

"MYSTERY ABOARD THE MADCAP'S YACHT!" Magnificent LONG COMPLETE Cliff House story inside.

# THE SCHOOLGIRL

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Incorporating  
"SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN"



**A MOST INTRIGUING  
DISCOVERY ABOARD THE  
YACHT OF MYSTERY!**

See this week's wonderful Babs & Co.  
story.



Meet Barbara Redfern & Co. of Cliff House, and an old favourite, Celeste Margesson,



# MYSTERY ABOARD *the*

## First Suspicions



**T**R-RING! Tr-ring!  
Ting-a-ling-a-ling!  
"Ahoy! Look out,  
there!"

Barbara Redfern, captain of Junior School at Cliff House School, and the five chums who were accompanying her, spun round.

"My hat!" Clara Trevlyn cried.  
"Oh crumbs! I sus-say, you know—" plump Bessie Bunter gasped.  
"Ze bicycle—he am out of control!" Marcelle Biquet shrilled excitedly.

There was no doubt about that—no doubt whatever. Babs & Co., near the bottom of the steep slope of Friardale Hill, saw that immediately. In haste they scampered to one side of the road.

Tr-ring! Tr-ring! Tr-ring! The bicycle bell pealed furiously. On the machine was a girl, slightly older than the six who formed the Cliff House group—a strikingly pretty girl, whose wavy hair streamed out behind her as she came whizzing down.

Despite the peril of her position, she was shrieking with laughter.

Next second machine and rider had hurtled past the chums.

"Oh, my stars!" Leila Carroll gasped.  
"See who it was?"

"Celeste!" cried golden-haired Mabel Lynn. "Celeste! Celeste, you dummy!" she shrieked.

But Celeste Margesson, the laughing madcap of the cycle, did not look round. Celeste in that moment could not have looked round! Fifty yards farther down the hill she had swerved

to avoid a bump in the road, and at the very moment Mabs shrieked out she was in the act of turning a spectacular, but unpremeditated, somersault over the handlebars of her machine.

A bump—a crash! A shower of sand from the ditch in which Celeste had shot head first. Babs, her heart jumping, stood petrified.

"Oh, Celeste—Celeste!" she cried, and led a rush down the road.

Then up from the depths went a merry peal of laughter. Over the rim

that gay madcap's face?—was hauled into the road.

Leila, meantime, had rescued the bicycle, the front wheel of which was sadly buckled.

"Thanks!" Celeste gurgled. "Oh whoops! Do I look a sight? The brakes went, you know," she added.

"And so," Tomboy Clara Trevlyn snorted, "did you! Off your rocker, I should say. What the dickens made you do that?"

"Oh, I didn't intend to do it, of

**What fun meeting madcap Celeste Margesson again! Thrilling to go aboard her yacht and help to decorate that luxury vessel for a forthcoming charity event. And then thrills of a different order when Tomboy Clara Trevlyn sets out to prove that the skipper of the yacht is playing some crooked game!**

of the ditch peeped a pretty face, in whose flushed cheeks two glorious blue eyes gleamed like stars.

Babs blinked.

"Celeste, are you hurt?"

"Hurt? Not a bit!" Celeste laughed.

"Oh whoops! Babs—Bessie—here, I say, all of you!" she cried. "I was just on my way to Cliff House to see you, you know. Wait a minute; I've got half a bramble-bush clinging round my legs! Oh phoo! There we are! Babs, give me a hand, will you?"

Willingly enough Babs & Co. lent that hand. Celeste, still laughing—did ever any accident erase the smile from

course!" Celeste laughed. "I was just having a little scorch. Still, here we are, all merry and bright. No bones broken, even if"—with a rueful glance at her scratched legs—"I've torn my stockings a wee. But I say, it's grand to see you. How are you all? And where's Jemima?"

Jemima Carstairs, Babs told her as they shook hands, had gone to London to see her father.

"He's off to Nigeria again next week, you see. That's how we come to be here. We've just been to the station to see her off. But when," she added, "did you arrive? And how's your grandfather, Celeste?"

In this Grand Long Complete Story.



# Madcap's YACHT!

"Yes, rather! And—and Aunt Mary, you know!" plump Bessie Bunter put in.

"And where's the *Gloriana*?" Clara wanted to know.

"Woof!" Celeste laughed. "One question at a time. The *Gloriana*," she replied, referring to her grandfather's yacht, "is in the bay. It arrived there this morning. But neither grandfather nor Aunt Mary is on it. Grandpop stopped behind in Algiers. Aunt Mary is in London. And that," she added, "is where I'm going to-morrow. That's why I wanted to see you to-day. What's your news?"

Babs smiled. One could never help but smile, somehow, in Celeste's company. As light and irresponsible as a sea breeze, with no thought ever except that of extracting the maximum amount of fun out of life. It really was good to see her again.

For that was a pleasure not accorded to them often. Though Celeste and her grandfather and her Aunt Mary officially lived at Romans Tower, south of Cliff House School, they were hardly ever in residence.

Spasmodically once or twice a year the *Gloriana* rolled into the bay there, remained a short while, and then was off again for another trip to some remote part of the planet.

Like a gust of the sea air to which she herself was so inured, Celeste gaily blew into their lives from time to time; as gently blew out again.

"Well——" Babs started.

"No, don't say it!" Celeste laughed. "Wait a minute. Ahoy, there! I've got an idea. Are you free for this afternoon?"

"Why, yes," Babs said,

"Goodie! Then," Celeste laughed, "what about coming back to the *Gloriana* with me? No, please don't ask me to come to school. I just couldn't, wearing these stockings. Is that on?"

"Oh crumbs! You mean to tea?" Bessie Bunter asked eagerly, her eyes gleaming behind her thick spectacles.

"Tea, dinner, supper, breakfast—anything you like!" Celeste laughed recklessly.

The chums laughed; faces brightened. It was always something of a thrill to find themselves aboard the *Gloriana*, but what a treat those teas of Celeste's were! Plump Bessie's mouth watered in anticipation.

"But what about this bicycle, I guess," Leila expostulated.

"That?" Celeste shrugged. "Oh, dump that in the ditch," she said flippantly.

"But it's new," pointed out the American junior.

"I know! Still, never mind," Celeste said impatiently. "Oh, all right, give it to me! I say, girlie," she added to a young stranger who was strolling up the road, "want a bicycle?"

"Well, I'd like it, but I'm afraid I couldn't afford to buy it, if that's what you mean," the girl said, blinking.

"But," Celeste laughed, "you can afford the repairs, can't you? Well, here we are. That's yours!" And handing the machine to the dazedly delighted girl, she boisterously took Clara's arm, then Babs', and, with a laugh, marched off down the street.

"Now off to the *Gloriana*!" she chuckled. "Whoops! Won't Hammond be surprised?"

"Hammond?" echoed Babs.

"Nice man! Our new skipper," Celeste explained. "Grandpop picked him up at Gibraltar. Simpkins, our old skipper, and half the crew, got fever while we were off Madagascar, and so commissioned Hammond and a new crew to bring the *Gloriana* back to Pegg, and wait here until Grandpop returns. But naturally," Celeste added, "as grandpop's away, I'm owner of the yacht now, and Hammond has to take his orders from me."

"And Mr. Murphy?" Clara queried eagerly. "Is he still with you?"

"Oh, young Murphy, the wireless officer!" Celeste's eyes grew mischievous. "Like him, don't you, Clara? Yes, he's still there—and doesn't he like to talk about you? Come on, Bessie!"

"Yes, rather! I—I'm kik-coming, you know," Bessie panted, for Celeste was setting the pace, and when Celeste set the pace, even Tomboy Clara had a job to keep up with her. "Oh, dud-dear!"

Celeste laughed. Down the road they swung. At Ivy House they left the village, and, striking through the woods, presently came within sight of the sea. And then they all stopped.

"The Glory!" laughed Celeste.

The *Gloriana*, standing magnificently out to sea, it was. What a perfect picture she made in her gold-and-white paint, with her brasswork gleaming, so that even from this distance the sun's rays seemed to be striking bright lights from it.

A thing of beauty and grace, a thing made for speed. There was something about the *Gloriana* which always made Babs catch her breath a little when she first saw it.

"It—it's lovely!" Babs breathed.

By  
**HILDA RICHARDS**

Illustrated by T. LAIDLER.

"Not a bad old tub," Celeste said carelessly. "She wears well, doesn't she? But—hallo!" she said quickly.

"Hallo what?" Clara asked.

"Those boats. Where the dickens have they come from?"

They all stared as they tramped on, heading towards Romans Tower, Celeste's official home.

Before them the glittering sea rolled smoothly towards the shore, so clear, so transparent, that they could see clearly the cruel rocks submerged in the shallow depths beneath the surface.

Beyond the rocks the *Gloriana* lay anchored. But—these boats—

There were four of them—long, low, racy-looking boats, piled high with cargo of some description. They were shooting straight for the *Gloriana*.

"Looks as if they're taking supplies to the yacht," murmured Mabel Lynn as they strode on. "They're heading in that direction."

"But what supplies?" Celeste asked. "Hammond hasn't orders to take supplies on board. Anyway, it doesn't matter, girls. Come on!"

They had reached the top of the steps at Romans Tower now. Those steps, carved out of the cliff by Roderick Margesson's orders, led straight down to the foreshore. On the shore, made fast to a mooring mast, Celeste's own motor-launch was waiting.

The chums climbed in. Celeste, with a laugh, seated herself at the wheel. "Now hold tight!" she said.

The launch quivered. There was a pop, a cloud of blue smoke from its exhaust as Celeste set the engine roaring. Clara, shifting to make room for Bessie, found her foot resting on a telescope, which Celeste, with characteristic carelessness, had left lying loose.

While the boat chugged on she adjusted it. Just to get a close-up glimpse of the Gloriana she put it to her eyes.

"Hallo!" Clara muttered.

"What's the matter?" Leila asked.

But Clara, for the moment, did not reply. She was squinting through the telescope with excited interest.

Its powerful lenses brought the Gloriana so near that it seemed for a moment that the motor-launch was right a-top of it. It showed the Gloriana's decks, men moving about. Clara could even see one of the stewards carrying a tray.

But that was not the scene upon which Clara was focusing both interest and telescope now. In the round frame formed by the end of the instrument, she had picked out a figure, wearing a peaked cap.

The man was standing quite near the bows. Leaning over the rail, he was frantically waving a large red handkerchief. He seemed to be signalling to the four boats ahead of them.

Clara, watching, saw that. Then suddenly the man vanished. She lowered the telescope. At the same moment there came a remark from Marcelle.

"Look, ze boats! Zey go off!"

Clara blinked. But what the little French junior said was true. The four boats had suddenly struck off at a tangent—were now racing towards the distant Belwin Island, in fact.

"There!" Celeste laughed. "Look at the boats. I told you they weren't going to the Gloriana. They're off to Belwin Island."

"You mean," Babs asked, "they're going to unload at Belwin Island?"

"What else?" Celeste asked carelessly.

"Nothing! Except," Babs answered dryly, "that Belwin Island is just a deserted bit of land. Nobody lives there—nor has lived there for years. If they're taking that stuff to anybody, it's certainly not anybody on Belwin Island!"

"No," Celeste considered, and then shrugged. "Well, it's their silly business," she said, "so why should we worry?"

They were nearly to the side of the yacht now. Towering and gleaming, the white wall of its side loomed above them. They saw figures moving, saw the steel ladder come down, and Clara, putting the telescope to her eye once again, saw the figure of the man in the peaked cap giving orders.

Funny, she thought, and looked towards the departing boats, now rapidly heading for Belwin Island. Why

had the man in the peaked cap signalled to them?

"Whoops, here we are!" Celeste sang gaily, and with an expertness born of years of practice, brought the boat to a standstill at the foot of the ladder, and carefully moored it. "Out you scramble, girlies! Bessie, you first, and for goodness' sake," she added, with mock anxiety, "don't slip and fall into the sea. We don't want a tidal wave."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Celeste!" Bessie said, with a sniff. "I sus-say, Babs, give me a hand!"

Babs gave her a hand, and Bessie laboriously climbed up the ladder. Babs went after her, then Mabel Lynn. Then Marcelle, then Leila, then Clara, and, last of all, Celeste. Breathless and laughing, they crowded on to the Gloriana's deck.

"Whoops!" Celeste said. "All here, everybody? Girls, let me introduce you to our temporary skipper—Captain Hammond," she said, as the man in the peaked cap bowed. "Skip, whose are those boats over there?"

"I'm sure," Hammond answered smoothly, "I don't know, Miss Margesson. Looks as if they're bound for the island."

Clara gazed at him. He didn't know! Yet deliberately he had signalled to them!

"But what's on the island?" Celeste demanded.

"I'm sure I couldn't tell you," the skipper said imperturbably. "After all, it's not our business, is it? I hardly expected you back so early, Miss Margesson."

"No?" Celeste smiled, characteristically forgetting all about the mystery boats at once. "And I never expected to be back so early. I had a spill, you see, and—well, I've invited these chums of mine to take tea with me. See that it's prepared in the after-lounge, will you, skipper? Like a wash and brush-up, girls?"

"Oh, please!"

"Then, this way!"

Celeste led the way towards the companionway. Only Clara for a moment paused, feeling uneasily and most strangely that something was amiss.

Not as a rule was Clara suspicious. But she felt a strange distrust of Skipper Hammond. And she was sure that he had told a lie! He did know about those boats, and he was rather disturbed. Clara fancied, that Celeste had returned so unexpectedly.

Still, there was nothing she could do. So Clara hurried after the others. She did not mention her distrust. It was not the Tomboy's way to voice half-formed suspicions—though, goodness knows what it was she suspected.

Down the companionway the chums clattered. In the gilt and white cloak-room on the lower deck they refreshingly washed. Glorious and marvellous the interior of the Gloriana. No comfort that money could buy, no luxury that human ingenuity could devise, had been left unincorporated in its appointments.

Except for the faint swaying of the floor beneath them it was difficult, indeed, to believe that they were on board a ship at all.

"Ze Gloriana is lovely," Marcelle Biquet said softly.

They all thought so. It was a thrill to feel they were on it. But what bigger and more delicious thrill, when, five minutes later, they were escorted into the dainty after-lounge where tea was laid.

Soft music came from the radio-gram hidden by the palms in one corner. The great glass shutters were

wide open, revealing a gleaming expanse of sea, with, in the foreground, the looming bulk of Belwin Island.

Of the boats which had been heading for the island, there was now no sign.

But even Clara forgot the mystery boats at sight of the really sumptuous tea which had been prepared for them. With appetites sharpened by the sea air, they fell to with zest—especially Bessie Bunter. Celeste laughed.

"And now," she said, "what's the news? Anything doing at the moment?"

"Why, yes!" Babs said.

"There you are! Aren't I a good guesser? What is it, Babs?"

"We're trying to raise money for the Lifeboat Fund."

"And, so far," grumbled Clara, "we've raised about five shillings!"

"Tough!" Celeste laughed. "Going to have a concert, or something?" she added. "I'd like to give a hand in anything."

"Well, we haven't thought of any stunts yet," Babs admitted. "You see, we only started this morning, and I'm afraid we haven't sorted out ideas yet."

"We did think," Leila Carroll put in, "of holding a flag day."

"Something in that," Celeste said—not very enthusiastically.

"But we aren't very encouraged by the last flag day," Clara broke out. "We held one for the Orphanage, you know. People bought the flags all right, but by the time we'd balanced up contributions with expenses, I think we had a credit of about three pounds."

"And so," Leila said, "we're trying to think up something bigger this time. Something which will bring the old shakels simply rolling in, I guess. Like—"

Like—and she stopped. "Gee, something's coming to me," she cried excitedly. "I've grabbed an idea. Celeste, I guess you said just now that you'd help?"

"Of course!" said Celeste eagerly.

"You say you're mistress of this ship?"

"Yes."

"Then—then," Leila chuckled excitedly, "what about—?" And she paused, despondently shaking her head. "But no, I thought there was a catch in it. You're going to London to-morrow, Celeste."

"Well, yes; but tell us the idea," Celeste cried.

"There's not much to tell. The crack-brain that hit me was that we should use the yacht for the purpose of making money for the Lifeboat Fund—"

"Yes?"

"Well, and use it, I guess, as a sort of pleasure cruiser. You know the idea. Trip round the bay on the Gloriana, with tea and cinema show thrown in, maybe, so much a head, all the cash collected to be given to the lifeboat fund. I guess you could take fifty trippers at a time on a yacht like this; and if they were charged, say, two boblets a time, that would give us a rake-in of five pounds every trip. But I guess the idea's no good if the boss of the yacht isn't here."

"But," Celeste cried eagerly, "wait a minute! Whoa, there! Hold the line! Supposing," she added, "the boss of the ship is here? Supposing I say it can be done? What's to prevent me from sending a wire to dear old Aunt Mary, telling her I'm postponing my visit to London?"

Babs' eyes shone.

"But, Celeste, you wouldn't—"

"I would! I can! I will!" Celeste decided. "Why not? Whoops! We must talk this over! We'll jolly well start soon after tea. We—"

And then she stopped as the door opened, and



Skipper Hammond came into the lounge. "Well, skip?"

"Excuse me, Miss Margesson, I thought you might like me to look up your train for to-morrow. What time will you be leaving for London?"

Celeste laughed gaily. "I shan't," he said. And Clara, watching the man's face closely, felt a sense of shock at the fleeting scowl which disfigured it. "Don't worry, skip. I'm not leaving for London at all. I'm stopping on," she said.

"Stopping on, Miss Margesson? Surely you aren't serious?"

"I am," Celeste said. "Never more serious in my life. There's work to be done, skip, and we're going to do it! We're going to decorate the old tub from end to end—just as we did," she added, her eyes twinkling, "at the Monte Carlo carnival. I'll give you orders later."

"But, Miss Margesson—" "Thank you, that's enough!" Celeste said, and waved him aside. "Now, listen, girls!" she added eagerly.

For a second Hammond paused. Clara was still watching him. What was it she saw on his face—alarm, baffled bewilderment?

Then he went out. Clara rose, too.

"I think I'll go and see my old friend, Mr. Murphy," she said. "Tell me all you've decided when I come back."

She quitted the room. Into the carpeted gangway she went. She hurried along, and then at the end of the gangway, where it joined with two other passages, she drew back, quickly flattening herself against a cabin door as she heard a man's voice—the voice of Captain Hammond.

And that voice was saying: "I don't know what the game is, Nicholls, but we've got to be careful! Already she nearly upset things by coming back with the boat; now she says she's not going to London!"

The other man whistled. "Makes it awkward, doesn't it?" he asked.

"Awkward or not, we're going through with it!" Hammond's voice was almost savage. "I haven't schemed for this chance to have it busted by a feather-brained slip of a girl, and I'm not going to have this ship swarming with a pack of schoolgirls! But let's hear what she's got in mind before we take action. Meantime, pass the word round to Maddox and Fisher and the rest that there might be a temporary change in our plans."

"Yes, sir!" said the voice of Nicholls. And Clara, as the men moved, hastily slipped into the cabin, and hid there until they had gone.

Clara Wasn't to Blame!



"I SUPPOSE," Wireless-Officer Murphy said uncomfortably, "that I ought not to say things about a superior officer, Miss Clara. But—well, since you have asked the question, it—"

"And since," Clara Trevlyn put in quickly, "we're friends—"

The young man acknowledged the compliment with a little smile.

"Well, yes, since we're friends. But you won't let it go any farther, will you?"

"As if," Clara scoffed, "I would!" His face cleared. He smiled.

Peter Murphy had always liked Clara. The Tomboy—strong, athletic—

had been a girl towards whom Murphy, normally shy, had expanded enormously.

Clara was inordinately interested in modern inventions and appliances, and from the first moment she had entered Wireless-Officer Murphy's neat little cabin many months ago, she had been eagerly enthusiastic to know everything about it.

And in due course she had mastered its intricacies. Murphy, no less eager to impart information than Clara was to receive it, had willingly explained the transmission and the receiving of messages—had even, in fact, gone so far as to allow her to transmit one or two messages herself.

The result had been the building of a friendship which had grown with every fresh meeting.

But Clara was not in Peter Murphy's cabin now to learn the further intricacies of his profession. Clara at this moment was much more interested in Captain William Hammond.

"Mind you," Peter Murphy said cautiously, "I don't know anything definite against him. I don't like him; I don't trust him. I've got a feeling that he's playing a shady game, and—well, after all, what do we know about him?"

"Quite!" Clara agreed, nodding.

"As Miss Margesson told you, half the crew fell sick at Madagascar. We had to leave them behind. We hoped to pick up another crew at Capetown, but when we got there there was nothing doing. Short-handed, we went on to Gibraltar."

"And that was where you found Hammond?" Clara questioned keenly.

"That's it. Every member of the crew had been doing double duty from Madagascar, and I can tell you we were all worn out when we put in at Gib."

"Mr. Margesson had some important business to attend to there, and couldn't come on with the Glory, and so we had to get the best crew we could. We picked up this man Hammond and his

mate, Nicholls, from one of the agencies there, and Hammond and Nicholls themselves signed on the rest of the crew."

"And that's all?" Clara asked.

"Not quite," Murphy looked towards the door. "Of course, Miss Margesson trusts the man; but, then, Miss Margesson trusts everyone, doesn't she? I soon tumbled to the fact myself that Hammond and Nicholls, though they weren't supposed to know each other before they signed on, were old pals. I found out, too, that the crew signed on were all on rather more than friendly terms with both of them."

Clara's eyes gleamed.

"And when we were in the Bay of Biscay Hammond got me to send rather a strange message to some port in the South Sea Islands. The message was to a man named Silvertree, and it was 'Shall arrive June 24th.' Now I happen to know that Hammond had been commissioned to skipper the *Gloriana* until the end of September, so how the dickens can he calmly arrange to go to the other side of the world between now and that date?"

"Apart from that," Murphy went on, his eyes growing rather worried, "just as soon as we landed here he gave all the old crew leave for ten days, but kept the new crowd on."

"The only man he didn't invite to take leave was me, but that's only because there's nobody else aboard who understands wireless. My own mate, you see, went to hospital with the rest at Madagascar."

"And those four motor-boats?" Clara questioned. "Do you know anything about those?"

"No," Murphy shook his head. "I agree with you, though, Miss Clara, that they were heading for the yacht. But for what reason? I wish I knew what was in the wind."

Clara nodded grimly. She wished that, too.

Why should Captain Hammond be



ANXIOUSLY Babs & Co. dashed to the aid of the fallen cyclist. "Celeste, are you hurt?" From Celeste came a merry peal of laughter. "Hurt? Not a bit!" she whooped. Trust the madcap to treat the matter lightly—and trust the madcap to appear again in sensational fashion!

afraid of the *Gloriana* "swarming with a pack of schoolgirls"? Why should there be a "temporary change in his plans"? What plans?

And why—if it was no accident or oversight—had he taken the trouble to get rid of all the *Gloriana's* loyal old crew?

Puzzling facts. Yet for the life of her Clara could not read significance into them.

She felt, indeed, half-ashamed of her own suspicions—and because they were merely suspicions, decided, for the time being, at any rate, to say nothing.

All the same, she didn't feel easy. She wondered, as she made her way back to the after-lounge, should she tell Babs, whose practical mind was so more capable of getting to grips with situations like this?

She reached the lounge to find tea finished. The chums, including Celeste, were in a state of high excitement.

"Aho! There you are!" was the breathless greeting with which Celeste buttonholed the Tomboy immediately upon her entry. "Where have you been, slacker? But never mind—listen to what we've arranged."

"What's that?" Clara asked.

"We're decorating the boat. We're going to start right away," Celeste informed her joyfully. "Flags, streamers, and bunting—all that sort of stuff—we've heaps and heaps of it stored away aboard. To-morrow," Celeste cried, "we're going to get leaflets printed and distribute them in the neighbourhood. On top of that, I'm going to put an ad. in all the local papers. Every day we're going to do two trips—with a free lunch aboard for the morning trippers, and a free tea for the afternoon trippers."

"And there's going to be dancing," Mabs put in.

"And zo cinema show," Marcelle shrilled.

"And one day we're going to have a grand concert—"

"Yes, rather. And I'm going to do a ventriloquial turn in it, you know," Bessie Bunter glowed, beaming with pride. "They'll all pay, if only to see me, you know."

Clara grinned; her eyes sparkled.

"Sounds topping," she applauded. "But where the dickens are you going to get the patrons?"

"Where?" Celeste laughed. "What a ninny the girl is," she cried merrily. "What about the villagers? What about Courtfield? What about the schools round about?"

"But wait a minute! Let's take one thing at a time," she added breathlessly.

"First, the decorations. I'll see the skip about those at once. Here, I say," she called to one of the sailors passing the entrance, "ask Mr. Hammond to step this way, will you?"

"Yes, miss."

Faces were bright now; eyes sparkle. Energetic Celeste believed in wasting no time. Under her enthusiastic leadership, the lifeboat fund, whose prospect had not seemed too rosy at the beginning, looked like being one of the biggest successes they had ever tackled.

There was a step outside. Big and broad-shouldered Captain Hammond entered the lounge.

"You want me, Miss Margesson?"

"Yes, please," Celeste laughed. "Skipper, will you send me someone to bring up the cases containing the carnival decorations from the hold? And then will you let me have every man you can spare?"

The skipper started. He looked piercingly at the madcap.

"I'm afraid I don't understand, Miss Celeste."

"Not the details, of course," Celeste chuckled. "We've only just arranged them ourselves. I'm not going to London, as I told you. I'm sticking around till my grandfather comes back, and in the meantime, we're going to make the *Gloriana* into a charity ship. You see—" Celeste bubbled forth eagerly, and in a few words outlined the scheme. "What do you think of that for an idea, skip?"

The captain's face had become rather grim. He shook his head.

"As an idea I think it's good," he said. "But I'm afraid I can't allow it!"

Celeste blinked. At once the merriment left her face.

"I beg your pardon?"

"I am sorry, Miss Margesson, but I can't allow it," the captain said.

"I remember no orders from your grandfather that this boat was to be turned into an excursion steamer. I should be transgressing upon my duty to allow it to be so used."

There went up a dismayed little gasp. But Celeste's eyes were gleaming then.

"Wait a minute!" She stepped forward. "Captain Hammond," she said quietly, "my grandfather's orders, as far as I remember, were that you were to regard me as the owner of this vessel."

"Yes, Miss Margesson."

"Well, then, carry out my orders." The man still shook his head.

"I'm sorry, Miss Margesson—"

"You mean you refuse?"

"It's not a matter of refusing," the captain replied steadily. "It's a matter of duty. My duty, as I see it, is to take care of this boat. There is nothing in my papers which mentions it shall be turned into an excursion steamer."

"Oh, my hat!" muttered Mabs.

"Then we're done!"

"But are we?" Celeste flashed round. Her eyes were gleaming now, her lips grim. If Celeste was a madcap, she was also a rebel, and something which Celeste could not and would not endure was being thwarted.

"All right, skipper," she said. "Stick by your duty. But if you're skipper, I'm owner, and I, as owner, can do as I like aboard my own yacht. We're going to decorate it—and we're going to decorate it now. Meantime," she added, "I'll get in touch with grandfather and ask him to wireless you orders. That's enough!"

The man looked disconcerted.

"But, Miss Margesson—"

"Thanks; that's enough!" Celeste said curtly. "You can go!"

The captain nodded; he took his leave. But once he had gone the chums, in a rather anxious knot, surrounded their young hostess.

"But, Celeste, if he says—"

"What he says doesn't count," Celeste said impatiently. "This boat is in my charge at the moment. Oh, I don't blame him! I suppose we've all got our own ideas of what is, and what isn't duty. But—well, blow him! It doesn't hurt us, anyway," she added. "We can get on without him. All it means is that we do our own fetching and carrying without the help of the men."

"But what about sailing the old boat when we have decorated her?"

Leila Carroll dubiously put in, "Sup-

posing old man skip's still on his duty dignity then?"

"But he won't be," Celeste replied. "This time to-morrow he'll have had his orders—from my grandfather. The only thing now is to get to grips with the job ourselves. Anybody understand electricity?"

"Yes, I do," Clara said.

"Good enough! You're our chief electrician, then," Celeste chuckled. "We put you in charge of the illuminations, Clara. Now come on—everybody! Let's get the things up from the hold."

The chums grinned. Any shadow Captain Hammond had thrown on the project, was immediately dispelled in the inspiring enthusiasm of their madcap hostess.

Out with a laugh, Celeste raced, the others following. Along the corridor she went at a rush, down the companion, and, entering the hold, switched on the light.

Except for a few cases and odd baggage, the hold was empty now; but along one wall were half a dozen trunks, and Celeste, producing a bunch of keys, flung them open, one after the other.

And then—what exclamations of delight!

Flags, bunting, garlands, pennants! Thousands and thousands of fairy lights all neatly arranged in wooden boxes!

"Grab 'em up!" Celeste grinned.

"Then heave them up to the main deck. If anybody should say anything to you, tell them you're working under owner's orders!"

Laughingly, eager, they set to work.

Armfuls and armfuls of flags, bunting, and decorations were carried up to the main deck, and then, at Babs' suggestion, they formed themselves into two working parties. Clara was to take charge of the electrical arrangements, with Leila and Mabs to help her. The rest, headed by Celeste, would attend to the remainder of their work.

With great enthusiasm they embarked on their task.

From the bridge Captain Hammond and his mate, the rather surly looking Nicholls, looked down with disapproval as the girls merrily flitted hither and thither.

Leila was set to work sorting out electric bulbs, Mabs in screwing them into holders. Clara departed on a search for a fuse-box, in order to make the necessary lighting connections.

That was no hard job. In the electrician's cabin next to the engine-room, all the electrical "spares" were kept. A search of the cupboard beneath the huge switchboard revealed both a bag of tools and a number of new fuse-boxes, and, after sorting out what she required, she spent a few minutes studying the wiring lay-out of the boat, which stood beside the switches. She grinned as she surveyed it, feeling proud and pleased of her practical knowledge.

"I'll get a copy of that," she told herself. "Have to connect up my switches with this main, of course. Humph! Some work to do, Clara, old girl!"

She went out, carrying the fuse-box and tools under her arm.

Hardly had she got to the top of the companionway, however, than from somewhere below came a sudden terrific bang.

"Hallo!" Clara said, and stopped, glancing back.

There was no repetition of the



sound, however. Clara paused only a moment. Something happened in the engine-room, she supposed, and tripped on to join her chums, flopping into a pile of flags and bunting as she hurried out of the door that gave on to the deck.

Babs, rushing forward to give her a hand up, laughed.

"Clumsy! Look where you're going!" she chided. "All serene?"

"What-ho!" Clara grinned. "But, I say, aren't you getting a move on?"

Getting a move on they were. Everybody was most extraordinarily busy. Celeste, with Marcelle, was at the foot of one of the masts, untangling a mass of flags which they were preparing to run up.

Babs was decorating the windows of the main deck cabins with red-white-and-blue bunting. Bessie Bunter sat on the deck boards, worriedly disentangling a jumbled mass of small pennants and ribbon streamers. Mabs had already strung together several yards of lamps, and was ramming others into holders as fast as she could go. Clara looked round for a likely spot in which to fix the fuse-box.

And then:  
Clang, clang, clang!  
Somewhere amidships a gong clamorously sounded.

It was followed by an instant's startled silence. Then a cry:

"Fire, fire, fire!"

At once the whole ship jumped into swift life. While the chums stood gaping their startled amazement at each other, a cloud of blue smoke rolled up from the companionway. Men were shouting; feet running. There came a sudden cry:

"In the electrician's cabin!"

"Whoops!" cried Celeste. "We must look into this, girls!"

"Look here! You know, we'll all get burned in our beds!" Bessie Bunter quavered. "W-w-where are the life-boats?"

"Oh, come on!" Clara urged.

But the plump duffer did not come on. Bessie clung to the rail. While the chums pelted breathlessly down the companionway, she stood there roaring for the help which nobody showed the slightest inclination to render.

In a body the chums reached the corridor, only to start back as two grim-faced ship's firemen, paying out a hose, came tearing along. A blue haze filled the air.

As they started forward again in the wake of the firemen, they heard the stentorian voice of Captain Hammond bellowing orders; heard the hiss and splutter of water projected from the nozzles of two powerful hoses.

Then they were in sight of the conflagration—if such it could be called. Out of the open door of the electrician's cabin a volume of grey-blue smoke was pouring, and through the haze they saw the captain with the two men who were playing the hose into the room. But even so they knew the fire was under control. The smoke had a steamy quality and there was no sound of crackling wood. But everywhere presented a most awful mess. The corridor was almost ankle deep in water.

"What happened?" cried Celeste.

The captain, rubbing a smut out of his eyes, turned. He looked directly at Clara.

"Miss Trevlyn, you were in this room a few minutes ago?" he questioned.

"Yes," Clara replied.

"You were playing with the switches?"

"I was not!" Clara hotly denied.

"As a result," the captain went on,

unheeding, "you fused the lights, and almost set the yacht on fire?"

Clara looked staggered.

"I," she cried. "But I didn't. How could I, when I never even touched the switches? I came here to get a fuse-box—"

"It may suit you to deny it now," the captain said curtly. "But you were seen, Miss Trevlyn! If it had not been for the prompt action of Mr. Nicholls, who first saw the fire, the ship might now be in flames. Miss Margesson, while not wishing to override you, as the owner of this yacht, I really must insist that, as captain, I am responsible for its safety. I cannot ensure that

"Nobody else might have thought it a good idea to tamper with the fuses, thinking, of course, that I should be held responsible?"

The captain laughed harshly.

"That is absurd, Miss Trevlyn. Please do not argue. It is lucky that things are no worse. As it is the ship will be without light or power for several hours. Miss Margesson, I ask you, for the last time, to give up this idea of tampering with the yacht. If you do not, I am afraid I can no longer hold myself responsible for the safety of this boat."

Celeste's face was angrily grim.

"Then in that case I will hold myself

No. 5 of a delightful series for your  
"Cliff House Album."

## CLIFF HOUSE PETS

Fay Chandler's  
BRUNO

Without doubt the most magnificent and massive dog that Cliff House has ever known is Bruno, the great St. Bernard, the property of Fay Chandler, of the Upper Third. Among dogs Bruno is a monarch indeed!

He is bigger and heavier than Pluto, Clara Trevlyn's Alsatian. He is huge compared with mischief-making little Ting-a-Ling, the diminutive Peke who is the apple of Bessie Bunter's bespectacled eyes. And yet, surprising as it may sound at first, stately Bruno and impish Ting are the fastest and firmest friends in the kennels of the Pets' House.

Why? There is a reason, of course. Ting, as you have been told in his biography, is an ex-circus performer. And so is Bruno. In those days long before Cliff House knew either the dogs or Fay Chandler, they were both "stars" of Jordan's Gigantic Circus, and there formed that great friendship which nothing since has changed. Both of them were born in Jordan's Circus; both bred in the circus; both trained—by Fay—in the arts of the circus. They acted together, they lived together, they exercised together.

And perhaps it is Bruno's firm friendship for tiny Ting which has made that impish Peke so daring and valiant in his conduct among other and bigger dogs. Only when Ting is around does Bruno show any signs of restiveness; only on Ting's behalf has he ever been known to snap or threateningly growl.

The one big fight of Bruno's life was undertaken on Ting's behalf—and that was when, at Jordan's Circus, Bruno tackled a great wild timber-wolf who, having escaped, was charging on Ting-a-Ling with the obvious intention of making a meal of him. Bruno killed that wolf, but as a result of the fight was in hospital for weeks with a broken leg and other wounds.

Under his thick glossy fur he carries those scars to this very day.

A more docile, intelligent animal than Bruno, however, it would be hard to find. Everybody at Cliff House loves him, and he is an especial favourite of the Second Form. When his young mistress left Jordan's Circus to become a schoolgirl at Cliff House she brought with her Bruno's "pony" harness, and also the small trap which was used during her performances in the ring. Bruno really loves being harnessed and allowing the little girls to ride on his back.

But the most laughable and pleasing sight in the Pets' House is when Bruno is harnessed to the shafts of the trap. Usually two girls sit in the trap, but the "driver" of the outfit is Ting-a-Ling, who, squatting on his hind legs on Bruno's broad back, solemnly holds the reins while the joy-ride is in progress.

I wish I had the space to tell you of the hundred and one other amusing tricks which Ting and Bruno play together—all, of course, relics of their performing days when they formed part of the canine troop which Fay trained and exhibited in the circus ring. I'd like to tell you, too, how Bessie Bunter once disguised Bruno as a lion during a ventriloquial turn in the circus and how she brought down the house (or should it be marquee?).

I'd like to tell you—oh, a hundred and one other anecdotes concerning Bruno, but space, you see, is scarce. But you will be interested and glad, I have no doubt, that though Bruno and Ting are not officially circus performers now, Fay still rehearses them in their old tricks and has taught them several new ones. At concerts on Speech Days and in the various other entertainment schemes in which Cliff House is interested, Bruno and Ting quite often "top the bill!"



safety if you allow your friends to play about with things of which they obviously know nothing. Miss Trevlyn might have endangered life—"

"Miss Trevlyn," Clara hotly broke in, "might have endangered nothing! I tell you I did no more than look at the silly switchboard!"

"And I believe Miss Trevlyn," said Celeste firmly.

"Then who else caused the fire?" the captain demanded.

"How the dickens should I—" the quick-tempered Tomboy began, and then started, as a sudden thought struck her.

"I suppose nobody else was in this room after I left?" she added quietly.

responsible," she said curtly. "Whatever happens, Captain Hammond, I am not giving up this idea. Come on, girls. Let's go and get on with our work!"

### Trouble for Two!



"THERE'S something wrong," Clara Trevlyn declared decisively. "Some-

thing jolly fishy going on, if you ask me, Babs. The

more I think about it the more sure I am that that blow-out in the electrician's cabin was faked simply to scare Celeste off this carnival business. For some reason Hammond doesn't want us

to turn the Glory into a pleasure-steamer, and he doesn't want us, either."

Barbara Redfern frowned thoughtfully.

"But what," she asked hesitantly, "could be going on?"

It was Clara's turn to frown then. Clara did not know. At no time was the Tomboy famed for being a deep thinker. She wished now that she had asked Peter Murphy's permission to relate to Babs what he had told her.

As it was, the only thing which had seemed mysterious to Babs was the abrupt turning of the four cargo boats. The accident in the electricity-room could have been explained half a dozen ways. True, Skipper Hammond's resistance to Celeste's orders was rather peculiar, but if he was a man with strict notions of duty, even that was not remarkable.

Even the conversation in the passage between Captain Hammond and the mate, Nicholls, she thought could be explained away. After all, a girl in the suspicious state of mind which must have been Clara's when listening to that conversation, could construe its words to hold any meaning.

"You don't think," Babs asked, "you're making a mistake?"

"No, I don't!" Clara said gruffly.

"But, Clara, what proof have you got?"

"That's it," Clara said. "I haven't proof. I just feel something—"

She broke off. For on the panels of the door came a sudden tap.

The door belonged to Study No. 7 in the Fourth Form passage at Cliff House, where this conversation was taking place. Just before call-over the chums had returned from the Gloriana, promising to return to-morrow afternoon which, as it happened, was a half-holiday. Except for Clara and Babs, the study was deserted, Marjorie Hazeldene and Janet Jordan, its co-sharers, having, at Clara's request, adjourned to Study No. 4 with Mabs and Bessie. Clara spun round now.

"Come in!" she bade.

The door opened to reveal the rather scared-looking face of Mary Treherne of the Lower Third.

"Oh, C-Clara, I—I'm not interrupting, am I?"

"No kid, come in," Clara said agreeably, for the Tomboy had a very soft spot in her heart for little Mary, and Mary looked upon Clara as her greatest heroine. "Anything wrong?"

"Oh, Clara, yes," Mary said. "It—it's my library book—"

"Your library book? Why, what's the matter with that?"

"I'm supposed to hand it in before assembly at breakfast to-morrow," Mary blurted out, "and I can't, you know. I—I've lost it in Pegg!"

"Oh!" Clara exclaimed, and looked concerned. "Was it a valuable book?"

"Yes, Clara. It was Hiawatha."

Clara looked at Babs. They knew the book, a real favourite of the Third Form, and, as it happened, a rather valuable edition. There was a strict rule at Cliff House about taking library books out of the school. There was a still stricter rule concerning their return, and serious indeed would be the trouble for little Mary for having mislaid such a volume as that.

"That's bad," Clara said. "But surely you've got some idea where you left it, Mary?"

"Yes," Mary agreed. "I lost it in the Fisherman's Cafe in Pegg. I—I had to rush for a bus, and I—I left it behind, and I can't go back there now," Mary added, "because the gates are locked, and I can't go and fetch it to-morrow

morning because the gates wouldn't be open before assembly, and so I should like to know what I am going to do!"

"Miss Belling will be awfully cross, and she'll have to report me to Miss Primrose, and Miss Primrose has already stopped half my pocket money for the term because I broke the glass case in the museum playing ball with Pansy Carter. Oh, Clara, what shall I do?"

It was obvious that Mary, with her great faith in her grown-up idol to right any wrong and to repair any damage, was looking to her for help.

Clara realised that, and being Clara, was in no mind to let the kiddie down. She thought for a moment.

"Wait here," she ordered. "I'll go off and phone the Fisherman's Cafe. If the book's still there I'll get it for you."

"Yes, Clara, please," Mary said breathlessly, and smiled relievedly at Babs as much as to say: "There, I knew she'd put things right!"

Clara went off. She was back in three minutes.

"Well, you're lucky," she said. "The book is there. The owner, Miss Fanshaw, is keeping it for you."

"But how can we get it back?" Mary wanted to know.

"I'll get it," Clara told her. "Now run off and don't worry."

"Yes, Clara, thank you!" Mary gasped gratefully, and rushed off.

"You mean," Babs asked, eyeing her chum, "you'll break bounds?"

"What else?" Clara asked. "Dash it all, I can't let the kiddie down. It's too late now to go and get it, and if Miss Fanshaw delivers it she'd only have to give it to Piper, the porter—which means that Mary would be in the soup anyway. Oh, don't worry, Babs. It won't take me long."

"I'm not worrying," Babs said. "At the same time, Clara, it's a pretty lonely walk. Let me come with you?" she added.

Clara's eyes shone.

"You mean it?"

"Of course!"

"Well, that's jolly nice of you," Clara beamed.

"Thanks, Babs. To-night then, about half-past ten?"

"That'll do," Babs said.

And at half-past ten that night the pair of them left the dormitory and climbed out through the open window in the lobby.

Despite the rather warm day which had preceded it, the night was dark and cold, with only a star winking here and there. Briskly they stepped out.

Pegg was reached in good time. Their feet rang on the hard cobbles that formed the surface of the village street, which sloped steeply towards the beach. On the jetty above the beach, facing the sea, the Fisherman's Cafe stood. The door was still open, and Miss Fanshaw, the good lady who owned the place, was standing at the door. She smiled as she saw them.

"Oh, you've called for the book," she said. "But my goodness, won't you get into trouble if you're found out at this time? Come in, will you?"

She invited them into the shop. There were two customers. One, with his back towards them, sat at a table reading a newspaper. He did not look round at their entry, but Clara recognised his back view at once and glanced significantly at Babs. It was Nicholls, the new mate of the Gloriana!

"Well, here's the book," Miss Fanshaw said. "I picked it up as soon as ever the little girl ran for the bus. I called her, but I don't think she heard me. It's very nice of you coming to fetch it for her, I'm sure. But for goodness' sake,

Miss Trevlyn, do mind getting back. I should hate you to get into any bother. And your headmistress is rather strict about you breaking bounds at night, isn't she—oh, sorry!" she added, clapping a hand to her mouth as Babs frenziedly pointed towards the back view of Nicholls.

They thanked her. Bidding her good-night they went out again. On the edge of the jetty they paused, gazing in the direction of the Gloriana, standing out to sea, four or five lights only marking the place where she rode.

"Suddenly Clara pointed.

"Babs, look!" she breathed. "Those boats—"

Babs started as Clara pointed. Now dimly she could make out the four motor-boats which Clara indicated. They were heading towards the Gloriana.

Faintly across the water came the chugging of engines. Then they heard a voice—low-toned, but, with the wind carrying it through the air, quite distinct:

"Gloriana—ahoy!"

"It's those boats again!" Clara whispered excitedly. "They're hailing the Glory! Babs, then they must have been heading for the yacht this afternoon. Why did Hammond deny it?"

Babs did not reply, but she felt just the queerest little tingle herself then. Together they stood watching, never noticing the cafe door opening behind them and Nicholls, had pulled over his eyes, slouch off into the night.

Nearer, nearer they saw the boats approaching the Gloriana. They saw lights moving up and down the yacht's decks. They followed the track of one light—obviously carried by a man—as it descended the ship's side, and then came to rest apparently just above the water. Its glow, even from that distance, showed that it rested on top of a large bale.

Babs caught her breath.

"Well, there's no mistake about that," she said.

None at all! At the same time, there was nothing they could do about it—except, perhaps, warn Celeste to-morrow.

For a few more moments, until the cold started to chill them, they stood and watched. Then they turned homeward.

Walking briskly, they reached the school in record time. Swiftly they climbed into the lobby through the open window; and Babs, pausing, turned to push back the fasteners.

And then they both wheeled with a gasp, as with sudden dazzling radiance the light was switched on in Big Hall.

A figure rustled towards them.

It was Miss Primrose, the headmistress!

### Strange Cargo!



"YOU have been out!" Miss Primrose accused.

Hopeless to deny that charge.

"You have been to Pegg!" Miss Primrose continued.

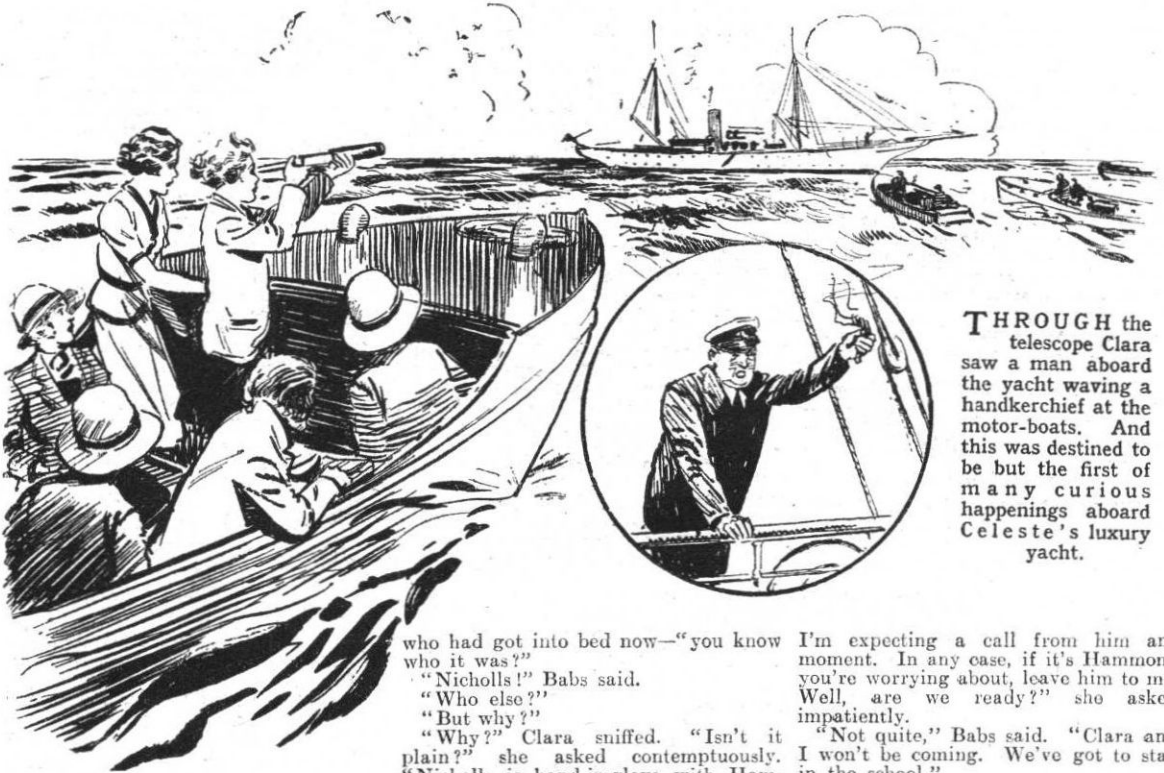
The two chums blinked even in their dismay. How did Miss Primrose know that?

"What," Miss Primrose rapped, "have you been there for?"

Babs bit her lip. Clara, who had instinctively hidden Mary Treherne's book behind her back, sighed.

"We—we went to get something, Miss Primrose," she stammered. "Something





**THROUGH** the telescope Clara saw a man aboard the yacht waving a handkerchief at the motor-boats. And this was destined to be but the first of many curious happenings aboard Celeste's luxury yacht.

that—that was left behind this afternoon at the Fisherman's Cafe."

"Indeed!" Miss Primrose's face did not relax in its severity. "In that case," she said, "I fail to see why you could not have gone to-morrow. As I know you to be two truthful girls, I accept your explanation; but that does not alter the fact that you have been guilty of a serious breach of the school rules in breaking bounds at night. For that you will both be detained to-morrow afternoon, and will do two hundred lines each. Now go to bed!"

"Yes, Miss Primrose."

And, watched by the stern-faced headmistress, the two chums sadly hurried up the stairs.

In the dim light they entered the Fourth Form dormitory. There was a rustle of clothes. A girl sat up in bed, and Margot Lantham's voice spoke.

"Babs, is that you?"

"Yes," Babs replied.

"Did Primmy catch you?"

"Yes."

"Poor old Babs!" Margot said softly. "She came in here a quarter of an hour ago with Miss Bullivant. Who was the man who gave you away?"

"Man?"

"Yes. I heard her talking to the Bull in the corridor. She said she'd received a telephone message from some man in Pegg, who wouldn't give his name. A pretty caddish trick to do!" Margot went on indignantly. "Who was he, Babs?"

"Oh, go to sleep!" came peevishly from Lydia Crossendale's bed.

But Babs did not reply. Unseen in the darkness, her face was rather grim. For she was remembering suddenly the man who had been in the Fisherman's Cafe—Nicholls, the mate—Nicholls, who must have overheard Miss Fanshaw's prophecy of trouble if they were caught out. Was that the man who had taken this trouble to give them away? And, if so, why had he done it?

"Babs"—it was Clara's voice—Clara,

who had got into bed now—"you know who it was?"

"Nicholls!" Babs said.

"Who else?"

"But why?"

"Why?" Clara sniffed. "Isn't it plain?" she asked contemptuously. "Nicholls is hand-in-glove with Hammond. They don't want us messing about on the Gloriana! And why?"

She did not answer that question herself; but Babs, pondering it, felt a little thrill seize her. It seemed a reasonable explanation. It seemed, after all, remembering what they had seen from the jetty, that there might be some grounds for Clara's suspicions, after all. Certainly Nicholls—if it was he—had gone out of his way to make trouble for them. And certainly Nicholls had succeeded!

She dropped asleep. Rather wearily in the morning she rose. Before breakfast she worked on her lines; in the brief half-hour allowed the juniors after breakfast she worked on them again.

Morning lessons came and went. Dinner followed. Half an hour before she and Clara were due in detention she strolled into the quad. Then she heard her name called.

"Ahoy, there, Babs!"

"Celeste!" cried Babs.

Celeste it was, all smiles as usual, gay, merry, madcap, laughing! Celeste, looking most extraordinarily pretty, in a new pink tulle frock, with a floppy, wide-brimmed straw hat upon her head. At a rush she came up the drive, slithering to a standstill as she reached Babs. Her face was aglow.

"Avast!" she chuckled. "But have I been busy! I've seen the printers, Babs, and fixed up the handbills."

"Yes, but—"

"And I've drafted the ad for the papers."

"Yes; but what about your grandfather?" Babs asked. "Have you got in touch with him?"

Celeste's face fell a little.

"No," she confessed.

"Then how—"

"Oh, stuff! There's no need to worry," Celeste laughed. "Grandpop's gone off into Spain somewhere—he would, with a war knocking around! They're trying to trace him at Gib, and

I'm expecting a call from him any moment. In any case, if it's Hammond you're worrying about, leave him to me. Well, are we ready?" she asked impatiently.

"Not quite," Babs said. "Clara and I won't be coming. We've got to stay in the school."

"In the school? But it's a half-holiday!"

"Yes; but Primmy's gated us!"

"Oh, did she?" said Celeste. "Did she? Well, you just wait. Is she in her study?"

"Yes, but— Here, I say, you chump—"

But Celeste, with a merry wave of her hand, and a rippling laugh, was speeding away into the school. Characteristic of that madcap, that she did not even ask why they were gated.

She knew her way about the school, and unerringly her footsteps took her to Miss Primrose's study.

That good lady blinked up with a start as Celeste, like a breath of sea air, breezed in.

"Why, bless my soul, Celeste!" she said, rising. "I am pleased to see you—"

"And I you," Celeste dimpled. "I meant to see you, anyway, before I left. Miss Primrose, will you do me a favour?" she added.

"Why, if it lies in my power, of course!" Miss Primrose said.

"It does lie in your power. In fact," Celeste said, "you're the only one who can do the favour, Miss Primrose. Do be a dear," she added coaxingly, "and let Barbara Redfern and Clara Trevlyn off detention to-day!"

"Celeste, you don't realise—"

"But I do!" Celeste nodded. "I know it's asking the impossible, Miss Primrose, but perhaps you don't know what Babs and Clara mean at the present moment. You see, it's in connection with the Lifeboat Fund. May I tell you about it?"

"You may, Celeste. But, even so, I am not sure—" Miss Primrose said uncertainly.

But Celeste was not listening then. Eagerly she was launching into an account of what they were doing; what they intended to do; how much they hoped to raise for the fund. She finished:

"And so you see, Miss Primrose, I

simply must have Babs and Clara—just must! And as this is the last half-holiday between now and the start of the carnival trips, it'll put us behind a couple of days if I can't have them. Can't you postpone the old detention?" she added eagerly. "Or give them some extra lines or something? After all, Miss Primrose, they're both perfect dears!"

"Ahem!" Miss Primrose said. "Ahem!" And she thought in that moment of the good turn Babs had rendered her not so long ago, when the captain of the Lower School had been instrumental in saving her from having to resign her headmistressship. "Well," she temporised, "well, I—ahem! It—it is most strictly irregular, Celeste—"

"But you'll do it?" Celeste whooped. "Well, I—I am not sure! Perhaps—well, yes," Miss Primrose said, and then gasped. "Celeste, what are you doing?"

"Just hugging you," Celeste laughed, suiting action to words. "I think you're a sport, Miss Primrose! Shall I scud them to you?"

"Er—er—yes, please! Bless my soul! Celeste, my dear—"

But Celeste had whooped out of her study. Her footsteps could even then be heard clattering down the corridor.

"I've fixed it!" she cried, as she reached Babs, who had been joined by Clara. "Dear old Primmy wants to see you now. Buck up, though!"

"You mean—"

"Shunt—quickly!" was Celeste's terse rejoinder.

And Babs and Clara "shunted," and they listened in beaming wonderment as Miss Primrose rather awkwardly told them that, all things considered, she had decided to postpone—only postpone!—their detention till a later date. Dazed and delighted, they sought out Celeste.

"You giddy marvel!" Clara gulped. "You old miracle worker," Babs laughed. "Whoops, we're free! But come on now, let's rustle up the others."

The others, meaning Mabs, Bessie, Leila, and Marcelle, were soon rustled up. Celeste, meeting Janet Jordan and Marjorie Hazeldene, generously invited them along, too. At the gates they were fortunate enough to catch the bus (to Pegg, and ten minutes later were all climbing on board Celeste's motor-launch, which was moored at the bottom of the steps which led up to Romans Tower.

Glittering and dazzling the sea; overhead a vault of unchanging blue, unbroken even by a suspicion of cloud. Like some gleaming fairy boat the Gloriana, shining white and gold, lay out to sea. Celeste set the boat in motion.

The engine thrashed, leaving a white wash of tossing foam in its wake as they sped towards the yacht.

Then:

"Hallo!" Babs whistled as they neared it. "I say, what's happened to the decorations we put up yesterday?"

They all blinked. Deck, rails, and cabins had been stripped bare.

"Hammond!" Clara muttered, and a gleam came into her eyes.

They chugged on. Celeste hailed the yacht. Down came the steel ladder as they drifted alongside. Up they swarmed. Celeste at once called for Captain Hammond.

In a few moments Captain Hammond came, accompanied by Nicholls, the mate. The latter stared as his eyes fell upon Clara and Babs.

"Oh, you!" he said. "I thought—"

"You thought," Clara said bitterly, "that we'd be safely tied up for the afternoon!"

"I—I beg your pardon!"

"You should!" Clara said contemptuously.

The mate reddened. But he did not press the point.

"You asked for me, Miss Margesson?" Captain Hammond said easily.

"I did!" Celeste retorted. "Where are our decorations?"

"Oh, those!" He shrugged his shoulders. "I ordered them to be put away again," he said. "They were making the ship look rather untidy, you know."

"You were aware that I had not finished with them?" Celeste asked angrily.

"I'm sorry; you did not make your wishes known to me," Hammond smoothly answered. "In any case, it was my duty, as captain of this ship, to keep it looking smart. Those were your grandfather's orders," he added respectfully.

Celeste's lips tightened.

"I see!" she said. "In other words you were determined to undo all the work my friends and I did yesterday! I don't thank you for your interference, Captain Hammond, and I shall make it clear to my grandfather, when he returns, that you have refused to take orders from me. But understand this," she added, "whatever you may consider your duty, you will cease, from this moment, to interfere in the things I and my friends do aboard my own vessel! If not—"

"Well?"

"I shall see my grandfather's solicitors and ask them to make your position clear! That's all! Where is the stuff?"

"I have it in the spare cabin."

"Thank you; you may go!"

Hammond, with a shrug, went. The chums looked at each other in dismay. All their work of yesterday—gone!

"Well, never mind," Celeste said, recovering immediately her natural cheerfulness. "We've got all afternoon before us! And anyway, we've got two extra hands to-day," she chuckled, "so we should about finish when the time comes for you all to go back. This way!"

She led the way below. In the spare cabin—a big, lofty apartment, the party crowded. Captain Hammond had been as good as his word. Not only was the stuff stored in that cabin, but the trunks which had originally contained it had been taken out of the hold, too.

Only one disaster had taken place during the removal. That was to Clara electric-light bulbs. Quite a number of those were smashed.

"Well, that's caused it!" Clara grumbled. "I shan't have enough now. But wait a minute," she added quickly, counting the trunks. "There was another box in the hold. Celeste, do you think there might be some bulbs in that?"

"Why not?" Celeste laughed. "I don't know! All the same, there's no harm in having a look, is there? Babs, will you take charge of operations above deck? I'll skip along with Clara."

And off they went. They reached the door of the hold, and Celeste turned the handle.

"Hallo, it's locked," she frowned.

"Well, isn't it supposed to be?" Clara asked.

"No, why?" Celeste asked. "There's no reason to lock up an empty hold. Never mind," she added, dimpling. "As owner of the ship, I've got a master key; I'll jolly soon have it open. Wait here."

She darted away. In a few minutes she had returned. Quickly she fitted the key into the lock, and flung the door open. And then she gasped.

"What—"

Clara stared. She blinked, herself. For the hold which had been practically empty yesterday was now half-full. A stack of cases ten feet high ranged along one of the walls. There were half a dozen bales along the other. In a flash Clara remembered the cargo boats last night.

"But where," Celeste wondered, "has all this come from?"

"Looks like cargo."

"Cargo? But it can't be!"

"All the same," Clara said, "there was cargo being unloaded here last night!" And while Celeste stared at her, she told what she and Babs had seen from the jetty at Pegg. Celeste blinked.

"You're sure of that?" she asked.

"Positive!" Clara replied.

"Right-ho!" Celeste's lips set. "I'll see Hammond about this now. No I won't, though," she added. "We'll look in those cases first. If this is cargo, I've got a right to know what it is. Grab that hatchet, Clara!"

Clara obeyed, and enthusiastically they set to work to prise open the lid of one of the cases. After some moments of exertion they threw it back. Then they blinked.

"Well, my golly!" gasped Celeste.

"My hat!" Clara stuttered.

For cargo it was. But what a strange assortment of cargo!

Mirrors, bright bead necklaces, brooches, little dolls; all sorts of gay and glittering things!

"Toys!" gasped Celeste, and then started as a shadow darkened the door, and Captain Hammond, looking rather agitated and angry, strode into the room. "Ho!" she said then. "I wanted to see you, skip. What do you know about these cases?"

The man paused.

"I—I—," he stumbled, and then he smiled. "I had them put there, Miss Margesson. They were in the after hold, and I thought it would be a good idea to give the yacht a good clean-up."

"But—toys?" Celeste asked. "I wasn't aware anything was in the after hold." And where on earth did we ship toys?"

"I'm sorry, Miss Margesson, but I don't know. The cases' obviously were shipped aboard before I accepted your grandfather's commission," the man returned smoothly.

"They weren't by any chance brought here last night?" Celeste asked keenly.

"I don't follow! Why do you ask that question, Miss Margesson?"

"Because Miss Trevlyn and Miss Redfern saw cargo boats alongside the yacht."

Just for a moment the man looked disturbed; then he laughed.

"I dare say Miss Redfern and Miss Trevlyn did," he said, with a hint of mockery in his voice. "And as a matter of fact they were right—up to a point. Somewhere about midnight some boats did moor alongside the yacht, but they weren't cargo boats. They were just fishermen back with a catch, trying to sell us fish. Naturally," he said, "as we are well stocked I sent them away. As for toys, Miss Margesson, I can tell you no more about them than you know yourself. That," he added, "is a question for your grandfather to answer."

He walked away.

"Well, old Clara, it looks as if you and Babs were seeing things that weren't there," said Celeste, with a smile.

But had they? Clara's lips set a little. Short of calling Captain Hammond a liar she couldn't counter that explanation. At the same time she was nettled



by Celeste's smiling, if well meant, sally.

"But," Celeste said, and her eyes sparkled with sudden animation, "whoopee! I've got an idea!" she cried. "Here's another stunt for the Lifeboat Fund. What about having a penny bazaar, and selling these things to the kiddies?"

"Yes," Clara agreed gruffly. "You don't sound enthusiastic."

"Oh, well, it's a good idea," Clara said, for Clara was still feeling rattled. "Anyway, let's find the electric bulbs."

They found the bulbs—a hundred or more of them, in fact—then off they went, Celeste rushing ahead to break the news of the latest find, and the idea it had inspired. Clara followed more slowly.

It was as she was climbing the companionway that a voice hailed her. She looked round, the remnants of her bad temper quickly vanishing as she found herself staring into the good-looking face of Wireless Officer Murphy.

"Miss Clara," he cried, "I've been looking for you!" He glanced quickly up and down the corridor. "Have you been into the hold?"

"Yes," Clara said, "and those cases—"

"They were slipped aboard last night," Murphy said quickly. "But say nothing. I'm not supposed to know anything, and just to make sure I didn't see anything Hammond locked my cabin door. But even so, you can't load up two or three dozen cases without making some sort of a row about it, and though I was locked in the porthole was open, and I heard everything. Funny, eh?"

"Very funny!" Clara agreed grimly. "And I heard 'em talking afterwards," Murphy went on. "They said the next consignment would be delivered to-night. That means, of course, that more cargo's coming aboard. But who is it intended for, and where is it to be taken? If you ask me—" He broke off. "Quick!" he hissed. "Somebody coming!"

Clara nodded. In a moment she had skimmed up the stairs, while Murphy, pausing to light a cigarette, passed on his way.

But Clara's face was very grim then. Anybody who knew the Tomboy would have seen at once that some idea was being born in her brain.

To-night another consignment was to be delivered, was it? Right!

**Something Most Seriously Wrong!**



"**A**NYBODY awake?" Clara Trevlyn muttered softly.

Nobody was, apparently, for no voice replied to her soft-breathed inquiry.

The time was eleven o'clock that night; the scene the Fourth Form dormitory. Clara was up and dressed, for Clara to-night was bent upon playing a lone hand.

She conquered the desire to awaken Babs. Babs, she knew, would be willing to support her project, but even Babs was half-doubtful of her suspicions. Apart from that, her projected adventure might lead to trouble, and Babs last night had suffered with her.

No! This was a stunt for Clara, and Clara alone! Clara was suspicious! Clara believed that Captain Hammond was, in some unfathomable way, playing traitor to Celeste and to the Gloriana. But how to convince Celeste of that unless Captain Hammond was caught in the act?

If it were possible to-night, Clara was going to convince Celeste.

She crept out of the dormitory. Five minutes later her feet were treading the road that led to Pegg. A cool wind blew on her face, ruffling her unruly hair.

She reached the village, shrouded in darkness. On the jetty she took her stand. Out at sea the lights of the Gloriana winked and glittered, and a pale moon, peering from behind a bank of cloud, showed for a moment the yacht's superb outlines.

For a long time she waited—half an hour; an hour. Then suddenly a red light flashed out from the yacht. It winked once, twice, thrice.

And then she caught her breath, for from a point farther along the coast a red light winked in reply.

Intently Clara waited and watched.

Presently she heard the throb of an engine; cautiously round a headland there nosed the prow of a laden motor-boat. It was followed by another, then another; then, after a space, a fourth.

Clara's eyes gleamed then.

"Hallo! Come in!" Celeste's startled voice bade, and she sat up, blinking her eyes as Clara entered. "Great starfish, you, Clara! At this time of night! What on earth—"

"Celeste, get up!" Clara said tersely.

"But what—"

"Look through the window!"

Celeste eyed her wonderingly, but she did as she was bid.

At the same moment the moon came out again, flooding the waters with silvery radiance. Clara crossed over to her side.

"See those boats carrying cargo?" she said grimly.

"Yes."

"Well, watch them."

Celeste flashed a wondering glance at the Tomboy, and then concentrated her attention upon the view through the window. It showed the Gloriana. It showed the four boats heading towards the yacht.

Presently it showed those four boats mooring alongside the Gloriana, and case after case being hoisted aboard.



"**YOU** were playing with the switches," accused Captain Hammond, "and as a result you fused the lights and almost set the yacht on fire!" Clara looked staggered. Why was the skipper of the yacht trying to blame the fire on her?

"Now will Celeste believe?" she muttered to herself.

No doubt that those boats were going to the Gloriana. No doubt at all! The four of them were heading directly for it.

No longer did Clara wait, but, turning, swiftly sped along the steep village street, and, rapidly taking the path along the coast, arrived ten minutes later at the door of Romans Tower.

Greig, the butler, recognised her as soon as he saw her.

"I'm sorry, Miss Trevlyn, but Miss Margesson has just retired," he said.

"That's all right," Clara said swiftly.

She stepped past him, leaving the old fellow blinking.

Up the marble stairs, leading from the large entrance-hall, she ran. Many times had Clara been a visitor at Romans Tower, and she was unflinching in her geography of the place.

Outside the door of Celeste's bedroom she paused. She knocked.

Celeste's face was a study.

"Clara, you meant me to see this?"

"That's it!" Clara said. Her lips were set in a straight line. "I thought perhaps if you saw it with your own eyes you might believe. Hammond's taking that cargo aboard—cases and cases of it. Those toys and things we found in the hold weren't part of an accident. They were taken there last night!"

Celeste's face was startled.

"But—but what's he doing?" she breathed.

"Wouldn't I like to know!"

"Well," said Celeste, "I'll certainly see him to-morrow about those boats."

"Not now?" Clara asked.

"Well, why now?" Celeste shrugged. "I can't know more if I go now, can I?" she asked. "To-night—to-morrow—what's the difference? But thanks for warning me, old top! And for goodness sake, don't go and get another

# OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS



Your friend *PATRICIA* is in a particularly gay mood in honour of Easter. She tells you where she is going—of Easter good luck—of a useful elephant, and a way to lengthen a frock, all in her letter this week. And, of course, written in that cheery style so typical of her.

**A** HAPPY Easter to you all, my big and little Easter-chicks!

Now that exams—ugh!—are over, and the excitements of "breaking-up" nearly forgotten, you can really look forward to hot cross buns and to lots of Easter goodies.

I hope you all have a perfectly lovely holiday—whether only for a week or for a whole lovely fortnight.

Will you be going anywhere special on Bank Holiday, I wonder.

Quite a lot of you will be at the Zoo, I expect.

Much as your Patricia—and all the family, too, for that matter—love visiting the Zoo (the Whipsnade Zoo, that is) you won't spot us there this Bank Holiday.

Father flatly refuses to take us out in the car on a Bank Holiday—and as he's the head of the house, and does the driving, I suppose the old grouser must have his own way sometimes.

Actually, we're all going to stay in Wiltshire for a few days. An old school friend of mother's has a lovely big house there and has invited our "tribe" to visit her.

She lives in quite a tiny village, but to many it is one of the most important villages in England. Many of you will have heard of it, of course—Avebury.

Not only is it extraordinarily pretty, but it is wonderfully rich in pre-historic interest. Learned professors, and very wise men (and women) who know a lot about geology and the Stone Age man, consider it about as marvellous as all the Seven Wonders of the World rolled into one.

You see, at Avebury is a wondrous Stone Circle. Yes, something like the Stone Circle at Stonehenge—except that it's even older, if you can imagine anything except the sun being that old!

There are several Stone Circles at Avebury, as a matter of fact, not to mention a Stone Avenue and other stone monuments. And the village of Avebury itself is built right in the middle of one of the Circles, and some of the giant stones, which weigh many, many tons, are in the villagers' back gardens!

So if any of you should be driving through Avebury over Easter and should see your Patricia gazing in wide-eyed wonder at a monumental stone that looks like the side of a house—well, perhaps you'll give her a wave.

And I'll wave back!

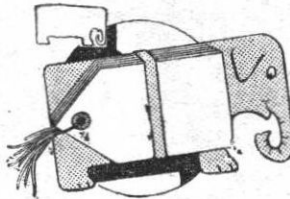
## ● For Your Trunk

You all know the riddle: "Why is the elephant always ready for a journey?" now, don't you? And the answer, too: "Because he keeps his trunk with him!"

Of course you do. Now look at the little picture here. This little elephant is doubly ready for a journey, for he carries labels for that trunk!

I'm sure you'd like to make a novelty like this for keeping labels for your holiday trunk.

First you must cut out Mr. Elephant. Get a piece of white cardboard (or a brown piece and cover it with paper) and cut it out to the elephant shape. (The tiny diagram will help you do this.) Paint the elephant grey—unless you have a weakness for a different colour—a pink



elephant say. Next mark out his face with black paint or ink.

Now lay the labels on your elephant's middle and keep them in position with an elastic band.

The strings will make quite a frisky little tail for Mr. Elephant, whose tail in real life is certainly not one to be proud of.

Now keep these in a secret drawer, and next time mother mentions "trunk" or suit-cases, run off and get her the labels!

## ● Lucky Me!

Yes (for you who have been looking at the picture at the top of the page), I have already had two Easter Eggs.

One was from friend Esme and one from friend Joan—both of whom sent them by post.

Esme's was a cardboard one and contained a very pretty necklace. As a matter of fact, necklaces don't happen to be a weakness of mine—I much prefer jangly, barbaric bracelets. All the same, I shall certainly treasure it—and wear it on a very, very special occasion if one comes along.

Joan's egg was a chocolate one and contained the most luscious chocolates—all soft centres, which I adore, and all marked with a very expensive maker's name.

Dear Joan! I'm sure she couldn't really afford such a costly egg (though one's not supposed to think of such things, I know), for she and her mother have very few pennies to spare. So I love this extravagant gift all the more for that!

Small brother Heath (or Heatherington, as he was christened) is most indignant because he hasn't received any yet. But since he is an absurdly popular small boy with his many aunts, uncles, and big

cousins, I've an idea that he won't be disappointed for long.

As a matter of fact, your Patricia has already bought him her small gift. I didn't buy him a chocolate egg, for the simple reason that he gets so many.

So I've bought him a Donald Duck, who is surprisingly friendly-looking in spite of his bad temper that's always so evident on the films. (For some reason, a duck struck me as a suitable gift for Easter—because I associated it with chickens and eggs, I can only suppose.)

You know it's lucky to do gardening on Good Friday, don't you? I haven't been able to trace the origin of this idea, but seeds and plants that are planted on this day are said to be blessed and to grow strong and fruitful.

We all know that it's supposed to bring good fortune if we wear something new on Easter Day—and it's certainly pleasant.

It doesn't matter how small that something is. A pair of gloves, some new stockings, a new petti, or even a new handkerchief—all will give you that feeling of spring—of starting afresh, which is one of the charms of a glorious Easter Sunday.

## ● A Little Longer

If it is going to be hot over the holiday, you'll certainly be wanting to wear a light, cool frock. And unless you are lucky enough to have a new one already, possibly last year's will be on the short side.

Well, never mind, you must let the hem down. But perhaps the hem has already been let down! So now what?

Here's the very notion.

Buy a yard of ribbon, to tone with your frock, and the same width as you require extra length. (That sounds rather complicated, but you see what I mean, don't you?)

Let this ribbon into the waist of your frock so that the skirt drops the required number of inches. Then make four little bows with the ribbon that is left over. Sew two of these at the neck of the frock and two at the waist.

It would take a detective then to know your frock had been lengthened!

HAPPY EASTER again to you all, my pets.

Your friend,  
*PATRICIA.*







# A COLOUR CHART FOR SCHOOLGIRLS

I have prepared this colour chart for you, hoping it will help you. It is not necessary in these days to spend a lot of money in order to be well-dressed, but it is just as important for schoolgirls as for grown-ups that colours should blend and harmonise, so that one garment "goes" with another.

So you will see that I have regarded your coat as the chief item of your wardrobe and have planned the frock, hat, and shoes to "go" with this. The hat won't match the everyday skirt-and-jumper outfit in each case, because I have assumed that you will wear a beret, a scarf, or no hat at all when dressed for "carefree days."

When you're going to have a new frock, hat or shoes, and are pondering over the delicious problem of colour, think first of your coat and consult the appropriate column in the chart here.

COAT	Navy	Brown	Fawn
FROCK (best)	Blue and white, Pink and blue, or Deep pink	Green, Yellow, Coral pink, or Turquoise blue	Blue-green, Cherry red or Navy
HAT (best)	White with blue band, or Blue with pink band	Beige (fawn) or Brown straw with posy of flowers	Natural straw with navy ribbon
SKIRT	Navy	Brown or Fawn tweed	Light brown or Blue
BLOUSE or JUMPER	Pink, Pale blue, Yellow or White	Green, Yellow, Coral pink or Hyacinth blue	Turquoise blue, Pale blue, Royal blue, or Cherry red
SHOES	Navy, Blue and white, or Black	Brown and white, or Brown	Black, London tan, or Navy
GLOVES	Yellow or White string	Tan or Chamois leather	Brown or Beige string
STOCKINGS (best)	Tan	Sunburn	Misty beige (fawn)

## HAPPY EASTER REMINDERS

*Some don't-forgets that will make your Easter holiday even jollier!*

### IF YOU ARE GOING AWAY—

—Don't forget to ask the lady next door to look after the family puss-cat for you. Even if he won't deign to enter her house (you know what snobs cats are) she'll most willingly place his milk in a shed in your garden, I'm sure. And you'll see that his basket is in a draught-proof corner, if he insists on staying at home, won't you?

—Don't forget to ask mother if you shall cancel the milk and the newspaper order for a day or so.

—Don't forget to give your suitcase a dust out, and a polish-up with furniture cream or white shoe-polish, before you start to pack, especially if it has not been used since last summer.

—Don't forget to let your chums know that you are going away. They may feel lonely and come to call on you. And if you know anything more disappointing than calling on an empty house—I don't.

—Don't forget to write nice little notes, or send Easter cards to those kindly grown-ups who send you an "egg" or a present by post. It would be a good idea to take along your own notepaper and envelopes for this.

—Don't forget to take a nice book (or favourite paper!) away with you, for there

are sure to be moments when a "good read" is indicated.

—Don't forget to shut your bedroom window tight and to draw the curtains if the sun is likely to be strong and bleach your precious bed-cover.

—Don't forget to fish out your camera and take this with you. Your cousins—or whoever you are staying with—will just love a "snappy" reminder of your visit.

—Don't forget to take small Easter gifts with you. It's fatal to rely entirely on buying them when you arrive, for shops have a habit of closing or being "sold out" if you leave the purchasing of gifts to the last minute.

### IF YOU ARE STAYING AT HOME—

—Don't forget that it's a holiday for mother as well, and try to be a very neat and useful daughter.

—Don't forget to greet the family on Easter Sunday with "A Happy Easter, everyone!"

—Don't forget to wear a hat in the garden if it should be grillingly hot. It's lovely to get sun-burned—but not on the back of your neck!

—Don't forget to go off to bed early on



Sunday night if you are all having a day's jaunt on the Bank Holiday Monday, for you'll want to get up early, I expect.

—Don't forget to take sun-glasses with you if the sun's as bright as we hope it will be.

—Don't forget to take a bag of food scraps with you if you are off to the Zoo. So often this is forgotten, and the monkeys get so weary of monkey-nuts which you can buy when you reach the zoo. The bears just love toffees; the monkeys adore celery; the elephants like carrots and apples—and so do the ponies and donkeys. Some lumps of sugar are also popular with many of the animals.

—Don't plead to wear your best frock and hat on this jaunt. You'll be anxious at first to take care of it, then when you find it creases—as it will!—you'll be so unhappy.

(Continued from page 11)

detention through breaking bounds. See you on the beach to-morrow, eh, after lessons?"

"Right-ho!" Clara said. She went back then, wondering, frowning, yet still feeling, for all the fact that she had opened Celeste's eyes, that strange sensation of peril, of trouble.

Without accident, this time, she reached and re-entered Cliff House, and in the morning communicated all that she had seen and done to Babs. Babs looked startled.

"And Celeste—what did she say?" "She says she's going to tackle Hammond this morning. She says she'll meet us on the beach, after lessons. I suppose she means the whole crowd?" Clara added dubiously.

Whether Celeste meant that or not, it was the whole crowd who turned up on the beach at half-past four that afternoon, the crowd being Clara herself, Babs, Bessie, Marjorie, Janet, Leila, and Marcelle. Out in the bay the yacht still stood, but of Celeste or Celeste's motor-launch there was no sign.

"Hallo! She must be at home, I guess," Leila Carroll observed. "Shall I run up and fetch her?"

"Good idea!" Leila scampered up the cliff steps at once. She was back in three minutes.

"No," she said, "the butler says she went out after breakfast this morning, and hasn't returned since. He says he thinks she went to the yacht."

"Well, it's jolly queer she hasn't turned up for the appointment," Mabs said.

"Jolly queer," Clara said grimly, and felt again that strange premonition that all was not well. "Anyway, there's no harm in going over to the yacht and seeing for ourselves," she opined. "I vote we walk back to Pegg and hire a boat. Old Harry, the fisherman, will let us have one."

Old Harry did, but as it was Harry's boat, he insisted upon rowing them out himself. As they drew near to the yacht Clara pointed.

"Hallo, Celeste is aboard!" she said. "There's her boat—on the lower deck. Now, what the dickens have they hoisted in her boat for?"

That question, at that moment, was unanswerable. The girls glanced at each other. Perhaps something of Clara's presentiment had communicated itself to them; or perhaps it was the storm which was plainly brewing. A chill wind struck off the water, which made Babs shiver. Then came a voice from the Gloriana:

"Aho, there! What do you want?" It was Captain Hammond. He was leaning over the rail.

"Celeste!" Clara called. "Miss Margesson is not aboard!" "No?" Clara asked. "Then how is it her boat is?"

There was no reply to that. They heard Hammond muttering something. Then, as Nicholls, the mate, came up and joined him, a swift conversation took place. Nicholls bawled down:

"Miss Margesson is not here!" "Then where is she?" Clara asked. "We don't know."

"O.K.!" Then in that case, we'll come aboard and wait for her. We've got an appointment, you see."

Another soft, muttered conversation. Plainly, the two men were a little non-plussed. Clara was tingling now. Those vague premonitions of disaster were strengthening within her. She watched as Hammond approached the rail again, looking at old Harry, who, non-

chalantly, smoking a short-stemmed black pipe, sat resting on his oars. He nodded.

"Very well; send the boat away," he said. "I'll send the ladder down."

The ladder came down. Clara paid off the boatman, and they all ascended. Captain Hammond grinned affably.

"I'm sorry, young ladies, but Miss Margesson has not been near the Gloriana to-day," he said. "We have her boat here because she gave orders last night that the leak which it had sprung in the stern was to be caulked. She has left no message, nor has she communicated with the ship in any way."

"But she said she would meet us on the beach," Clara protested.

Hammond shrugged. "I am sorry. I know nothing of her private arrangements," he said. "I rather fancy you are wasting your time. However, if you are determined to wait—"

"We are!" Clara said grimly. "Then perhaps you would wait in the after lounge?" the skipper asked. "I will see that tea is served to you."

Clara nodded. She sensed both trickery and peril in that moment. She felt, though she had no proof other than the presence of Celeste's boat, that the madcap was aboard. She felt at last that she was at grips with some dramatic situation—that the end of the battle between her and Captain Hammond was approaching. Not for anything would Tomboy Clara have given an inch of ground then.

"Very well," she said. "Come on, everybody!"

She led the way this time, not missing the sly nod which Hammond sent in the direction of his mate. They were just at the head of the companion when suddenly she stooped, and swiftly grabbed up something from the floor. It was a pearl bead.

"Babs, look!" she breathed. "Recognise it?"

"Celeste's!" Babs cried. "Celeste's!" Clara nodded. "Celeste obviously broke her necklace. And since Celeste was wearing the necklace intact last night when she left us, she must have broken it here. That proves, I think, that she's been aboard to-day."

Babs looked startled. "Clara, you don't mean—"

"I don't know!" Clara spoke quickly. "But I—I feel things, Babs. Oh, I can't explain! I've got a funny idea that Celeste is aboard this ship somewhere as Hammond's prisoner. Look here," she whispered, "you take the others to the lounge. I'm going to do a bit of exploring."

"Oh, Clara, be careful. Let me—"

"No, no! Go!" Clara said testily. "Leave me to look after myself."

Babs eyed her. But she saw that the Tomboy's mind was made up. And, knowing Clara, she knew better than to argue with her in that frame of mind, though she could not help but feel some misgiving.

While Clara lingered behind, she led the way to the lounge. Clara turned down the companion.

At the third step there were three or four beads all in a cluster. She picked them up. With growing excitement, she went on. At the bottom of the steps there was another bead, showing plainly that Celeste had come this way.

The Tomboy caught her breath. Now she found herself in the corridor that led to the crew's quarters. Two further beads guided her steps. She reached a short flight of iron-bound stairs, and guessed now that she must be

below the water-mark of the vessel. At the bottom of those steps, glittering in the yellow radiance of some unseen lamp, was another bead.

"Phew!" Clara whistled. She went down, staring at her. On the right there was a wall, and in that wall a tiny door. Clara stepped towards it.

She listened. Was it her fancy, or did some sound come from the other side? The door was of the bulkhead variety, containing no lock or key, and it slid back beneath her pressure. Softly Clara stepped into the darkened room, leaving the bulkhead open so that the yellow light from outside should give her illumination. And then she pulled up with a jerk.

For in a corner, her hands tied behind her back, a gag pressed over her mouth, was a girl.

"Celeste!" Clara gasped. Celeste it was.

In a moment Clara was by her side, was loosening the gag. Celeste shook her head as she would have tackled the bonds which bound her wrists, however.

"No!" she panted. "Clara, don't! Leave me! Any moment someone may come now, and if they find me free, the alarm will go round! Clara, listen now—quickly!"

"Yes?" Clara said. "There's a plot on foot—a plot to seize the ship and make off with it! Hammond and Nicholls and all the crew, except Murphy, are in the plot together. The idea is, I gather, to take the ship to some South Sea island laden with cargo for the natives, and hand it over to a man called Silvertree."

"Celeste, no—"

"It's true!" Celeste gasped, her eyes on the door. "Grandfather's message came through this morning. He's expecting to arrive to-morrow or the next day. Hammond knows it. He's getting up steam, and intends to sail with the next tide—which is about an hour now. Clara, are Babs & Co. with you?"

"Yes, but—"

Celeste groaned. "Oh, I'm a fool!" she said. "I ought not to have let you come. But I couldn't help it. As soon as I started asking questions about the cargo, Hammond grabbed me and slung me here. I broke my necklace, hoping that help might arrive, and I would be traced by it. Clara—quickly! Get back to Murphy. He doesn't know about all this yet. Tell him to send out an S O S, it's our one hope. Hammond will never let you or Babs and the rest get away."

"But, Celeste—"

"Clara, please do as I say! But hey!" she called, as Clara leapt for the door. "Come back, dummy! Put this gag back—just in case someone should come. If they found me still trussed-up and gagged, they wouldn't be suspicious, see?"

Clara did see. She rammed the gag back in position. Then, her heart in her mouth, she headed for the stairs. Up corridor and companion she raced, as though her life was depending on it, and, reaching the main deck, crouched stealthily behind the ventilators as Captain Hammond and Mate Nicholls came by. For one moment she thought they had spotted her; then they passed on.

She rose, and crossed to the wireless cabin.

One swift look round. She wasn't spotted, thank goodness! Quickly she pushed open the door; breathlessly she entered. Murphy, busy at his instruments, jumped round with a start.

"Miss Clara—"



"All right," Clara said. She caught him by the shoulders. "Peter—quick!" she said. "Send out an SOS!" She saw the startled look on his face. "Quick—I tell you!" she added frantically. "Hammond & Co are pirates! They're getting up steam, and intend to run off with the ship! Listen!" And she paused, white-faced as the deck suddenly shook, and the whir and the rumble of the engines came to their ears. "Oh, my hat, we're starting!" she gasped. "Peter—"

The wireless operator clapped the carphones about his head. His eyes were keen then, his face set. Quickly he leaned over his instruments.

Then suddenly—  
There came a cry from Clara. A vicious arm swept her back against the wall, a hand wielding a short, thick stem of wood reached out.

And Clara shrieked as she saw Murphy turn, as she saw, too late, that arm go up and descend.

Murphy, receiving that cowardly blow full upon the skull, reeled unconscious to the floor!

### At the Mercy of the Storm!



"CLEVER, eh?" Hammond snarled—for it was he. "Thought you'd double-cross me!" His eyes gleaming, he made a sudden lunge, catching at her wrists. "And don't fuss," he growled, "otherwise you'll get what he got! Come with me!"

Clara glared, more furious than frightened in that moment. She looked at the limp body of Peter Murphy on the floor. For a moment her gaze fastened upon the transmitter of the wireless instrument. If only, she thought, she could get to that; but she couldn't.

It was obvious now that Hammond had made himself master of the ship, and if Hammond was master of the ship, every man jack aboard it, save the helpless Murphy, was in his pay.

Grim-faced, he led the way out on to the deck. It was dark now with the coming of the storm. A gale of wind was already blowing, making the flags above her head circle and crack. Away to the west the first vicious stab of lightning forked downwards from the sky.

"Get on!" snarled Hammond.

He pushed her in the back. Clara staggered along. The after lounge was reached where her chums, in the charge of the grinning first mate, Nicholls, were huddled together. Hammond pushed her in.

"Right!" he snarled. "Now stop there, and while we're about it," he added, addressing the others, "let's have an understanding. I might as well tell you for a start that it's no use your kicking up a shindy because this ship's in my hands now, and every member of the crew is my man. Understand that!"

"You—you pirate!" burst out Babs. Hammond grinned mirthlessly.

"If it eases your feelings calling me names, then call 'em," he said cheerfully. "Pirate or not, this ship is mine, and, since you interfered in business which didn't concern you, you've only yourselves to thank for what's coming to you. We're getting up steam. In half an hour, maybe, we'll be moving off."

"Oh, crumbs! Nun-not with us aboard?" quavered Bessie.

"With you aboard!" he sneered. "But what are you going to do with us?" Leila Carroll cried.

"That depends. I may," Hammond mocked, "put you ashore at some little island en route. But I'm not going to discuss that now. All right; come on, Nicholls!"

The door slammed as the two men went out.

"Oh, my hat! What are we going to do?" Marjorie Hazeldene asked faintly. "Clara—"

Clara's face was grim. "There's one thing—" she said. "My hat, see that flash of lightning? Hammond's made just one mistake, that's all—and that's the mistake of thinking that poor Peter Murphy is the only one on board who knows anything about wireless. If only I could get to that cabin!" she muttered.

But that was impossible. Doors and

decorated the lounge. "If I swam up that—"

"Clara, you daren't!"

"Give me a hand!"

"But—"

"Please!" Clara rapped almost fiercely.

She stepped towards the palm. She began to tug at it. Babs, seeing that argument was useless, lent a hand. Leila came forward, too. Between them they dragged the palm to the middle of the lounge, and Clara smiled grimly. She stepped on to the barrel.

"Oh, Clara, for goodness' sake be careful!" Marjorie quavered.

But Clara did not heed. She and she only could save the chums, Celeste and Peter Murphy, now. Up she went. The slender tree bent under her weight.

With white, desperate faces the chums watched.

Forcing her head and shoulders up



"YOUR headmistress is rather strict about you breaking bounds at night, isn't she?" asked the owner of the cafe as she handed the book to Babs. The man with the newspaper heard that remark, and his eyes gleamed thoughtfully.

portholes were securely shut. As if mocking the very suggestion, the deck beneath their feet began to heave, at the same moment there came hoarse cries outside, running feet; then the ship began to move.

"Oh dear," gasped Bessie, "we're going, you know!"

Faces whitened. The ship gave a list as she plunged into deeper water, sending them all helplessly staggering into one corner. Now outside the gale struck the ship with full force, howling and shrieking through the rigging.

It seemed indeed, that they were lost.

But were they? Desperately Tom-boy Clara looked about her.

Doors and portholes were hopeless, but overhead was still the ventilator through which the lightning came flickering now. Clara had her eyes upon that, and Clara was mentally calculating how she could reach it.

"Babs—" she said suddenly.

"Yes, old thing?"

"Give me a hand with this palm."

And Clara indicated the tallest of the large palms which, planted in tubs,

through the thick fronds near the top, Clara gained another inch or two in height. She paused as the ship heeled again, and then, risking all, made a jump for the ledge of the framework. There came a shriek from Marjorie.

"Clara, oh—look!"

"She's done it!" Babs gasped.

Done it Clara had. Swinging from the ledge, she hung a moment until the yacht righted itself, then, with another spring, she had swarmed up on to the ledge, was fumbling at the catches. The ventilator flew open, making her gasp as she stuck her head into the raging gale. Then, with a wave to her chums, she had scrambled through.

Now—

Blackness—blackness. The gale raged about her. Came a crackling flash of lightning, and for a moment she saw the white cliff of Pegg, far, far away on her right.

Then, ducking and dodging in the darkness, she had reached the wireless cabin.

It was empty when she reached it, Murphy evidently having been taken

off. Breathlessly she nipped inside, shut the door, and feverishly clapped on the earphones. The illuminated chart above her gave her her location. She bent over the transmitter.

"SOS! SOS!" she tapped out, and listened.

"SOS! SOS!" she repeated. "S.Y. Gloriana seized by pirates off Pegg! Hurry! Hurry!" she tapped out, and listened in agony for reply.

Along the deck there came a shout. Too late Clara remembered that the wireless above her must be crackling, betraying her presence in the cabin.

Then—  
Click, click, click! The light over the receiver glowed. A message came into the cabin.

"Call heard! Call heard!" the message came back. "This is H.M. Gunboat Shellcap. Hold on! Hold on! Be with you in an hour!"

And then the door came open with a crash. A revolver spat, shattering the receiver. Then a hand descended upon Clara's shoulder, wrenching her off her seat. Hammond's blazing eyes glared into hers.

"You—you—" he choked. "What was that?"

"A gunboat, you scoundrel!" cried Clara. "And it's coming here! You—"

She dodged the blow he aimed at her. Then, livid with fear, he had dashed out. She heard his voice calling:

"The boats! The boats! Get to the boats! Smash the steering! Disable the engines! There's a gunboat coming—every man jack of you man the boats!"

Clara's face was white then as she realised the despicable intention of this scoundrel—deserting her and her chums.

"No, no!" she shrieked, and rushed towards the door. "No, I tell you, you shan't—"

And then, as the yacht heaved wildly, she slipped, crashing her head on the door jamb. Unconscious, she fell to the floor. When she came to Babs was bending over her.

"Clara—" Babs gasped. "Thank goodness you're all right! Clara, they've gone!"

"But you—" Clara panted. "Where did you come from?"

"Murphy. He broke loose; he let us out. They've taken the boats, Clara, they've rendered the ship useless." She gasped as the yacht rolled wildly, and, clinging to the ledge of the shattered wireless table, waited until the vessel righted itself again. "Murphy says that we're helpless, and we're drifting on to Black Rock!"

Clara gulped. She was up in a moment then. Out she staggered, gasping in the fury of the storm which smote her. Outside the chums, shivering as they clung to the rail, stood with Celeste, also rescued by Murphy.

A vivid flash of lightning snaked out of the sky. Ahead, Clara saw the great pile of Black Rock towards which they were rushing.

"We're going straight for it!" Mabs shuddered.

"But the rockets—" Clara cried. "Can't we send up rockets?"

"There are no rockets!" It was Murphy, his head in bandages, who spoke. "Those scoundrels wrecked the rocket apparatus before they went. Every boat's gone. The steering's smashed, the engines disabled. Even the lifebelts have gone. Look out!" he cried.

They all ducked as a hissing wall of water rolled towards the bows, reared

upwards, and broke down upon them with deafening force. Then—

"Look!" shrieked Marjorie.

She pointed. Every face was white then. Bessie, fumbling her way to the wireless-cabin, sank down in the doorway and collapsed. A vivid fork of lightning struck down from the sky, showing them, barely a hundred yards ahead, the sinister pile of Black Rock, on which, so many times in the past, gallant vessels like the Gloriana had wrecked themselves. Like a dart they were rushing towards it.

"Another minute—" muttered Clara.

And then—what happened? Nobody knew. But suddenly there was a crash. Like some great tidal wave a huge wall of water sprang up from nowhere it seemed. Like a cork the yacht was tossed upwards, while the chums, all thrown together, scrambled madly for safety.

In midair the Gloriana seemed to hesitate. Then, like a falling rocket, she plunged downwards into the trough of the sea again. A shower of spray burst over the bows, and then she had righted herself.

It was Peter Murphy who was the first to scramble to his feet, who sent up a dazed shout of joy.

"Look!" he cried. "We're over the rocks!" And by a miracle they were! Over the rocks in the comparatively safe and deeper water which flowed from there to Belwin Island. "And look!" again he shouted, next moment, as a huge grey shape loomed up in the darkness, and a dazzling searchlight beam fell full upon the Gloriana's decks. "It's a gunboat!" he cried.

"The Shellcap!" Clara gasped. "The Shellcap! It—it's come! I—I called it—" and then, faint and weak from her ordeal, and in the knowledge that safety and life were won again, for the first time in her tomboy life she fainted!

HOURS LATER at Cliff House School—

"Well, all's well that ends well," Peter Murphy said cheerfully, in Miss Primrose's study, where all the adventurers of the Gloriana were congregated. "I must say, Miss Primrose, that if it hadn't been for Clara, none of us might have been here now. The gunboat reached us just in time, and from the reports I have received since, all Hammond's rascals have been picked up, and are now safely in gaol at Eastbourne. The commander of the

Shellcap wished me to convey his compliments, Miss Primrose, and to congratulate the school upon the fine type of girls it produces."

"Ahem! Ahem!" Miss Primrose blushed, but she looked pleased. "Please thank him from me—er yes! Er—tell him I also am proud. Extremely, extraordinarily proud, and particularly, Clara, of you, my dear! But I am glad," she added fervently, "that you have all come through such a dreadful experience unscathed. Er—what was it you said, Celeste?"

Celeste, who was among the group, chuckled.

"I just said," she answered, "that after it all they need a few days' leave, Miss Primrose, don't you think so?"

"Well—er—perhaps—yes!"

"And if I might make the suggestion," Celeste artfully went on, "I don't think that leave could be better spent than on board the Gloriana! Because," Celeste added seriously, "apart from all the good sea air will do them, there's a heap of work to be tackled in the way of preparing for the Lifeboat Carnival! While the engineers are at work getting the old ship in shape again, that's an opportunity to do a bit and recover from the strain of this experience at the same time. Don't you think so?"

Miss Primrose smiled. "Well, as that seems to be so unanimous—yes!" she said.

"Whoopee!"

"Celeste, my dear, what an expression! Celeste—why, goodness! My goodness gracious! What are you doing?"

"Just," Celeste laughed, "hugging you, Miss Primrose! Just sort of expressing what an awful, topping sport I think you are! There!" she added. "Can we go now?"

"Oh, my goodness, yes—please do!" flustered Miss Primrose gasped. "And—and—Celeste—"

"Yes, Miss Primrose?"

"I—I do hope that your efforts, and the efforts of my girls for the Lifeboat Fund, will be a great success!"

"They will!" Celeste chuckled. And they were. For thanks to the astonishing publicity which the adventures of Babs & Co., and the heroism of Clara Trevlyn in particular, gave that project, the amount of money raised by Cliff House for the Lifeboat Fund was easily the greatest record of all time!

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.



Don't miss this magnificent story. It appears COMPLETE NEXT WEEK, and is, of course, by world-favourite HILDA RICHARDS.

Order your copy NOW

ALWAYS MYSTERIOUS—

That's Jemima Carstairs! Flippant at the best of times, never seeming to take anything seriously, no matter how important it may be. And yet, as all Cliff House knows, keenly shrewd and resourceful. Imagine, then, how baffling the strange Fourth Former is when actually playing a mystery role. Even her own chums, Barbara Redfern & Co., cannot make her out. It really seems that Jemima has let them down; has let down the school; has let down herself! What IS "old Jimmy" up to?



COMPLETE this week. Another topping fun and excitement story featuring—

# 'GIPSY JOY'

*The Rich Girl Romany*



## Nakita's Blunder

**J**OY SHARPE could hardly sit still for excitement. The school-room, which a moment before had seemed a rather gloomy place despite the sunshine, became bright and cheery. For Joy had just heard good news.

Miss Retcham, her governess, was taking the afternoon off—and a holiday for her meant a holiday for Joy!

"I am glad, Miss Retcham. You need a change," said Joy, beaming.

Miss Retcham regarded her coldly. "I trust your elation is due to the pleasure in store for me, rather than for the supposed freedom from restraint which you anticipate."

"Er—yes, Miss Retcham," said Joy, torn between absolute honesty and tact.

"Then I am glad," said the governess severely. "Because your grandfather will be in charge of you, and he will certainly not want to be bothered. The best thing you can do is to take some needlework into your grandfather's study."

Joy's sense of elation waned. It was not her idea of a jolly afternoon.

"Couldn't I go out into the garden, Miss Retcham?"

"You can not!" said the governess grimly. "I have an idea that before you had been there ten minutes, you would be in mischief. The chances are that the butcher's boy would arrive, and you would chatter with him, and perhaps start some silly game, or even leave the grounds. Or you might meet the gipsy girl, Nakita."

"Um!" murmured Joy; for they were both very shrewd guesses.

"I am going to see my brother, who has recently arrived in England from abroad, and I do not want to be worried the whole time by what may be happening to you," finished the governess. "Get on with your work."

Joy bent her head to her work, but she did not do so now with any great show of light-heartedness.

Her grandfather, whose house this was, spent his time studying. He knew more about ancient Egypt than most people, but he wanted to know more. The events of the present day world did not interest him—only what had happened five or six thousand years ago. In the intervals of working, however,

**When rich girl Joy Sharpe was barred from her Governess' picnic, she did not worry. Disguised as Nakita, the Gipsy, she arranged two picnics—one with a hamper of rubbish!**

Joy turned things over in her mind. The spring sunshine came warmly through the window, and there was the song of birds outside. The great outdoors was calling, trees were showing a hint of green, and there were wild flowers in the fields.

But Joy Sharpe would be in the dark, dingy library—sewing!

For an hour Joy worked, and then Miss Retcham rose.

"I am going down to the village, Joy, and shall return in an hour," she said.

She hurried out, and a moment later was striding down the drive on her way to the village.

Joy did not rush on madly with her work. Instead, she closed the French grammar book, and rose.

"A picnic—that's the idea," she told herself. "And a picnic on the river would do granddad a lot of good. He needs fresh air. He's looking awfully pale. And it would do me good, too."

The more she thought about it, the more Joy liked the idea, and presently, her eyes dancing, she hurried up to her bed-room. Tinker, her pup, lay sadly at the door, his head resting on his paws, as though there was no fun in life at all. But at sound of his mistress, he became a changed dog.

If a dog can say "whoopee," Tinker said it then. He jumped high, and nearly somersaulted with excitement, and gave a shrill, high-pitched bark.

"Nakita!" said Joy, and hurled open her bed-room door.

Tinker hurled himself at the wardrobe, for he knew what that mysterious word meant—freedom, fun, and a new mistress.

He did not really want a new mistress—but he wanted Nakita, the gipsy. To him, Nakita and Joy were the same mistress.

Everybody else, including Miss Retcham and Joy's grandfather, thought that Joy Sharpe, rich girl, and Nakita, gipsy girl, were two entirely different people. But Tinker knew better. He knew that the only difference between the two was in their clothes, and the colour of their skin!

Joy opened the wardrobe door, and pulled out a gaily coloured frock which was hidden there.

Thanks to practice, she changed herself into Nakita in record time. She put on the frock and sandals, dyed her skin with the special stuff, and then looked into the mirror to make sure that nowhere did her own pale skin show through the dye.

Tinker, in shrill excitement, ran to the door, and then paused, while a dab of dye was put on his jacket to make him like Slinker, Nakita's dog—his own twin brother.

"And not a sound," warned Nakita.

**By IDA MELBOURNE**

Very quietly, knowing the ways of the house, she crept down the servants' staircase. In the garden, she stole along until she reached the drive. Then, boldly and openly, she walked towards her grandfather's study.

"Tinks," she murmured, "this is where Nakita fixes things for Joy!"

Creeping to the window, she peeped in and saw her grandfather reading at his desk. As she tapped the window he looked up, quite startled.

"Morning, gent!" said Nakita brightly.

"Er—good-morning!" said Joy's grandfather, astonished. "Is not this somewhat unusual, peering in at the window?"

"Not for gipsy girls, guv'nor," said Nakita, smiling. "I want to ask you a favour. You've got a nice lot of pretty flowers and I've got none. How'd it be if you let me buy some?"

Joy knew her grandfather's kind heart.

"Of course," he said readily. "By all means."

And, that settled, he turned back to

his book; but Nakita did not mean it to end there.

"You look tired, guv'nor," she said gently.

"Really?" said her grandfather, amused. "Am I pale?"

"You are, guv'nor. Can't you see the spring? Can't you hear the birds? On a day like this you and the little girl ought to be out—on the river or somewhere," she added daringly.

But he was not offended. He smiled indulgently and rose, stretching himself.

"H'm! Outsiders see most of the game—eh?" he mused. "Perhaps I rather neglect the poor child."

"Mister," said Nakita in tense tone, "don't you worry. A gipsy knows—and I know that you and she are going to have happiness this afternoon. You're going to give her a surprise. You're going to order the cook to pack a nice hamper. Can't you just see her skipping about with excitement? And you could teach her to row."

"H'm!" he murmured. "But beware—the governess! She will be stern. She will forbid it," said Nakita, wagging a forefinger.

Her grandfather drew up with dignity.

"You mistake the governess' vocation. She cannot forbid me to take my own granddaughter out for the afternoon," he said rather huffily.

"Course not. But I bet she tries," said Nakita.

And then, not wanting to over-do things, she blew him a kiss and went off.

Working her way to the back of the house, she presently heard voices—her grandfather's and cook's.

"Well, I must say she needs a change like this, and I'm glad you thought of it, sir," said the cook. "I'll pack a lovely hamper, I will really!"

Nakita skipped with joy.

"What Miss Joy would do without me I don't know!" she chortled. "Oh, lovely—lovely!"

And, dancing down the path, she almost ran into Boko, the butcher's boy.

"Hey, you!" she said merrily. "This your afternoon off?"

"That's right. What of it?" said Boko.

"Well, you hang around near the river—and mebbe you'll be in luck. Miss Joy's having a picnic, and you may have a look in," said Nakita.

Then, fairly singing with happiness, she skipped off to the woods with Slinker. And what fun it was!

For twenty minutes they frolicked; and then, peeping down the lane, Nakita saw Miss Retcham returning, walking quickly.

"All over, Tinks, until this afternoon," she said. "And then what fun—eh? On the river, picnicking!"

But, instead of hurrying home, Nakita loitered, tempted to speak to her governess.

"Afternoon, lidy—I mean, morning!" Miss Retcham halted.

"It is a pity a gipsy, being so clever, does not know the difference between morning and afternoon," she mocked. "Perhaps it comes of always looking into the future."

"Yes, lidy; and you've got a happy afternoon before you. You're going to travel. I see you in a train—"

Miss Retcham smiled.

"Indeed! Then it gives me great pleasure to tell you you're wrong. I was—but I'm not now. My journey is cancelled—"

Nakita nearly collapsed.

"Cancelled!" she gasped.

"Yes. Instead of my going a journey

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,—Easter! Thrilling word, isn't it? Easter, the first of our Bank Holidays; the time when we really know that summer is on the way; when the weather CAN be so very kind to us.

I had intended devoting most of this chat to the subject of Easter. Indeed, I was just about to plan out a whole heap of things to say to you, when—along came our mutual friend, and your very own guide and philosopher, PATRICIA, with her Two Pages for this week's issue.

And what do you think I found out? Patricia had dealt with Easter; dealt with it from many angles, in that attractive way she has. By the time I'd finished reading what she had to say on the subject I realised that there wasn't anything left for me!

So, readers all, no more about Easter. You'll find heaps and heaps of lovely notes and suggestions of an Easterish nature in Pat's own pages in the middle of this number.

Well, there IS one thing I can speak on with authority, anyway—next Saturday's programme of stories. First of all, the superb LONG COMPLETE Cliff House story by HILDA RICHARDS.

And what a treat, for Jemima fans especially.

Jemima, of course, is a strange sort of girl, as you know. Always flippant; always ready with some quaint quip or jest; always seeming to be carefree and indifferent to the things that go on about her.

But that isn't the real Jemima, as we know. That's just her manner; her "shell." In her heart, Jemima is startlingly different, as loyal and resourceful as the best, cool and alert.

So you can give a shrewd guess as to the delight and excitement in store for you next week when you read

#### "JEMIMA UNDER SUSPICION!"

A new role for Cliff House's strange Fourth Former. But a role which Jemima, despite its seriousness, tackles in her own fascinating manner. And Barbara Redfern & Co. are also most actively involved, too.

As usual next Saturday's number will contain all our other topping features: further magnificent chapters of "The Jungle Hikers!" more of Patricia's Bright and Breezy Pages; another "Cliff House Pet" to add to your collection, and finally one more delightful story of "Gipsy Joy."

I say "one more" because I'm afraid it will be the last of this attractive personality, at least for the present. But much as we shall regret bidding Joy good-bye, I don't think you will be too upset when you discover the topping feature Miss Ida Melbourne is writing in Joy's place. Full details of it next week.

And now, au revoir once again.

With best wishes, your sincere friend,  
THE EDITOR.

to see someone, someone is making a journey to see me—here!"

And with that Miss Retcham passed on, smiling with triumph at her defeat of the fortune-teller. But, though she pictured Nakita as being chagrined, she couldn't guess just how completely taken aback and dejected the gipsy girl was.

"Not—not going away! Her brother coming here!" groaned Nakita. "Oh golly! The picnic's off!"

#### Someone Would be Unlucky!

**J**OY SHARPE crept down to the kitchen. It was lunch-time, and she had long since changed back to Joy, leaving Nakita in the wardrobe.

Her gaiety was all gone; for she had heard her governess go into her grandfather's study, and when she emerged she had been looking triumphant—the victor!

Now Joy, sneaking down to the kitchen, tried to find out what was happening to the hamper.

Cook was there—packing it.

"Golly!" Joy cried in amazement. "Then the picnic isn't off! Does—does Miss Retcham know it's being packed?"

"She does, Miss Joy," said cook. "She's asked for cold chicken, ham, and all the best we've got in the larder. There'll be enough for an army, I should think."

Joy blinked. It was astounding that her governess should not only have readily agreed to a picnic, but ordered it herself.

At that moment—Miss Retcham entered.

"Ah, I see that you are getting on with it, cook," she said. "My brother and I will not be having lunch. We can combine the meal at tea. Put in some fancy cakes and fruit and chocolates."

Joy beamed.

"Oh, Miss Retcham, how grand, how wonderful!" she exclaimed. "I shall just love it!"

"You?" said Miss Retcham sharply.

"You are not coming!"

Joy reeled.

"I—I'm not going on the picnic?" she babbled.

"Of course not. I wish to be alone with my brother."

Joy went limp.

"But what am I doing, then?" she asked.

"Precisely what I said you were doing," said Miss Retcham, "except that, as your grandfather has decided that he wishes to work alone, you can do your needlework at Miss Mitford's house. She will expect you at half-past two."

Joy did not utter a word. She did not dislike Miss Mitford, but—

But how different all that would be from a picnic on the sunny river! How dead, how dull, how depressing!

"By the way, cook, you have used the right hamper?" asked Miss Retcham. "The two are exactly alike, except for the paint that was spilled in one of them."

"Yes, miss. The other one's outside. It might as well be thrown away. The butcher's boy was asking for a hamper. I don't suppose he will mind that paint."

"No. I should imagine he will delight in the flavour. Give it to him by all means," said Miss Retcham.

With heart as heavy as lead, Joy walked from the kitchen, feeling just as though she had been robbed.



"My picnic—my hamper!" she said miserably.

Miss Retcham, humming merrily to herself, went upstairs to change into more summery, river-like clothes. And her last words were:

"Remember, Joy, Miss Mitford is expecting you at two-thirty."

But Joy, rebellious and wrathful, did not reply as she went on to her bedroom.

"If I can't go on their picnic, I'll jolly well go with Boko and his pals," she told herself, "even though we shan't have such a wonderful hamper—even though—"

And then came a dazzling thought into her mind that chased away all the clouds of gloom. Once again Nakita could help her—and the moment Miss Retcham had gone, Nakita would spring into action!

MISS MITFORD looked at the lovely daffodils critically. Her maid had brought them into the room, and said that a gypsy girl was at the door, selling them for sixpence a bunch.

It was cheap, far too cheap, and Miss Mitford had a suspicious mind. How could a gypsy sell these fresh daffodils so cheaply?

"Show her in. I will see her myself," she said, lifting into her arms a large tabby cat which had been lying on her lap.

She was a typical old maid, and rather given to meddling into other people's affairs. Naturally, being inquisitive and suspicious, she could not just wonder if the flowers had been stolen; she had to go into the matter thoroughly.

The moment Nakita stood before her Miss Mitford peered at her critically.

"How comes it that you can sell these flowers for only sixpence a bunch?"

"The kind gent at the Gables gave them me, and you can ring up and ask him if you like," said Nakita coolly. "He's a real kind gent."

"Oh, he is, eh? Well, his granddaughter is coming here this afternoon, so I shall find out," said Miss Mitford, and turned to her maid. "Bring my bag, Jessie. I will have three bunches."

Nakita gladly sold the three bunches she had, and then asked a question.

"That young girl from the Gables coming here? Well, a nice, merry afternoon you'll have with her romping about, lidy; liven you up all right! I suppose she'll bring that there dog of hers? You watch out for it biting the curtain; and it'll give that cat of yours some fun!"

Miss Mitford gave a little gasp of dismay.

"Is that the kind of girl she is?" she asked indignantly. "A fine thing, Miss Retcham sending her to me when she wants to be rid of her. Dear, dear! Chasing my cat! Poor Tiddles! If that's the kind of girl she is, I won't have her in the place!"

"Oh, lidy! Hope I haven't gorn and put my foot in it," said Nakita.

"Course, if you've got a headache mebbe she is a bit too much like. But a proper sport she is. Never a minute's peace. If she's not knocking over one thing, she's smashing another."

Miss Mitford's lips compressed.

"I can feel a headache coming on," she said. "Good gracious! I regard it as a sheer imposition upon my good nature. Indeed—h'm!—tut-tut! Phew!"

"You have a nice sleep, lidy," urged Nakita. "You need it. This is tiring weather, spring. Thank you, lidy! 'Arternoon!"

And Nakita managed to walk sedately down the path. But once in the roadway she skipped with delight.

Back home she raced then, as hard as she could go, and reached her bed-room in breathless state. Only a moment after the door had slammed there was a knock on it.

"Miss Joy," said the parlourmaid's voice, "there was a call for you. Miss Mitford rang up to say that she's got a bad headache, and would you mind not coming."

"Thank you, Nellie!" said Joy. "It's quite all right!"

"Very well, miss. I'll ring up and say you've had the message and won't be coming."

Joy chuckled with glee, and then danced about with Tinker, whom she had shut in the bedroom while she went to Miss Mitford's house.

"And now we're free, Tinks—free for the picnic!" she chortled.

Down to the river she ran with Tinker, and there, on the landing-stage, was Boko, the butcher's boy, and two friends.

"Here, Nakita," said Boko indignantly, "thought you said Miss Joy was on a picnic? Well, she's not. Her governess dame is, and a bloke, but not Joy."

"All right, chum," said Nakita easily. "Mebbe she's not. But the hamper her governess has got is the one we're to share."

"What?" gasped Boko. And then, after a pause, he added quite strangely: "Look at my red ear!"

"That means your mother's talking about you!" exclaimed Nakita.

"Wrong again," said Boko, with a rueful grin. "So you're not much of a gypsy. This ear is red because the old boy socked it."

"The governess' brother?" asked Nakita indignantly.

"Yes, if that's what he is. She calls

him 'Fred.' And when I upped and asked if Miss Joy was going with them, she ordered me off, and then when I said 'Poor old Joy!' he just whipped round, called me an impertinent pup, and socked me!" said Boko, in wrath.

Nakita's eyes flashed.

"Oh, he did! Well, he'll be sorry for that. Now I don't feel any kind of regrets."

"About what?" asked Boko.

"About eating that lovely hamper of theirs."

Boko shook his head.

"Don't be silly! How can we get it from them? It's theirs, not ours."

"It's Miss Joy's, and she said I could have it if I could get it," said Nakita. "Have you brought along the hamper you got from their cook, chum?"

"I have. And there's a bit of stale cake, some cold tea, and a few hunks of bread and some jam," said Boko.

"Then put some grass and stones in," advised Nakita.

"Eh? I'm not an ostrich!" said Boko, surprised.

"But it'll make it heavier, scatty!" said Nakita; and, opening the hamper, she put in some heavy stones, a few handfuls of earth, a small quantity of twigs, and some nettles.

"And now the final touch," she said, and covered the things with a piece of blue cloth, leaving one bit hanging out as she fastened it down.

"What's that for?"

"The governess had a bit like that hanging out," said one of Boko's pals.

"Good!" said Nakita briskly.

"Now, which way did she go? Miss Joy promised you a slap-up picnic, and you shall have it."

Boko knew the way the governess and her brother had gone, and, although he was slightly puzzled, he agreed to follow.

Nakita lolled back in the boat and steered, while Boko and one of his chums gave a demonstration of rowing



"NOW then!" demanded Miss Mitford suspiciously. "Where did you get these flowers?" Nakita, pretending to be most demure, got ready to make the interfering woman an unwitting accomplice in her little plan to have a picnic.

that kept the water moving briskly, and combined bathing with boating.

"I've a plan," Nakita announced. "You've got to pretend to try to stop me doing something."

"O.K.!" said Boko, winking.

A moment later Nakita was speaking in a hoarse whisper.

"Ah, there they are, ahead!" she suddenly exclaimed, as she sighted the other boat, with Miss Retcham steering, while her brother tugged leisurely at the oars. "Now for it, gents! Keep a gay heart, and we'll have that grub!"

### When They Were Opened!

"THOSE wretched urchins are just behind us," said Miss Retcham's portly brother Fred. "I shall have to teach them another lesson. They seem to be following us about."

Miss Retcham looked behind. "Go ashore, Fred," she said. "It will be a pleasant spot for a picnic, and I do not want you to strain your heart rowing."

He pulled ashore, for even that short stretch of river had flushed his cheeks, and made his eyes bulge a little.

But no sooner had he landed and helped Miss Retcham ashore than the other boat pulled into the bank, too.

"This cannot be accidental," Fred frowned. "They are up to something—planning vengeance perhaps for my just rebuke."

Boko's voice came clearly. "No, Nakita, chuck it," she said. "You can't play tricks with Miss Retcham, she's a nice lady."

"Shush, they'll hear," came the gipsy girl's voice.

"No they can't. But, anyway, you chuck it," advised Boko. "I won't have anything to do with it."

"Nor me—nor me—"

"Give me that hamper," came Nakita's voice.

Miss Retcham and her brother exchanged swift glances.

"That girl is planning some trick," said the governess. "And look—someone is dodging through the bushes there."

Her brother crept across towards the spot, and at the same moment Miss Retcham saw another movement, and herself moved forward.

Suddenly she wheeled, and was just in time to see Nakita dumping a hamper down on the ground.

"Stop!" she cried.

Nakita dashed through the bushes, and appeared in view a few yards away staggering with a hamper. But at express speed Miss Retcham's brother rushed to her, shouting.

"Stop!"

Then came Boko's alarmed voice. "Gosh, chaps—she's done it! She's changed the hampers."

The words were clearly heard and Miss Retcham and her brother strode forward.

"So—you changed the hampers? Do you know that that is stealing?" said Mr. Retcham grimly.

His sister looked at the hamper at Nakita's feet.

"Yes—that is ours," she said. "Pick it up, Fred. We will keep theirs as punishment."

"But this is ours," said Nakita. "And you can't keep our hamper. That's stealing, too."

"Girl," said the governess. "You are a fool as well as a liar. I happen to know that that is our hamper because of the piece of blue material sticking

## HILDA RICHARDS



### Replies to Some of Her Correspondents.

**MARJORIE LOONEY** (Warrnambool, Victoria, Australia).—Thank you for a very charming little letter, Marjorie. Your district sounds very lovely; I should love to visit Australia some day. Be sure to write to me again, won't you?

**ELSIE FERROL** (Glasgow, Scotland).—What a tiny letter, Elsie! Next time you write do tell me all about yourself. Yes, the biographies of Babs and her chums have already appeared in the "Celebrities" series. Did you miss them?

**"OLIVE"** (Co. Down, Ireland).—Here are the full names you asked for, my dear: Leila Constance Carroll, Jean Stella Cartwright, Rosa Imogen Rodworth, and Margot Clementina Lantham. Yes, there is an Upper and a Lower Third at Cliff House. Doris Redfern is in the Upper Third. Write again, won't you?

**MARGARET STEWART** (Angus, Scotland).—You see, I did find a corner for your reply, Margaret! Babs is aged 14 years and 6 months, and Bessie three months younger. Yes, my dear, my dog Juno is an Alsatian—and the dearest pet you can possibly imagine.

**"BUNTY"** (Nottingham).—You are evidently rather like Janet Jordan in appearance, Bunty. I wonder if you also share the same tastes? (Janet adores swimming, you know.) My pet Alsatian, Juno, sends pawshakes to Mac and Nelson. Be sure to write again, my dear.

**NANCY ABLE** (Marham, Norfolk).—Thank you for writing to me, Nancy. I was very pleased to hear how much you are enjoying my stories. Yes, Sarah Harrigan is the oldest girl at Cliff House. Of course I will feature Bessie in many more of my future stories, my dear. C. H. tales would hardly be the same without her, would they?

out at the side. I remember trying in vain to tuck it in."

"And so do I," said her brother. "If you take this hamper, or try to, you will be guilty of robbery with violence, for believe me it would entail a struggle."

Nakita pulled a face.

"Oh, all right. Have it your own way, gov'nor. I'm not so strong as you and these boys won't back me up. But you're not having them both."

And with that she walked to the other hamper. Mr. Retcham took a step forward, and then hesitated, shrugging.

"You can have that with pleasure, but think yourself lucky that you are not being charged with attempted theft. I have never known anything so brazen in my life."

Nakita carried the other hamper past them, and silently she and Boko & Co. went back to their boat.

"Gosh, aren't you a mutt?" said Boko, in surprise. "Fancy trying a silly dodge like that."

"Yes, fancy," said Nakita.

"Row in the other direction," commanded Miss Retcham's brother, "or I shall lose my temper, and the consequences may be serious."

Boko and his pals, in a very subdued mood, rowed off with the hamper and Nakita! Only Nakita was smiling, and

they told her to take the grin off her face.

It was twenty minutes later, when their spirits were somewhat revived, that they pulled up in a lonely back-water. And Boko opened the hamper.

"Sorry it's not better than this—," he began, and then gasped blankly. "Gosh! It's the wrong hamper!"

The other boys stared at the well-packed hamper, with its fruit, chocolates, chicken and other delicacies in amazement.

"Well, of course it is," said Nakita. "I told them the other one was ours, but they wouldn't believe it. They had their way, and I hope they like it."

Boko looked at her with deep admiration and then roared with laughter. He clung to his pals for support and they almost hooted and yelled.

"And won't Miss Retcham giggle when she opens her hamper," said Nakita merrily. "But who cares? She robbed me—I mean, she robbed Joy of her picnic," she added hastily. "And Miss Joy said I could have this hamper. So tuck in, chums."

They tucked in. Two miles down the river, Miss Retcham and her brother had landed again, and the governess was opening the hamper.

"It is interesting to note, Frederick," she said, "how keen observation stands one in good stead. Had I not noticed that our hamper had the piece of blue cloth jutting out, I might not have known so instantly that this one was ours."

"You have keen eyes," he agreed. "What is in the hamper, did you say?"

"Cold chicken, delicious salad, fruit, cakes, chocolates, apple pie. The feast that would have sent those wretched boys into a—why—bless my soul!"

Miss Retcham, having opened the hamper, drew back, her eyes wide, as into view came earth, stones, and twigs! She dragged them out and found a loaf wrapped in newspaper, a small pot of cheap jam, and a chunk of stale cake, and a flask of tea.

"Frederick. It's the wrong hamper! Quick—after them. They must have ours."

Her brother glowered down, eyes rounded.

"The wrong hamper. I had my doubts all the time—"

"Then it's a pity you didn't say so—"

"You were so sure, as usual."

"And weren't you? Didn't the gipsy girl say the other was her hamper? You played into her hands. She tricked you. In your usual blundering way, Frederick—"

"My usual blundering way?" he said, shocked at the injustice. "How about the blue cloth?"

Boko was discussing the blue cloth at the same moment, between mouthfuls of delicious apple pie.

"Course, now I see why you put the blue cloth there," he mused. "But why didn't she spot it sticking out of the other?"

"Because, being only a girl, I held it so that the side with the blue cloth was hidden, tucked up against me," said Nakita. "Half time with the apple-pie, chum. I want some."

But there was enough for all—of everything!

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

BE sure to meet our irrepressible harum-scarum again next Saturday. And do tell all your friends about her, won't you?



Further thrilling chapters of our great 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, which allows them to enter a native king's country. Finding a lioness in a trap, they lower one of its cubs on a branch. But the lioness climbs out!

(Now read on.)

## "Look! Warriors!"

"PUT the cub down, Luise!" Teresa gave that frantic shout of alarm as the lioness, struggling out of the pit by means of the pole, clawed at the ground.

In a moment, the animal, carrying her other cub in her mouth, would be out of the pit and attacking Luise. It was so unforeseen that Teresa was caught off her guard. They had lowered the pole into the pit with one cub on it, so that the mother might have her babies with her. That done, they had meant to lower the one that Luise now held.

But the lioness had used the pole to escape. Now, with the first cub in her mouth, she came out.

Adolphus, the baby chimp, gave a terrified chatter and rushed to the nearest tree. Taking a jump for a branch, he swung on to it, and was three floors up before the lioness had moved a yard.

Teresa rushed at Luise to snatch away the cub.

"It's clinging on," wailed Luise in terror.

Now the lioness was quite free of the pit. Her eyes glowered, and she was in a furious rage, tail lashing.

She could not know that the girls were her friends, and that they had actually found her cubs and brought

them to her, out of sheer kindness of heart.

To the lioness they were enemies. They might even have made the trap, and be kidnapping her other cub.

She lowered the first cub to the ground, and snarled. If she could frighten the girl, so much the better, she seemed to think, for she could not rescue one cub without deserting the other—and to her they were equally precious.

But Teresa knew that at any moment she might spring. Because Luise held her cub she would attack her, maul her. And Luise could not free herself from the cub's paws, which were caught in her frock.

She turned to run, but Teresa caught her in time. That was not the way to safety. For the lioness could spring and run faster than they!

BECAUSE THEY BE-  
FRIENDED A HELPLESS  
LIONESS, THE JUNGLE  
HIKERS AROUSED THE  
WRATH OF THE GREAT  
KING NOMPANYO!

"Quick—hold it!" Teresa said briskly.

And while Luise lifted the cub away from herself, Teresa disentangled its claws and placed it on the ground.

Fuzzy, meanwhile, with cooing voice, sought to soothe the lioness. Many times before she had soothed a savage animal, for she had some strange charm of manner that seemed to bridge the gap of human and animal intelligence.

But the lioness was too overwrought even to heed Fuzzy's existence.

As she heard her cub squeal when it landed on the ground, she sprang.

Teresa saw the movement, and with all her strength she pushed Luise. The

push sent Luise staggering into the bush, and Teresa herself tottered back, stumbled, and fell.

The lioness sprang between them—where a moment before they had stood together.

Teresa rolled over into the thicket, while Luise scrambled through thorns, hardly noticing that they cut her.

Slithering to a standstill, the lioness swung round and made for her cub. Picking it up, and keeping her head lifted high, she carried it to the other cub, which trotted gladly to greet her.

Luise ran to join Fuzzy and Teresa.

"Oh, Terry—that was touch and go!" she gasped, her face chalk-white. "I thought she had me."

Terry gripped her arm.

"Not hurt?" she asked anxiously.

"Just a few thorn-cuts, that's all," said Luise shakily.

"Poor old lioness, she didn't really mean to hurt us. It was just to save her cub," said Teresa in forgiveness.

"Poor thing. I'll say she's glad to be out of that pit. I don't suppose she ever expected to be."

Fuzzy, in a whisper, assured them that the lioness would not leave her cubs, to attack them, but all the same, Teresa insisted on climbing to a branch and taking Luise with her.

From that vantage point they watched, and saw the lioness take her cubs into the thicket. She moved off a few yards with one, dumped it, and returned for the other. Without a pause she went backwards and forwards, tirelessly, farther and farther into the jungle—nearer and nearer her lair, the cubs overjoyed.

"Gone!" said Teresa, heaving a sigh. "And now it's safe to get down. We took a chance, but it was worth it."

By  
ELIZABETH  
CHESTER

"Well worth it," agreed Luise, albeit a little shakily. "It was wonderful to see the cubs so glad to see her."

"Our good turn for the day, or rather the night," said Teresa, stifling a yawn. "Golly, I'm tired. It's about time we went back to bed. But where's Adolphus?"

Fuzzy called to Adolphus, and his answering chatter came from the third floor of a tall tree. He wanted to know if it was safe.

"You come down," said Teresa. "We're not climbing up there after you."

Fuzzy assured him that it was really safe, and Adolphus clambered down, dropped lightly, and rushing to Fuzzy, chattering, took her hand in his paw.

He looked about him as though he was not too sure even now that all was well. But Fuzzy gave him confidence, and he kept a tight grip of her hand.

"Just a minute," mused Teresa, flashing her torch into the darkness of the trees. "I suppose this is the right way? A nice thing if we couldn't find our camp again."

"My goodness—Terry, don't even suggest it!" gasped Luise.

But Teresa had not made the remark lightly. They had been attracted to the lioness, directed to the pit by her roars. But there was nothing to direct them to their camp.

In dismay the three drew together, and even Fuzzy was not sure of the way. Not one of them had thought to leave a trail, so eager had they been to find the lioness.

Teresa did not admit that they were lost because she did not want to scare Luise, and hoped against hope that she would soon gain a clue to their way back.

"Just for a moment I forget," she said, as casually as she could. "Let's think—we came upon the pit in this way

—and we turned left before we reached it."

"No, right," said Luise quickly. "I'm sure it was right."

Teresa looked at Fuzzy who was frowning in perplexity.

"Did we turn left or right when we reached the path?" she asked.

"Right," said Fuzzy quickly.

"You're sure?" asked Teresa.

For the more she thought about it, the more certain she was that they had turned left. If the others were equally sure that it was right, then the vote was two to one against her, and she would have to believe that she was mistaken.

"Yes, me sure," nodded Fuzzy. "Me got good nose for trail. Not forget. We turn right."

"You mean we have to turn right now—or we did?" said Teresa. There was all the difference in the world.

"Didde," said Fuzzy with confidence.

"Good. That means I'm wrong, so you'd better lead, because I could have sworn that it was left," said Teresa.

"I—I'm not really too sure," admitted Luise uneasily.

"Fuzzy is, though," said Teresa. "And she's our guide. According to her we've got to turn left soon."

Fuzzy led them a dozen or so yards, halted and looked about her thoughtfully—and then turned right.

"Here, whoa—this isn't what you said," warned Teresa.

"Oh, Fuzzy, don't say you don't remember," implored Luise.

"Dis way," said Fuzzy. "Dis am what I say biffor."

Teresa shook her head worriedly, for there was grave danger now of being lost. If they turned left instead of right, or the other way round, they could go for miles, deeper and deeper into the jungle.

"We've got to stay here and make quite sure," Teresa insisted.

Fuzzy folded her arms indignantly.

"Me am sho," she said firmly.

"Well, first you said we'd have to turn

left, and now right," objected Teresa.

"So—" She broke off and smiled.

"Hold up your right hand, Fuzzy."

Fuzzy, surprised, raised her left hand.

"Now your left," said Teresa, with a smile of relief.

Up went Fuzzy's right.

Luise, gravely anxious though she was, had to smile, for the puzzle was solved. Fuzzy did not know her left from her right.

"Poor old Fuzzy," said Teresa sadly.

"You'll have to walk backwards, then your left will be right. Come on—this way, my infants."

And Fuzzy, always ready to be amused by her own silly mistakes, went with Teresa—for, after all, they were both agreed now as to the direction.

"The path's through there—and our camp can't be far—" Teresa's voice trilled away. "What's that light?" she exclaimed.

Through the trees came a reddish glow and she turned, staring in surprise.

Luise and Fuzzy watched, too, as the red glow came nearer, growing brighter.

"Fire?" said Luise, in awe.

"Fire doesn't travel like that. It's winding amongst the trees," said Teresa.

"It's—golly! It's flares—torches—men carrying torches. Warriors!"

### "Lioness—She King's Sister!"

"WARRIORS!" gasped Luise.

"Run."

"No. Stay!" urged

Teresa. "Hide!"

Round a bend in the beaten path came a small procession of men carrying torches on high, and chanting a strange dirge.

"Singing. Singing what?" asked Teresa in surprise.

Fuzzy strained her ears and caught a word or two.

"King Nompanyo—they call his name!" she exclaimed. "They say—'We are the great king's hunters. Very brave men are we.'"

"Hide!" urged Teresa. "They may be quite friendly, but we won't take chances. Hide until they're past. If we move on, they'll see the bushes rustling."

Crouched in hiding they watched, and to their surprise, saw the procession come to a halt—at the edge of the lion pit.

The men grouped about it and then suddenly yells of anger rose to the air, and they scattered in every direction, torches held high, searching.

"The lioness—they know she was in the pit," said Teresa.

Fuzzy let out a gasp.

"Dey say—sacred lioness gone!" she whispered.

"Sacred lioness—oh!" said Teresa in dismay. "Now we've done it!"

The men were staring into the pit and searching the bushes. Now some of them had found the lioness' trail and were stooping low, following the spoor.

Luise moved forward as though to run but Teresa held her.

"Quiet—if we move they'll think we're the lioness," she said softly.

"They'll go after her perhaps, but they won't catch up with her; they'll lose the trail in the thicket. But they'll follow far enough to be out of sight of us."

Teresa was right. Grouping together, the men followed the trail, and in a moment only their torches could be seen.

"Now," said Teresa, and with Fuzzy leading the way they crashed through the undergrowth back to their camp.

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"QUICK, quick! Give it to me!" Teresa cried. But the cub was clinging to Luise's frock. Its mother was almost out of the pit. In another few seconds she would spring!

"Oh, dear, did we do the wrong thing in freeing the lioness, then?" asked Luise anxiously.

"We did right, but they may think it wrong," said Teresa. "But they won't connect us with it—that's one blessing, at least."

It took them a long while to find their camp, but Bambo the young elephant gave them warning. Patiently awaiting their return, he trumpeted when he knew that they were near.

"Phew—glad to be home," said Teresa. "Home? Yes, I suppose it is," admitted Luise, with a shaky laugh. "Fancy a tent and hammock being home! Isn't it quaint, and yet—getting back here I do really feel that we are home."

She was just as glad to see Bambo, their luggage and equipment, as though it were a comfortable little house.

Adolphus, equally delighted, greeted Bambo with glee, did a little dance, and then rushed to the bed he shared with Fuzzy.

"And now we can settle down in comfort," said Teresa, "and get some more sleep. Let's hope there are no more disturbances."

There weren't, and very soon all were asleep.

The next thing that any of them knew was the dawn. And with the dawn came the jungle chorus of bird song.

Once the birds were awake, everything else had to wake up, too. The birds saw to that.

"Hail, smiling morn," was the burden of their song, and each tried to outdo the other in reaching top notes.

Teresa sat up and rubbed her eyes. Overhead in the trees were two birds, bright blue, red, and yellow.

"Hey, that's enough," called Teresa. "We heard you the first time."

But the birds considered themselves to be alarm clocks of the jungle, and would not be stopped.

Adolphus crawled out from bed and stretched, trod on Fuzzy's face, and then, after a look at the birds, swarmed up the tree to give them a good wallop. But the birds soared off long before Adolphus reached them, and perched in the next tree.

"Up, chicks!" called Teresa, and slid out of the hammock to the ground.

Luise, rubbing her eyes, scrambled down, and Fuzzy, gently feeling her nose where Adolphus had trodden in his

boyish way, shook her mop of wiry hair.

"Brekker!" yawned Teresa. "So-ho for breakfast. Who says some juicy fruit? Who says a cup of tea? Who says lighting a fire?"

"Yes," said Luise. "Yaw-a-a-a!" "Me light fire," offered Fuzzy, shaking herself. "Me get fruit."

Bambo was already collecting fruit for his own breakfast. He knew what he wanted, and the right shops for it. But there was nothing to pay. Everything in the jungle was free.

Luise combed her hair and brushed it, wishing that there was a nice bathing pool close to hand. Meanwhile Fuzzy, having collected sticks, cleared the ground, so that the grass should not take light, and their little bonfire become a forest blaze.

"Lovely day!" sighed Teresa. "But it's going to be hotter than ever, if possible. Put your sun helmet on, Luise, or you may get sunstroke, you know."

Luise put it on, and then, singing to herself, started to make plans for the hot part of breakfast.

They were in gay mood, and Adolphus gave them a fine little show, all by himself, although he was not being funny intentionally.

Adolphus had decided to capture one of the red, blue, and yellow birds, perhaps to make a pet of it, perhaps to borrow its colours to make a scarf, or else for some other unguessable reason.

Unfortunately, no sooner had he swung to the tree where the bird perched than it flew neatly to another. It was the most maddening thing Adolphus had ever known, and presently he ignored the bird completely, and plucked fruit and nuts instead, trying to give the impression—or so it seemed to the girls—that he had not wanted to capture the bird at all, but had merely been giving it exercise to keep it fit.

"Am I hungry?" asked Teresa. "Golly, what couldn't I do to bacon and eggs?"

"Well, you can have it," said Luise. "Where's the frying-pan?"

She found it, and got busy.

Fat was sizzling in the frying-pan, and Teresa was arranging knives and forks and plates when Fuzzy, who had gone fruit-picking, came scurrying back.

"Men come—King Nompango's

men!" she said excitedly. "Men who brought torches."

Teresa jumped up at once. She was not alarmed, but it was not a piece of information that could be ignored, remembering how the men had searched for the missing lioness the night before.

"You've got the ring still, Terry?" asked Luise anxiously.

Teresa held out her left hand, on which shone the king's ring. It was their talisman, and the mere sight of it gave Luise confidence, for they had already had proof of its power.

The ring, which a British hunter had given them, was King Nompango's, and anyone wearing it could be assured of his friendship and assistance, a free passage through this, his country.

The men whom Fuzzy had seen now came into earshot, and presently Teresa saw them and gave salute.

Plainly amazed to see her, they came to a halt, and one of them stepped forward. He was clad in a cotton garment, a red sash about his waist, and in his right hand he carried over his shoulder a heavy sword.

"Greetings!" said Teresa. "Loyal greetings to King Nompango! Speak English?"

The man halted, his face solemn and stern. He spoke sharply, but not in English, so that his words meant nothing to Teresa or Luise. But Fuzzy understood, and Teresa, to be able to guess what he said, watched her face.

Fuzzy looked startled. Then she frowned and shook her head vigorously. Next, she pointed to Teresa's left hand.

Teresa, understanding, held out the ring. In surprise the man leaned forward, took Teresa's hand, and made a close examination of it.

That done, apparently satisfied that the ring was genuine, he stiffened and gave salute.

"Phew!" came a sigh of relief from Luise.

"What did he say, Fuzzy?" Teresa asked.

Fuzzy smiled. "Him ask if we see de sacred lioness. Me say no. Not say we letted her out of de pit—"

The man, staring at her, suddenly uttered an exclamation, and stepped forward.

"You let the lioness go free?" he cried in English.



Fuzzy fell back, eyes wide. Meanwhile, Teresa looked at the man in dismay. They had been trapped. He understood English, but had pretended that he did not. Unguardedly, Fuzzy had spoken too freely. And now the truth was out.

With folded arms the man stared at them.

"King Nompnyo," he said in stern tone, his brow furrowed. "Him get plenty cross. Him wait sacred lioness. You plenty bad."

Teresa had no idea whether their offence was considered serious or not, but she did not regret what they had done, and she was willing to admit it even to the great King Nompnyo himself.

"We took the cubs to the lioness," she said, "and she escaped. If we have offended the king, we are sorry."

The man frowned upon her sternly. "You do bad," he insisted. "The great king shall be much anger. Me, too—me he shall be anger with."

Then he spoke to Fuzzy in their own tongue, and Teresa saw that she became even more concerned.

"What does he say?" she asked, when he paused.

Fuzzy's eyes were wide, and she blinked.

"Him say—'we taken um king sister,'" she said. "Lioness—her sister of King Nompnyo!"

### And The King Awaits!

LUISE nearly giggled, and Teresa herself had a hard job not to smile at the quaint idea, but she knew too much about native beliefs to treat this one lightly.

For some reason or other, the king supposed that his sister had been changed into a lioness. And that meant but one thing—magic. There was a witch-doctor at work pretending to cast spells.

Naturally, Teresa herself did not believe for one moment that such a thing was possible. The lioness was just an ordinary lioness, but if the king really believed his witch-doctor, he would be completely convinced that the lioness was indeed his sister, and it was necessary to be careful. Above all, the girls must not scoff.

"Ask him," said Teresa swiftly, "if the king is well."

Fuzzy asked the question, and the man's countenance became mournful in the extreme, as in sing-song voice he gave reply to the question.

The king was ill, sad, and he would grow weak. The king's sister had been taken from him, and now roamed the jungle in the guise of a lioness. Only when she was returned to the king would he be well again. If she didn't—he would never get well!

It was an alarming story, and Luise, at least, looked deeply concerned, while Fuzzy's eyes were as round as saucers, for, being a native herself, she had been brought up to accept these strange legends and beliefs.

But to Teresa it was just plain bosh. She knew that the king was being fooled. The witch-doctor, for some reason of his own, wanted power over the king; and was playing on the king's love for his sister.

"Then what do you want us to do?" Teresa asked. "Go with you to the king, or find the lioness?"

"Find lioness," said the man sternly. "Only by finding lioness shall great

king be made please. If not so—bad! Bad for you. Yes—very bad!"

Luise looked anxiously at Teresa, quite alarmed now by the turn events had taken, and Fuzzy was looking as though their doom was at hand.

All her life Fuzzy had heard stories of the great King Nompnyo, who was kind to his friends, and terrible to his enemies, and the mere thought of incurring his wrath had always made people tremble.

Mothers had used his name to frighten their children into obedience, even though there were so many who lauded him as a just and merciful ruler.

"How can we find the lioness?" whispered Luise huskily.

Teresa spoke with lowered voice.

"There's hardly a hope of finding her," she said. "But if King Nompnyo is all they say he is, then I'm sure he won't be angry. Look here! We're not hunting for the lioness. We're going straight to the king himself!"

"But he'll be angry with us," gasped Luise.

"Perhaps. Perhaps not," decided Teresa. "I'm not so sure. This story may be all bosh. These men mayn't want us to meet the king. And, anyway, if the king does think it was his sister in the trap, we can say it was a kindness releasing her. That's our line."

The men moved a little nearer to listen, but the whispering was too soft for them to hear words distinctly.

### COUSIN GEORGE

and

### "THE IMP"

will be here soon. And that will mean **SUCH FUN—SUCH LAUGHTER** for you. Look out for full details next week.

Luise, always ready to agree with Teresa, whose ideas so often proved sound, did not argue now.

"I think you're right, Teresa," she said.

"Of course I'm right. And, anyway, there will be another lioness in that trap before long," said Teresa.

She turned to the man with the red sash, who watched them intently, a cunning glint in his eyes.

"Take us to King Nompnyo," she said in commanding tone. "We will explain to him."

Luise admired Teresa for her coolness; for the fact that she could speak with such sureness and command. She did not know what inward qualms Teresa had all the time.

But bluff was needed. It would never do to seem nervous and afraid. Once the natives felt that they were dealing with superior people they would take orders, and already the man's manner had changed.

"Walk in front," Teresa commanded. Rather sulkily, the man gave orders to the others, and they turned.

"Don't go till we give the word," added Teresa. "We have to pack a few things first. Then you shall take us to the king."

And, quite calmly, Teresa turned and signalled to Luise and Fuzzy.

Teresa did not intend to hurry over breakfast, so they settled down to the meal, while the man stood back, mut-

tering and shifting from one foot to the other.

But, naturally, the girls did hurry more than usual, and the meal was finished in quick time. Packing, which had become a matter of routine, did not take long, either, and soon Bambo was saddled with the luggage.

"And now," said Teresa, "we are ready. How far is it?"

"Two of clocks," was the answer.

"Two hours?" said Teresa, surprised.

"I thought it was much farther."

"All the better," Luise murmured.

"I shall be glad when we get to him—unless—unless we regret it!"

But Teresa did not waver. There was no going back. They were in King Nompnyo's country, and they must go to him. Although Luise might be alarmed, Teresa was not, for she had an idea that King Nompnyo would be impressed, not only by the fact that they had the ring, but by mention of her father.

The first hour seemed long; the second went more quickly—so quickly that it came as quite a shock when, breasting a rise that gave a view of spreading country below, their guide halted and said:

"King Nompnyo—castle!"

He pointed, and the three girls drew together and stared at the remains of a magnificent white building, once a glorious palace, now overgrown by tangled jungle in places, the roof caved in—and yet for all that impressive and awe-inspiring.

It was hardly more than a quarter of a mile away, and they could see the flash of sentries' spears.

One of the party ran ahead, but already their approach had been signalled, and another man came to meet him.

"Now for King Nompnyo," said Teresa, her eyes shining. "I wonder what he's like?"

Fuzzy was torn between eager excitement and a sinking feeling of fearful anticipation; for she had never met a king before, and she became suddenly conscious that her dreams of being a princess were indeed only dreams.

The two runners, the one from their party and the one from the palace, met and called out, their words being clear enough for Fuzzy to interpret.

"Him ask—king's sister found?"

"Oder say 'Alas, no! Alas, dese bad girls dey done free her.'"

Even as she translated, the palace runner went hot foot back to take the bad news, and the leading guide turned to them.

"Now," he said in grim tone, "you go meet the king. Watch out!"

Luise clutched Teresa's hand as they reached the palace, halted in a shady, carved archway, and passed through into a cool stone corridor.

At the end of that corridor was a large room whence the sounds of lamentations came and the soft beat of a drum.

King Nompnyo was bewailing the loss of his sister!

"Come!" said the guide in a voice of triumph. "The king awaits—and lo! his wrath is as the wrath of a trapped leopard!"

**WHAT** fresh perils lay before the plucky chums? You simply must make certain of reading what happens in next week's dramatic continuation of this wonderful story, so order your copy of **THE SCHOOLGIRL** well in advance.