfather. For Joy's grandfather—her guardian—was a dear old man whom she loved dearly, and there was nothing pained her more than to displease him.

But the hope was in vain. Miss Retcham seemed able to read her thoughts.

"I shall report this instantly to your grandfather," she said curtly. "You will not have the new dress you were

promised, and I shall see that you are more strictly supervised in future."

Miss Retcham swung from the room, and Joy heaved a sigh.

The new frock! It hadn't occurred to her that she would lose that. The frock was a pretty one she had seen in the near-by town, and she had been promised it to wear at a friend's party. And even worse was the dread of the interview with her grandfather. He would not be angry—worse than that—he would be pained with her because she had defied the governess.

But there was no way out for Joy. At any cost, she had to save Nakita. She went on to the landing, and heard voices from the hall below—Miss Retcham's and Mr. Hardinge's.

Joy, listening, overheard quite a lot of interesting things which helped to straighten the position out—a little.

Mr. Hardinge, it appeared, had encountered Miss Retcham in the village, when the governess was hysterically trying to find the escaped Nakita. Having been told the story of Nakita's theft of Miranda, he had ridden homewards, to have the shock of his life when he spotted Miranda, perfectly safe and sound, back in the field next to the Gables.

"That gipsy girl can scarcely have stolen the animal," he said. "Borrowed it, yes, but—"

"I said stolen, and I mean stolen, even now!" said Miss Retcham doggedly. "The fact that Miranda has been restored, only shows that the gipsy girl lost her nerve. I intimidated her. However, that is not what I wanted to say. If Nakita imagines she will ride Miranda at the gymkhana, I shall have a great surprise awaiting her," came the governess' voice in anger.

"But if Joy doesn't mind her pony



MISS RETCHAM, determined to prove that the pony was Miranda in disguise, scrubbed away at the animal's spots. Nakita, seated on the real Miranda, looked on delightedly.

being ridden—" Mr. Hardinge murmured.

"I mind, Mr. Hardinge. Thank you for informing me of the pony's return," was the icy rejoinder. "I am sorry if you have been inconvenienced. Good-morning!"

It was Miss Retcham's polite manner of saying "scram," and Mr. Hardinge apparently took the hint; for Joy, creeping back to her room, and looking out of the window, saw him riding down the drive.

Relieved, though she was at Mr. Hardinge's doubts about any question of theft, she was annoyed with Miss Retcham.

"So Nakita isn't to ride the pony, eh?" she mused. "Well, that's where Miss Retcham is wrong. Because if I'm to be hanged for a lamb, I might just as well be hanged for a sheep. Nakita will ride my pony, and, what's more, win a prize."

By the morrow Joy had found a new idea—a really brilliant one. And so, when she saw Boko, the butcher's boy, she managed to get him on one side, and told him all about it.

So good was the idea that it tickled Boko's fancy, and, furthermore, thrilled him! Being Boko, he did not say no when she asked his help. He gave an enthusiastic:

"You betcher!"

MISS RETCHAM opened a slip of paper contained in an envelope, which the housemaid had found on the mat. The envelope was dirty, and addressed in ill-formed handwriting to "Miss Wretchum."

Joy, sitting at the school-room table, did not look up. It was Saturday morning—the day of the gymkhana, but both Joy and Miss Retcham were staying in.

Opening the note, Miss Retcham gave a quick start, and then peered at it more closely.

"So!" she exclaimed, and folded it carefully, after a look at Joy.

Without a word, the governess rose, and a moment later, crossed to Miranda's stable.

The gardener stood near by, arms folded.

"You remained on guard, as I instructed you?" Miss Retcham asked grimly.

"Yes, ma'am," replied the gardener. "And I chased off the butcher's boy; he came sneaking round here."

"H'm! Well, keep a very close eye on the stable. I have received a warning, from someone who chooses to remain anonymous, that the pony will be entered at the gymkhana disguised—"

"Disguised?" said the gardener. "What, with a false beard or something?"

"No; of course not! With white spots—dappled," said Miss Retcham, "like a rocking-horse. But first the pony would have to be stolen."

It was just after lunch that Miss Retcham returned to the stable, and heard a whinny from inside.

But as she moved closer to the door, to her stark amazement, Miranda said: "Go on; your turn to whinny. It's making my throat sore."

The governess reeled. Of all the fantastic things! The only possible conclusion was that Miranda was talking to herself, or else—

Miss Retcham's cheeks flamed, and she wheeled upon the gardener, demanding the stable key. Puzzled, he gave it

to her, and watched while she opened the door.

As the door was flung wide two odd shapes rushed through—two red blankets with legs appearing under them. They rushed at full pelt, and had covered a hundred yards before the gardener moved.

Utterly dazed and bewildered, he stood behind the governess, staring at an empty stable.

"She's gorn—gorn—"

Miss Retcham nearly boiled with rage.

"We have been tricked! That was not Miranda. It was a couple of boys hiding there, whinnying—pretending to be a pony. And you, being an imbecile, were deceived."

"I was. And wasn't you?" said the gardener indignantly. "And I'm not an imbecile, ma'am. I'm a gardener, and it's not part of my job to mind ponies."

"Go after those boys!" screamed Miss Retcham.

Joy, sitting in the school-room with fast-beating heart, heard the governess' hurried steps in the corridor outside. Bursting open the door, Miss Retcham glared in.

"Joy, I'm locking you in here for the afternoon. The cook will keep the key."

She slammed the door, turned the key, and disappeared. Such was her haste that when she scurried across the drive she was pulling on her coat with one hand, and wheeling her cycle with the other.

"Hurrah, hurrah!" cheered Joy. "It's worked! And now, come on, Nakita!"

Chuckling softly, Joy found her duplicate key of the school-room, a key belonging to another door which fitted the lock. Letting herself out, she locked the door behind her and went to her room.

Five minutes later, unaccompanied by Slinker this time, she was on her way to the village.

The gymkhana was starting, and soon there would be the second race—the one for which Miranda was entered, and in which Nakita herself was riding.

There was a goodly sized crowd gathered all the way along the course, and the paddock was thronged.

In such a crowd it would be hard to find anyone, but Nakita kept her eyes wide for her governess, for if she knew where Miss Retcham was she could not herself be taken by surprise.

She soon saw Miss Retcham. The governess was talking excitedly to Mr. Hardinge. Followed at a discreet distance by Nakita, she went to the paddock, and there gave a sudden shout.

"That pony is a fake—disguised!" she cried. "Where is a policeman? Arrest the girl who is riding it!"

Confusion reigned. People protested, shouted, expostulated, but Mr. Hardinge, gallantly trying to be helpful, presently brought a bucket of water and a sponge.

"I will prove that I am right!" stormed Miss Retcham. "I cannot easily be fooled."

People were laughing now, but she paid them no heed. Having had the secret warning, she knew that this pony was really Miranda in disguise.

Amidst jeers she tried to wipe off the animal's spots. Knowing nothing about ponies, Miss Retcham did not realise that these particular spots were genuine, but the crowd did. They became quite hysterical as the short-sighted governess

frenziedly rubbed and brushed the pony's side in order to prove her case.

So excited was she, and so thick was the crowd gathered about her, that she did not know the pony race was starting.

And there on the inside, ridden by the gipsy girl Nakita, was Miranda, disguised with white "spats," and a white patch on her muzzle.

"They're off!" shouted Boko from the side, and his two pals gave the most realistic whinnies.

Away went Miranda, with Nakita riding her surely, confidently.

What a race it was! What a thriller!

Never had Nakita enjoyed anything so much. The wild excitement of racing, of knowing that there was another pony just in front who must be caught, and others coming up behind!

Away down the field she went, over a low hedge, over a small line of hurdles.

"Miranda on! Faster, faster, faster!" urged Nakita.

Miranda nobly obeyed. By a head she streaked home first, and then slowed, with Nakita patting her sleek neck.

"Miranda, you've won! You've won!" Nakita cried delightedly. "But not under your own name, dear! You're a gipsy pony, Zinganda; but you don't mind!"

It was all one to Miranda. Looking at the pony she had just beaten, she let out a giggling whinny of triumph.

WITH A face bright red, Miss Retcham cycled home from the gymkhana. She had made a complete fool of herself, for the spots on the pony were real, and the most careful search had failed to reveal another similar animal; nor had she found Nakita.

The first thing Miss Retcham saw on cycling into the grounds of the Gables was the paddock, and there grazed Miranda, without her spats.

And for all Miss Retcham knew she had been grazing there all the time, for the gardener had gone in chase of the two boys, and then in search of the local policeman.

When Miss Retcham re-entered the school-room, after getting the key from the cook, she found Joy writing busily at the table. But not a word did Miss Retcham say of her adventure. She banged out of the room, and went sulkily to her bed-room, to forget her troubles in the novel she was writing.

Joy, happy and excited, hardly knew how to keep her secret. But the real climax came two days later, when a mysterious parcel arrived. In that parcel was a silver cup, and a little note from Nakita, the gipsy girl.

"Miranda one this kup by wining the rais at the gimkarner," said the note, "so it's reely yours. So here it is; and she went like a narrow, my word she didn't harf."

Had Miss Retcham had her way the cup would have been returned; but no one knew where to find Nakita. And, moreover, so struck was Joy's grandfather by the gipsy girl's honesty, and so thrilled was Joy at her pony's victory, that the cup was finally placed on the book-case in the school-room.

Joy's triumph was complete—thanks to Nakita!

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

"GIPSY JOY" will be here again next Thursday, as full of fun and frolic as ever. Be sure to meet her, won't you?