

“THEIR CAPTAIN IN PERIL!” Magnificent LONG COMPLETE story of Cliff House School inside.

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Incorporating
"SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN"

STAGE DOOR



**“BUT WE MUST
GO IN—WE MUST!”**

For the sake of the school
captain Babs and Clara had
to enter the theatre.

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

This Grand Long Complete Story of Barbara Redfern & Co. holds a very intriguing note of mystery.

THEIR CAPTAIN *in* PERIL!

Dulcia Fairbrother, captain of Cliff House, is one of the most admired and respected girls in the school. But Dulcia has an enemy in Connie Jackson of the Sixth. Connie means to disgrace Dulcia, and she schemes to that end But Connie reckons without Babs & Co.



Trapping a Prefect!



"READY, Clara?" asked blue-eyed Barbara Redfern.
"What-ho! You, Babs?" returned Clara Trevlyn.

"Yes, rather! Let's go."
"But for goodness' sake be careful," Mabel Lynn, Babs' golden-haired chum, whispered anxiously.

"Leave it to us," Clara said cheerily. "Where did you say the grub was hidden, Leila?"

"Under the hedge—near the gap in Lane's Field, I guess," Leila Carroll replied. "We had to dump it sort of sudden because Miss Bullivant came along, and I guess she'd have wanted to know things if she'd seen Jemima and me staggering about with a full-sized hamper. Good-luck, sisters! Hope everything goes all right!"

There was a murmur of agreement from every girl in the Fourth Form dormitory of Cliff House School. For the expedition upon which Tomboy Clara and Form captain Barbara were embarking concerned the whole Form. It was an expedition which had been decided by drawing lots, and Babs and Clara were the ones chosen. To-night the Fourth were staging one of their mid-term dormitory feeds, and the tuck which had been bought that afternoon had been smuggled into a hiding-place near the hedge. Babs and Clara were deputed to bring it safely to the dormitory.



"O.K.," Clara chuckled. "Back in five minutes. This way, Babs. Mind you don't trip over the carpet—crumbs!"

"And mind you don't," Babs smiled, as Clara, in the very act of warning Babs, did that exact thing herself. "Now—shush!"

Clara shushed; carefully picking her way along the darkened corridor outside. Clara the Tomboy, big-footed and big-hearted, was rather painfully conscious of her natural clumsiness, and on that account was over-cautious. Twice, to Babs' throbbing-hearted anxiety, she slipped on the stairs. In Big Hall, at the bottom of those stairs, she slipped on the small mat outside Miss Bullivant's door.

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Babs. But fortunately there was no alarm. The bad-tempered mistress seemed sound asleep. Softly they slithered across the parquet flooring of Big Hall; softly entered the lobby. There Babs threw up the window, and, stepping out, helped Clara up out of the flower-beds as she fell face downwards in the earth! "Woof," Clara gurgled. "And I thought I was being a real old Red Indian, you know! That's what comes of being too careful."

In the darkness, Babs grinned. But she said nothing. Rather anxiously she looked round the deserted grounds, glimmering now in the pale moonlight. Quietly she led the way towards the hedge, and there, groping around, found the hamper.

"Right-ho, here we are," she said cheerily. "Grab that handle!"

"Ay, ay, cap'n!" Clara answered. They lifted the hamper. It was heavy. Swinging it between them, they marched back towards the school. Then, all at once, Barbara let out a "hist!"

"What's up?" Clara asked.

"Look! Dulcia's window!" Clara blinked. Dulcia Fairbrother was head girl and games captain of Cliff House School, and if the Tomboy of the Fourth acknowledged a heroine Dulcia Fairbrother was certainly that one. In Dulcia's window, which was on the ground floor at the other side of the main entrance, the light of a torch had suddenly appeared.

Even as the two Fourth Formers watched there was a squeak as the window opened and a dark head and shoulders silhouetted clearly against the background of light. Clara tensed.

"Babs, that isn't Dulcia! That's Connie Jackson. What's she doing in Dulcia's study?"

Connie Jackson, the spiteful and disliked prefect of the Sixth Form, it was. Babs' eyes narrowed a little. As long as she could remember Connie had always been a little envious of Dulcia, and disliked her intensely. There could be but one explanation for Connie's presence in Dulcia's study.

"Dulcia's gone out," Babs breathed. "Connie's found it out. Now Connie's in her study waiting to catch Dulcia as she comes in."

"But what should Dulcia be doing out?" Clara questioned. "You mean she's breaking bounds?"

"Well, what else?" Clara blinked again. Breaking bounds, of course, was a serious offence—especially when bounds were broken at night. If Dulcia were caught in an escapade of that nature, it would mean very big trouble for her—more especially, as head girl of the school, she was supposed to set a good example to the rest of the girls.

The light snapped out. They listened, but they did not hear the window go down. In the pale moonlight they could see Connie's form still vaguely etched against the curtains.

"And," Babs said, "she'll jolly well catch her."

"Will she, though?" In the dark Clara's eyes gleamed. "I don't know why old Dulcia's breaking bounds, and I don't jolly well care," she said. "Anything Dulcia does is good enough for me, and you can bet she's not breaking bounds for fun. Babs, can you carry on with the hamper by yourself? I'll join you in a minute or two."

"But, Clara—" Babs whispered. "Shush!"

And Clara, while Babs blinked, darted away.

Babs looked after her, her heart thudding all at once, rather apprehensively wondering what madcap scheme had suddenly darted into the Tomboy's reckless mind. Still, if it was something to save Dulcia, that was enough for Babs. With difficulty she hoisted the heavy hamper; breathing heavily, she tugged it into the shadows.

While Clara—
In the darkness, Clara's face was set. But there was a light of mischief in her grey eyes. Half-stooping, half-running, she made her way towards Dulcia's window. Chuckling she saw Connie's statuesque figure still waiting at the window. Poising only to glance round as if to make sure she was not being followed, she ran towards it. One hand she placed on the sill.

Then—
"Dulcia! I've caught you!" came Connie Jackson's hissing voice.

And her hand shot out. For a moment it touched Clara's wrist. Clara was expecting that, however. With a gasp she withdrew it; with a low cry shrunk away. Connie called out:

"Dulcia!"
But Dulcia, as she fondly imagined Tomboy Clara to be, had started back,

By HILDA RICHARDS

Illustrated by T. LAIDLER.

was, indeed, in the act of running. In a moment Connie had flung herself over the sill. In a moment was dashing in pursuit.

Clara raced along the front of the school. On the other side of the west wing the school garages—at the moment being furnished with a coat of paint—stood, and into the shadows belonging to those garages, Clara led the way. All except one was empty. That was the garage belonging to Miss Primrose, Cliff House's headmistress.

The doors of that garage, gleaming and wet, stood wide open because Miss Primrose, attending a bridge party at Friars Gables, was out.

Straight for it Clara headed. With one backward glance she darted through the door, and, twisting, flattened herself against the wall. There came a triumphant cry from Connie, who plainly saw her quarry disappear. In, without a thought, the prefect blundered, and then, catching her foot against an unseen oil drum, measured her length with a howl. In a flash Clara was outside. Heedless of the sticky paint which adhered to her fingers, she grasped the doors, pulling them to. From inside came a shout:

"Dulcia—Dulcia!"
Grimly Clara chuckled; quickly she slipped the padlock on the door; then she flew. Breathing heavily, she joined Babs at the lobby window.

"O.K.!" she panted. "I don't think Dulcia need worry about Connie. Get in, Babs!"

They got in, drawing the hamper after them. Babs reached up to close the window. Then she started.

"Clara, look!"
"Dulcia!" breathed Clara.

Dulcia it was. A patch of moonlight showed her clearly. From the other side of the pavilion she had entered the school grounds, and was now looking round anxiously before trusting herself to the bright patch of moonlight which she would have to cross in order to reach her study. They saw her make a sudden dart. Then faintly to their ears came the squeak of a window. Clara grinned.

"Goodie, she's home!" she breathed. "That makes Dulcia safe. Grab the hamper, Babs! Ugh! I've got that beastly green paint all over my hands! Bolt!"

And the two, chuckling, bolted.

Connie Out of Luck!



BANG, bang, bang!
Thump, thump, thump!

"Let me out! Let me out! Hang you, Dulcia Fairbrother! Let me out, you cat!"

But Connie Jackson's thumps, like her cries, brought neither help nor response.

Connie, in the darkness of the garage, almost writhed. Things had happened to Connie Jackson in her frantic endeavours to free herself from her prison. For Connie, in addition to tumbling over the oil-drum, had, in her wild and furious gropings, upset a shelf. On that shelf, carelessly left uncovered, had stood a pot of black enamel. Most of that enamel now, alas! had transferred itself to Connie's enraged person!

"Let me out!" she screamed hoarsely for the hundredth time, and thump, thump! went her fist against the door. "Hang you! Bother you! Blow you! Let me out, you awful cat!"

"Why, bless my soul!" cried a voice outside. "Good gracious, what's the matter? Jenkins, I believe—I really do believe that some animal is trapped in the garage!" And Connie, panting, fell back, realising then to whom that voice belonged, realising that in the din of her own furious creating, she had never heard the mistress' smooth Rolls-Royce glide up to the door. "And see," Miss Primrose went on, "somebody has shut the door."

"Yes, ma'am. And somebody," came the offended tones of Jenkins, Miss Primrose's chauffeur, "has made a mess of the paint in shutting the door. Look at those places round the padlock!"

"Open the door, Jenkins!" Miss Primrose commanded.

Jenkins went forward. Connie, inside, heard the rattle of a key in the padlock. Squeak! went the doors as they were pushed inward, and Connie blinked in the sudden flood of blinding brilliance that was pouring from the Rolls' powerful headlights. Miss Primrose, seeing the apparition the headlights revealed, started back.

"Good gracious! Who—What is it?"

"Oh dear, Miss Primrose, it's me!" Connie gasped, through the enamel on her face.

"You—a girl!" Miss Primrose clutched at her pince-nez. "Who are you, girl? And what, for goodness' sake, have you been doing to yourself?"

"I've done nothing to myself," Connie ground out. "I'm Connie Jackson," she added furiously. "Dulcia Fairbrother shut me up here in the dark."

"But look at you!" Miss Primrose cried.

"Well," Connie hooted, "you don't think I've done this to myself deliberately, do you? If some silly idiot hadn't left a silly tin of enamel open, I shouldn't be in this mess! I—I didn't mean to speak like that. But Dulcia, that cat—"

"Connie, please remember you are a prefect," Miss Primrose said sternly.

Connie gulped.

"And I really do think," Miss Primrose added annoyedly, "that you should go and clean yourself. Please go at once, Connie, and when you are presentable, report to me in my study."

Connie, gritting her teeth, stumbled off. But it was a considerable time before she reported to Miss Primrose. Even when she did, there were still traces of black enamel to be seen on her hands and face, and Miss Primrose, who had a great fondness for Dulcia, and not a very high opinion of Connie, was inclined to be sceptical when she heard the explanation. She said:

"You are sure, Connie?"

"Of course I'm sure!" Connie retorted. "Dulcia was out of her study. I was waiting for her. I nearly caught her, but she ran away, leading me to the garage. There she shut me up, and locked me in. And," Connie added, with sudden inspiration, "if you want other proof, you'll find it on her hands. She must have simply plastered her hands with that green paint."

Miss Primrose frowned doubtfully. But as Connie, a prefect, had made a complaint of a serious nature, she had to take action.

"Very well, we will go and see Dulcia," she said stiffly.

Miss Primrose whisked from the room, Connie on her heels. They reached the Sixth Form corridor, pausing outside the door labelled "Head Girl." Miss Primrose knocked.

She knocked again. Then Dulcia's voice, rather sleepily answered:

"Yes—who's that?"

"Dulcia, it is Miss Primrose. May I come in?"

"Why, of course, Miss Primrose."

The headmistress entered. Dulcia, scrambling out of bed, was in her pyjamas. A very pretty girl was Dulcia, with her fluffy, fair hair, and large blue eyes. She stared wonderingly from the headmistress to Connie.

"Dulcia, I hate to disturb you at this time of night, but Connie has made a rather serious complaint against you. She accuses you of imprisoning her in my garage."

"I?" Dulcia cried, in amazement.

"Yes, you?" Connie sneered.

"Connie, please!" Miss Primrose said quietly. "Dulcia—"

"But it's absurd, Miss Primrose! Why should I shut Connie in your garage? I have not been anywhere near the garage."

Miss Primrose drew a breath of relief.

"You give me your word of honour, Dulcia?"

"Certainly, Miss Primrose!"

"Then," Miss Primrose said, "I think we may call the incident closed."

"Oh, can we," Connie cried furiously—"can we? Wait a minute, Miss Primrose! You haven't asked for proof. Let Dulcia show her hands."

"Connie—"

"Please, just a minute, Miss Primrose!" said Dulcia, and she looked at Connie in amazement. "What have my hands to do with it?" she asked. "Nevertheless, if it will help Connie to see my hands, then most certainly she may. There!"

She stretched her hands forward. Slim, clean, and white they were. Connie blinked. Stiffly Miss Primrose smiled.

"Well, Connie?"

But Connie's answer to that was to stride towards Dulcia's wash-basin. Furiously she stared at it. But one glance at that was sufficient. The wash-basin was clean and smooth and shiny, and practically dry in the bargain.

Even the soap, which Dulcia would have been forced to use to remove the incriminating stains which Connie accused her of possessing, was dry.

For the first time it began to dawn on Connie Jackson that triumph was not going to be hers. Her face was a study.

"Well, Connie?" Miss Primrose asked again.

"I—I—I—" Connie blinked. "I—I—I seem to have made a mistake!" she stuttered. "But if it wasn't Dulcia, who was it? And, anyway," she added accusingly, "it doesn't alter the fact that she wasn't in her room when I came here."

"I think," Miss Primrose said coldly, "that having discovered your error in one respect, Connie, you need not invent other circumstances! I, at least, am perfectly satisfied that Dulcia has done nothing to merit your accusations, and I order you, here and now, to apologise! And perhaps," she added witheringly, "you will first make sure of your facts before making unworthy accusations in future! Now apologise!"

And Connie, almost choking, apologised. She realised now that somebody else had taken advantage of the moonlight to play a trick on her, and had trapped her into making an utter fool of herself.

Connie burned as she stamped back to her study. She burned with rage, with a desire for vengeance. Dulcia had been out, right enough; but Dulcia, even Connie admitted now, could not have played that trick upon her. Then who—

Connie's eyes gleamed suddenly. One of those Fourth Form kids, perhaps! Connie had always loathed the Fourth, and she knew how much they admired Dulcia. Up to the Fourth Form dormitory she went.

And her mean spirit gloated even before she reached the dormitory door. For the subdued though very evident sounds that were coming from that dormitory showed that something at this very moment was afoot!

Cautiously Connie tiptoed towards the door. The Fourth Form had almost finished its feed then. The candles which had been lit were burning low. The hamper, except for a few oddments, was completely empty, and even plump Bessie Bunter, who had a tremendous appetite, was content. One or two of the girls, indeed, had already crept back to bed.

Connie caught the handle of the door. Then—Snick! Crash! And while the amazed and surprised Fourth Formers spun round, Connie strode upon the scene.

"Stay where you are, all of you!" she rapped harshly. "Barbara Redfern!"

"Oh crumbs! Yes, Connie?"

"Feeding—eh?" Connie sneered. "A nice captain you are to allow things like this—eh? I shall report you to Miss Primrose! Every other girl here will

take a hundred lines," she added sternly, "and you will jolly well hand them in before tea to-morrow, which means that you can spend part of your afternoon's half-holiday in doing them! Bessie Bunter, what are you doing?"

"Eh? Oh crumbs! I—I'm nun-not dud-doing anything, Connie!" stuttered the plump duffer. "I wasn't trying to crawl under the bed, because you mummight sus-see me, you know! I'd never dud-dream of such a thing! And you needn't think I've been feeding, either," Bessie added, hastily grabbing a secreted apple which rolled out of her pocket, "because I haven't had a bite to eat since tut-tea-time, you know!"

"Take another fifty lines for telling lies!" Connie snapped. "Meantime, Barbara Redfern, you can pick up all this stuff and pile it in the hamper! And—" Then, with her gaze directed towards the hamper, she started forward, her expression suddenly excited. Swiftly she spun round. "Everybody," she raged, "stand at the foot of your beds!"

"But what—" cried Diana Royston-Clarke.

"Do as I say!"

There was a murmur. But Connie, much as the Fourth disliked her, was a prefect, and as such had to be obeyed. Grudgingly the Fourth lined up.

"Now stand still!" Connie ordered. "Each girl will hold out her hands as I pass!"

"But what for?" protested Mabel Lynn, Barbara Redfern's golden-haired chum.

"You'll see!"

And Connie's eyes glittered again, for she had seen telltale signs of green paint upon one of the handles of the hamper. The girl who had helped carry that hamper upstairs was the girl who had shut her up! She was on the right track at last!

The girls held out their hands. Keenly and quickly Connie scrutinised them. Clara, conscious of the green paint still on hers, rubbed them furiously—but vainly—on the legs of her pyjamas as Connie came along the line. The prefect at last paused in front of her.

"Your hands, Clara!" she said.

Clara shrugged. There was just a chance, she thought, that Connie might glance at them and pass on. If she held back—and that was her first intention—Connie's suspicion would be definitely aroused: With a yawn, she held out her hands.

Then something like a gasp came from Connie.

"So," she said grimly—"so it was you, Clara!"

"Me?" Clara asked innocently.

"You shut me in the Head's garage!" Connie hooted.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Babs. "I say—"

And then she caught a wink from Clara and subsided. Clara's expression was innocence itself. She looked reproachfully shocked.

"But, Connie," she protested, "how funny you are! How could I have shut you in the Head's garage?"

Connie glared.

"You deny you have been near the Head's garage?"

"Oh, no!" Clara answered readily. "I was there this morning. I was also there this afternoon. The workmen were there, too, you know; and I do so love to see them painting that I stopped and watched. And I do seem," she added thoughtfully, "to have got some of their beastly paint on my hands! Awful stuff, paint, Connie, isn't it?"

Connie breathed heavily.

"Somebody," she ground out, "shut me in the Head's garage."
 "Oh, Connie, how naughty of them," Clara sympathised.
 "Was it you?" Connie hooted.
 "Oh, Connie, pip-please don't make me cry," Clara sniffed, beginning to wipe her eyes.

There were chuckles. Even Bessie Bunter giggled. But Connie, furious, glared. She knew she had found her quarry, but she knew how difficult it would be, if Clara persisted in this attitude, to prove anything against her. After her snub at Miss Primrose's hands it would be more than she dared do to haul the Tomboy off repeating the old accusation.

"Clara, answer me!" she hooted.
 "Booh-hoo!" Clara howled. "Booh-hoo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Silence!" Connie spun round. "Take another fifty lines, all of you," she cried. "And, Clara, you take an extra hundred for behaving so foolishly. And you needn't," she ground out, "think you're pulling wool over my eyes, because you're not. I know. You fooled me, didn't you? You're trying to fool me now. But you wait, Clara Trevlyn! Just you wait. Next time—if there is a next time—you won't get off so easily. And for goodness' sake stop that row," she added apprehensively.

At which Clara let up a most dreadful bawl.

"Wow-ow, ow, b-oooooh! Bo-hoooooh! Connie's being unkind to me," she loudly wailed.

Connie, with a fear in her heart that Miss Primrose might burst on the scene, turned and hurried from the dormitory.

Clara's Great Chance



"IT'S going to be a good match—a jolly good match," Clara Trevlyn enthusiastically declared. "I suppose the team is causing Dulcia a bit of anxiety. Wonder when she's going to post the list up?" she added.
 "And I wonder," Barbara Redfern mused thoughtfully, "what she was doing out of bounds last night?"

"And I wonder," Mabel Lynn said—Mabel was interestedly perusing the "Courtfield Times" in Study No. 4 after breakfast next morning—"who Sonia Neave is? They say she acted brilliantly in the part of Rosalind in 'As You Like It,' last night. Never heard of her before, have you, Babs?"

"No," Babs said abstractedly. "But it's not like Dulcia to break bounds, you know."

"I'd like to see her, wouldn't you?" Mabs asked wistfully—for Mabs was keen on all forms of acting, but particularly keen on Shakespeare, and particularly keen on "As You Like It," a play which the Sixth Form had recently performed with Dulcia Fairbrother in Mabs' favourite part—that of Rosalind. "Pity the show doesn't start until eight forty-five at night. But I suppose we could go to the matinee on Saturday?"

"Eh?" Clara started. "Matinee—what matinee?" she asked. "We can't go anywhere on Saturday except the cricket match at Eastbourne. The first eleven match, I mean. What do you want to go to?"

"Well, the play. It's Shakespeare, you know."

"Oh, that! Babs, do you think, if we asked Dulcia she might include us among the visitors? I'd love to go."

And Clara glowed. Once or twice Clara herself had played for the senior cricket team at Cliff House. Next to captaining the Junior School team, there was nothing Clara loved better than to watch her beloved Dulcia in action. Next Saturday, as it happened, the Junior School were without a fixture; next Saturday, on the contrary, the seniors were engaged in one of the stiffest matches of the season—against their friendly rivals, Chalkhill School, of Eastbourne.

"Well, we can try it," Babs said. "Why not? And if Dulcia's handing out junior passes, Clara, she'd rather hand them out to you than anybody. Trot along and ask her."

"Shall I ask for you, Mabs?" Clara asked.

"Eh? Oh, the cricket?" Mabs asked, and drew her attention with difficulty from her newspaper. "N-no thanks," she said. "If there's a chance of going to see 'As You Like It,' I shall be

going there. I'd love to see this new actress the paper's shouting about—this Sonia Neave. They say she's very young, Babs."

Clara sniffed. If Shakespeare was the most important thing in the world to Mabel Lynn, upon cricket, to Clara Trevlyn, hung the fate of empires. Hurriedly she ran along to the Sixth Form corridor, almost breathlessly halted outside Dulcia Fairbrother's door. She knocked. Dulcia's voice came to her ears:

"Come in."
 Clara went in. Dulcia was seated by the window. In her hand was the same paper which Mabel Lynn had been reading, and strangely enough it was open at the same page. The head girl put the paper down as Clara entered, however.

Her smile was very bright and welcome.

"Yes, Clara?"
 "I—I came to see you about Saturday," Clara said. "Of course, I know you can't take many visitors. But, Dulcia, do you think you could find places for Babs and me?"

Dulcia's smile broadened.
 "Well, as it happens, I can find a place—for you," she said, her eyes gleaming with laughter. "As for Barbara—well, of course, I shall have to see how many coaches we are taking. You'll travel with the team, Clara—"

"Oh, Dulc—"
 "Because," Dulcia ended with a laugh, "you're in the team."

"Eh?"
 "You're in it!" Dulcia smiled. "You're playing! No, don't look so astonished. Clara, it's true! And you're batting fifth wicket down. Here we are," she said. "I've just finished the list. Look at it."

Clara looked at it. She looked at it with the eyes of one struck with joy. She—to play in the Chalkhill match—she, a junior! She was dreaming, of course! This just couldn't be true. But there, in Dulcia's neat, firm handwriting, it was:

"CLIFF HOUSE v. CHALKHILL.

"MATCH TO BE PLAYED AT CHALKHILL SCHOOL on Saturday, June 4th.



"EACH girl will hold out her hands as I pass," ordered the unpopular prefect. Clara Trevlyn glanced down at her own hands in dismay. For they still bore traces of the incriminating green paint.

"The following girls have been selected to represent Cliff House first eleven:

Dulcia Fairbrother (Captain)
Rona Fox (Vice-Captain)
Patricia Northanson
Ida Greenaway
Clara Trevlyn
Saidie McPherson
Grace Woodfield
Mary Buller
Anastasia Cricklewood
Pearl Braithwaite
Cecilia Young

Twelfth girl: Constance Jackson."

"Dulcia!" Clara cried. "Oh, Dulcia! You don't mean it?"

"But I do." Dulcia's pretty face was very serious in spite of her smile. "My job, Clara, like yours, is to pick the best team. I've been watching your cricket lately, and frankly, without wanting to give you a swelled head, I think you're right up to first eleven form. So you're in, you see! And I think," she added, "you can promise Babs that I'll find her a place among the visitors—and three or four of your other friends as well. Hallo—come in!" she added, as there came a tap at the door.

It opened. The bad-tempered face of Connie Jackson scowled in. Her eyes darted from Clara to Dulcia.

"Oh, so here you are wasting time gassing to a junior," she sniffed. "Why isn't the team list up? The school's waiting for it."

Dulcia rose.

"Then," she said, and took the paper from Clara's fingers, "you may post the list on the board, Connie. Here it is."

Connie took it. She looked at it. Then she started and looked at it again, and her face turned a furious red. She flared up.

"You mean to say I'm only a reserve?"

"That's it," Dulcia levelly agreed.

"And you mean to say," Connie almost shouted these words—"you mean to say you've given a kid in the Fourth Form my place in the first team?"

"That's it."

"I object!"

"I'm sorry," Dulcia's lips came together. "It's your own fault," she said. "If you'd only given more attention to your practice there would have been no question of anyone having your place. Clara, for all that she is only a junior, has earned the honour. And that's enough," she added sharply, as furious Connie opened her mouth to hotly retort.

"Wait a minute!" Connie's face was grim. "Just a minute!" she ground out. "I think I get the idea now. Tit for tat—eh?" she sneered. "You help me, and I help you. You help me to break bounds, Clara Trevlyn, and I give you a place in the cricket team, Clara—"

"Connie!"

"Well, isn't it true?"

"I haven't the faintest idea what you are talking about," Dulcia said firmly. "There's the list! Take it. And if," she added warningly, "you've any complaint, go and make it to Miss Keys, who has seen the list and approved my choices."

Connie glared. She was almost choking with fury. In her hand the list trembled. Then slam! went the door as tempestuously she raged out of the room.

That cat Dulcia! That cat!

When Connie was seething, Connie had to do things—spiteful things, of course. If she had always disliked Dulcia Fairbrother, with her popularity, her power, and her prettiness, before, she hated her now. Down the corridor she strode; into the prefects' room she raged. The prefects should hear about this!

But, to Connie's chagrin, there was only one prefect in the prefects' room. That was her own crony, the crafty, slant-eyed Rona Fox.

"Peeved?" Rona inquired, casually looking up from a magazine. "What's wrong?"

"Look at that," choked Connie, and held out the list.

"H'm!" Rona pulled a face. "The Trevlyn kid—eh?" she asked. "Dulcia's fond of her, isn't she?"

"Fond? She's not only fond; she's in league with her," Connie said. "But she's too jolly artful and clever to let herself get caught. Last night she broke bounds; I spotted it, and—" And Connie told the story. Rona, who had no love for Dulcia—who, in fact, privately considered that she would make both a better games captain and captain of the school than Dulcia—looked startled.

"What's she breaking bounds for?" she asked.

"How do I know?"

"Funny," Rona frowned thoughtfully. "But, do you know, last night, just after call-over, I went to her study. She was messing about there in front of a mirror and reading aloud from some book. I had to report to her again at nine o'clock, but when I went into her study she'd vanished. And this morning," Rona added, "I heard her on the phone. She was talking to somebody—don't know who—and she said distinctly, 'Yes, I'll be there at a quarter to nine.' Sounds as if she's going to break bounds again to-night—what?"

Connie started. Neither of them heard a sudden, shuffling footstep outside.

"My hat!" she breathed. "What a chance! You're sure?"

"Of course."

"Then," Connie vowed, "this is where I come into my own! If she's going out at a quarter to nine, Rona, I'm going after her; and when she comes back there'll be no Clara Trevlyn to help her, I'll see to that."

There was another shuffle outside. Rona looked up.

"What was that?"

"What was what?" Connie asked. "Oh rats! Some girl passing, I expect. Never mind what that was. Look at this list!" she raged, fury breaking out again. "Just look at it! And my father's coming to Eastbourne to see that match. I was so jolly sure I'd be in the team that I wrote and told him so. A nice show-up for me, isn't it?"

Rona languidly smiled.

"Why worry?"

"Well, wouldn't you?"

"No!" Rona shrugged. "Once Primmy gets to know that Dulcia's been breaking bounds, what's going to be the result? Dulcia loses her captaincy, doesn't she? That means I'm captain of the team! And that means," Rona went on smoothly, "that the Trevlyn kid gets turfed out, and one Connie Jackson goes back into her place. Look after Clara and Dulcia, Connie; I'll do the rest. Do you get it?"

Connie, gazing at her, did "get it." A sudden satisfied gleam came into her eyes; a slow, significant smile to her features. She nodded.

Connie in Charge of the Fourth!



"CLARA?"
"Clara playing in the first eleven?"
"And Connie Jackson dropped!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Very excited was the crowd of juniors which thronged round the notice-board in Big Hall before assembly that morning. Excited and seething. For Clara to play in the senior team was not an unheard-of happening, but that Clara should be selected to play in a stiff match like that against Chalkhill, and that Connie, the unpopular, should be dropped to make room for her was big news.

The Fourth Form gleefully chuckled. The Fourth, with the prospect of doing Connie's lines during the halfer that afternoon, were less than usually disposed to regard the tyrant of the Sixth with favour. Slap in the eye for Connie, everybody agreed, and everybody also agreed that what Connie required at this moment was a slap in the eye. On all sides breathless Clara was congratulated, thumped, and hand-shaken.

Assembly bell rang. Cheerily the Fourth formed their ranks in Big Hall. Everybody chuckled when scowling Connie appeared, which caused Connie, in passing, to turn and scowl more fiercely than ever. But a murmur went round when it was observed that Miss Charmant, the adored mistress of the Fourth Form, was absent. Miss Wanda Belling, the general assistant mistress, took her place.

Rolls were called; prayers were said. Then Miss Primrose mounted the platform to give the orders for the day.

"Duty mistress, Miss Wright," she announced. "Duty prefect, Helen Hunter. The following girls will attend the dentist at Courtfield this afternoon for teeth inspection—" And Mabel Lynn gave a grimace as her own name was the first to be read out, followed by those of Leila Carroll and Marcelle Biquet. "I am interested to announce," Miss Primrose added mildly, "that Miss Charmant of the Fourth has been given permission to go to London, where she will deliver a series of lectures to the All British Women's Flying Association. As she will be absent for some little time, and as Miss Belling is on special coaching, her Form, for the time being, will be handed over to a prefect. That prefect—and here for a second the Fourth held its breath and looked eagerly and hopefully in the direction of Dulcia Fairbrother and Lady Patricia Northanson—is Constance Jackson."

The gasp that went up from the Fourth Form was distinctly audible. It brought a stern frown to Miss Primrose's features. In Connie's face it was as if a torch of vengeful triumph had suddenly been lit.

"And, Constance," Miss Primrose went on, "will take over her duties immediately. That is all."

The Fourth, happy and elated before assembly, were plunged into gloom and apprehension once more. Connie, on the other hand, was all gleeful triumph.

"And now," she said, before she dismissed the Fourth, "perhaps you'll pay some attention to me. I'm your mistress, remember. You'll do as I say, for once in a way. Bessie Bunter, you can take twenty lines for moving your mouth while I'm talking to you. Clara Trevlyn, take another twenty for

shuffling your feet. Now dismiss to your studies. Any girl who isn't in her place in class when lesson bell rings will be gated for this afternoon."

"Oooh, aren't we going to have a lovely time!" Jemima Carstairs sighed. "What a prospect of peace to look forward to! Chins up and chesties out, old Spartans, and strengthen the old wrist muscles for all the merry old lines you'll soon be doing. Tut, tut, what a life!"

What a life, indeed! Rather gloomily Babs & Co. gathered in Study No. 4 before lessons.

"Seems we're going through the mill," said Babs anxiously. "All the same, it's up to us. Give Connie no cause for complaint, and Connie can't very well jump on us."

"Which shows," grumbled Bessie Bunter, "how little you know Connie, you know. Fancy giving me twenty lines for moving my mouth! I'd like to see her with a whacking great toffee ball in her mouth, and not move it."

"But toffee balls, chump, were not made to be eaten at assembly," Mabs gently reminded her. "But—oh, golly! What awful luck!"

"And, Clara, you'll have to be careful," Babs added anxiously. "Give Connie half a chance, and she'll be on you like a ton of bricks, and if you get gated for the match on Saturday you know what will happen."

"Connie will take my place?" Clara suggested grimly.

"Of course!"

"Well, she'll take Clara's place, in any case, you know," Bessie said. "Because I heard her and Rona Fox fixing it all up, you know. I was going to tell you before, you know, but I had to go and get these toffees from the tuckshop. Rona says— Oh, really, Babs, I wish you wouldn't st-stare at me like that, you know," Bessie bleated feebly. "I wasn't listening."

"Never mind whether you were listening or not," Clara said. "What did Rona say?"

"Well, you know, Rona has found out that Dulcia is going somewhere at a quarter to nine to-night," Bessie said. "Connie said that she was going to follow her. I don't know how they mean to do it, but Connie said she'd show Dulcia up, you know, and that would mean that Dulcia would have to resign the captaincy and Rona would be captain instead. Then Rona said she'd give Connie her place, you know, and you'd be out of it. Oh, crumbs, there's lesson bell!" Bessie added.

Lesson bell it was. But the chums glanced at each other. The story rang true. So that was the big plot, was it? Disgrace Dulcia, force Dulcia to resign, and Rona, taking up the cricket captaincy, would deprive Clara of her place and give it back to Connie.

Still, there was no time to discuss the news then. Lesson bell was ringing. Anxious to give Connie no cause for complaint, they raced along to the classroom. Connie was already there, her eyes glinting as she stood in front of the Form. She scowled a little when Babs & Co. came in.

"Sit down," she rapped. "Get out your geography books. And please remember," she added warningly, "that while I'm in charge of this class I'm your Form-mistress, and there's going to be no nonsense. Clara Trevlyn, that warning particularly applied to you."

Clara's eyes gleamed a little. "And why should it apply to me?" "Because," Connie snapped, "you are the unriest girl in the class. And," she added, determined to find fault, "the untidiest girl in the class. Why

haven't you combed your hair this morning?"

"I have combed it!" Clara said, flushing.

"Don't speak to me like that! Take twenty lines. Now comb your hair."

Clara drew in a deep breath. Marjorie Hazeldene, next to the Tomboy, scenting the rising anger of her chum, anxiously nudged her elbow.

"Marjorie, I saw that," snapped Connie. "Take twenty lines."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Marjorie.

"Clara, comb your hair!"

For a moment the red roses of rebellion glowed in the Tomboy's face. She had combed her hair—and Connie knew it. Windblown and unruly, that hair of hers. The quiff in front would persist in slipping over her forehead. Just in time she caught Babs' anxious eye, remembered the agreement, and savagely combed the quiff back. Connie nodded.

Glenmore Valley, the—the Carse of Gowrie, and the Central Plain."

Connie scowled.

"Correct. Sit down," she said.

"Clara Trevlyn, where exactly is the Strathmore Plain?"

Clara blinked.

"Oh, crumbs! In—in Scotland," she said.

"That is not the answer. Exactly where in Scotland?"

Clara looked stumped. It was not an easy question, and Connie knew it. Apart from that, geography was one of Clara's worst subjects.

"I—I don't know," she said.

"Then take twenty lines for not knowing. Now tell me, how many rivers in Scotland flow into the North Sea?"

Clara bit her lip.

"Answer, Clara!"

"I—I don't know."

"You don't know, eh? Don't know?"

CLIFF HOUSE PETS

No. 12.

Mary Buller's BEAU

HAVE you ever noticed that sometimes you find dogs adopting the characteristics of their masters or their mistresses? It would certainly seem that this is so in the case of Mary Buller, of Cliff House's Sixth Form, and her huge brindle mastiff, Beau.

Mary, as you know, is stolid and uncommunicative. So is Beau—so stolid, so aloof indeed, that he affects not to notice there are other dogs in the Pets' House beside himself. Mary is big and strong—and so is Beau, who is a giant among mastiffs. Mary never talks unless she is forced to—Beau never barks at all. Undemonstrative is Mary and so, too, is her dog! Even as a puppy he never wriggled and yapped as other puppies do.

And yet, despite the lack of these outward signs of affection, there is a deep and very great love between Mary and her pet. I doubt if Beau indeed does not understand nearly every thought that passes through his mistress' mind, and I am sure that Mary understands Beau much more easily than she does the girls under her charge.

If Beau is in Mary's study and Mary requires her slippers, for instance, she has only to nod towards them, and Beau will immediately go and fetch them. If a knock comes at the door, Mary will just look at Beau; then Beau will pull the door open and stand in dignified aloofness while the visitor enters.

Perhaps it is his unquestionable obedience to Mary which so endears Beau to his mistress.



You may know that Mary is very fond of bathing and swimming. Last year, accompanied by Beau, she made her way to a lovely, little cove along the coast. After changing, Mary ordered Beau to guard her clothes while she went in for her dip.

During the swim, however, Mary was caught in a current. She was swept nearly a mile out to sea, but happily she was rescued by a party of fishermen before she was completely exhausted.

For twenty-four hours Mary was unconscious. All that time Beau was not seen. Then Mary recovered, remembered that she had left Beau guarding her clothes, and gave directions where he was to be found.

A party of prefects discovered the faithful Beau, worn out, hungry, and thirsty, still guarding those clothes!

A lovable but rather awesome animal is Beau—but what a fine specimen! Massive and strong he has already become a champion in the dog world. Mary recently refused an offer to sell him for quite a large sum! He is four years old, and has been Mary's pet since he was a six-weeks-old puppy.

"That's better! Now we'll get on with the lesson. Bessie Bunter!"

"Oh, gog, glug—ow, yes, kikk-Connie?"

"What have you in your mouth?"

"Mum-my mouth? Ooog! Gig-gig-gug-gug! Oh, help!" Bessie wailed.

"Now I've swallowed it all in a lump! I mumm-mean, I had nun-nothing in my mouth, Connie. Except my tut-tongue, of course! But I couldn't very well keep that anywhere else, could I?"

There was a titter. Connie's eyes flashed.

"Rosa Rodworth, take fifty lines for giggling! Bridget O'Toole, take twenty lines for putting a hand over your mouth! Bessie, you will take fifty lines for eating in class! Barbara Redfern!"

"You, Connie?" Babs said meekly.

"Name the principal plains of Scotland."

"Yes, Connie. Er—Strathmore,

Connie sneered. "What, Clara Trevlyn, do you think your parents pay your fees here for, eh? You don't know, when any kid in the Third Form could answer that question. Take another twenty lines! Marjorie Hazeldene, as you seem so sympathetic, perhaps you will answer the question—and take twenty lines at the same time for glowering at me!"

Marjorie answered the question. Clara, hot and flushed, sat still, while Connie picked on Barbara Redfern, Lucy Morgan, and Joan Charmant. Then Connie fired another question.

"Clara Trevlyn, describe the area of Scotland."

"Oh crumbs! A—about half the size of England and Wales," Clara stammered uncertainly.

"Give me the length and breadth in miles."

There was a murmur. It was obvious to everyone then that Connie was deliberately picking upon Clara. Again the Tomboy shook her head.

"I don't know."
"I'd be very pleased," Connie said tartly, "if there was something you did know. Step out in front of the class!"

There was a tense pause. Clara, plainly debating in her own mind whether she should obey or not, at last shufflingly rose to her feet. All sympathy was on Clara's side at that moment.

"Come here!" Connie railed. "And don't slouch!"

Clara went there.
"Now, take this," Connie said, and handed her a book. "Stand in that corner with your back to the class and learn the dimensions of Scotland by heart. Jemima, twenty lines for fiddling about with your eyeglass! Bessie Bunter, another twenty for shuffling your feet! Well, Clara?"

But Clara was definitely fed-up then. She took the book, but stood still.

"Clara," Connie barked, "get into the corner!"

"No," Clara said. "Miss Charmant never makes us stand in corners, so I don't see why you should."

"You defy me, eh?"

"I'm not defying you," Clara said doggedly, "but I—"

"Then get in that corner."

Clara did not move.

What would have happened then it is impossible to say. But suddenly there came an unexpected diversion. Nobody noticed, in the excitement of the moment, the lips of Bessie Bunter pucker into a little "O." Nobody noticed that sudden queer gleam in Bessie Bunter's eyes.

Only Babs of them all heard the little cough Bessie gave preparatory to clearing her throat for a ventriloquial performance—for Bessie, dufer in most other things, was a surprisingly good ventriloquist.

From directly beneath Connie's feet there suddenly came the distant but unmistakable squeak of a mouse.

Connie jumped. Connie was terrified of mice. Quickly her eyes sought the floor.

Squeak!
"Oh crumbs! I sus-say, Connie, you know, there's a mouse!" Bessie Bunter cried.

Connie shifted back nervously. Re-provingly Babs looked towards Bessie, but Bessie, out for vengeance now for the lines she had received, ignored the glance. There came another squeak, behind Connie.

Connie flung round.
"He, he, he!" giggled Freda Ferriers. "Where is it?" Connie gasped.
"Connie, look behind you!" Rosa Rodworth cried.

Squeak, squeak, squeak!
Connie almost fainted. Squeals seemed to be coming from all around her. Several girls had spotted the workings of Bessie Bunter's face now. Squeak again—and Connie, quivering with fright, jumped on a chair.

"Where is it?" she cried.

"There!" yelled Rosa Rodworth. "Connie, hold still!" And out from Rosa's hand flew a ruler. It may not have been intended to hit Connie, but it smote her legs, and Connie yelled. "Oh crumbs!" giggled Rosa Rodworth. "Sorry, Connie. Look, there it is!"

"Oh, my hat—girls!" cried Babs.

Squeak, squeak, squeak!

Uproar then! The lesson forgotten, the Form enthusiastically entering into the spirit of the jape! Half the girls were out of their desks, hunting imaginary mice. Things were raining

round Connie. Everybody was shouting. In the midst of it there came a whispered "Cave!" But too late! Into the room an amazed, quivering figure was already striding.

"Golly, Primmy!" gasped Babs.

Girls scrambled for their seats.

"Goodness gracious!" Miss Primrose gasped. She gazed at Connie. "Connie, what is the meaning of this, and what, girl, are you doing in that ridiculous pose?"

"I—I'm sorry," Connie stammered, stumbling down, but, nevertheless, she cast a fearful glance at the floor. "There—there was a mouse."

"Ridiculous!"

"But there was!" cried Connie.

"Connie—please!" Miss Primrose's brow was thunderous. "Mouse or not, I see no cause for this disturbance. And I am very, very disappointed, Connie, at the way you are handling this Form. Get back to your places, everyone. Tonight each of you will write a special essay on discipline in the class-room. Connie, what is Clara doing out there?"

Connie's eyes gleamed. Humiliated herself, furiously and resentfully angry, she was going to take it out of someone.

"Clara," she said spitefully, "was defiant. Clara refused to obey orders."

"Clara!"

"I'm sorry!" Clara said gruffly.

"Go back to your place," Miss Primrose said. "I am displeased, Clara. I would like you to understand that when I appointed a prefect to take charge of this class, I expected her to be treated as a mistress. At the same time," she added to Connie, "I also expect the prefect to behave like a mistress. Please try to conduct both yourself and your class with some degree of order!"

And Miss Primrose very frigidly rustled out of the room, leaving Connie with fury boiling in her heart. The Fourth Form sighed, and under cover of her exercise-book, Bessie Bunter giggled.

Had the Captain Let Them Down?



RATHER more subdued was Connie Jackson after that. In any case, she only took the first lesson of the morning, being called away on special duty after break. The Fourth, to its vast pleasure and relief, found Dulcia Fairbrother in her place when they returned to class.

Under Dulcia's rule, the rest of the morning passed peacefully. How conducted and orderly a Fourth Form from the riotous rebels of the first session!

Not another line was given. Not even once did Dulcia have cause even to reprimand a girl. Instead of wielding the rod of authority, indeed, Dulcia seemed very content to leave the Fourth Form to itself. Unlike Connie, she did not believe in improving or even advancing Miss Charmant's work. What she did was to set the Form a task in which they reviewed the work already done during the term.

That suited the Fourth; it seemed to suit Dulcia Dulcia, for the most part, sat at Miss Charmant's desk, rather worriedly studying a book. What that book was nobody knew; but once or twice Babs, looking up, saw Dulcia's lips moving as if she were trying to learn off by heart the words it contained. At half-past twelve, as it was a half-holiday, the Form was dismissed. Just before she went out of the door Dulcia called Clara.

"Clara, there'll be practice on Senior Side this afternoon—three o'clock

sharp," she said. "Mind you turn up!"

"Just won't I!" laughed Clara. "You'll be there, Dulcia?"

"Why, of course."

Very happy, very contented Clara felt then, and gleefully looking forward to the practice. But first there were the lines to be done which ill-natured Connie had given her. With a will Clara set to work. Almost cheerfully she scratched off page after page. Shortly before half-past two she was finished.

She took the lines to Connie's study. Connie, as it happened, was not there.

Clara left the lines and went to Study No. 4. She found Babs, Mabs, Leila Carroll, and Janet Jordan discussing the fact that Connie intended to follow Dulcia when the head girl left the school that night.

"Connie's out to catch Dulcia," Babs was saying. "And we, little children, have got to prevent her from doing it somehow."

"But how?" Clara said, and then stopped. "My only giddy aunt, I've got it!"

"Got what?"

"The idea." Clara suddenly broke into chuckles. "Wait a ticklet!" she cried. "Connie's still our Form-mistress, isn't she? As our Form-mistress, Connie can't refuse to answer questions. Well, kidlets, why shouldn't she answer questions—a few dozen of them—a little before a quarter to nine. That'll keep her busy."

"Oh, ha, ha, ha!" laughed Janet Jordan.

They beamed; the idea was a good one. Moreover, it was one that appealed to their mischief-loving hearts. It would be fun detaining Connie when Connie, fuming, was anxious to start out on the trail of Dulcia.

"But I say," Janet put in quickly, "what about Dulcia coming back—that is, supposing she is going to break bounds again. Connie will have her there."

"We'll deal with that when the time comes," Babs said. "Now, who's coming to see old Clara practice at the nets?"

They all were—with the exception of Mabel Lynn and Leila Carroll, both of whom had to visit the school dentist in Courtfield. While Mabs and Leila went off to collect Marcelle Biquet, the little French junior, who was also booked for dental attention, Clara, surrounded by her chums, walked over to Senior Side.

It was nearly three o'clock then, and all the senior team, including Connie Jackson, were at the nets. And half the Junior School, anxious to see Clara in action, were walking round the pitch. But of Dulcia Fairbrother there was no sign.

Rona Fox frowned at Clara as she came up.

"Have you seen Dulcia?"

"No, Rona."

"Pretty good skipper she is, isn't she?" Connie Jackson sneered jealously.

"Ordering practice for three o'clock, and then being late for it herself!"

"Ordering practice for three o'clock, and then being late for it herself!"

Saidie, she added, to Saidie McPherson of the Fifth, "cut off and tell her we're waiting."

Saidie nodded. Off she ran. The team glared a little; a little murmur passed among the crowd. In five minutes Saidie was back. Her face was rather serious.

"She's gone out," she said.

"Out?" cried Rona Fox.

"Yes. Grace Camperhill said she went out twenty minutes ago."

"Oh, rats!" Clara cried. "She wouldn't!"

But she had. That was evident. Not only had Dulcia gone out; indeed, it seemed that she was not going to return. Ten more minutes they waited. Connie laughed harshly.

"And that's the skipper who drops me and gives my place to a Fourth Form kid, because she says I don't get in enough practice," she scoffed. "Such a shining light and a noble example to everybody else, isn't she? Well, what are you going to do, Rona?"

"Get on without her," Rona said. "Dash it, we can't wait here all the afternoon!"

And get on without her they did, although Clara was puzzled. What had happened to Dulcia? Why, if she had been forced to go out, had she not left a message?

She did not know that Dulcia, hurriedly called away by a telephone call, had left a message, but had left it with Rona Fox, who, preferring to allow the worst construction to be put upon the captain's absence, had naturally said nothing about it.

Four o'clock came. Still Dulcia had not turned up. At half-past four the bus from Courtfield stopped outside the gate, and cricket practice was almost at an end, when hurrying up the drive came the well-known figure of the head girl. Breathlessly Dulcia hurried across to the nets.

"Oh dear! I—I'm sorry!" she said. "I was delayed."

Connie glanced at her witheringly. "Pretty good example to set the team, isn't it? Where have you been?"

"That," Dulcia retorted, though she was aware of the half-hostile looks of the others, "is my business."

"And it's your business, I suppose, to keep the team waiting while you slide off for the afternoon?" Connie retorted. "Don't you think we're entitled to some explanation?"

But to that Dulcia did not reply. She turned away.

Not a very pleasant impression did that incident leave. There was a feeling of injury among the team.

Even Clara was a little shaken; but Clara, fiercely loyal, said nothing. Whatever business had taken Dulcia from among her team-mates, was business of some urgency; something which could not have been foreseen. Not for a moment did Clara believe, as Connie was spitefully trying to suggest, that Dulcia had sacrificed the team for some whim of her own.

Only when Mabs, and Marcelle, and Leila returned from Courtfield was some minor light thrown upon the subject. That was during tea, when Mabs, recounting her adventures at the dentist's, said:

"And such a funny thing happened after we left the dentist's. Of course, you know how frightfully keen I am on seeing 'As You Like It'? Well, just for fun's sake, we strolled round to the theatre to have a look at the photographs they hang outside—and oh, Babs, that Sonia Neave is a lovely girl!"

"Yes. But what was funny?" Babs asked.

"Well, Dulcia, you know. We saw her. She came out of the stage door. And, Babs, do you know, she was with Sonia Neave!"

"Dulcia?" cried Babs.

"Dulcia—yes," Mabs nodded. "She didn't see us. She was talking to Sonia. They drove off in a taxi. But, Babs, what was she doing in the theatre? Do you think she is a friend of Sonia Neave?"



"AND you mean to say," Connie almost shouted, "you've given a kid in the Fourth Form my place in the first team?" Furiously she pointed at Clara. Dulcia Fairbrother nodded coolly. "That's it," she said.

But Babs did not reply at once. She was staring at Mabs. Dulcia had deliberately cut practice that afternoon; Dulcia had been paying a visit to the Courtfield Theatre! Could it have been the Courtfield Theatre which Dulcia visited last night?

"Well, it's not our business," Clara said gruffly. "Let's get on with tea!"

"No, it's not our business," Babs replied thoughtfully. "But—it might explain things. It might, for instance, tell us why Dulcia has promised to be in Courtfield at a quarter to nine to-night. The show at the Courtfield Theatre starts at a quarter to nine, doesn't it?"

"My hat!" exclaimed Clara. "You mean, she might be helping this Sonia, or something?"

"What else?" Babs asked. "In any case, never mind. What we've got to do," she said grimly, "is to see that Connie doesn't nip in and spoil whatever it is Dulcia is doing. And I vote," she added, with a chuckle, "that as Connie's our Form-mistress, we get our questions ready for her right away!"

Outwitted by Babs & Co.!



CONSTANCE ALMA JACKSON, in her study in the Sixth Form passage, smiled spitefully as she glanced at the clock on the mantelpiece. The fingers of that clock registered a quarter past eight.

Connie was dressed ready for going out, and Connie had stationed herself by the window so that she could watch for the exit of Dulcia Fairbrother. Connie meant to make no mistake this time. When Dulcia went, Connie would follow; and, having discovered Dulcia's destination, would hurry back and inform Miss Primrose. Once Miss Primrose found Dulcia's study empty, even Primmy would have to take some action.

Primmy would have to punish Dulcia, and since lines and gatings were not meted out to the Sixth Form, there was only one punishment which would fit Dulcia's case—and that was suspension for either a short or a long term.

Most certainly Dulcia would find herself suspended for Saturday. That, as Rona had said, would take the captaincy of the first eleven out of her hands; would mean that Connie would be able to play!

It would be good to make that cat sit up! It would—

Tap!

Connie, twisting round, frowned. She called "Come in!" Her face expressed no pleasure when Marjorie Hazeldene, a little hesitantly, stepped into the room.

"Well, what is it?" she snapped.

"Please, Connie, I've got a question," Marjorie ventured.

"Then go and bury it!" Connie snorted.

"But it's frightfully important," Marjorie said. "And, after all, you are our Form-mistress, Connie. But if you don't want to be bothered, I'll go and ask Miss Primrose."

Connie sat up at that. She knew Miss Primrose would not receive a request like that with favour. Having been delegated a Form-mistress' position, Connie must accept a Form-mistress' responsibilities, or Miss Primrose would want to know the reason why.

She flung another hasty glance out of the window.

"Well, what is it?"

"Please, Connie, who discovered America?"

"Is this a joke?" Connie roared. "Bother it, I want to get out! You know as well as I do, Marjorie Hazeldene, that Columbus discovered America."

"But it says in my 'Rise of Man' that he didn't, you know," Marjorie said seriously. "It says that America was discovered a thousand years before

Columbus by the Chinese. I should like you to explain that, Connie."

Connie looked baffled. It was not easy to explain. She knew, as most girls at Cliff House knew, that America was credited to have been discovered before Columbus, but by whom, in what fashion, was a mystery. Marjorie was perfectly entitled to ask that question.

"Well—well—well!" she stammered. "Oh, hang it, I—I've forgotten. Can't you look it up?"

"Yes, Connie, of course. What shall I look it up in, though?" Marjorie asked innocently.

Connie fumed. She flung another glance through the window. Dulcia Fairbrother, dressed for going out, was just emerging out of the school.

If she didn't go after her straight she'd lose her altogether.

"Oh, hang it! Bother! Look it up in the encyclopedia," Connie fumed. "Now I've got to be going. Well?" she added, as Clara Trevlyn came in.

"Please, Connie, I've got a question to ask."

Connie gasped. "I'm going out."

"Yes, Connie, but this is fearfully important," Clara said seriously. "If you don't want to answer it, I'll ask Miss Primrose, of course."

Connie gritted her teeth. Dulcia was starting down the drive then.

"Well, what is it?"

"Please, Connie, can you tell me who invented geography?"

Connie raged. She glared; Dulcia was disappearing now. In two minutes she would be gone.

"Nobody invented geography," she said.

"But somebody first thought of it," Clara objected. "Somebody must have mentioned it first at some time or other, you know. Who was it?"

"Oh, bother! Get out! I'll look it up," Connie roared. "Now—" and she stepped again as Barbara Redfern came in. "Well?" she almost howled.

"Please, Connie, I want to ask you a question!"

"Look here, I'm going out!" Connie hooted.

"But, Connie, I'm sorry, I've just got to do this essay, you know. And I'm sure being such a clever deputy mistress, that you'll be able to answer it in no time. How long is the River Dee in Scotland?"

Connie gasped. Dulcia had almost entirely disappeared now.

"That," she grated, "is a question your lesson-books will answer. Take twenty lines for not knowing, in any case. Now—oh, my hat! What do you want?" she almost shrieked, as Mabel Lynn came in at the door, a sheaf of papers in her hands.

"Please, Connie, will you check this? It's a list of animals that existed in the Stone Age," Mabs said.

"Check them with your books!" Connie hooted.

"I have, Connie. But one book gives one list, and another book gives another. It's most frightfully confusing, you know," Mabs said seriously. "Of course, Miss Primrose would tell me—"

Connie fumed. But duty must come first, and if Connie had a suspicion that the juniors had left their questions till rather late, that duty had to be done. In any case, it was no use trying to follow Dulcia now; Dulcia had vanished.

She sat down. Fretfully she fumed over Mabel Lynn's list. Mabs winked at Babs; Clara shook with suppressed mirth. Five, ten minutes went by, and the chums smiled. Connie, with a scowl, handed the list back.

"These are all dead right," she snapped. "Now get out, all of you."

"Thank you, Connie," the four chorused.

They went out, chucking to themselves. But they did not go far. At the end of the passage they stopped, watching the door of the room they had just left. Less than a minute went by before Connie came striding out. Babs nudged Clara.

"Watch," she advised. "Bet she's after Dulcia."

It was a safe guess. Straight to Dulcia's study Connie strode. She knocked, turned the handle, and looked in. Then, a satisfied gleam in her eyes, she emerged again. They saw her go striding away in the direction of Big Hall.

"Gone to fetch Primmy," Babs muttered. "My hat! Primmy will be at her private house having supper now."

"And if Connie brings her back with her," Clara said.

"And if she finds Dulcia is out—" Marjorie said.

"But she won't," Babs cried. "Half a ticklet. Idea! Mabs—quick, come to Dulcia's study."

"But what—" Mabs said.

"Let's scoot!"

They scooted. Arriving at Dulcia's study, Babs flung the door open. It was not yet quite dark, but she switched on the light. Quickly she grabbed two or three cushions and dumped them on the chair in front of Dulcia's desk, which was placed near the window. She chuckled.

"O.K.," she said. "Clara, give me Dulcia's dressing-gown from behind the door. Now, Mabs, roost on these cushions. See the idea? The cushions make you look about Dulcia's height. Your hair is the same colour. Turn your back to the window, and when Primmy comes across the quad, she'll have no need to come up and see whether Dulcia is here or not. Come on, kidlets, we'll go and watch the fun from the entrance. All right, Mabs?"

"Yes, rather," Mabs laughed.

She stayed on. Babs & Co., stifling their laughter, flew into Big Hall. Connie, meantime, had reached the Head's private house, and Miss Primrose, looking rather annoyed—for Miss Primrose had been pleasantly idling after supper with a copy of a learned scientific publication to which she had contributed an article entitled "Some New Aspects of Grecian Mythology"—came to the door. Her lips pursed at the sight of Connie.

"Well, Connie, what is the matter?"

"I think you ought to know," Connie said, "that Dulcia has gone out."

Miss Primrose eyed her sharply. "You are sure, Connie?"

"Positive, Miss Primrose. I saw her with my own eyes a few minutes ago. I should have stopped her," Connie added virtuously, "except that I was helping some of the backward scholars of the Fourth Form."

Miss Primrose frowned. At this time of the night every girl, senior or junior, should have been within doors, and if Dulcia was out, Dulcia must be taking advantage of her position of head girl to break bounds. She nodded.

"Very well, Connie, I will come with you. If Dulcia is out we will await her return."

Connie gleed inwardly. That was what she wanted. By the time Miss Primrose had waited two or three hours, she imagined, there would be short shrift for Dulcia Fairbrother.

Out through the gate on to the lawns

Miss Primrose walked. And then she jumped.

"Connie!" she cried in a suddenly quivering voice.

"Yes, Miss Primrose?"

"How dare you come to me with such a falsehood!"

"What? I tell you—"

"And, please, Connie, do not speak to me like that!" Miss Primrose said angrily. "I think I advised you last night to make sure of your facts before accusing Dulcia. Dulcia is in her room. You can see that from here. Look!"

Connie looked, and Connie almost fell down. Miss Primrose was pointing to a lighted window in the west wing, and beyond the window the fair hair and the gown-draped shoulders of a girl could plainly be seen.

Very thoughtfully that girl's head was bent; painstakingly she was writing.

"Well—well, I—" stammered Connie. "But, Miss Primrose, I saw her go out—"

"What you probably saw," Miss Primrose returned tartly, "was Dulcia executing some duty, Connie. I really do deplore this suspiciousness of mind where Dulcia is concerned, and I really do protest—emphatically—at being so constantly irritated with your foolish stories."

"Oh crumbs! But—"

But Miss Primrose had wheeled around, was already striding back to her own house. Connie, bubbling with fury, rushed on into the school. But even as she entered Big Hall she saw the light snap out in Dulcia's study. When, suspicion aroused at last, she entered that apartment it was in semi-darkness. Dulcia's gown was carelessly thrown across a chair.

Connie gritted her teeth. Somebody, once again, had fooled her.

What Babs Overheard!



THOSE little imps, of course—Babs & Co.!

Connie had no doubt of that now! She began to see why Babs & Co. had detained her with those footing questions.

For a moment she stood glaring about her in the empty study. For a moment she struggled with the impulse to rush off there and then to the Fourth Form corridor and give those young jape-players the time of their lives. But she paused; she reflected. Already she was in Primmy's bad books. There was just a chance that Babs & Co. had not been guilty, and to go creating a row on the assumption that they had might recoil very badly to her own disadvantage. Nevertheless, as she gazed round the empty study she felt a hot wave of hatred and anger sweep over her.

Dulcia—that cat! She HAD gone out.

Connie gritted her teeth. Where was the girl? What secret mission took her out of school before bed-time and made her return somewhere about midnight?

Well, why not find out? Dulcia, obviously, would not be returning for some hours. Surely there was something in this study which would give her a clue?

"Well, look round, fool," she fumed at herself.

She closed the door; then she drew the blinds. Switching on the electric light, she began a careful survey of the room. She went toward the desk. Open upon it was a book, some lines heavily underscored. Quickly Connie picked it up, and scanned it.

The book was Shakespeare's "As You Like It." The lines underscored were those spoken by Rosalind. Rats! Nothing there. That was only a copy of the part which Dulcia had taken in the recent school play.

She opened the drawer. In the drawer were a number of newspaper cuttings. She picked them up. They were all from the issues of the morning papers, and curiously enough, dealt with the first-night performance of the same play in which Dulcia was so absorbedly interested. Headlines caught her eyes: "Brilliant acting of New Star." "Sonia Neave Gets Her First Big Part." "Dazzling Success Of New Actress in Shakespeare." Sonia Neave? Who the dickens was Sonia Neave?

Oh, this was nothing to do with it, of course.

All the same, Connie flicked through the cuttings. And then suddenly she stopped dead. One of those cuttings with a double-column head, had obviously let itself go on the topic of

had been fags in the Upper Third—or was it Fourth? Dulcia had been Nellie Jackson's fag. Dulcia had worshipped and admired Nellie Jackson. She remembered how Dulcia had been almost heartbroken when Nellie had left; how bitter, how furious she had been when she had heard the news that Nellie had run away from home because of lying stories Connie had told her father.

"N-Nellie," Connie stuttered. She thought she had finished for ever with Nellie Jackson. Nellie, so different from herself—open, frank, upright. Very much like the Dulcia of to-day, had Nellie been then.

Though Nellie was her own sister, Connie had always disliked her, been jealous of her. When the row had come between Nellie and her father, and Nellie had left school—Mr. Jackson wanted Nellie to go into business, and Nellie most passionately wanted to go on to the stage—it was Connie, who,

"CONNIE'S GOING OUT." Barbara Redfern made that remark.

She made it to Mabs and Clara who, after afternoon lessons the following day, had just returned to Study No. 4, rather red-eared and simmering, for afternoon lessons, like morning lessons, had not been a happy experience at the hands of Connie Jackson. They both looked up with interest as Babs made that announcement, however.

For Babs & Co., having foiled Connie in her activities against Dulcia last night, had made up their minds to watch Connie Jackson. Knowing Connie, they feared new mischief.

"Where?" asked Clara. "Well, how should I know?" Babs asked. "I just dropped the exercise books in her study, and I saw her putting on her hat. Are we following?" "Are we?" Clara cried. "Aren't we just understudying Mary's little lambs?" She grinned as she broke into verse.



"I—I'M sorry," Connie stuttered, as Miss Primrose gazed at her in amazement. "There—there was a mouse." Babs & Co. chuckled inwardly. They knew there had been no mouse, but they also knew that this would probably mean trouble for all of them.

Sonia Neave and "As You Like It," and had included a large photograph of the new star. It was that photograph which brought Connie up with a sudden startled start. That photograph, at which she was suddenly staring as if unable to believe her own eyes. For that photograph—was she dreaming? It was a photograph of her own sister—

"Nellie!" breathed Connie. Nellie—yes, Nellie Jackson! Slightly older, a little altered since Connie had last seen her four years ago, but unmistakably Nellie Jackson.

A sudden breathless sensation took possession of Connie. Nellie—that sister she had disliked so. That sister who had run away to become an actress and who, from that day to this, neither she nor her father had ever seen or heard of again.

But Dulcia— And then Connie remembered. Her eyes widened. What a fool, what a fool! Of course, this explained it. When Nellie, her elder sister, had been captain of Cliff House, she and Dulcia

in a thousand nasty little ways, had widened the rift between them.

But Connie knew—and was secretly furious in the knowledge—that her father, from the moment that Nellie had gone, had regretted his daughter's flight. She knew that many, many times since then had he employed detectives to try to find her.

And now— Connie drew a deep breath. Her hands were shaking as she put the cuttings back. After this, there could be no doubt about Dulcia's activities. Nellie, under this silly name of Sonia Neave, was acting at the Courtfield Theatre; Dulcia had met her. Dulcia was going there night after night to help her, to see her. Connie's lips came together. Well, good enough!

She fancied she had Dulcia now. She turned off the light; softly she withdrew the curtain. Then she stepped out of the study, and shivering a little in the stress of her feelings, went to her own room.

How—how could she put Primmy on Dulcia's track?

"Connie's going for a walk, as early as can be, but where our dear old Con. doth stalk, so also stalketh we." How's that?"

"Rotten!" Mabs grinned. "But come on!"

They soon got on Connie's track. She led them to Courtfield, and went straight to the theatre. They saw her reach the booking-hall; they saw her studying the photographs displayed outside. Clara frowned.

"Now what the dickens?" she said. "Look, she's going in. Oh, stuff, we're just on a wild goose chase. She's only going to buy tickets for the theatre."

"Yes," answered Babs slowly. "But what about what Mabs saw? Connie's found something out! Remember Mabs saw Dulcia yesterday coming out of the stage door with Sonia Neave? Doesn't that seem to indicate that the theatre's got something to do with Dulcia's mysterious comings and goings? Any-

OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS



Your friend *PATRICIA* is in *Whitsun* mood this week, and hopes you have a grand time over the week-end holiday. She tells you of her own and the Family's plans; of a way to wake; of two ways to change a frock; and something of that charming film star, *Deanna Durbin*.

A HAPPY Whitsun to you all, my pets.

I hope you all have something nice, in white, to wear on Sunday (as custom demands for White—or Whit—Sunday) and have somewhere thrilling to go on Whit Monday.

Your Patricia—that's me!—is saving a nice, white silk blouse to wear on Sunday. It is already washed and ironed most carefully, ready to be tucked into my black skirt—and over which I wear a vivid green jacket. (How do you like the sound of that?)

Oh, and also I have the dearest brooch to wear on the blouse! It is made of gold, inset with little pearls and coral—and I'm so proud of it.

It belonged to mother when she was a girl, and she gave it me for my birthday last month. (Yes, I DO still have birthdays—and still get quite excited about them, too!)

That's for Sunday, then.

On Monday, we're having a picnic.

Father hates driving the family car on Bank Holidays, but we've finally persuaded him to take us out.

"All right," he grumbled. "But we're to start off really early, so that we're out of London before the roads get crowded."

Glibly we promised. And the result is that we're going to get up round about six, have an early breakfast, rustle round tidying up the house—and be off and away about eight!

But I'm not telling you where our picnic spot is.

For it has been a secret in the family ever since I can remember. We will admit that it is in the Chiltern Hills, not so very far from Princes Risborough—but that's all.

And so far, no one else—as far as we know!—has yet discovered that field with the shady wood behind it and a rippling brook in front.

● Picnic Plans

We generally take coffee with us on a picnic, to have after lunch, but this has always presented a problem.

You see, mother and I like ours "white"—that is, with milk—while father and big brother like theirs "black."

But this time I've had a brainwave—only a little one, that will allow us all to have our coffee what colour we like.

I trotted out to the sixpenny stores and bought the most magnificent scarlet flask

(which worked out at one and six after I had assembled all the pieces.)

Now we shall take the black coffee in one flask and some warm milk in another. This means that father and Brian can have theirs straight from the "black" flask, while mother and I will add a spot of milk to ours. (Mother likes a lot of milk, but I prefer a drip only.)

Another thing we mustn't forget to take with us is the "picnic towel." This is a very garishly coloured towel that we bought on holiday for the beach one year—and has accompanied us on every picnic since.

For if it is warm, young brother Heath (whose full name is H. -th-r-ngt-n, if you leave out the important vowels) and big sister Patricia will probably dabble twenty dainty toes in the nice stream I mentioned. And we shall, of course, want to dry them after this treat.

● Bump Bump

Are you a sleepy-head in the mornings. Or have you one of those hideously noisy alarm clocks to wake you? (Though I know some people who can sleep even through the din they make!)

Well, supposing you are a sleepy one, and haven't an alarm clock in your room, here's a good way of waking up in the morning, without even one call up the stairs from mother.

Decide the night before what time you'd like to wake in the morning. We'll say it is half-past seven.

Now—last thing at night—just before you pop off to sleep, give your head seven bumps on the pillow, and one little bump. That's one bump for each hour, and a little bump for the half.

Almost magically, 'tis said, you wake to the dot of half-past seven.

Just try it and see! (But don't bump so hard that you wake yourself up thoroughly and can't get off to sleep again, will you?)

● More Roomy with Ribbon

Cotton frocks are not supposed to shrink "in the wash" are they? All the same, it's jolly mysterious how last year's always seem to have a knack of being too small just when we want to wear them again!

If this should have happened to a

particularly pet frock of yours, don't be too despairful.

With mother's help, you can let a piece of ribbon right down the front of the frock, from neck to hem—and this will give you a nice bit of extra room. (You should buy ribbon that is exactly the same shade as one of the colours in the frock.)

And don't forget to add a bow of ribbon to match at the neck. You'll be surprised how nice it will look.

● A Summer Coatee

But just supposing that the frock has become too, too hopelessly tight, and there's no small sister to pass it on to.

In this case, you can turn it into a really smart bolero-style coatee. (By the way, I used to tell you that bolero is pronounced bol-ay-ro. But since these garments have become increasingly fashionable, you may now say bol-ero—nearly all the shop assistants do.)

To make the coatee, you must cut the skirt right off the frock and then cut from the neck—right down the front.

Hem all raw edges—and it is complete. One of these little jackets worn over a white, sleeveless frock—with a belt around it if you like—is absolutely "tops" in schoolgirl fashions.



● Such a Famous Schoolgirl

Talking of smart schoolgirls reminds me of Deanna Durbin.

Don't you love this golden-voiced young screen star?

She was christened Edna Mae Durbin, you know, and is Canadian. But her parents were English. Her mother came from Manchester and her father from Chester.

Deanna (as we now know her) was born on December 4th, 1922, at Winnipeg. Most film stars seem to have done something remarkable as children—but Deanna never did—

Unless you can count the incident of the silver coffee pot that she won for her mother at a baby show.

But—not as a beauty prize, let me hasten to add. No—but because she cried the loudest. Deanna had the lustiest pair of lungs.

Her hobbies at the moment are her beloved dog, Tippy, and roller skating.

Deanna gets up at seven o'clock every morning. She starts work at nine; she finishes for the day at five, and goes to bed at ten.

A pretty busy day for a fifteen-year-old, isn't it?

Bye-bye until next week, all!
Your friend, *PATRICIA*.



A DAY WITH YOUR CAMERA

What fun you and your chums can have on your bikes—or on a hike—with a camera for company. And what happy memories afterwards!



IT'S a lovely morning, and out in the country the cuckoo is simply shrieking his welcome to all who will respond to his call.

So you and your chum are going to set off on your bikes for a whole day's glorious trip.

And with you will be another friend—Your camera!

Having planned your excursion in advance, you'll have everything ready.

There will be sandwiches inside your saddle-bag. You'll wear shorts and blouses, and perhaps a jersey. And the sky will be so blue, you won't even worry about a mac. But you must tuck a beret, or a gay scarf into your saddle-bag, to wear over your hair should a breeze spring up.

Having said good-bye to mother, and promised her you'll be very careful, avoiding main roads as much as possible, you sling your precious camera in its case around your shoulders. Then, tring!—a merry peal with your bike bells and you're away.

The first pause is to buy a brand new spool for the camera. This will mean eight pictures can be taken during your day.

If you are in any doubt as to the size film required for your camera, don't hesitate to show your camera to the shop-



A pretty view can often be made prettier.

keeper, and he will know at a glance just what you require.

Halt under a tree, or in some other shady spot to insert the brand new spool. Wind it carefully around till you come to the figure 1—and after a few miles on the road you're ready for the first snap.

What shall it be?

Let's make the first one a view, shall we?

A PRETTY VIEW

I'm quite sure you'll spot the most adorable cottage with a thatched roof that's obviously aching to be made into a picture. Perhaps they even sell lemonade there—and cycling IS thirsty work.

So after your little rest, you study the best angles of the cottage—the best, that is, from a pictorial point of view.

If you face the cottage "dead on," it will certainly look very sweet. But just try moving round to one side, so that more than one wall of the cottage is visible in your lens, and you include that charming corner of the roof, too.

There now, isn't that prettier still?

Your chum will probably demand to be included in this picture. But you must be firm and tell her that this one is principally to be a "view." She may, however, if she likes, prop her bike somewhere in the picture and stand beside it, to give the picture extra "life"—but she mustn't expect to come out as in a portrait.

Stand well back so that you get the complete cottage into the picture, and include a gate or a hedge in the foreground if you can.

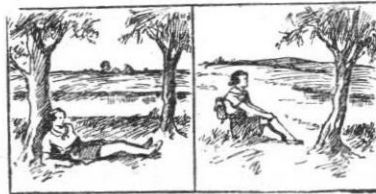
Keep the camera quite steady, lean right over to look into the view-finder—and snick!

Now turn the film around to number two—and away again.

A PORTRAIT-VIEW

After a few more miles, perhaps you'll come to a stream—and a rest is indicated.

You'll simply have to take a snap of



Too many straight lines can spoil a picture.

your chum this time—otherwise she'll think you don't intend to.

So she'll lie down by the stream, turn to you, and say: "How do I look?"

Looking into your view-finder, you're rather surprised to see that the picture isn't quite as pretty, somehow, as you think it deserves to be.

Can it be because of those parallel lines that seem to divide it up so evenly?

There's the straight lines of your chum's body as she reclines. There are the two straight banks of the stream. And there is the straight line of the horizon. That's far too many straight lines—especially as they all are in the same direction.

So again you move around. You command your chum to sit up—that gives one upright line. Next you find there is a bend in the river, and a tiny rise on the other bank. There may even be a tree just beside you, which will again give an interesting foreground to the picture and quite dispel that "tram-line" effect which you noticed before.

Make sure the sun is behind you still, after all that moving around; take a last look into the view-finder to see how much prettier the improved "composition" of your picture is—and click again.

Turn to number three—and vault gaily into the saddle again.

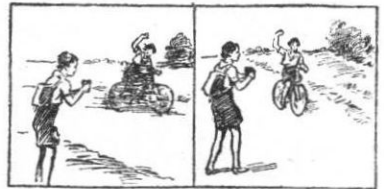
A MOVING PICTURE

Supposing your bike is a new one, I've an idea that you'd like your chum to take a

picture of you riding it at great speed. But can it be done with an ordinary (though very precious, none the less!) box camera, you may ask.

Well, it can. But will you tell your chum before you pass over the camera, that it is no use her snapping you "dead on," that is, side view of you and the moving bike? The result will only be one of blurred wheels—and very disappointing.

Instead, she must stand in front of you and slightly to one side, as you ride towards her. Then, when you are about



Be careful, or that moving object will be a blur.

ten feet from her—she may snap. The picture will certainly be a success then.

IMPORTANT BACKGROUND

I've an idea you'll be ready for tea at the very earliest possible moment, so the sun will still be rising for taking snaps. Perhaps you'll meet some other cyclists at the tea-place. I hope so, for then you and your chum can ask one of them to take a picture of you two together.

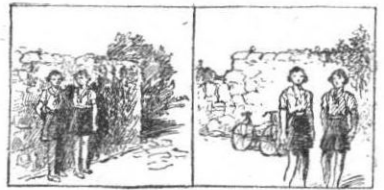
The "snapper" must again be ten feet away from you if you want your full-length figures in the picture, or seven feet if three-quarters of you will satisfy you.

But in all portraits, the background is very important. A most useful little line to quote to yourself is "light against dark, and dark against light." There must be contrast. So if you are wearing white or very light clothes, you should stand against a darker background—otherwise you will "merge" into it, and in the finished picture it will be difficult to see which is you and which is the background.

But I expect you will be wearing dark shorts and bright coloured blouses or jumpers—so you must choose a light background.

There, you're nearly at the end of that spool of films now, and will certainly be thinking of setting back home.

So off you go. Take the spool out care-



Your choice of background is important.

fully when you reach home and hand it to the chemist for developing and printing.

Wait impatiently for two days or so—and then the big moment!

You call for your snaps and the result is eight out of eight! This is the photographer's and camera owner's big moment,

(Continued from page 11)

way, I'm going to see what she's doing. You two hold on here."

Connie had disappeared now. Quickly the leader of the Fourth Form shot across the square. Breathless, she reached the entrance to the theatre. Just inside the booking hall, at the pay desk, she could see Connie talking to the assistant. Innocently Babs studied the photographs outside.

Connie was chatty. "They tell me Miss Neave is a frightfully good actress," she said.

"Oh, yes!" the assistant agreed. "Let me see," Connie said artlessly. "She's got a friend at my school, hasn't she—a girl named Dulcia Fairbrother?" Babs pricked up her ears. "I suppose she comes to see Miss Neave quite a lot?"

"Oh, yes, every night," the assistant said.

"Must be proud of her, eh?" Connie asked, with false lightness. "Well, may I have two tickets, please—stall, yes? Er"—she coughed—"I'm hoping to bring our headmistress along to-night. She's frightfully keen on Shakespeare. It may happen, though, that she can't come. I suppose it will be all right, if she can't, to claim a refund on the unused ticket?"

"Yes, miss; as long as you hand it back a quarter of an hour before the performance," the assistant replied.

Babs waited to hear no more. She knew, then. As she raced back to her chums, she was burning with indignation. Clever Connie! Cunning, artful Connie! Connie, making sure that Dulcia would be at the theatre, proposed to take Miss Primrose, in order to bowl her out. Breathlessly she told her chums what she had overheard.

"Oh, my hat!" said Clara. "What the dickens are we to do?"

"Warn Dulcia," Mabs suggested.

"And Dulcia," Babs retorted, "would think we'd been poking our noses into her affairs. We have, of course, but only to help her. No, wait a ticklet. I've a better idea than that. Supposing," she breathed, "we could bag those tickets?"

"What—?"

"Listen!" Babs said rapidly. "When Connie gets back to school, Miss Primrose will be in her own house at tea. That means Connie can't mention the theatre at once. Right! Connie will go to her own study. She's bound to leave the tickets there. We can get back first. You and I, Clara, will hide in the study. Mabs, you get Connie out of the way on some excuse or other, and then we'll bag the tickets. After that Connie can't very well make Primmy go to the show without tickets, and she'll have no time to come back and book others. If we fail—well, then, we'll just have to warn Dulcia."

"Crumbs, what an idea!" gurgled Clara. "Come on; bus back!"

Immediately the chums arrived back at Cliff House they put their plan into action. Up to Connie's study Babs and Clara hurried, and, entering that apartment, quickly closed the door.

"Well, where do we hide?" Clara asked.

There were two places—one behind the curtain which cut off Connie's bed from the rest of the room, the other behind the screen near the window. Babs suggested the screen. It was just possible, she pointed out, that Connie, when she came in, might move the curtain to hang up her clothes in the cupboard beside the bed.

Gingerly the two moved the screen a few inches; carefully they squeezed behind it, taking care to keep well to one side of the window so as not to be spotted by anyone from the quad. Unfortunately, however, Clara had made one mistake—in helping to move the screen she had put her handbag on Connie's study table, and had forgotten to retrieve it. Characteristically careless of Clara, an oversight like that.

Five, ten minutes went by; then there was a step outside. Babs tensed. "She's coming!" she breathed.

She was. The next moment the handle of the door rattled. Connie Jackson, with a satisfied smile on her face, stepped into the room, pulling off her hat as she did so. Then suddenly she stopped, her eyes fixed upon the bag in the middle of the table.

"Oho!" she muttered. She stepped towards it; then she halted. She knew that bag; she guessed at once what its presence foreboded. A glimmer came into her eyes. Quickly she stepped to her cubicle, and threw the curtain aside; then she flung round towards the screen.

Distinctly protruding from beneath that screen were the toes of a pair of rather large shoes!

It was a pity that Babs and Clara could not see the smile on the face of Connie Jackson then.

Connie, stooping, caught hold of the arms of the heavy armchair; with a rush she whirled it towards the screen. Just as if it had been a pure accident, she rammed the armchair against the screen—crash!—immediately flattening the hidden watchers against the wall!

From Babs came a startled gasp; from Clara a yell of pain as the screen, jumping, clamped back on her foot. Wildly she hopped, squirming in sudden agony, her arm instinctively jerking back.

And then, crash! Tinkle!

Connie had not meant that as part of her original scheme; but in an instant the mischief was done. In the wild agony of the moment, Clara had no time to think where she was placing her arm, and her elbow went clean through the window behind her. There came a shout from Connie; another gasp from Babs as the prefect, tearing the screen aside, revealed the discomfited plotters with, behind them a great, jagged hole in one of the window panes.

"So!" she snapped. "Spying, eh?"

"Oh crumbs! You—you see—"

Babs stammered. "You cat! I believe you did that on purpose!" Clara howled, rubbing her arm.

"Look at my window!"

"Good gracious!" cried a voice; and the door was swept open, and into the room, blinking in amazement, came Miss Primrose. "Who has broken that window, Connie? What is all this?"

"I do not know, Miss Primrose," Connie said smoothly. "Presumably Barbara and Clara were hiding behind the screen. Without being aware of that fact, I pushed the armchair against the screen, and apparently it startled Clara so much that she put her arm through the window. I can only imagine that these two girls meant to play some practical joke."

Miss Primrose's lips compressed.

"Barbara!"

"Oh dear! Y—yes, Miss Primrose?"

Babs said unhappily.

"What were you doing in this study?"

"Nun-nothing, Miss Primrose."

"That is absurd!"

"Well, we—we were waiting for Connie!" Babs blurted.

"Indeed! Then you choose a very extraordinary method of waiting," Miss Primrose said. "In any case, you know you are not allowed in prefects' studies without permission, and I utterly decline to accept that as an explanation. I can only conclude, as Connie suggests, that you were here for the purpose of playing some practical joke. You will both take a detention until call-over. Now go!"

With a sickly glance at each other, the chums went. Their plan had hardly been a success.

Connie's Triumph Seems Sure!



CALL-OVER, at Cliff House, was at eight o'clock during the summer, and by the

time Babs and Clara were dismissed detention and had answered the register, Dulcia Fairbrother had gone. They received that news from Mabs when they returned to Study No. 4.

"But," Babs cried, "didn't you warn her?"

"Well—no," Mabs said. "I hoped you had. In any case, there hasn't been any opportunity; she was with Miss Wright until a quarter past eight. I went to get a word with her, but she was in too much of a hurry after that."

"The-then," Babs said. "Oh, my hat! What about Connie?"

Mabs shook her head. She looked rather gloomy.

"I—I'm not sure. I know she was with Miss Primrose for half an hour this evening, and she came out of her study looking jolly pleased with herself. I followed her to her study and saw her starting to change for going out. She was putting on an evening gown."

"Oh, golly!" groaned Clara. "That means Primmy's accepted her invitation to go to the theatre all right. Babs, what are we going to do?"

"There's only one thing to do!" Babs said instantly. "Good job for us that Myra Brownlow is duty prefect, and Myra doesn't look too closely into things. We've got to rush off to the theatre and warn Dulcia. Clara, will you make up two dummies in our beds? It'll look then, when Myra comes in to turn out the lights, as if we're in bed and asleep. Mabs and I will go!"

"But Mabs and you won't go," Clara fiercely objected. "If Dulcia's going to be warned, I'm having a hand in it."

"But the cricket match? Supposing we're caught?"

"We'll risk that, and I'll risk the cricket match. In any case," Clara said recklessly, "if Dulcia's caught, she won't be playing, so why the dickens should I worry? Mabs, you do the dummy rigging. Come on, Babs!"

"But look here—" Mabs protested. "Rats! Babs, come on!"

And Clara, almost fiercely, caught the leader of the Fourth Form by the shoulder. Together they hurried off. Just a pause in the cloak-room to don hats and coats, and then a mad scamper for the main entrance. Fortunately, they got out without being spotted.

As luck would have it, they were just in time to catch the bus at that moment following past the school. A little after half-past eight they dismounted at the Market Cross, in Courtfield, and breathlessly hurried towards the stage door of the theatre. A uniformed commissioner, forbidding in aspect, barred

their passage as they would have darted in.

"Hey, hey, wait a minute!" he said. "None of that there, young ladies. Who do you want?"

"A— a friend of ours. Miss Dulcia Fairbrother."

"Miss Dulcia who? Never heard of her," declared the commissionaire.

"But she's in the theatre!" cried Babs.

"Never heard of her," the commissionaire said stolidly.

"She's a friend of— of Miss Neave!" Clara cried.

"Then I'm sorry," the commissionaire frowned. "If it's Miss Neave you want to see, you can't. Miss Neave is in her dressing-room, and my orders is to admit nobody who hasn't got an appointment."

Clara and Babs gulped desperately. "Oh, goodness!" Babs gasped. "Can we see the manager?"

"You can't; the manager's busy. Now hop it."

"But look here—"

"Hop it," the commissionaire frowned.

Despairingly the two looked at each other. But there was no help for it. Babs caught Clara's arm.

"Come on round to the front. We might get in there."

But they had no better luck at the front. Apparently the girl Connie had spoken to that morning was the only one who had heard of Dulcia Fairbrother—and that girl wasn't there.

"Well, we've got to see Dulcia! And to see Dulcia we've got to get in," Babs said desperately. "And there's only one way to get in— buy tickets. Got enough money, Clara?"

"No, about a bob I think," Clara said. "You—"

"Only sixpence."

"Then what are we to do?"

Blankly they stared at each other. What, indeed? Dulcia was in there— Dulcia, all unmindful of the peril which was about to overtake her. They were still staring when a jovial voice spoke at their elbow.

"Hallo, girls! What's the matter? Want to see the show?"

They both spun round. A man, plump, genial, his eyes twinkling with fun, was staring down at them.

"Well, yes," Babs said. "But—but we've got no money, you see—"

"Oh, is that all?" The man laughed again. "Then allow me— please," he said, his face wreathed in smiles.

"Please do. Two pit stalls for these young ladies," he added, and put down the money. "No— let me, please. It's not often I feel generous, so don't thwart me. So long! See you in the interval, perhaps—" and while Clara and Babs goggled, beaming at each other in delighted amazement, he strode through the curtains.

"Well, of all the fairy godfathers!" breathed Babs. "Wonder who he is! Clara, we're in luck, after all!"

In luck they were— up to a point. But the great thing was to see Dulcia. In they went; anxiously they looked round. Dulcia, however, was not to be seen in the audience.

"Perhaps she hasn't come after all," Babs suggested. "Look out! Here's Primmy and Connie!"

Miss Primrose and Connie Jackson it was. They came walking down the aisle at that moment, steering for the stalls. So close did the Head pass to Babs, that she felt the wind of her flouncy skirt as she rustled by. Four rows farther down, midway along the row, they took their seats. Babs breathed more freely.

"Look at Connie!" she said.

For Connie, like a cat on hot bricks, was twisting and turning, her eyes peering this way and that. It was obvious what Connie hoped to find— Dulcia.

Clara chuckled a little.

"I believe we're all up a gum-tree," she said. "Old Dulcia's not here, after all. She's not in the stalls. She's not in the pit, that's sure, and if she's in the circle she's bound to have seen Connie and Primmy herself. Probably she's helping Miss Neave in her dressing-room. What about settling down to enjoy the old play now?"

It seemed a good idea. It was, in fact, the only idea. Wherever Dulcia was, she was not on public view, so what need to worry further?

Babs bought a programme, showing the names of the cast; the orchestra crashed out, and the curtain rang up. The two chums settled back.

"Not bad," Clara said, as the first scene came to an end. "But when does this Neave girl appear? Poor old

the hall seemed to be feeling the compelling charm of the girl on the stage. But Babs and Clara sat silent, in wonderment and dismay. Dulcia was playing in the play! Dulcia, whom they had expected to find in the audience or the dressing-room of Sonia Neave, was an actual star in the piece! How came that? How was Dulcia Sonia Neave? How could Dulcia, as the papers said, have fought her way from the chorus to a front rank star? How—

"Look at Primmy!" muttered Clara.

But Babs was. Miss Primrose was sitting as rigidly upright as though she was resting on porcupine quills. Connie, beside her, was grinning.

The chums groaned. It seemed all up. Dulcia was spotted. Connie, her vengeance achieved, was satisfied. But Dulcia, on the stage, unconscious of the audience in front of her, was going on— and even Clara, who was no judge of acting, knew she was good. The curtain dropped on the second act. Miss



BABS and Clara slipped out of the room, leaving their chum seated in Dulcia's chair. It was all just a little scheme to save their captain from Connie Jackson's spite.

Mabs! Wouldn't she like to be here. And Connie," she giggled, "mustn't she be feeling fed up—"

"Shush, here's scene two," Babs said.

The curtain went up again, depicting a lawn before a feudal castle. On to the stage strode two figures. One was dark and tall, the other graceful, medium in height, with a wealth of fair hair. Babs craned forward, staring.

"Clara!" she breathed.

But Clara was sitting as though turned to stone.

"D-Dulcia!" she stuttered. "Dulcia! Oh, great goodness, she's playing the part of Rosalind! Babs, it isn't Dulcia!"

But it was Dulcia. The gesture she made with one hand before she spoke was so reminiscent of Dulcia. It was exactly the same little gesture she had made in the Sixth Form play. Exactly as she acted in that was she acting now. If there were any remaining doubts they were instantly dispelled when Dulcia clearly, ringingly, spoke her first lines.

There was silence. Everybody in

Primrose and Connie could be seen talking. Miss Primrose, her face sharp with anger, her eyes glinting, Connie shaking her head.

Next act. Then the dazed Babs rose just before the final curtain.

"Come on! Now's our chance," she whispered. "Dulcia doesn't know. We've got to rush off and warn her."

"Oh golly! What does it all mean? How on earth— But come on!"

Together they stole from their seats. All eyes were now concentrated on the stage. They reached the passage near the stage. Breathlessly they doubled along it. A door was on their right. They bolted through it just as a thunderous burst of cheering heralded the ringing down of the curtain.

"It's all over," Babs cried. "And— listen! They're calling for Miss Neave! They don't know it's Dulcia!"

They stood, hearts thumping. A group of stage hands just in front were too busy watching through the wings to pay them attention. They paused for a few seconds. A final roar of applause; the orchestra thundered out "God Save

the King." Then suddenly in front of them limped a figure.

It was the figure of a young and rather pretty woman. Babs recognised it at once from photographs she had seen outside.

Sonia Neave!

Now Dulcia, surrounded by admirers, was coming off the stage.

"Dulcia—Dulcia!" cried Sonia. "Oh, Dulcia, how splendid! Better than ever, Dulcia! Better than—Hallo!" she cried in surprise as Babs and Clara rushed forward. "Who are you?"

"Barbara!" cried Dulcia, starting back.

"Dulcia, quick!" Babs hissed. "Primmy's here! She's here with Connie Jackson. Get back to school!" Dulcia bit her lip.

"But how can she be here—"

"Dulcia," Clara cried desperately, "go!"

Dulcia trembled. Her face, hidden under her make-up, was white then. She turned, and at the same time:

"Dulcia!" cried a voice—or, rather, two voices—the voices of Miss Primrose and Connie Jackson together.

Dulcia fell back as Miss Primrose, followed by Connie and a gesticulating manager, approached.

"Dulcia, what does this mean? What are you doing out of bounds?" Miss Primrose stormed. "What do you mean by acting in a public theatre without permission? Is this the example you are expected to set the school?"

"Miss Primrose—" Dulcia said desperately.

"And what," Miss Primrose went on thunderously, "are Barbara and Clara doing here? No, never mind. I will deal with them later! Never, never in my life have I heard of such conduct and such gross-breaking of rules on the part of a Head Girl! You understand, Dulcia, that I shall suspend you for this?"

"Miss Primrose—" Clara cried.

"Be silent, Clara!"

"But, Miss Primrose!" It was Sonia Neave who spoke; and Miss Primrose, staring at her, started. "Miss Primrose, as one of your old head girls, please let me explain," she said.

"Good gracious, isn't it Nellie Jackson?"

"Miss Primrose, yes. I am not known here as Nellie Jackson. My stage name," Nellie said, with a glance at her sister, who had fallen back, "is Sonia Neave. Miss Primrose, please listen!" she pleaded. "Dulcia may have done wrong in one respect, but surely it is not wrong for one Cliff House girl to stand by another, and that is the only crime she has been guilty of. I got my chance in the play after waiting for years. I was to have appeared here as Rosalind. On the very day the play was to have opened I had an accident, spraining my leg. We hadn't an understudy. Dulcia, with the manager's consent, took my part—and, to save a lot of bother, also took my name. If she hadn't, it would have meant that some other actress would have been given my contract. She saved that for me—"

Miss Primrose's lips compressed. "Dulcia," she said, "should have consulted me."

"But, Miss Primrose, you wouldn't have given me permission to carry on indefinitely," Dulcia cried.

"Most certainly I should not, and I do not give you permission to stay here now," Miss Primrose said. "I may take into consideration all the circumstances, Dulcia, but I warn you, you are suspended from this moment. Come!"

Nellie Jackson fell back. At the same moment from behind Miss Primrose there came another voice, and Clara and Babs wheeled to stare at the genial, plump man who had paid for their admission to the theatre.

"Not so fast, not so fast," he cried warmly. "Let me have my little say in this! Hallo, Connie!" he said, rather curtly, and Connie's jaw dropped. "Hallo, Nellie!" And Nellie started as if she had seen a ghost. "Miss Primrose, you know me?"

"Why, Mr. Jackson—Constance's father?" Miss Primrose said.

"Exactly!" Mr. Jackson looked grim. "And I've just heard things. I've seen things. I saw Connie in the audience, for instance. I saw her jumping about as if she were looking for someone. I may have left school a long time, Miss Primrose, but I can still put two and two together. If Connie isn't proud of Nellie and Dulcia, then I am, and I tell you, Miss Primrose, that if you punish Dulcia for what she has done, I shall never think the same of you again—"

"R-really, sir!" Miss Primrose stammered.

"Because," Mr. Jackson went on, "it was Dulcia, indirectly, who has helped me to find Nellie. I've been searching for her for four years, Miss Primrose. I've been wanting her. If Dulcia hadn't put up such a brilliant performance in her name, her photograph would never have been in the papers, and I should never have recognised it. Whether Dulcia meant to or not, she has given me back my daughter. For that, Miss Primrose, there can be no punishment, only praise." He took Nellie by the arm.

"My dear," he softly murmured. "Well, Miss Primrose?"

Connie scowled furiously. "Dulcia's done wrong! Dulcia is suspended!" she grated.

"Connie, please!" Miss Primrose was shaken. She looked at Nellie, whose expression was pleading, beseeching. She looked at Dulcia, who was biting her lip. She looked at Mr. Jackson, and at Connie. The prefect's face alive with fury and fear as she saw all that she had schemed for in danger of slipping away from her.

"Er—er—ahem, ahem!" Miss Primrose shook her head thoughtfully. "I—I may alter my decision. I may—er—think over it. Dulcia must be punished. Dulcia, I suspend you for two days!"

"But the cricket match—" Clara cried.

"Clara, silence! I am thinking of that!" Miss Primrose answered. "Dulcia, you will captain the team to-morrow. From to-morrow night you will consider yourself suspended until next Tuesday morning!"

"But look here!" Connie almost shrieked.

"And please, Connie, do not make scenes in a public theatre. Dulcia, if you would care for a lift back in my car? And you, too, Barbara and Clara."

The faces of Babs and Clara broke into a smile. Dulcia, almost quivering with relieved joy, was caught and rapturously kissed by the girl she had impersonated. Connie, scowling, bestowed a bitter look upon her, and her father, intercepting it, grimly shook his head. As she slunk away, he smiled at Clara and Babs.

"Good girls, good girls!" he said. "But push off now. See you to-morrow!"

And to-morrow he did see them, and to-morrow when Cliff House had won its match, and Clara and Dulcia made the record partnership of the match, he took them all into Eastbourne's finest restaurant, and stood them the most wonderful tea they had ever eaten. Sonia was not there, however, for Sonia, fit again, was back in the cast of the play as Rosalind.

Neither was Connie, Connie, back at Cliff House, was scowling and muttering in her own study.

Her rival, thanks to the assistance of those little cats from the Fourth—who, having told their story to Miss Primrose, had only received a wiggling, after all—had triumphed in the end. The Prodigal Daughter, thanks to that rival, had been restored to the family fold, and, as far as Connie was concerned, there was no joy in life at all!

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.



"Babs—Babs! Don't go in there!
I've just heard the—the ghost!"

"But Barbara Redfern & Co., of the Fourth Form at Cliff House School, merely smiled. It was just like superstitious Gladys Norman to imagine a scare like that. Ghost? Piffle! they decided, and went on to the school studio to resume work on some scenery for the Visitor's Day entertainment. 'But—was it piffle? Very soon Babs & Co. began to wonder, for weird things DID happen in that studio—frightening, inexplicable things; eerie voices, a spectral figure, the mutilation of their precious work. It seemed that the famous chums, utterly baffled, would never be able to finish their task in time. And then—that strange, far-seeing Fourth-former Jemima Carstairs decided to take a hand.

This thrilling Cliff House story is quite one of the finest HILDA RICHARDS has ever written. Don't miss it. And remember, it appears—

COMPLETE NEXT WEEK

Another sparkling COMPLETE laughter-story featuring those delightful funsters—



COUSIN GEORGE & THE IMP

Breaking In!

I SUPPOSE, Hetty, you can't find your key?"

Hetty Sonning's Cousin George spoke in a superior tone. He was a superior boy; two years older than Hetty, as wise as an owl, sophisticated as any man of the world, astute, cautious, learned—or, anyway, he thought so himself.

And now, leaning on his cycle, with a lofty smile he watched Hetty groping in her pocket for the doorkey.

Hetty did not answer, but she hoped fiercely that she would find the key and turn the laugh against Cousin George.

Unfortunately, the key refused to appear.

"It's a funny thing, but I can't find it," she had to admit, frowning.

Cousin George wheeled his cycle forward, rested it against the hedge, and then wagged a forefinger at Hetty.

"A place for everything—and everything in its place. I suppose you have heard that saying?"

"About two million times!" said Hetty crossly. "And, anyway, what's the good of jawing? You've scored—"

"Jawing?" frowned Cousin George. "Isn't that rather a slangy phrase for a girl to use, Hetty? I've asked you hundreds of times not to use slang. It lets you down—"

Hetty breathed hard. There were times when she wished that Cousin George was not her elder, and that she was not a guest in his mother's house; and that he was not, practically speaking, in charge of her. For had he not been, this was an occasion when she might reasonably have boxed his ears.

"Yes, Cousin George," she managed to say meekly. "I'm sorry. But Uncle Tom is coming, and we've got to meet him at the station. I've got to get in and wash and change. Aunt said we were to."

Cousin George walked to the door of his home, putting his hand in his trousers pocket at the right side. He groped, took it out, and tried the left pocket.

Hetty's eyes brightened. "Golly!" she breathed. "He's lost his! Yes—no! Yes—no!"

Cousin George dived his hand from

Together they turned from staring at that remarkable figure. "Uncle Tom," breathed George. "Uncle T——" Hetty began, then started. Cousin George, fancying he knew everything, might believe that this was Uncle Tom from Australia; but Hetty didn't. She was sure he was—a burglar!

pocket to pocket; and then, frowning heavily, turned.

What Hetty wanted to do was to giggle and giggle and giggle; but Cousin George was touchy, and she was tired of lectures.

"Oh, Cousin George," she said, with mock roguishness, "do stop teasing and pretending you can't find it!"

Cousin George went red. "I—I—er— Ahem!" he stammered. And Hetty crept back to watch.

"Cousin George," Hetty piped, "you don't mean you've really lost your key, too?"

Cousin George did not answer; he marched to the door and banged.

"It's no good; Nellie's out," said Hetty. "She won't be back until six. If you've lost your key we shall have to break in somehow."

"Break in?" said Cousin George, staring.

"Well, I can't get through the letter-box," pointed out Hetty; "and, unless we stand here like a couple of mutts until uncle arrives—"

"That's quite enough," George said coldly. "I shall get in without breaking anything. It so happens that there is a window upstairs partly open."

Hetty looked up at that window and grimaced; for it was a good twenty feet or more from the ground, without any noticeable way of being reached.

"You'll need to take a pretty long run if you're going to jump to that sill, Cousin George," she said meekly. "Or shall I make a back?"

"Make a back!" he scoffed. "Don't be ludicrous. Do use your brain. I shall get a ladder from the shed, of course."

Hetty nodded sagely, chuckling inside because her cousin was much too serious-minded to know when his leg was being pulled.

"Help me with the ladder," he said in a tone of command, "and be careful with it! I've seen silly, clumsy duffers break windows before now."

"Yes, Cousin George," piped Hetty. "And that's the last thing we want to do."

"It certainly is. You may think breaking a window is the only way of getting in, but I'll show you," he said.

And, opening the shed door, he dragged out a ladder.

"Now, steady!" warned Cousin George. "You'd better leave this entirely to me."

He got it scientifically in the middle, carried it along, and then hoisted it a bit.

"I've seen Bob Biggs lift a ladder right over his head," said Hetty. "Of course, he was unusually strong."

"Any fool can lift a ladder over his head!" said Cousin George.

And, to prove it, he hoisted the ladder up, determined that Hetty's hero of her past—Bob Biggs—should not seem to be better at anything than he was.

Unfortunately, Bob Biggs was obviously a super-boy, for the trick was not so easy; and George, heaving the ladder up, tottered, lost his balance, lurched, and swung the ladder round in a wild arc.

Crash!

The end of the ladder made a hole in the lounge window.

Hetty did not speak; she was too convulsed with mirth.

By a tremendous effort Cousin George managed to get the foot of the ladder under control, and hoisted the end up so that it dropped just short of the sill.

"Hold the ladder, and don't chatter!" he snapped.

By IDA MELBOURNE

"Yes. But why can't we get in through this lounge window now it's busted?" asked Hetty reasonably. "Why go to all this trouble?"

It was a pretty sound idea, as Cousin George realised, but he was the kind of boy who did not take advice from girls.

"If you want to be cut to bits with broken glass, I don't," he said loftily. "Hold the ladder while I go up it."

He mounted steadily, reached the sill, climbed on until he was staring through the window, and then—suddenly lost his footing and came jolting down, hand over hand.

"Well?" said Hetty blankly.

Cousin George looked aloft, put his fingers to his lips, and grabbed her arm.

"Shush!"

"Wh-what's wrong?" blinked Hetty.

"Wrong? Plenty! There's a burglar in that room!"

Hetty's eyes rounded wide.

"A b-burglar?"

"A burglar!" he hissed. "Not a word! We've got to nab him red-handed."

"Did he see you?"

"No; he was lying on the bed, dozing."

It sounded odd to Hetty, and she frowned a little; for she thought burglars were busy men, who hurried around the place filling sacks with

silver, keeping ears and eyes alert. To go to sleep seemed risky for a burglar, and she said so.

"I know what I saw. I'm not a fool," said Cousin George. "You stay here—I'm going in through this window."

He crept to the window, which the ladder had broken, unfastened the catch, and opened it. Climbing over the settee, he crossed the room on tiptoe.

Hetty waited only until he reached the sitting-room door, and then followed.

"Cousin George—be careful!" she whispered.

"Go back!" he hissed.

Hetty watched him carefully mount the stairs. Whatever his faults were, Cousin George most certainly had plenty of pluck!

But the thought struck Hetty that telephoning the police wouldn't be a bad idea, so she tiptoed into the hall, took a step to the telephone, and there she halted.

Hanging on the hallstand was a piece of paper, on which a message had been printed, in capitals, in ink!

"DON'T DISTURB. ARRIVED EARLY. SLEEPING AFTER JOURNEY IN SPARE ROOM.

UNCLE TOM."

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.

Redland Gulch, five miles away, than—

But I mustn't say too much or I shall spoil Miss Leslie's story. I will just breathe the one word—rustlers!—and then add that the activities of those cowardly sneak-thieves in the district plunge Fay and her father and brothers—everyone on their little ranch, indeed, though more particularly Fay—into a round of mystery, suspicion, and humandrama that will hold you spellbound.

Although you are sure to be sorry to say good-bye to those old friends, "The Jungle Hikers," I know you will love meeting a host of new friends in romantic Texas.

Be sure not to miss the opening chapters of this wonderful story, but order next week's SCHOOLGIRL at once. Then you will not only be certain of meeting Fay Thornton, but also of renewing your acquaintance with world-favourites

BARBARA REDFERN & CO.

And what a breathlessly exciting time the famous Cliff House chums have, too. At work in an art studio which is haunted!

Weird voices are heard, apparently coming from nowhere. And when the chums investigate they are completely baffled—not to mention comically terrified in the case of dear old Bessie Bunter.

Then that strange Fourth Former, Jemima Carstairs takes a hand, and being Jemima, so cool, so tantalising, and so mysterious herself, at the best of times, she only seems to make everything more baffling than ever. But that's just like "Jimmy." In the end she solves the mystery—and I shan't be saying too much if I tell you that the Co. are almost astounded at the explanation as they were by all the inexplicable happenings.

In addition to Hilda Richards' great yarn—"The Haunted Studio!"—our next issue contains another topping, COMPLETE "Cousin George and the 'Imp' story," more of Patricia's bright and interesting pages, and another Cliff House Pet.

With best wishes,

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

Wanted—a Wheeze!

Cousin George mounted the stairs on tiptoe. He was a bit nervous, but in front of Hetty he was not going to flinch, for he knew that Bob Biggs would not have flinched.

Always before George was this hero, Bob Biggs, whom Hetty was never tired of lauding, and in his secret heart, George at times felt a little inferior to him.

As a strict matter of fact, there was no such person as Bob Biggs, but having invented him once, to make George jealous, Hetty had kept him alive.

"I'll show her!" vowed Cousin George. "I'll fix this fellow single-handed!"

Not being completely reckless, however, George placed an artful trap outside the spare-room door. He put a chair down, arranged a cold-water jug ready for the contents to be flung, fetched a blanket, to throw over his victim, and, as a final thought, fetched a pillow. A good slam from a pillow would knock a man flat.

From the bottom of the stairs Hetty called:

"Cousin George—"

He rushed to the stairs, finger to lips.

"Shush!"

"But George—" she protested.

"Will you be quiet?"

He descended the stairs and shook his fist.

"Do you want to warn him?" he demanded. "Next thing we know, he'll be escaping—"

"If he were a burglar," Hetty agreed. "But he isn't."

And she showed him the note. It was such a shock to Cousin George that he reeled against the banisters.

"A nice thing—playing jokes on uncle!" reproved Hetty. "After this he won't take us to London, as he said—won't take us to the Zoo—"

Cousin George crumpled the note in his hand, turned, and briskly mounted the stairs.

But at that moment the door above opened; a man emerged, tripped, fell headlong, knocked over the water-jug, rolled in the water, and, scrambling up, caught his foot in the blanket, and went down smack again.

"Wow!" yelled Hetty. "Oh golly! This is our finish!"

And it certainly seemed that Uncle Tom, recently arrived home from Australia, would not be flinging his arms around their necks and hugging them! In fact, he might be so furious that he would march out of the house.

Cousin George mounted the stairs, and then halted as his victim kicked the blanket clear and stood scowling.

"Sus-su-sorry, uncle!" he faltered. "Awfully sorry, uncle! I—I thought you were a burglar, uncle!"

"A burglar? You—you thought I was a burglar?" said Uncle Tom, in shocked, surprised tone.

"Well, you see, uncle, I didn't see the note at once," explained George anxiously. "We thought you hadn't arrived yet."

Hetty, peering up to get her first glimpse of her uncle, had a shock. She had never seen Uncle Tom before, but she had seen a snapshot of him—and he was fifteen stone, jovial, and greying.

But the man at the top of the stairs was of slight build, and dark-haired.

"Er—er—well, very pleased to meet you, nephew!" he said, in an odd, uneasy tone.

Cousin George beamed.

BETWEEN OURSELVES



MY DEAR READERS,—Last week, you will remember, I mentioned a treat in store for you all. This week I am going to give you full exciting details of that treat. And because they really are exciting, and I am just as eager to tell you all about them as you, I am sure, are to hear them, I won't delay another moment.

Here, then, is the thrilling news.

Next Saturday's issue of the SCHOOLGIRL will contain the first enthralling instalment of

"GIRL RIDER OF THE BLUE HILLS!"

a superb, true-to-life story of the Golden West. The author is Miss Doris Leslie, who has written several very popular stories for our sister-paper, the "Girl's Crystal," and I know you will soon be won over to the ranks of her admirers.

"Girl Rider of the Blue Hills!" is something most thrillingly new in the way of stories. Its heroine, Fay Thornton, is a new kind of heroine. Born and bred on a ranch, brought up among cowboys, cattle, horses, used to the life of the once Wild West since she was a baby, Fay is so self-reliant and resourceful that, when her father is away, the cowboys look upon her as their "boss."

But Fay is also a capable little person about the home. Her two young brothers, aged nine and six—who will win your hearts, I know—look upon her as though she were their mother. Her father is justly proud of her, and she of him.

And yet Fay, despite her strength of character, can be very tender and gentle when the occasion demands. She has to be both tender and capable, for scarcely has the story begun and her brothers sent safely on their way to school in

"You forgive me, uncle?" he said.
 "Yes; but don't let it happen again, my boy."
 "Oh, gosh! You're a sport, uncle! If mother got to hear of this— You won't tell her?" George ended anxiously.

Hetty mounted the stairs slowly, puzzled by Uncle Tom's unexpected appearance. He was rather shabbily dressed, with an ill-fitting sweater under his jacket, and a spotted kerchief at his neck.

Also, what struck her as being very queer was that he had strips of blanket tied round his boots.

Hetty stood stock-still, blinking, as a startling idea came to her mind!

The more she looked at this curious man the more convinced she was that he couldn't possibly be Uncle Tom. And yet he said he was!

"Put your mind at rest, chummie," said the supposed Uncle Tom, rubbing his shin. "I won't tell your ma; but if you'll excuse me, I'll be popping back to the station with my bag."

And with a nod at Cousin George he went back into the bed-room and appeared again with a suitcase which seemed to be very heavy.

Hetty moved back, and her eyes gleamed.

"Golly, a burglar after all!" she told herself with a thrill. "Playing up—pretending to be Uncle Tom. Wow!"

Cousin George, delighted that his awful blunder had been forgiven, was eager to help. He wanted to carry the suitcase, and he apologised four times more.

Down in the hall Hetty waited, thinking hard, wondering what to do for the best, but determined above all that the burglar should not just walk out of the house with that heavy case.

"Sall right, laddie—I can carry a bag," said the supposed Uncle Tom. "Law lumme, when I was in Canada—"

"Australia, surely, uncle?" said Hetty.

He looked at her and grinned.

"Hark at me—Canada! I'll be saying India next! Of course I mean Australia. And how are you, my dear?" he said, watching her expression closely.

"Fine, thank you, uncle," Hetty said brightly. "But you're not going off at once. Let me get you some tea. And, besides—look, you've still got your bed-socks on!"

The supposed Uncle Tom glanced down at his boots, and gave a start.

"Look at me," he said—"still got the pads on. Always put these on when—er—when I have forty winks. I walk in my sleep, you see—sometimes."

He didn't seem sure that it sounded convincing, and there was something wary in his expression.

Reaching the hall, he gladly put down the heavy bag and rubbed his hands, while Cousin George followed down the stairs. Then, sitting down, the pseudo Uncle Tom removed the blanket pads from his boots and pocketed them.

"A nice sight I should have looked walking to the station like this. Must be losing my nerve—I mean—getting absent-minded," he said, with a quick look at Hetty.

Hetty kept her face still.

"Uncle, we won't let you go now," she said playfully. "Take his bag and hide it, George—"

"Uncle Tom" jumped up.

"Hey—you leave that alone!" he exclaimed, as Hetty tried to lift it. "It's got—it's my dress suit in it."

Hetty lowered it with a bump and gasped



WHILE Cousin George hid his face, the Imp turned to the burglar. "Go on. You hide in there. And I bet you don't find the hidden jewels," she said, pointing to the cupboard. The burglar crept inside, and Hetty hid a smile of triumph. She'd tricked him!

"Uncle, you don't dress in armour, do you?" she asked. "Seems like it by the weight"

"Well, it's got the studs in, too," he said awkwardly. "And a picture of the ranch in Orstralia. And my revolvers—and my favourite saddle—"

"What—a saddle in that suitcase?" said Cousin George.

"Of course," retorted Hetty. "Anyway, uncle's not leaving us now. He's having tea. Take the case, George, and put it away. Lock it in the dining-room."

She tried to give him a meaning look, but Cousin George had not had time to suspect anything. He just glared reproachfully, and so enabled Uncle Tom to pick up the suitcase again.

By this time not a shred of doubt remained in Hetty's mind. The man was a burglar!

Something had to be done. The burglar had to be captured, and the contents of that case saved—without arousing his suspicion.

"Hetty, make uncle some tea," said George, with a lordly movement of the hand. "I can take his bag to the station while he's having it."

The supposed Uncle Tom mopped his brow. He was just as hot as though it was a burning day, and he had been lying too long in the sun.

"If uncle doesn't want tea, we needn't force him, Cousin George," Hetty said. "But I tell you what, let's play hide-and-peek!"

It was such a staggering suggestion that Cousin George just gaped and the burglar goggled. As an alternative to having tea it was odd.

"Hide-and-peek?" said George, frowning. "Have you gone off your head? Do you seriously think that uncle wants to play hide-and-peek the moment he arrives? He's tired."

Hetty tossed her head.

"Well, I think uncle's a sport—I can see he is. If you and I went and hid, I'm sure uncle would love trying to find us."

The suggestion struck George as being plump crazy. And if Uncle Tom had spoken sharply in rebuke to Hetty he wouldn't have been a bit surprised.

But he was surprised now; for Uncle Tom fairly leaped at the idea.

"Now that's what I call sense," he said eagerly. "You two run off and hide, and I'll count a thousand and then look for you, eh?"

Hetty clapped her hands.

"There—I knew he was a sport," she said in delight.

"Oh, I'm a sport! I like a nice game of hide-and-peek," said the burglar, chuckling. "And you two will find some artful place to hide all right. Might take me an hour to find you, but I don't mind. I'm a sport."

Hetty's eyes glimmered; for she had been quite sure he would be tricked. Ever since he had come downstairs he had obviously been wondering how to give them the slip. Here was his chance.

"Well, if you like the idea, uncle," said George slowly. "It's rather a kid's game, really—"

"No, no. You buzz along and hide. We play it for hours at a time in Orstralia, up and down the High Street, in Sydney," said the burglar, rubbing his hands. "Go on—hide—"

But Hetty sprang a little surprise. She snapped her fingers and gave an exclamation of delight at a new idea, and then winked at the burglar, who winked back without knowing why.

"I've got a better idea!" Hetty exclaimed. "We'll hide, uncle, and George can find us."

The burglar's delight vanished; it didn't seem so good to him.

"Oh, no, no!" he said.

But Hetty took his arm and lowered her voice.

"I know just the place for you to hide, uncle," she said, with a giggle. "There's a secret cupboard under the stairs where aunt keeps her jewels. We're not supposed to know, and George wouldn't think of it. You could hide there."

The burglar gave a little jump and whistled.

"My eye! Hey," he said softly, "That's an idea!"

Then he looked at Cousin George.

"Hide your eyes and count five hundred," he said. "Then come and search."

He gave a thoughtful look at the suitcase, and then followed Hetty, who led

him to a cupboard under the stairs.

"In there," she whispered. "And I bet you a bob, uncle, you can't find the jewel-case."

"No?" he said. "The bet's on. Where are you hiding?"

He crept into the cupboard.

"Bottom of the garden. That all right?" breathed Hetty.

"Good!"

He crouched inside and pulled the door to. Then, from outside, Hetty gave it a good secure push and turned the key in the lock.

George Blunders On!

HETTY'S eyes danced with excitement.

Thanks to the burglar's greed he had been trapped. After Hetty's feeble suggestion of a game of hide-and-seek he had taken her for a mutt, and really believed the story about the jewel-case.

Before calling George she grabbed the heavy suitcase and struggled to open it.

"Hetty, what are you doing?" he cried. "Put that case down!"

"Guess what's inside."

"I'm not going to guess, you nasty little spy!" he said hotly.

"It's full of silver. Help me open it. The locks are jammed," said Hetty.

"Put it down! So this is your game of hide-and-seek—just a trick to pry into uncle's case."

He pushed Hetty from the case, snatched it up, and took it to the dining-room. But Hetty followed him in.

She looked at the mantelpiece and whistled softly.

"The clock," she murmured. "The silver candlesticks, the cigarette-lighter and box."

They were all missing from their usual places. "Uncle Tom" had made a haul! And there were other things missing, too!

Excitedly she turned to point out the facts to Cousin George, when she saw him lifting the suitcase again.

"George!" she exclaimed.

But George fended her off, swung the case through the door and himself after it, and then turned the key in the lock.

"You can stay there, Hetty!" he snapped.

Hetty thumped the panels.

"He's not Uncle Tom! He's a burglar! That case is full of our silver! George—George!"

But Cousin George was already rushing to the stair cupboard, from which came banging and thumping.

With deep horror he realised that Hetty had locked Uncle Tom in the meter cupboard, and with trembling fingers he turned the key.

Out came the burglar, red-faced and scared-looking.

"Uncle, I'm sorry!" faltered Cousin George. "But Hetty's got no sense of fitness—"

"Where is she?" said the burglar sharply. He had taken Hetty's measure at last.

"I've locked her in the dining-room," said George. "Uncle, you're not going?"

The burglar heaved a sigh.

"Going I am, and quick," he said. "Go to your room, my boy—straight to bed, and no supper. I'll speak to your ma about this."

And, leaving George on the landing, he grabbed his bag and went out of the house as though he had a train to catch.

Cousin George, heavy-hearted, went up to his bed-room. He had not been

sent to bed since his early childhood, and he wriggled at the mere idea of it. And yet an order had to be obeyed.

He might even have obeyed it, too, had he not noticed that that silver cup which usually stood on his mantelpiece was gone. He had won it in the school spelling bee, and it was one of his most prized possessions.

"My cup!" he cried. "Great goodness! Hetty—Hetty—"

He charged downstairs, and almost ran into Hetty as she came through the front door, having climbed out of the dining-room window.

"George! Where is he?"

"Uncle Tom?"

"No; the burglar!"

Cousin George gaped at her.

"You didn't let him get out?" panted Hetty. "My golly, don't say you did, George! He's got all the silver in that case—the cutlery, a clock, candlesticks, the lighter—"

George gave a jump of sudden understanding.

"My cup! You mean he's really a burglar? Hetty, you knew it, and didn't stop him? But—but—pshaw!"

Hetty grabbed him by the jacket lapels.

"George, did you let him out? Of course he's a burglar! Uncle Tom weighs fifteen stone. He's older, too!"

Cousin George was pale; but, with a startled gasp, a war-like cry, he rushed to the door.

"He's got my cup! He's bolted! I let him out!"

Hetty moaned in despair, and then ran after him to the drive; but the bird had flown. "Uncle Tom" had gone.

"I said he was a burglar in the first place," said Cousin George. "Let this be a lesson to you, interfering. I knew directly I looked at him he was a burglar. Then you said he was Uncle Tom."

"I didn't. I showed you the notice."

Cousin George snapped his fingers.

"Don't shilly-shally," he said.

"You've made a nice mess of things! If you knew what was in the suitcase why didn't you open it?"

"Because you stopped me."

"Well, why didn't you tell me what was in it? I could have stopped him."

Cousin George protested in despair.

"Now he's got away with everything."

But Hetty ran round the house, to return with her cycle and George's; for this was a time for action, not words.

"Come on," she said. "We've got to stop him."

But Cousin George held her back.

"Not you," he said sharply. "He'll be tough. He may be armed. If he knows the game is up, he'll be desperate, Hetty. He's probably gone across the field. I can easily catch him up."

But this time it was Hetty who held back. She grabbed his machine.

"Cousin George, don't be reckless," she said seriously. "He might be armed, as you say. There's only one thing to do—bluff. If he has gone over the field, then there's a chance yet."

The sound of a car was heard in the drive, and of a well-known horn.

"Mother!" gasped George.

"All right, all right—leave her to me," said Hetty briskly. "And listen, here's the idea—"

She explained it in detail, then turning, ran to greet Aunt Miriam and tell her that Uncle Tom was not in the house, and that they had better go to the station to meet him.

THE BURGLAR, stumbling along, half-trotting, half-running, suddenly heard George on the cycle behind him, and halted grimly. The time had come to be tough.

"Uncle—wait for me, uncle!" George called.

The burglar stopped, and frowned at him.

"Well, what d'ye want?" he said.

"I'll show you the short cut, uncle," said George, putting Hetty's plan into practice.

"Short cut, son? Oh! Well, all right then."

George, chatting about Australia, led the way to a deepish brook across which was a narrow bridge. It was a short cut, and it was also a trap.

The burglar was half-way across when George, dropping his cycle, suddenly rushed and shoulder-charged "Uncle Tom" from behind like a mad bull.

The burglar went sprawling, dropped the bag, clutched the plank, and clung on to it.

Only his left foot went into the water, but the case went down and down. Scrambling up, he faced George, who dodged back, fists up.

"Come on, burglar!" he said grimly.

"You never took me in for a minute."

But the burglar, after one savage look at him, turned. Then, leaving the bag loaded with silver, he pelted over the bridge and through the trees.

MEANWHILE HETTY, in the rear of Aunt Miriam's little car, was driving to the station, and keeping her eyes wide open, not for Uncle Tom but for the burglar. Since the man was making for the station they should meet him soon.

And they did. A figure burst through the hedge, waving his arms.

"Aunt—stop! There's been an accident," cried Hetty, and dodged down behind the front seat as her aunt slowed and the man rushed up.

"Lady—can you give me a lift to the station?" the burglar panted. "Please—lady! Matter of life or death."

Aunt Miriam gladly said she would, and shot the car forward.

"Which station?" she asked. "Central or Local?"

A voice at the back answered. "Police station. He's a burglar!"

The burglar turned his head, saw Hetty, and nearly collapsed.

"Well, I—"

"It's a fair cop," said Hetty.

Aunt Miriam took one look at the burglar's startled face, and then accelerated fiercely, not slowing up until she reached the police station. In sullen silence, the burglar was escorted into the station by a sergeant. And there Hetty gave particulars while Aunt Miriam listened with round eyes.

When they finally reached home again, Uncle Tom was there. It appeared that he had arrived at the house earlier, had forced a window, gone up to rest, and then, unable to sleep, had found he had no tobacco. In the village they had not his special brand, so he had taken the bus to the near-by town.

A jovial, heavily-built man, he roared with laughter at the story.

"Well, well! Fancy the burglar diddling you, Hetty," he chuckled.

"Lucky George was on hand, eh?"

"Awfully lucky," said Hetty, with a look at George, who gave a smiling nod of agreement.

"I don't want to take all the credit," said Cousin George honestly. "Hetty played her part, mother."

"Then I am proud of you, too," said Aunt Miriam. "Go and wash your hands, my dear."

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

BE certain to meet these two irrepresible funsters again next week.

They'll be here, you know—waiting to greet you as cheerily as ever.

The dramatic concluding chapters of that superb story—



FOR NEW READERS.

TERESA FORRESTER, self-possessed and resourceful, and

LUISE RAYMOND, her more timorous chum, are on their way to meet Teresa's father in Africa when they become stranded.

With a quaint native girl, **FUZZY**, as guide, they set off by foot. When they help a white hunter, he gives them a talisman ring, which allows them to enter a native king's country. Teresa exposes a treacherous magician. The king gives them all jewels, but Fuzzy's are taken by the queen. Continuing their journey, they learn from the message of a native drummer that the magician has started a rebellion and captured Teresa's father. Teresa plans to try to save her father.

(Now read on.)

"Lion Speak!"

"COME, there's the drum!" Teresa cried.

She pointed through the thick jungle undergrowth, and at her side the little black girl Fuzzy stopped and peered intently at the hollow tree trunk which a black man was pounding.

Luise, hardly breathing, watched too.

The three girls and the black servant of Teresa's father had forged their way through the jungle, over uneven ground, through thick tangled undergrowth at which Bambo, the young elephant, had sometimes jibbed.

But they had arrived now, and could see the drummer at work, sending out messages by means of this simple broadcasting system. Another native crouched beside him.

"Now," whispered Teresa, "you know what to do, all of you? You," she said to her father's servant, "run up as though alarmed—spread the news—a white army on the way. Take care that they don't guess it is a trick—or—"

There was no need to warn him what might happen then. He could guess himself what would happen if these two black men thought he was an enemy.

The man sending out the drummed messages was old, but beside him was a younger warrior, armed. He was one of the insurgents, the black men who had risen against their king, the great Nompanyo, urged on by the evil magician.

But before the servant took the message, Teresa wanted to hear what was being sent out.

Little Fuzzy listened and interpreted, the black servant nodding approval of her translation.

"Big white chief captured," she said.

It was not news to them now. That white chief was Teresa's own father, on his way to meet them.

At a signal the black servant went forward, and Teresa, Luise, and Fuzzy,

**ONLY IN ONE WAY
CAN TERESA SAVE
HER FATHER FROM
THE REBEL BLACKS—
BY PRETENDING TO
TURN A LEOPARD IN-
TO THE NATIVE KING!**

concealing themselves well, began to watch.

Teresa hardly breathed as the loyal black servant rushed shouting to the drummers. Black people are good, natural actors, and this one played his part well. With starting eyes, fighting for breath, pointing and gesticulating, he had worked the drummer and the warrior into a fever of excitement and curiosity before they had an inkling of what he would say.

Something was wrong—something terrible had happened. What?

Then, as the warrior shook him, the servant spluttered out the news.

Teresa gave a sigh of relief as she saw the two men's agitation.

For a moment they conferred, and then got busy. The drum boomed—dom-a-dom-dom-dom-a-dom-dom!—f a r

away over hillside and valley, over the rolling plain.

"That'll scare them!" Teresa muttered.

"Then we're safe?" said Luise eagerly.

"Not safe," decided Teresa, "because the magician may guess that we've had some hand in this. But it'll give us breathing space."

They crept away from the scene as the message was drummed out.

"Oh, Terry, just suppose that message does frighten them and ends the rising," murmured Luise, "it might prevent a battle."

"Yes, it might," Teresa agreed, but without much hope. "Anyway, it will make the natives a little more wary about rushing on with things."

The thing to do now was to forge ahead away from the main path, and to return to King Nompanyo's old, ruined palace.

What had happened there they could but imagine.

The king had loyal soldiers and guards, so that if the magician had captured him by force, there must have been a terrific fight. But Teresa believed that the magician had worked by cunning.

It was hard going on this new route, but Bambo was a great help. His enormous weight and tough skin enabled him to brush aside all manner of obstacles. But now that they had moved from the beaten path there were jungle dangers to be faced.

Once they started up a dozing lion, and his roar scared Bambo almost into flight. Adolphus, the baby chimp, who had been asleep, leapt straight for a tree-branch and clung there.

But the lion, resting after a meal, fortunately hurried away. He had no

By
**ELIZABETH
CHESTER**

A word from Bessie Bunter!

"I SUS-SAY, YOU GIG-GIRLS . . ."

I'm so excited. Th-th-the Editor has asked me tut-to tell you all about the other stories f-f-featuring me and—and Bib-Babs & Co. You know, the ones that app-app—oh, dud-dear—now I've mum-made a big b-blot. . . ."

From which point onwards Bessie's letter was indecipherable. But what she meant to say was that you can meet her—and all your Cliff House favourites—every month in the grand LONG story of their early adventures which appears in the SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN LIBRARY. This month's story—No. 637—is one of HILDA RICHARDS' Masterpieces. Don't fail to get it!

And also remember the other three fine stories, details of which appear on the right. These grand book-length volumes cost 4d. Each . . . are now on Sale, everywhere . . . and will give you hours of enthralling reading.



No. 637

No. 636—"AT SCHOOL TO GUARD A MADCAP!" Specially written for these Numbers by Ruth Maxwell.

No. 638—"DRIVEN FROM MORCOVE!" One of Marjorie Stanton's early stories of Betty Barton & Co.

No. 639—"AN OUTCAST—ON MYSTERY'S TRAIL!" Which is simply packed with excitement.

hatred of humans, and only wanted sleep.

There were snakes, too, and Luise, after her previous experience, stepped very warily indeed, and kept a stout stick in her hand. But with Fuzzy running ahead and acting as guide, Luise was always given good warning.

They covered the ground at a good pace, despite their difficulties, and shortly after their halt for their first meal, found that they were not far distant from the tunnel which Teresa had smoked out to rescue Luise.

"This is where we halt," said Teresa. "For that tunnel leads into the king's palace. I don't think the magician will be there—he'll have far too much to see to. But if we can only be sure that he isn't—then that's our safest route."

"Me go see," said Fuzzy readily. "No. Wait for 'Mong,'" advised Teresa.

'Mong was the name of her father's servant, who had been behind them. Presently he came up, and Teresa explained to him what she wanted.

Then Teresa and Fuzzy located the bush in the middle of which was the tunnel entrance, and 'Mong, being told that there was a drop to the ground below, explored.

In tense silence Teresa and Fuzzy waited.

Ten minutes passed, and Teresa's hopes sank. For if they could not use this tunnel they would have to take grave risks.

Somehow, if they were to find King Nompanyo or his loyal men, they would have to enter the palace itself, and to do that past armed natives would not be easy.

"Me go see now?" begged Fuzzy, as three more minutes passed.

But Teresa took her arm. "Wait—someone coming!" she said.

Through the thick, tangled bush they crept to the entrance to the tunnel—a hole in the ground, pitch dark. A voice came up to them, and recognising it as 'Mong's, Teresa heaved a sigh of relief. "Yes. Is it clear?" she asked.

But 'Mong's voice shook with fright. "Hellup, hellup, lift!" he cried, in terror. "Lion here! Lion say him king! Lion roaring!"

Teresa crawled forward, put her hands down through the gaping hole, and felt them gripped by 'Mong. Fuzzy clung to her, and between them they hauled up the frightened servant.

There was no acting now in 'Mong's fear. He really was afraid. He was quaking and trembling.

"Me see dem lion. Him say him 'King Nompanyo,'" he said. "Berry cross lion! Bad place—bad. Not go." He quivered in terror. "Lion speak," he added.

Teresa Makes Magic!

"LION speak!"

But for earlier experience Teresa would have scoffed. Now, knowing the magician's trickery, she gave a cry of eager excitement and gripped Fuzzy's arm.

"We've found him!" she cried. "The king. It's just as I suspected. That rascal of a magician has been playing his tricks again—this time with the king."

"But how we makem lion into king 'gen?" said Fuzzy tremulously; for although Teresa had exposed the magician, there was lingering in Fuzzy enough credulity to allow her to believe even yet that such a strange thing was possible.

"Easily," said Teresa grimly. "Fuzzy, we're going down. You're not afraid of a lion?"

Fuzzy blinked, but did not at once answer.

"Not 'fraid ornery lion," she said. "No."

"And you're not afraid of the king? Then come on," said Teresa. "Although," she added, "we'd better warn Luise we're going."

She turned back, and as they had kept a check on their changes of direction, she knew just where she had left her friend.

Together she and Fuzzy raced back. "Luise, we've found the king!" cried Teresa.

Luise clapped her hands with delight. "Oh, Terry! And now we can free him?" she said.

"Yes," Teresa agreed. "Come on, dear. We'd better keep together. Leave 'Mong in charge of Bambo and Adolphus. He's just over there."

She hailed 'Mong, who, still frightened, gladly accepted keeping guard of their goods as an alternative to going down into the tunnel.

"And make sure that nothing is taken," added Teresa. "If you are attacked, then make Bambo bolt—run."

So 'Mong agreed that at the first hint of trouble he would set Bambo adrift. And as Adolphus in a panic might go astray, Fuzzy decided to take him into the tunnel.

Luise, remembering her own ordeal in that tunnel, paled a little when she had to drop down into it. But Fuzzy went first, followed by Adolphus and Teresa, and between them they caught Luise as she jumped.

With a new battery in her powerful flash-lamp, Teresa lit up the tunnel.

"Now for it," she said grimly.

Everything depended upon their success now. They had to free King Nompanyo; they had to let his followers see that he was alive and well, and not, after all, a lion!

And when they had done that, and the king could again take charge of his men, Teresa's father would be freed.

For a hundred yards or so, Teresa, Luise and Fuzzy, with Adolphus clinging to the little black girl's hand, progressed along the tunnel, Teresa flashing the torch on for moments at a time, so that there was less chance of its being seen.

It was when they reached the bend of the tunnel that they heard the lion's snarl. Next it roared, and the sound, magnified in the tunnel, was so impressive, so alarming, that they halted. And even Teresa's heart started to thump.

"Steady!" she warned them. "Don't let's be bluffed. It's a lion, but a captive one."

Fuzzy, unafraid of wild animals, insisted on taking the lead, and it was she who first saw the lion.

At the end of the tunnel there was a small cave, guarded by stout bars, and the lion was behind those. It paced there, angry, roaring, helpless!

In a moment the three girls were standing in front of the bars, staring through at it, and after a while its roaring died.

Then came a voice: "Who is there? It is I, King Nompanyo."

Fuzzy answered herself before translating.

"It's Princess Fuzzy!" she shouted back. "And Miss Teaser and Miss Luise."

There came another roar from the lion, and then the king shouted that he had been changed, after all.

Teresa, flashing her torch through the bars, was able to see others at the far end.

"Long grass there!" she exclaimed. "The same old trick. The king is blindfolded and tied up, of course; but I can't see him."

Fuzzy sent him a message of consolation, and told him that soon they would rescue him and change him back.

But it was a message easier to give than to bring true, as Teresa realised, for before they could hope to free the king they had to release the lion.

"These bars are fixed—fixed into the stone," said Luise, studying them. "We can never get them free, Terry."

"No, afraid not," agreed Teresa, looking about her for some other means of freeing the king.

Then inspiration came to her. "Why, of course!" she exclaimed. "If we can't move them—if they don't open from this side—then the lion was put in from the other. And the king was, too. Seems to me he was lowered through a trap from above."

"Well, then?" said Luise. "Well, don't you see—we've got to find the way into the palace from this tunnel!" Teresa exclaimed. "Fuzzy, ask the king if he knows the entrance." Fuzzy told the king then that they were in the tunnel below the palace, near to the exit into the jungle, and he answered excitedly.

"Him glad we come; him say tunnel go long, long way, up steps," said Fuzzy. "Into room."

"Good," said Teresa. Assuring the king that they would save him, they went guardedly forward down the tunnel, Teresa flashing the torch as before.

At last they saw ahead of them a ring of light on the ground, and a few steps farther on they realised that it came from a trapdoor in the roof above.

Fuzzy, perched on Teresa's shoulders, lifted it an inch or two quite easily. In breathless silence they waited, half dreading to hear voices, to see that trapdoor flung wide open from above.

Opening it farther, Fuzzy held up Adolphus, who, without any need of instructions, went through into the chamber.

No voices came; he did not chatter excitedly.

"Open it wide, Fuzzy!" called Teresa softly.

The trapdoor, made of stone though it was, opened wide with comparative ease, and Fuzzy climbed through.

The room in which she found herself

was deserted, and she called down to Teresa and Luise, then, finding a large box in the room, dropped it down through the hole for them to stand on.

Presently all three were in the room, and Teresa, eyes shining, felt that they were really nearing their journey's end.

"Now to find the way down to the king," she said.

From the room they passed through bead curtains into a deserted corridor. The whole palace seemed to be empty.

"Near here—that's where the magic room was," said Teresa. "The king's throne-room is there—"

The sound of footsteps and voices came to them, and the girls hurried on, Teresa leading the way into the room where the magician had worked his mysteries before.

"Keep guard," warned Teresa.

She went to the stone trapdoor, which the magician had used before, and had soon opened it. Then, peering down, she called:

"King Nompanyo! Are you there?"

"Here!" came his voice.

Fuzzy and Luise, at the doorway that led to the corridor, could hear approaching steps.

"Terry—quick!" cried Luise. "Someone coming."

Teresa knew that they dared not go down below, and risk being trapped there, with the enemy above in this room. Nor was there time to free the king and return.

It was a time for quick thinking, and Teresa did not fail.

"Stand back—away from the doorway!" she exclaimed.

Then, while Luise wondered what she was going to do, Teresa levered open another stone block at the back of the room.

Fuzzy, remembering what had happened when she had been "turned into" a leopard by the magician, drew back in alarm.

"Leopard—" she gasped.

And at that same moment the block opened, and there in the darkness was a leopard, crouching down, teeth bared. With a sudden spring, for which they were all unprepared, it leaped out, and went darting across the room through the bead curtains that were draped across the doorway.

Instantly there came wild yells of fright and the swift pattering of feet, growing fainter.

"I thought that would send them flying!" said Teresa grimly. "Lucky we remembered the magician's tricks."

Then she dropped down below and, flashing her torch, found the compartment in the weird place where the king was a prisoner.

He had been half-covered by leaves and small branches, to make him believe he was in the darkness of some impenetrable jungle. The snarling of the caged lion came from close by.

"Are you tied?" she asked.

"Yes—yes—bad man not take chance," answered the king huskily. "Ah! How I hab wish you should come back, white girl, wise frien'."

Teresa forced her way through the thick, tangled mass of leaves, prickles, and branches, and very soon found the king, who, tightly bound with leather thongs, was hardly able to move at all.

Her hunting-knife made short work of his bonds, and he was soon free. But he staggered weakly to the hole where Luise's face was framed, and it took them a moment or two to get him up.

Before long, however, King Nompanyo, in a royal rage, was in his own palace again.

"And now, you'd better know the worst," said Teresa, and she told him all that they knew, how her father had been captured, how the king's men were in revolt, and of their own false message.

King Nompanyo trembled. "The magician—it is dat rascal!" he cried in rage. "Where am my loyal men? Where dey am?"

"Ah! They think you have been turned into a lion," said Teresa.

"Den I will go to dem. Dey shall see me," said the king, "and know I am safe."

Teresa shook her head. The revelation had to be more dramatic than that, and as she stood wondering what would be the best thing to do, she heard the snarling of the leopard.

"Fuzzy!" she exclaimed. "Can you quieten that leopard, make it a little tame, just for a while?"

Fuzzy, eager to show the wonder-power she had over animals, gave a quick nod.

King Nompanyo put his hand on her head.

"Sabe me now, and you shall be ever more princess!"

"Me sabe you," Fuzzy promised.



"BEHOLD!" cried Teresa, whipping the rug from before the crouching king. Fuzzy gestured excitedly. "De leopard am turned back into de king!" she shrieked. Convinced that they had witnessed magic, the rebel warriors drew back, trembling.

Then she hurried off to find the leopard, without knowing at all what Teresa's plan was.

"This is where we turn the tables on the magician," Teresa explained to Luise and the king. "If Fuzzy can calm that leopard—I'll turn it back into you. And that'll startle the warriors."

In the corridor, Fuzzy found the leopard, and soon managed to sooth it to such purpose that presently it was lying on the ground, while she fearlessly stroked its head.

Teresa, the king, and Luise crept up behind her on tiptoe. But now from the other direction came warriors, armed with spears and short swords.

Fuzzy kept the leopard quiet, and Teresa and Luise, bearing the skin rug which the magician had used, hurried up, shielding the king with it.

When, a moment later, the warriors came into sight, they saw the leopard, but not, of course, the king.

Fuzzy, after whispered advice from Teresa, addressed the men, who, impressed by this altogether unexpected sight, had halted in confusion and wonder.

"Stop—move not forward!" cried Fuzzy, while the leopard snarled a warning. "For here lies your king—your king; and yet a leopard. This is the evil work of the magician. But fear him not. The king is his master. See! The king can become himself again!"

She gave the leopard a tap, and sent it down the corridor away from the waiting warriors, while the king, well instructed and prepared, kept crouched on all fours.

"Behold!" shouted Teresa, whisking the rug away.

"The king!" screamed Fuzzy.

As the king was revealed in that attitude, the warriors fell back, wide-eyed, fearful, stupefied.

"It is I, rascals, traitors!" cried the king. "Only the first hundred who return to my command will be forgiven!"

The warriors, seeing him, regained all their old admiration and fear, and even those who were still inclined to rebellion, were nevertheless eager to be amongst the first hundred.

Two of them, at the king's behest, went to take the news; and outside confusion reigned.

Teresa, Luise, Fuzzy, and young Adolphus then followed; and it was a strange scene that greeted their eyes, for, outside in the courtyard of the ancient palace, at least two hundred warriors had gathered, armed to the teeth, fearful now of their king.

"Who brings me the magician alive shall have a handful of gold!" cried the king.

There was a mad rush to do his bidding, and Teresa, hugging Luise and Fuzzy, laughed.

"Oh, Luise—we're saved! Daddy's saved!" she cried exultantly.

"And you've saved him," said Luise. "You helped—you, and Fuzzy!" responded Teresa. "And now—to find daddy!"

A HAGGARD MAN, helpless in the heat of the African sun, stood against an immense tree in the jungle, bound to it by strong cords.

All about him were black men, armed and talking excitedly of revolt.

The tomatom of war drums came to him, and then the wild huzzas of approaching warriors, which were returned by the men who stood about.

"Chief," said a black warrior to him, brandishing a spear. "Big black army come—army ob King Nompanyo—but not de king. No, no—de king, he am killed. Magic man him de king now."

Teresa's father uttered a groan of despair, and then, as he caught a glimpse of the advancing army through the thick leaves of the trees, he struggled desperately to escape.

The army had arrived, and there was joy of union between black and black.

But that joy became stilled, the voices died, and now the prisoner heard a mighty voice.

"I, King Nompanyo, reign again! All traitors shall be punished. Who still defies the king, let him stand to the north of the line of tall trees—"

Teresa's father listened, wide-eyed; for he knew well enough the meaning of this speech. Without a battle, without even the clashing of swords, King Nompanyo had won!

Still dazed by this surprising climax, he heard a girlish voice:

"Daddy—where are you—"

"Teresa!" he shouted.

Teresa, bronzed, sun-helmeted, eyes sparkling, came rushing into view as she heard his answering shout, and in one hand was a knife to cut his bonds—in the other the black case, which the skipper of the steamer had warned her to guard.

Luise was behind, and with her a black girl with frizzy hair, adorned with jewels—a girl he had never seen before—Fuzzy!

Teresa slashed the bonds, and her father almost collapsed in her arms. Helping him gently to the ground—for, after his ordeal, he was too weak to stand—she hugged and kissed him, while he clasped her tightly.

"Terry, how did you manage it? You two—you and Luise! And you brought that case through!"

"Yes, daddy—we brought it here, though what it is, I don't know—"

"No; and I am not at liberty to say, except that it contains Government documents; but if you had not brought it—"

He shrugged as he took it. "But there—you have! Teresa, I think you're marvellous. And you, Luise—"

Then his eyes rested on Fuzzy, who stood back shyly.

"Princess Fuzzy, daddy," said Teresa, gravely pulling Fuzzy forward.

"Meet my father, dear," she said. "He's the grandest man ever—and this is the grandest princess of all Africa, daddy."

Her father welcomed Fuzzy, smiling. "And a rich princess, too!" he exclaimed.

For Fuzzy was wearing several thousand pounds' worth of jewels.

"Me princess," said Fuzzy, with pride. "Plenty rich!"

Then came King Nompanyo, and the praise he gave Teresa made her blush. According to him, there was no other girl so wonderful, so wise; nor anyone so beautiful and gentle as Luise. As for Fuzzy—he was proud to make her a princess.

There was so much to tell, so much to explain, and there and then they made a camp to hold a banquet in celebration, during which they could tell everything.

Bambo was brought forward and introduced, and then came young Adolphus, the baby chimp, who had "won" a warrior's headdress, and a sword scabbard.

"We shall miss you, Adolphus," said Luise sadly. "And Bambo, too—"

She looked at Fuzzy, and so did Teresa, silent and sad; but their sadness was as nothing to Fuzzy's; for the little black girl had tears streaming down her cheeks.

"Fuzzy go back King Nompanyo's palace, be princess?" asked Teresa sadly.

This time Fuzzy did not hesitate.

"Fuzzy stay—please!" she begged.

"Bambo stay—Dolphus stay!"

No need for Teresa to look to her father; for he gave the answer before being asked.

"Of course, as long as you like, all three," he said readily. "For each and everyone has played a part in the wonderful, triumphant end of this brave journey, and I wouldn't care to be the one to separate you. Here's to Happy Days Together!"

And when Bambo and Fuzzy had been given the means, that toast was drunk by all.

THE END.

GIRL RIDER OF THE BLUE HILLS!



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