

“AMY THE UNLUCKY!”

Absorbing LONG COMPLETE
story of Cliff House School
inside.

THE SCHOOLGIRL

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Incorporating
"SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN"



**BABS THOUGHT
AMY WAS WASHING—**

But Amy was hiding
the Evidence Against
Herself.

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

Absorbing LONG COMPLETE story featuring Barbara Redfern & Co., of the Fourth



AMY *the*

Her Great Chance at Last!



"WE'VE got to make this show a success!" Barbara Redfern announced.

"Hear, hear!" supported her golden-haired chum, Mabel Lynn.

"Not only have we got to have the best turnout of any in the school—"

"And we will, you know," put in plump Bessie Bunter, who was the third of the famous trio of Study No. 4.

"We've just got to win that prize for the best decorated stall!"

"Yes, rather! I should say so!" Bessie agreed. "You leave that to me, Babs. You know what ripping ideas I have!"

"Ripping's the word! That's why you've got such a tattered brain," Tomboy Clara Trevlyn chuckled.

"Silence!" frowned Leila Carroll.

"Go on, Babs!"

"And—" Barbara said significantly.

"Oh, come on, get on with the washing!" snapped Frances Frost impatiently. "Let's know the main thing. Who's going to be in charge of the stall?"

"Why not let Babs take charge of the stall?" Mabel Lynn suggested. "After all, Babs is Form captain! I vote for Babs!"

"Hear, hear! Seconded, thirded, and passed unanimously!" Jemima Carstairs assented, with an amiable nod.

"And—" Barbara said. "Oh, for goodness' sake, you chumps, please hear me out. I'm not going to take charge of the stall."

"Not?"

Girls in the Fourth Form Common-room at Cliff House School stared a little. There were many stares, because the whole Form was assembled there.

Barbara Redfern, captain of the Junior School, had called one of those

very rare meetings, always foreshadowing some big event which had a significance for the whole of the Form.

The event, on this occasion, was a happy one. In a fortnight's time the school would be breaking up for the summer holidays. Before that great and eagerly anticipated day arrived, however, there was the school garden party to be held, and it was the school garden party which was under discussion now.

And this year it was going to be something more than a garden party, for the school governors had consented to combine the school sale of work with it—the proceeds of that sale to go to Miss

doing something for the garden party, I think it only fair that we should draw for it."

"How generous of our captain," said Frances Frost, with one of her unpleasant sneers. "But why draw for it? What about giving it to someone else, right away?"

"You, for instance!" sniffed Clara Trevlyn.

"Well, you might do worse!" Frances said. "In any case—"

"We draw!" Babs said firmly. "Nuff said!" She jumped off the chair on which she had been standing. "Get a hat, Mabs. Marjorie, will you write down the name of every girl in this

"Poor old Amy!" Many a time have Babs & Co. said that with reference to the timid Fourth Former, for Amy has always been the unluckiest girl in the school. Something always goes wrong with her chances of happiness. But, amazingly, Amy's luck changes. It is she who wins the honour and glory of taking charge of the Form's garden party stall. At last, Amy has her big moment. But, alas, bad luck creeps in again—bad luck callously made use of by someone who covets Amy's position.

Primrose's home for West London Orphans.

Each Form would have its own stall. Each Form had to appoint a stall-holder—the girl who would look after the stall and sell the articles it contained. Better than that, Major-General Mabbeson, chairman of the school governors, had decided to offer a prize for the best decorated stall, which meant that a wave of friendly Form rivalry was at this moment seething throughout the school. In other Forms it was the accepted thing that the captain of the Form should look after the stall. But—

"I'm not going to take charge of the stall," Babs repeated. "Honours were made to go round, and as we're all

room? I'll run along and get Flora Cann and Joan Carson from the Lower Fifth to do the drawing, so that there shall be no rows about it afterwards. I"—and then she paused as she spotted the girl in the corner—a girl whose face wore an air of rather hopeless anxiety, and who stood away from the rest of the Form. "Amy, will you come with me?" she asked cheerily.

Amy glowered at her in surprise. Rarely, indeed, was it that anyone ever seemed to notice Amy's existence. A rather shy girl, she usually held aloof when other girls were present.

Rather unfortunately, Amy had earned the nickname of "Jonah," and Amy, like the rest of the Form, had

Form at Cliff House School, and that appealing "tame-mouse"—



reason to believe in her bad luck. Certainly, it always did seem that the most frightfully unlucky things were always happening to Amy Jones.

"Y-you mean me?" she asked, incredulously doubting.

"Of course I mean you!" Babs laughed, and caught her arm. "Amy, old thing, cheer up!" she whispered softly as they went out through the door. "I've been watching you. You don't seem a bit excited. Aren't you pleased about the garden party?"

"Oh, yes, I—I'm pleased enough," Amy said. "I'm dressing three dolls for it, you know. I—I only hope nothing happens to them," she added nervously.

"Goose!" Babs laughed lightly. "What could happen to them?"

"Well, don't things always happen to me?" Amy asked resignedly. "Don't they all call me Jonah? Look what happened when Clara picked me for the cricket team. It was the first chance I'd had this term—and, of course, I must go and rick my ankle the night before the match took place!"

Babs pressed her arm.

"Poor old Amy!" she sympathised. "That was bad luck! But those things happen to everybody, old thing. You know, if you always think you're going to have bad luck, you always will. You should believe you're going to have good."

Amy smiled, and then sighed.

"Oh, Babs, I wish I could!"

"Supposing, for instance," Babs went on, "you were drawn to take charge of the stall next Saturday?"

"Then," Amy said, "I certainly should throw a fit!"

But her violet eyes widened, even at the prospect; a flush of pleasure came into her face. To be singled out for an honour like that! To be in the lime-light on such an occasion as that! But no! That was asking just too much. Big things like that never happened to Amy Jones.

"You mean," she amended glumly, "I'm more likely to be gated."

"Oh, stuff!" Babs said, a little sharply. "Why should you be gated?"

"Well, there's the Bull—"

"Miss Bullivant?" Babs gazed at her. "Why should Miss Bullivant gate you?"

"Well, you know she took something from me in class this morning—"

Babs frowned. Yes, she did remember that now. Something rather bulky which Amy, always neat and very careful, had kept enclosed in an envelope. Amy had been playing about with that under cover of her desk, and Miss Bullivant had caught her and confiscated it.

"It—it was my diary," Amy went on. She bit her lip. "Oh, Babs, she's bound

By
HILDA RICHARDS

Illustrated by T. LAIDLER

to read it! And if she does she'll just have fits. I've said a good many things in that diary about her—"

"Silly old Amy! But still, don't worry!" Babs comforted. "I don't expect she'll even so much as glance through it now. She's fearfully busy with end-of-term reports and all that; and, apart from that, there's this garden party. But here's Flora's study," she added, as they reached the Lower Fifth corridor. "You go along to Study No. 10 and rout Joan Carson out. And remember, old thing," she added softly, "look on the bright side!"

Amy smiled. She flushed. Nice girl, Babs! No wonder everybody loved her so much. No wonder everybody looked up to her as they did.

"Oh, hallo!" Joan beamed, when she peered in at Study No. 10. "Not often find you roaming in the wilds of the

Lower Fifth, Amy. What's on your mind now? Slogged a cricket ball through the Head's window, or something?"

"No," Amy said; "I've come to ask you if you'll help in the draw in the Fourth Form Common-room. Babs asked me to ask you," she added nervously.

"Then," Joan Carson smiled, "I'm the girl. Let's go!"

They went. Babs, by that time, had collected Flora.

The Common-room, when they reached it, was seething with impatience. Everybody was clustered round the long table in the middle of the room. On the table was the hat containing the names, which Mabs had already written out, each name on a screwed-up piece of paper. There was almost a cheer when Babs, Flora, Joan, and Amy came in.

"Well, all ready?" Babs asked cheerily.

"Ready! We've been ready about two years!" Frances Frost scowled. "Come on, let's get on with it!"

"Right!" Babs smiled. "Flora, will you make the draw? Joan, will you announce the winner?"

As the two Fifth Formers, grinning, approached the table everybody stood still, holding their breaths. There was a dead silence as Flora dipped her hand among the names, tantalisingly holding it there for a few seconds while she winked at the tense, expectant faces which surrounded her. Then she picked out one slip. She handed it to Joan.

Everybody's eyes were on Joan as, with maddening slowness, she unfolded the paper. Then she chuckled, glanced at Amy, and—

"The winner," she announced, "is— Amy Jones!"

"What?"

A cry went up from everybody. Nobody had even thought of Amy. And Amy herself, hearing the news, looked at Joan reproachfully, as though

implored her not to pull her leg. Joan passed the paper back to Flora.

"Is that right?"

"Right it is!" Flora agreed heartily, and beamed at Amy. "Well, Amy, it's yours—and what a chance to shine! Though, of course," she added with all the lofty superiority of a girl in the next Form, "you kids won't stand a dog's chance in the prize for the stall!"

"Says you!" sniffed Leila Carroll.

Envious but congratulating glances were turned on Amy, who first of all turned red, then pale, even now hardly able to believe her good luck.

"Well, Amy?" Babs was by her side. Babs was laughing and dimpling—looking more pleased, indeed, than if she herself had won the draw. "What did I tell you?"

"I—I can't believe it," Amy stuttered.

"Well, there it is!" Babs laughed. "And now," she added, "we've got to start work right away. Thanks, Flora and Joan, that was frightfully nice of you. Now," Babs added, "what about forming a committee—with Amy, of course, at its head?"

"Good idea!"

Excited chatter. Only Frances Frost did not join in. Frances, obviously, had most desperately wanted the honour which had been won by the Jonah.

On Babs' suggestion, they all drew again—for six committee girls. The six were: Babs, Mabs, Bessie, Jemima Carstairs, Marjorie Hazeldene, and Frances Frost.

"Well, there you are!" Babs cried. "And for goodness' sake, Frances, take that scowl off your face! Amy, you'd better call a meeting right away," she added.

"Y-yes," stammered Amy. "But, oh dear, you—you think I'll be able to do it, Babs?"

"Well, you can resign," Frances Frost glowered.

"But, Amy," Babs announced, "will not resign. Of course you can do it, Amy—you've just got to now! Frances, for goodness' sake be quiet! Now, what about a meeting right away—in Study No. 4? Amy, got a notebook?"

"No," Amy said; "but I'll go and fetch one."

And off at once she ran, thrilling now, excited, enthusiastic. Oh, this was splendid! This was fun! She, one of the nobodies, was somebody at last. What price her bad luck now?

With an excited laugh, she burst into Study No. 9. She was crossing to the bureau near the window to get her notebook when suddenly she caught sight of a figure strolling out of the school. The figure was that of Miss Bullivant, the sharp-tempered mathematics mistress.

For one minute Amy paused, biting her lips. That diary of hers! Despite Babs' assurance, she didn't believe that Miss Bullivant would not read it. And if Miss Bullivant did, what then? She would be bound to report it to the headmistress. Miss Primrose would take a serious view of it. A gating, at least, was bound to follow. And if she was gated, what hopes then of being the honoured holder of the Fourth Form stall?

Obviously Miss Bullivant had not opened it yet; otherwise, Amy would have heard about it. That meant, then, that the diary was still in Miss Bullivant's study. A sudden idea came to Amy. Supposing—just supposing—now that Miss Bullivant was out, she sneaked into her study and got it? Supposing she did that?

She paused again. Amy Jones was not of the stuff of which heroines are made. Nervous and shrinking in temperament, that notion, in her, called for

a great deal of courage. Still, after all, why not? Once the diary was removed, there was a chance that the Bull would never think about it again.

And now—if ever—was her opportunity.

One moment longer Amy thought. Miss Bullivant was half-way across the quad. Then, with a look of determination strangely new to Amy Jones' usual expression, she darted out of the study, almost barging into Frances Frost as she flew round the corner. With a splutter, Frances gave back, staring in curiosity at the strangely excited girl whose honour she so coveted. Amy hardly noticed her. She flew on.

At Miss Bullivant's door she nervously tapped. As she expected, there was no answer. Screwing up her courage—and Amy was almost trembling now in agitation—she went in.

She saw it at once—still in the school envelope in which she always kept it—lying on Miss Bullivant's desk, right in the middle of her blotting-pad. One, two, three strides towards the envelope she took. She grabbed it up.

She had it!

And even as her fingers closed upon it she saw out of the corners of her eyes Miss Bullivant turning. She was coming back to school!

Shaking and white, Amy rammed the incriminating envelope in her pocket. Though it was her own property, she felt like a thief. Like a startled rabbit she flew towards the door. Almost sobbing, she flew towards the stairs. As she did so a girl came down. It was Frances again.

"Here, I say—" she cried, and started at the expression on Amy's face. But Amy, in a perfect flurry, had swept past her.

She felt better, more relieved, when she reached the seclusion of the Fourth Form corridor again and bolted into Study No. 9. Hastily she drew out the drawer of her bureau, dropped the envelope-covered diary into it, and locked the drawer. That was safe—and in her relief at last she could almost have laughed.

Now, her notebook— Ah, there it was! She grabbed it. Happily she tripped along to Babs' study, where the rest of the committee—with the exception of Frances Frost—were already gathered.

Babs smiled.

"Taken you a long time to find your notebook, Amy," she commented. "Still, here you are. Where's Frances?"

"I'm here," that girl's drawing voice put in at the door, and Frances entered.

She flung a rather peculiar look at Amy; and Amy, remembering her two encounters with the girl, flushed and looked away. But Frances said nothing. Babs rapped on the table.

"Now, Amy, you're in the chair," she said, "and the first— Oh goodness! Come in," she added resignedly.

Helen Hunter of the Sixth Form entered; her face wore a sharp look.

"Barbara, you're wanted at once in Miss Primrose's study. General captains' meeting," she said, and disappeared.

Helen went. The company regarded each other with some wonder. A summons like that was unusual, to say the least of it; some very disturbing thing must have happened. Babs shrugged.

"All right, I'll have to go," she decided. "You'd better get on without me—"

"Oh, no, Babs; we'll wait!" Amy said.

Babs went out, while Amy, more concerned with her thrilling task of chairwoman, busied herself with the agenda which Babs had drawn up.

Five minutes went by—ten; then Babs entered, a rather serious look on her face.

"Babs, what was it?" Mabs asked. "Anything very dreadful?"

"Dreadful enough!" Babs' lips came together a little. "Some awful japer—or thief—has taken twenty pounds from Miss Bullivant's study. I'm afraid," she added, "the meeting's off for the time being. Captains have orders to round up the Forms and assemble them in Big Hall for an inquiry right away."

A Most Dreadful Mistake



IT was heartless. It was cattish. And even though the Fourth Form as a whole hadn't a great deal of use for Miss Bullivant, they could feel sorry for her in this moment—and especially hostile towards that unknown japer, or thief, who had taken that twenty pounds from her study.

Miss Bullivant, if she was bad-tempered at times, was not well off. That twenty pounds had represented the hard-scraped savings of a whole year, and had been carefully put away so that Miss Bullivant, for once, could enjoy a real summer holiday. And now the money had gone.

The work of a japer, of course. Miss Bullivant, alas! had many enemies. Someone with a distorted sense of humour had taken that money just to upset Miss Bullivant. Nobody was ready to believe that there was a thief in the school, though that rumour was certainly going round now; for the girl, having had every opportunity to own up in Big Hall—having, indeed, been promised freedom from punishment—had not stepped forward.

The committee, meeting again after the fruitless assembly which had failed to reveal the identity of the japer, was indignant.

"Well, I think it's a dirty trick," Babs said. "It is rather like robbing the poor. And I know the Bull was looking forward most dreadfully to the holiday. It will be the first she's had in about three years—"

"Poor Miss Bullivant!" sighed Marjorie; and Marjorie, who always felt everybody's troubles, poignantly shook her head. "Oh dear! I hope it does turn up!"

"Well, of course it will turn up," Amy said. "I shouldn't think anybody could be so heartless as to keep the joke up now."

"She'll be expelled if she does!" Frances said, with a sneer, and looked at Amy again. "I wonder," she added thoughtfully, "who did it?"

Amy shook her head. She did not know; but, like everybody else, she was feeling angry and indignant.

"I do hope," Mabel Lynn anxiously ventured, "that it isn't anybody in the Fourth, Babs! You don't think so, do you?"

"Oh, stuff! Who could it be?" Babs asked instantly. "All the same, it's beastly! And if," she added, her eyes flashing, "it is anybody in the Fourth, then the whole Form, as well as Miss Primrose, will deal with her! She's had her chance now of repairing the mischief; it was awfully decent of Primmy to promise letting her off punishment if she'd only own up. But now—the meeting!" she added.

"What about the decorating idea?" Amy asked.

"Yes, there's that. Now, let's see!" Babs said thoughtfully. "The Sixth have got a Grecian amphitheatre idea, haven't they? They would! The Upper Fifth are running their stall as a sort of Caledonian Market place; the Lower Fifth are doing something on the same lines—street-seller's barrow, with Flora Cann dressed up as a costermonger. The Third Form are making their stall into a sort of tuckshop, with props from the dramatic society. Well, we've got to do something different from all those—something original, something special!"

"Yes, rather! And I know!" Bessie Bunter said eagerly. "What about making it into an Egyptian palace?"

"Or a jolly Roman bath—what," burred that strange, monocled girl, Jemima Carstairs—"with Amy dressed up as a diver, selling her jolly old wares under water?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, let's be serious!" Babs urged. "Wait a minute! By Jove! Supposing—supposing," she breathed, "we make the stall into a sort of rustic summer-house, decorated, of course, with all sorts of flowers?"

"I sus-say, I was just going to suggest that myself!" Bessie cried. "What do you think, Amy?"

"I think it's topping!" Amy cried, and laughed. "And so jolly appropriate, too, you know! But what about designing it?"

"That," Jemima suggested, "is surely a task for our Spartan old craftsman, Babs? And then, of course, there'll be the merry old costume for you, Amy, all lavender and lace and thingummies—what?—with a Dolly Vardon bonnet."

Amy laughed; her eyes sparkled then. Lovely, that idea! And how pleased and proud she would be to reign over such a stall! So easy to fix up, too.

"That's it!" she said. "Gorgeous, Babs! Well, we'll leave Babs to do the decorating of the stall," she added. "Meantime, what about us all getting a move on to try to get out this list of things? Look here, we'll separate the Form up, shall we?" she suggested eagerly. "Frances, will you do Studies Nos. 1 and 2? Mabs, you Studies Nos. 3 and 4?"

"Good idea!" Mabs said.

A good idea it was, and, all alert and enthusiastic, they rushed off, Amy the happiest and most excited of them all. Trotting down the corridor, she met Helen Hunter again. Helen nodded.

"Amy, Miss Bullivant wants to see you."

Amy's heart momentarily stopped as she thought of her recovered diary. So Miss Bullivant had spotted its absence!

"I—I'll go at once!" she stuttered.

Nervously she hurried away, once again summoning her courage. What should she say to Miss Bullivant—how to account for having recovered the diary? In any case, that didn't matter; the awful, horrible part of it would be if Miss Bullivant demanded that she should return the thing.

Almost without realising how she had got there, she found herself nervously tapping on Miss Bullivant's door. Her heart knew a moment of dread as she heard the mistress' "Come in!" Desperately trying to look unconcerned, she strolled into the room. Miss Bullivant, sitting at her desk, her face grey and strained, looked up.

"All right, Amy; you need not look so nervous," she said. Her voice sounded dejected and heavy. "I merely sent for you to give you back the article I confiscated in class this morning."

"Oh, y-y-yes!" stuttered Amy. "Thuth-thank you!"

"It is, I believe, a diary," Miss Bullivant said. "I glanced only at the first page to discover that much. As it is of a private nature, Amy, I have not read through it, but I must warn you against allowing your attention to be disturbed by your own toys during lessons! You will take fifty lines for allowing it to absorb your interest when your interest should have been on something else!"

Amy gulped and nodded, mentally calling herself a fool for her trouble and her pains. And then her heart knew a stab of fresh alarm as Miss Bullivant pulled open the drawer of her desk. Oh, goodness! Now she would discover that it had gone!

But amazingly Miss Bullivant did not frown or blink as she looked into the interior of that drawer. Her hand went in and came out again, and Amy gazed in round-eyed wonder at the envelope she produced.

"Here is your diary, Amy! You may go!" Miss Bullivant said.

Amy gulped. Miss Bullivant was making a mistake, of course. Miss Bullivant was giving her something which did not belong to her.

"But—but, Miss Bullivant—" she stuttered.

"There you are, Amy! Take it and go! Please," Miss Bullivant said, with a little of her old starchiness, "do not take up my time, Amy! I accept your apology, if that is what you are going to offer! Please go!"

Amy took the envelope. Well, perhaps it was better to get out like this. If Miss Bullivant did discover that mistake here and now, she was bound to want to know what had happened to the diary. For the moment, at least, Amy saw that it was her best plan to fall into the error Miss Bullivant had made.

With a dazed smile, Amy went out. Rather thoughtfully, she stuffed the thing in her pocket, and then, remembering her garden-party duties, went along to Study No. 6. Peggy Preston, Jane Mills, and Christine Wilmer, who shared that apartment, were there when she arrived, and readily enough gave her the list of articles they had collected or intended to make for the great day. Pleased, Amy looked in next door.

Marjorie Hazeldene, as one of the committee, was not at home, but Amy already knew what Marjorie was giving. Clara Trevlyn beamed.

"Yes, I'm giving a box of tennis balls, and two sets of cricket pads," she said. "Janet Jordan is presenting a case of mounted botany specimens."

"Thanks for the list, Clara!" Amy said, and smilingly left.

But then she remembered the Bull and her strange mistake. Poor old thing! She must be so worried, so distracted. What a shocking shame to be plunged into that anxiety on the very eve of her holiday! No wonder she had made a mistake in giving her back her diary! She'd have to explain that to her, somehow.

She fished the envelope from her pocket again. It certainly felt like her diary. Curiously she peered in at the flap of the envelope, and then she



"THE winner—" Joan Carson began, tantalisingly paused, and then—"the winner is—Amy Jones!" There was a cheer from Babs & Co., while Amy herself just looked completely dazed. Her bad luck had been broken. The great honour at the garden party had fallen to her!

frowned again. It looked like her diary.

She took it out. It was her diary! For a moment she stared, not comprehending. Then the truth burst upon her, causing a choking hiss to come from her lips.

So it was she, and not Miss Bullivant, who had made the mistake. Then—then what was the package, so similar to this, which she had taken from the mistress' study?

Some frightful knife seemed to stab right at her heart in that moment. Again she found herself trembling. Rather flustered, she darted into her study, unlocked the drawer of the bureau, and caught up the envelope she had concealed there. With a hand that trembled slightly, she opened it.

The very world seemed to stand still. The room about her seemed suddenly to whiz.

For this—oh, goodness! What folly, in her nervous haste, had she been guilty of? What awful thing had she done? For what came out of the envelope was not a diary, nor anything like a diary. It was a bundle of pound notes, carefully folded in halves down the middle!

Someone is Suspicious!



EVEN had the whole of the school buildings collapsed round her in that frightful moment, Amy Jones might not have noticed the fact.

Stunned, glassy-eyed, and trembling, she stared down at the bundle of notes in her hand.

Miss Bullivant's savings! Miss Bullivant's hard-scraped money! The money the whole school was talking about. And she the japer—she the thief!

What had she done?

Amy gulped. Quivering, she came to herself. Oh, what a frightful, what a dreadful mess she was in now! This, here—and she one of the girls who had most bitterly condemned the unknown thief.

What could she do?

But there was only one thing to do. She must take them back.

She shuddered as that thought came to her. It wasn't Amy's fault that she was nervous and apprehensive; but she almost shook at the prospect of the ordeal of facing the Bull.

Falteringly she went towards the door. Something seemed to be choking her; something seemed to be dragging at her legs. Leadenly heavy they were as she crept down the stairs, and, feeling on fire, halted in front of Miss Bullivant's door. She raised her hand to knock.

For in the room she heard Miss Bullivant talking—apparently to Miss Primrose.

"There can be no explanation," she was saying. "Loth as I am to believe it, Miss Primrose, there is a thief in the school. When she is found—even if she owns up now—I shall demand her instant expulsion!"

The face of Amy Jones grew grey at that. A thief—expulsion! Oh, goodness! And suddenly, panic-strickenly, she raced away from the door. She must do something—something! What? She must think it out; she must hide this dreadful money!

Back to the study she flew. And then, entering it, she pulled up short with such a gasp that Frances, sitting in that room, stared at her.

"Great Scott! What's the matter with you? Been seeing a ghost?"

"I—I—" Amy gulped. Convulsively her hand closed upon the envelope in her pocket, though she had a sudden sensation that it had become red hot. "I—I've been running," she stammered.

"Yes." Frances eyed her disbelievingly. "You seem to forget that you are the chairwoman of the garden party committee. You seem to forget that we're all jolly well waiting for you. I've just come along to rope you in. Where have you been?"

"Nowhere," Amy panted. "Funny sort of place to go, isn't it?" Frances gaped. She was eyeing her narrowly. "Not to Miss Bullivant, for instance?"

Amy's eyes flickered. "M-Miss Bullivant? Why should I go to Miss Bullivant?"

"Well, there's the matter of her twenty missing quidlets," Frances replied carelessly. "Pretty obvious, isn't it, that Miss Bullivant lost the notes when she was out of the room. Wasn't she out of the room when you went to see her, Amy?"

Amy's face turned white. And then suddenly, fiercely, she pulled herself together.

"I—I went with lines," she fibbed. "I—I left them on Miss Bullivant's desk."

"But I notice," Frances sneered, "you didn't say that at Assembly, when Miss Primrose asked if any girl had been in the Bull's study. Rather tricky for you if that came out—what?"

Amy felt hunted. "Well, I—I did nothing wrong."

"No?" Frances shrugged. "Well, I don't care," she said. "I don't want to make things awkward for you, of course; but my people are coming down on Saturday, and I rather want them to find me holding that stall, you know. All you've got to do is to just say you're chucking it, and nominate me in your place."

Amy stared at her. She understood then. Frances was threatening her! Frances, acting on her suspicion, was hoping to frighten her into resigning. Resigning—when this was the greatest thing that had ever come her way; when she was, at last, in the limelight she had always so sincerely coveted! Fear of Frances, terror of Frances, gave place to suddenly overpowering anger as she realised her game. Her eyes gleamed!

"Get out!" she cried. "Get out! You cat—you—you sneak!"

And she gave Frances one violent push.

Frances, not expecting that, gasped as she was whisked towards the door. She gave another, as, outside that door, the tiny mohair mat which was placed on the threshold slipped under her feet, and, like a girl on roller skates, she frenziedly skated three yards before, with a howl and a bump, she struck the parquet floor. At the same moment:

"Hallo, hallo!" the voice of Helen Hunter said, and Helen, who was rather a toady of Frances, came bustling up. "Frances—"

"That cat—she pushed me!"

"Oh, she did, did she?" Helen's eyes gleamed. "Getting uppish because you've been chosen as the garden party stall-holder, are you, Amy Jones? Take a hundred lines, and bring them to me before lessons to-morrow morning! You hear?"

"Y-yes, I hear!" Amy muttered, trembling in the aftermath of her outburst, and rather amazed by it.

She closed the door. She was breathing heavily then. Oh, what was the good of trying to fight this beastly luck of hers?—yes, it was her luck! She might have guessed something like this would happen to mar her chance of happiness—didn't something like this always happen to her, the Jonah?

How—how could she possibly get that money back to Miss Bullivant?

She'd have to think that out. Meantime, she'd got to hide it. But where—where? With the packet half withdrawn from her pocket, she gave a most frightful start as the door opened.

"Who the dickens—" she began, and then stopped as she saw Babs' surprised eyes surveying her. "Oh! I—I'm sorry!" she said. "I—I didn't think it was you, Babs!"

"Thanks!" Babs retorted, a little shortly, but her eyes were rather wondering. "Amy, what's this about a row with Frances? Pretty bad start, isn't it? If you go piling up lines like that, you can't be expected to do your duty by the garden party. But, cheer up!" she added softly, as she saw the look of hopelessness that came into Amy's face. "Come along to the meeting now."

"Y-yes," Amy stammered.

She did not know what else to say. But she was fearfully conscious of the twenty pounds in her pocket. If only she could get rid of that!

She must hide them—in her locker—as soon as opportunity offered. They would be safe there.

So, guiltily she went along to Study No. 4. Frances, thank goodness, was not there. But Bessie and Mabs and Jemima and Marjorie were, and they all eyed her a little resentfully for wasting time as she came in. But nobody said anything, though Jemima did stare rather curiously at her still flustered face.

"Well, here we are!" Babs laughed. "Now to get on with the business. Lists out, everybody! Let's see what we can expect. Here we are, Amy, this is your job. Read the things out, and I'll make a note of them."

"Yes," said Amy, and stared at the paper in her hand, feeling all hot inside at thought of that incriminating money in her pocket. "Beatrice Beverley—three framed old prints; Marcelle Biquet—a packet of foreign stamps; Muriel Bond—a framed water colour; Leila Carroll—a camera—"

"Splendid!" Jemima beamed. "Sounds as if we're going to have a bazaar rather than a stall! Pretty good list so far. Go on, Amy, old Spartan!"

"Joan Charmant—new set of bicycle tools in case; Gwen Cook—four books; Lydia Crossendale—ivory walking-stick; Bridget O'Toole—box of Irish lace handkies; and"—suddenly, in a moment of guilty fear, she put a hand to her pocket—"and—and Rhoda Rodworth— Oh, Babs, dud-do you mind if—if I go for a minute?" she added.

"But what about the rest of the list?" Mabs expostulated.

"You—you read that!" Amy murmured hurriedly, and bolted.

"Well, I don't know—" Mabs looked after Amy in surprise. "What the dickens is the matter with her? I must say," she added a little sharply, "that she doesn't seem interested in her job. What on earth does she keep on dodging away for?"

But Babs shook her head. She felt surprised, a little nettled, too. And yet she was puzzled at the same time, for this most certainly was not the Amy she knew. Something strange had come over her.

Amy, meantime, was pelting up to the dormitory.

She had to hide that money! While it remained on her person she felt haunted by it. She couldn't concentrate. She couldn't think of anything but her own guilty secret.

Reaching the dormitory, gulping with relief to find it empty, she stepped towards her locker. She flung back the lid, looking round guiltily towards the door as she produced the envelope. Well into the clothes the locker contained she rammed the incriminating object, and then straightened up, fumbling for her key. As she produced it, the door came open.

If anybody had kicked Amy, she could not have straightened up with a more terrified gasp.

"Oh!" she said, seeing Frances there, and "Oh!" she cried again, as, urged by the desperate danger of her position, she stepped swiftly, turning the key in the lock.

Frances eyed her.

"Agitated, eh?" she grinned. "My hat! You look as white as a sheet! What have you been hiding in your locker?"

"Nothing," Amy panted.

"No?" Frances looked incredulous. "That's why you've taken such pains to lock it, eh?" she asked.

"That," Amy said, white-lipped, "is my business!"

"Sure?" Frances eyed her with increasing suspicion. "It's not somebody else's business, too—Miss Bullivant's, for instance? Amy, why not be honest about it? You took that money from Miss Bullivant's study!"

"I—I didn't!" Amy panted. "How—how dare you say such a thing?"

Frances laughed.

"Don't worry, I shan't blab!" she said. "Personally, I don't care two hoots what happens to the Bull's money—but I do care about the stall business. Supposing you think again over the resignation question?"

Amy stared at her. She was regaining composure now. What a spiteful, tormenting cat this girl was! What an unscrupulous sneak. But courage came to her aid again. Frances knew nothing—was merely suspicious.

Amy's lips came together.

"I've thought over it. I'm not resigning. That's all," she said.

Frances' eyes glimmered.

"And supposing," she said, "I tell what I know to Miss Bullivant?"

"Well, supposing you do," Amy challenged. "What can you prove? Do what you jolly well like," she added disdainfully, and, with a rush, swept past Frances towards the door.

"You'll be sorry," Frances threatened.

But Amy did not reply. She went out. For a moment Frances stood staring after her, her face a mask of spite. Her hands clenched. Plainly, she reflected, Amy was not to be coerced. Her own hope of taking Amy's role had gone. And Frances could think of nothing now but—revenge!

"You don't think I can do anything to you?" she said viciously. "Right, we'll see! I'll give you a fright, anyway."

And with a glance at the locker she went downstairs and entered her study. It was empty. On a piece of paper she wrote a message in capital letters.

That message read:

"MISS BULLIVANT,—Y O U R STOLEN MONEY IS IN A LOCKER IN THE FOURTH FORM DORMITORY.—WELL WISHER."

Smiling softly, Frances folded the note and slipped it in an envelope. Five minutes later, just before prep bell, she slipped into Big Hall. There, pausing for a moment outside Miss Bullivant's door, she stooped, as if to tie up her shoelace, and quickly shot the note beneath it. Then she walked off.

Amy the Amazing!



"O H, Babs, that's splendid, topping!" Amy Jones enthused, and, with her worry temporarily thrust to the back of her mind, her eyes sparkled as she looked over Babs' shoulder in Study No. 4. "What a stunning design!"

CLIFF HOUSE PETS

No. 18

Flora Cann's SNOOPS

SNOOPS is a grey tabby, four years old, and the property of Flora Cann of the Fifth Form at Cliff House. But Snoops, alas! is not popular in the Pets' Enclosure of Cliff House, for Snoops has many, many faults.

But what Snoops does not possess in the smallest degree is fear! Snoops never runs away from a dog, however big and fierce it may be—but many, many dogs run away from Snoops, and Cliff House will never forget the recent spectacle of a howling Great Dane, careering round the quad with Snoops, a spitting ball of fury, perched on his back, smacking at him with her paw as he ran!

Snoops is a thief, too—with a preference for dogs' dinners—and so great a reign of terror has she instituted in the Pets' House, that many a dog, seeing her coming, will slink away from his meal, leaving Snoops to graze contentedly on his plate until nothing is left, or until Flora, her mistress, catches her. Snoops, too, likes to chase birds, quite regardless of their size. I don't think I have ever told you of Snoops' fierce fight with the wild hawk—all over a tiny mouse. And how Snoops, battered and cut and bruised, finally succeeded in vanquishing her fierce enemy and allowing the little field-mouse to go free.

Something of a mystery, too, is Snoops. It is not unusual for Snoops, to her fond mistress' perplexed worry, to disappear for days on end and live in the woods and fields near by. "It's a bit of her ancestors in her," says Mr. Merryweather sagely, whose lap, by the way, is the only one Snoops will deign to sit in apart from Flora's.

A famous rabbit-hunter, too, Snoops will join any dog in this form of sport, but woe-betide the dog if he does not allow Snoops the honour of the final catch!

receded to the background of her mind; now, there was still rather a strained, haunted look in her eyes, which told Babs that she was not altogether as happy as that laugh suggested.

Rather curiously she looked at her. She and Amy, for the time being, were alone.

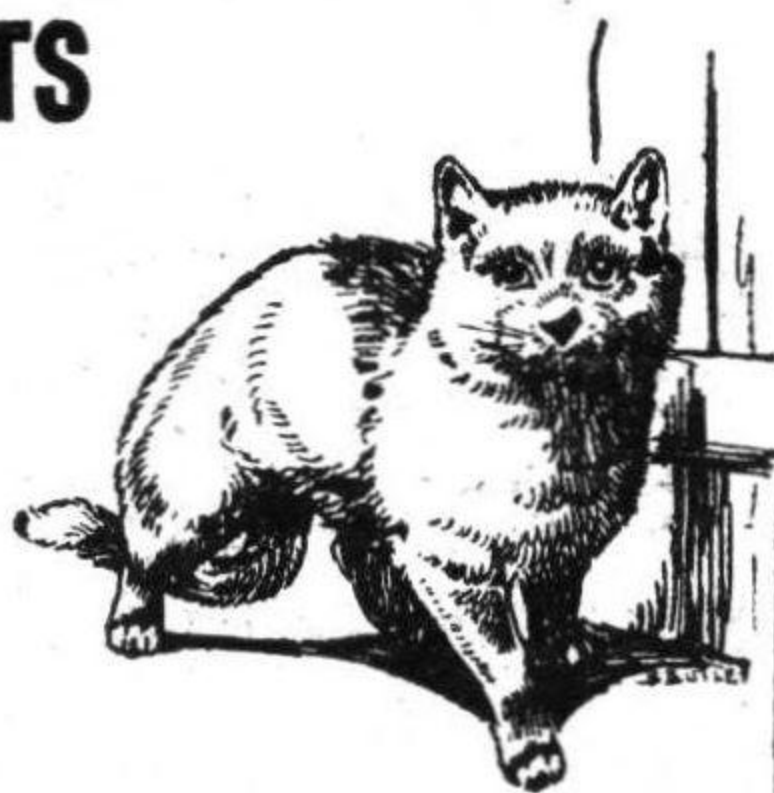
"And you're still keen, Amy?" she asked gently.

"Oh, Babs, yes. I—I can hardly believe it, even now," Amy said.

"You don't believe in your bad luck any more?"

"I—well, I—I suppose not," Amy said; but she looked so profoundly unhappy all at once that Babs knew that was a fib. "I—but please don't let's talk about it, Babs."

"Amy, wait a minute!" Babs said keenly. "Amy, old thing, I don't want you to think I'm being nosey, but—"



Pretty tough old tabby, eh? But now I must make one surprising revelation concerning Snoops! She is frightfully fond of, and tender towards—MICE!

Never, never has Snoops been known to hurt a mouse, and the only denizens of Cliff House which regard her without mistrust are the six or seven little grey mice which are owned by Doris Redfern. And where do you think Doris got those mice from in the first place? From Snoops' own nest!

For Snoops, you see, occupies a corner in the stable of Lady Patricia's Rastus—Snoops and Rastus, by the way, get on remarkably well together!—and in that corner those little mice were born. Unfortunately for them their mother was caught in a trap when they were still so young that they did not possess a thimbleful of fun between them, and mouse-complex Snoops it was who brought them up, defending and looking after them with all the zealous attention she would have given to her own kittens!

A queer, formidable pet, is Flora's Snoops, but a pet, I'm sure you will all agree, with oceans and oceans of character!

A stunning design it was. And an especially pretty design, too! It depicted a rustic sort of summer-house, with rose bushes rising from each side of it, and the whole prettily decorated with flowers. Babs smiled.

"Easy enough to decorate," she said, "provided, of course, we get Boker and Mr. Merryweather to do the heavy work. There are plenty of hanging geranium baskets and flower vases in the gardener's shed. We can borrow those and fill them with all sorts of flowers. Inside the summer-house there will be two large trestle tables, which we can use for the stall, and Mabs is already looking out the lavender and lace costume among the Dramatic Society's props."

Amy laughed a little. Babs looked up at her. Although whatever had been troubling Amy seemed to have

well, I am your friend, old thing, and I want you to know this—that if I can help you in any way—"

Amy gasped.

"Thanks, Babs, that—that's frightfully nice of you. But there's nothing—nothing," she said feverishly. "It—it's all right now—at least, it will be to-morrow. I mean— Oh!"

She spun round as the door opened, mechanically clutching a pot of paint in her hand. Clara Trevlyn looked in.

"Lo, Babs! More funny business," she said. "Prep's cancelled, but Miss Primrose has told me to tell you to get the Form up to dorm in ten minutes' time."

"The dorm?" Amy's eyes became suddenly wild. "What for?"

"I dunno. A locker inspection, or something. Oh, Great Aunt Moggins!"

Clara yelled. "Look what you've done!"

For Amy, at the mention of that word "locker," had given such a violent start that the ink had splashed out of the pot right on to Babs' beautiful design.

Babs leaped out of her chair.

"Amy, you idiot!" she cried. "Look what you're—"

Then—crash! The pot fell from Amy's hands. And Amy, with a terror-stricken face, was making for the door. Clara, astonished, automatically made way for her, staring at Babs, who was gazing with feelings too deep for words at her ruined design. Like a scared pheasant, Amy flew up the stairs into the dormitory.

Quickly she turned, agitatedly she pushed the door to behind her, turning the key at the same time. With a rush she darted across the room, fumbling in her pocket for her locker key, and tremblingly fitted it in the lock.

She turned it. Frantically she rummaged inside and withdrew the envelope. Up the stairs she heard the tramping footsteps of approaching girls.

Envelope in hand, she wildly looked round.

Where—oh, where to hide it?

Almost without thinking, it, she spun towards the window.

Ah!

The window, surrounded by ivy, was open. Amy stretched out her hand. On the sill, just underneath the ivy, she placed the envelope—hidden where no one would look for it. She closed the window just as the door-handle was tried. Towards the door she flew. She flung it open. Babs, Mabs, and Clara, standing on the threshold, stared at her in surprise.

"Hallo, you!" Clara said. "What ever did you lock the door for?"

"Dud-did I?" stammered Amy. "Dud-did I? I—I didn't know. I must have locked it by accident. I—I'm sorry!" she blurted out, with breathless incoherence.

Clara frowned; but Babs looked at her sharply. Easy to see that Amy was dreadfully agitated. Why? Why should the news of locker inspection have upset her so? Why had she rushed like a mad thing into the dormitory, and shut herself there before anyone else arrived? Angry as she was at the ruin of her design in Study No. 4, Babs felt a swift pang of pity, of compassion almost. Poor Amy! She looked like a dead thing.

"Well," Clara said, "I think it's a jolly funny way of going on, if you ask me. And I think," she added, a little snappishly, "that you might, at least, have had the decency to apologise to old Babs for messing up her design."

"I—I'm sorry."

"All right, Amy," Babs said softly, and laid her hand upon the girl's arm. "Say no more about it. Now, please, girls," she added, as the Form trooped in, "take your places by your lockers."

Amy gulped. Fearful still, she went to her locker, which was near the window; Frances Frost, taking her place next to her, gave her a peculiar glance, and smiled—vengefully.

Amy looked. She felt dizzy—sick. She was afraid of Frances. And yet she was even more afraid of the thing on the window-sill. If Miss Bullivant spotted that—

A sudden gust of wind was sweeping up outside. In terror, Amy saw the envelope move slightly.

Then Miss Primrose and Miss Bullivant, both wearing rather severe looks, came in, followed by Miss Charmant,

the mistress of the Fourth Form, whose pretty face bore an expression of unwonted trouble.

"Please, girls, open your lockers," she said, "and each girl here stand by hers."

Very grim, very severe did both Miss Bullivant and Miss Primrose look.

They stopped before Margot Lantham, the first in the line of inspection. To the Form's restive amazement, Margot was made to turn out the whole contents of her locker, and place them on her bed. Freda Ferriers was next. The same ceremony was performed. Bessie, rather apprehensively, was the third on the list, and, though she turned out, among other things, an apple gone bad, a bag of sticky toffee, and a screwed-up ball of paper, full of crumbs, which had once contained cake, no comment was made. Then it came to Amy's turn.

She stiffened.

"Amy, please turn out your locker," Miss Bullivant said.

Amy nodded, with a gulp.

But she did so; the contents were examined, and the mistresses satisfied. Then, just as they were turning away, a fierce little eddy of wind blew against the window, and out of the corner of her eyes, Amy saw the precious envelope whisked off the sill. Next moment it had gone, whirling merrily down into the quad. With a gasp she straightened up.

"Amy!" Miss Bullivant cried.

But Amy was not hearing. With wide, dilated eyes, she was watching that breeze-tossed envelope. Then she saw Deena, the Head's Borzoi, approaching. The sight of the fluttering thing in the air caught Deena's eye. With a suddenly gleeful woof! he rushed to meet it. Amy saw the mighty leap he gave in the air, saw the envelope caught, and clenched between his fine white teeth.

"Amy!" Miss Bullivant thundered again.

But Amy almost fainted then. For Deena, his spirits doubtless ruffled by the refreshing breeze, was whisking away like a puppy, the envelope in his mouth, no doubt to tear it to pieces in the seclusion of some secret cache. It was enough for Amy.

She forgot where she was—what she was doing. With a cry she turned, and precipitately fled through the dormitory door!

Early Birds at Cliff House!



"IT'S not good enough." Thus Frances Frost.

The scene was Study No. 4 once again, and the occasion a meeting of the garden-party committee of the Fourth Form. Rather indignantly and rather angrily was that meeting being held, and it was significant that Amy Jones, its chairwoman, was not among its members. Amy, indeed, was at that moment grinding away at lines in her own study.

For Amy had been severely punished for her flight from the dormitory during locker inspection. In addition to receiving a hundred lines, which she was busy doing now, she was detained for to-morrow afternoon.

"And to-morrow afternoon," Mabs said, "we want to erect the pergola. A fat lot of good having a chairwoman who just can't help in that."

"Well, sack her!" said Frances Frost.

But Babs shook her head. Jemima, who had been rather thoughtfully polishing her monocle, glanced at Frances, and coughed.

"Rather keen on the old job—what?" she burred. "Tut, tut! What a merry old appetite you have for work, fair Frances!"

"Well, if Amy can't do it properly she—" Frances glowered.

"Then the letter of resignation," Jemima murmured, "should come from Amy herself. She was drawn for the job in the presence of the Form—was she not? That being so," Jemima said firmly, "we, as the committee, have no power to ask for her resignation, unless the Form also desires. Am I right, Babs?"

"Yes," Babs said.

But she was thinking not of Jemima's proclamation, but of Amy. Like the rest, she was perplexed; but even though she had suffered more than any of them, she was not blaming Amy. She knew Amy's nervous nature. She knew how she magnified molehillish troubles into gigantic mountains, and she was wondering what lay behind this. Amy was not doing this for fun.

"Well, anyway, what are we going to do?" Frances scowled.

"I'll have a talk to her," Babs said. "What I can't make out, though," she added, "is why she was so frightened of locker inspection? Why the dickens she ran away during it? And I wonder—" she added.

"What?" Mabs asked.

"Who wrote the note telling Miss Bullivant that she'd find her missing twenty pounds in one of our lockers?"

"Aha!" Jemima said puzzledly.

For Miss Bullivant, of course, had explained, after the rather fruitless locker inspection, her reason for that unusual act. Frances, meeting Babs' eyes, shook her head.

"Well, who?" she asked.

That was the question.

Babs, with a shrug, went out. Thoughtfully she strode along the corridor. At the door of Study No. 9 she halted, knocked, and went in. Amy, her face wretchedly white, looked up from the lines she was grinding out. She started as she saw Babs.

"Oh!" she said.

Babs closed the door. For a long moment she did not speak. She stood, back to the door, looking at the girl in the study. Amy eyes fell before her steady gaze.

"Amy," Babs said, and then very softly went towards her, "what is it?"

"Oh, Babs, I—I didn't want to do it!" Amy burst out. "But I told you, didn't I, that the luck's against me? I was so happy—so pleased—and then—then some dreadful thing happened, some frightful mistake. No, please don't—don't ask me what!" she went on apprehensively. "Please, Babs!"

"Amy, can't I help you?" Babs asked.

"No."

"And you still want to go on?"

"Yes, Babs! Oh, yes! Oh, Babs, I do! Babs, please, please don't ask me any more questions!" Amy added, and with such a poignant note of appeal in her voice that Babs' heart was more than ever touched.

She went out. Something was wrong, decidedly. If only the girl would speak!

But Amy, obviously, was keeping her secret to herself. Not until bed-time did Babs see her again. Then, as if wishing to avoid the talk going on in the dormitory, Amy threw the sheets over her head. But she did not sleep.

Not, indeed, until the rest of the Form

were fast asleep did Amy Jones' poor, weary brain become mercifully immuned by slumber.

For Amy was thinking—and what dreadfully poignant thoughts they were. Lines. Detained. The committee getting fed-up with her. The golden opportunity of being someone at last in the school slipping through her fingers. What a silly, impossible state of affairs.

But it was going to end. To-morrow it was going to end. Thank goodness she had retrieved the money from Deena. It was now hidden underneath one of the logs in the woodshed. To-morrow she would go and get it. To-morrow, before anyone was up, she would slip it under Miss Bullivant's door and leave it there. And with that resolve hammering in her mind, Amy at last fell asleep.

The sun was shining in her eyes when she woke again. She did not know what time it was, but hurriedly she got up and dressed, then crept towards the door, casting a swift glance round as she did so. Then she paused. One bed other than her own was empty.

Bessie Bunter's.

Had Bessie found—

But, no. She was imagining things. Still, it was unusual for Bessie to be awake. Where was she, she wondered.

She soon knew the answer to that question.

For, having crept down the stairs to the Sixth Form quarters, she was passing the prefects' dining-room when the door opened, and Bessie Bunter came out.

In Bessie's arms was a cake. She jumped as she saw Amy, who, no less startled to see her, gave a gasp.

And then, seeing that it was only Amy, Bessie heaved a fat sigh of relief. "Oh, kik-crumbs, fuf-fancy you being here! Dud-don't you get up early!"

"And so," Amy said, with an eye on the cake, "do you, Bessie. What have you been doing?"

"Me? Nun-nothing! What should I do?" Bessie asked. "Just looking round, you know; and I haven't been raiding this cake, so you needn't think I have! It—it came in my last lull-letter, you know—I mum-mean, my last parcel! And it's a real Dundee! You know what ripping Dundeeds Mrs. Carey makes!"

Amy smiled faintly.

"Meaning," she said, "that it's not yours; you've raided it."

"Oh, really, Amy! But don't tell anyone," Bessie added anxiously.

"I don't."

"Good old Amy!" Bessie beamed. "Look here," she said generously, "you can come and share it, if you like! I'm going to the woodshed! It'll be safe there!"

"The—the where?" Amy breathed, with a sudden tumultuous stab of panic. "Bessie, you can't go there!"

"Oh, can't I!" Bessie said with some indignation. "Well, where else do you think a girl can eat in peace? Come on, Amy! Don't gas!"

And Bessie, trotting off with the stolen cake under her arm, led the way.

Amy choked. That fat chump! Wasn't it just like Bessie to think of something like that? And wasn't it just her ghastly luck that Bessie should think of it at this moment? But Bessie wasn't going to the woodshed, not if she knew it. How, with Bessie there, to recover her hidden treasure?

"Bessie," she said, as they reached the door of the prefects' room, "look in there!"

And as Bessie innocently turned to stare into the prefects' room, towards which Amy pointed, she gave her a shove which propelled her into the room



"PLEASE, Miss Bullivant, can I go and wash my hands?" Frances asked. "I've upset ink over them." With a startled gasp, Amy sprang to her feet. "No—no! She mustn't go!" she cried. For she knew this was Frances' scheme to search the bathroom for the missing money!

itself. With a howl, Bessie went stumbling forward, while Amy, her face haggard, turned the key in the door. Bessie's furious voice floated after her:

"Amy, you—you cat! Amy—"

Amy sped on. She'd release Bessie when she came back. Out of the school—the door having just been opened by Piper, the porter—she scampered. Breathlessly she burst into the woodshed. The envelope. Where was it? Where was it? And again she knew that agony of pain as her fingers groped around, followed by an almost swooning relief as at last they encountered the envelope. She had it. Now—

With the envelope in her pocket, she rushed back to school. Rising-bell was sounding then.

Well, thank goodness that meant that Miss Bullivant would only just be getting up. Panting, Amy reached Big Hall—again deserted.

Breathlessly she stopped in front of Miss Bullivant's door, the envelope in her hand. And then, just at the very moment she was preparing to insert it between the bottom of the door and the floor the door flew open.

Miss Bullivant, her face full of surprise, stood there, staring down at her. Amy almost fainted.

"What on earth," Miss Bullivant snapped, "are you doing here, Amy? And what is that you have in your hand, child?"

Amy Jones' mind was not of the order which reacts quickly in moments of crisis. For one horror-stricken second she could only gaze at Miss Bullivant with goggling eyes, telling herself, with a sickly pang of realisation, that she was caught red-handed at last.

But the Fate which Amy said was always against her came to her rescue. There was an interruption. It came in the shape of a red-faced Bessie Bunter firmly led by Mary Buller of the Sixth Form. In Mary's hand was the remains of a cake.

"Miss Bullivant—" she said.

"Dear me!" Miss Bullivant spun round, and Amy, freed at last from the dread which seemed to wrench the very

core of her guilty heart, slipped the letter into her pocket. "What is this?"

"Bessie Bunter," Mary exclaimed wrathfully, "with a cake raided from the Senior dining-room. I found Bessie shut up in the prefects' room—with the cake."

"Bessie!"

"Of course it—it wasn't me, you know!" Bessie spluttered wildly. "And I never saw the cake, Miss Bullivant! Well, I mum-might have seen it, but I only took it away to dud-dust it, you know! Such a thought as going to the woodshed to eat it nun-never entered my mind, you know!"

"Bessie—stop!" Miss Bullivant said. "What wild and foolish fabrications you do invent! It is perfectly apparent," she went on rumbly, "that you purloined this cake! With the idea of creeping away to the woodshed to consume it, you find yourself locked in the prefects' room. Will you kindly explain, Bessie Bunter, what you were doing in the prefects' room?"

"Well, that cat—" Bessie said, glaring at Amy. "She—"

"I—I'm sorry," Amy said, stepping forward. "I—I locked Bessie in, Miss Bullivant—"

"Indeed! For what reason?"

"Well, for—for a joke!" stuttered Amy.

"I see! I fail to see what humour you found in such a joke, however! For playing it, you will take fifty lines. Bessie, for purloining that cake you will miss breakfast this morning! For having mutilated the cake your pocket money at the week-end will be confiscated. Now go!"

Bessie glared. She looked daggers at Amy. Amy, biting her lip, but glad enough of the excuse to get away, bolted at once. Up to the study she went. There again, she closed the door. Oh, goodness! Now where could she hide this money? Her eyes fell upon the fireplace.

The fireplace was one of the old, wide-open variety.

Amy gulped. She fancied she saw a safe hiding-place at last. Just under the chimney, on the inner side of the fireplace, the brickwork was broken. Great fissures now yawned between bricks where once the mortar had been. No one would ever dream of looking for it there, and with a quick glance towards the door, she crept into the hearth.

Now where? And fumbling, finding an accommodating crack, she quickly slipped the envelope and its precious contents into it. Safe—for the moment!

Frances Smiles!



"BUT why," Babs asked, "did she shut you up, Bessie?"

"'Cos she's a cat!" Bessie said wrathfully. "Oh, dear! I'm fuf-famished!"

That, in fact, was not strictly true. For the whole of the contents of Study No. 4 were inside Bessie. But Bessie, having missed breakfast, still fancied she had leeway to make up.

Babs was puzzled. Indeed, as she had said, that was not like Amy. Amy must have had some reason for doing such a thing.

Babs shook her head. She felt rather downcast. She was sorry for Amy, she would have liked to help Amy; but it could not be said that Amy, by her conduct, was helping along the Fourth Form's share in the garden fete. Already the other girls were muttering against her. It was being freely commented that Amy Jones was doing her utmost to put obstacles in the way of the Fourth Form's garden-party efforts—and seeing that the garden party was to take place to-morrow, the Fourth, apart from being indignant, was anxious. It certainly did seem as if Amy was going out of her way to let them down!

Assembly-bell sounded then. Amy, when they reached Big Hall, was in her place. She looked a little fresher, a little more relieved than when Babs had seen her last night, and meeting the Form captain's glance, she flashed her a timid smile. Babs mechanically smiled back, wondering again, however, at that underlying expression of anxiety in Amy's face. She also noticed, as Frances Frost stepped on the scene, how those eyes flickered and wavered. Had Frances Frost got anything to do with Amy's worry?

"Girls, attention, please!" Miss Charmant said.

The roll was called—all present. Miss Primrose, mounting the rostrum, gave out orders for the day. Then she paused.

"I wish to add," she finished, "that the money taken from Miss Bullivant's study has not yet turned up. I warn the girl who has it that I no longer look upon the act as a thoughtless joke. I regard it as a theft. And for theft," Miss Primrose added, her eyes glinting a little, "there can only be one punishment—expulsion. That is all."

All. But was it? For Babs, happening to glance in Amy's direction at that moment, was stricken by the sudden pallor of her face. Despite herself, Babs found her pulses quickening. Had that missing twenty pounds any significance in relation to Amy's strange conduct?

It seemed like it—more especially remembering Amy's agitation while

that missing money was being hunted for in the lockers. And yet nothing had been found in Amy's possession.

Puzzling though it was, Babs knew enough of Amy Jones to believe her incapable of theft. If the girl would only speak! If she would only allow her to help!

But Amy said nothing. Assembly was dismissed. Feeling like a thief, in truth, Amy went out with the rest, avoiding the ironically mocking glance of Frances Frost.

In her study she collected the books she would require during lessons, and tramped towards the Common-room, where Babs, as captain of the Form, was lining up the Form preparatory to marching them into class. Very quickly Amy fell into her place.

"Right, all here," Babs said. "Left turn! Quick march!"

The girls turned. Resignedly they marched off. Quickly and orderly they went into the class-room—more quietly and orderly than usual this morning, for Miss Primrose was outside the Fourth Form class-room talking to Mrs. Carey, the housekeeper.

"And the sweep is calling this morning, Miss Primrose," Mrs. Carey was saying. "He'll be here any moment now. Would you like him to do the Fourth Form chimneys first—"

"Why, yes, I leave it to you, of course," Miss Primrose smiled.

Amy stopped dead, fingers of ice suddenly clutching at her heart. The chimney sweep was coming to the school; he was going to clean out the Fourth Form chimneys. What a fool she was! Why hadn't she remembered that the sweep always paid a visit to the school just before the end of term?

She paused. Mabs came past, and nudged her.

"Aren't you coming in?" she asked. "What are you standing here for?"

But Amy did not hear. Her head was spinning. Once again she was in the grip of a dreadful fear. That envelope, hidden in the chimney! She must save it—she must!

Trembling, she broke away. Frances Frost, just entering the class-room, stared at her as she bolted up the corridor towards her own study.

"Hallo! What's she got the wind-up for again?" she muttered.

But Amy, without looking round, had entered the study. Anxiously she closed the door. Frantically she rushed across the room, her fingers groping under the ledge where she had stored the envelope.

And then—at the very moment that her fingers closed upon the envelope there was a soft scutter up in the chimney. A shower of soot came whirling down, covering her at once, and bringing out of her such a shattering sneeze that the floating particles were followed by a perfect avalanche. Blinded, dazed, and covered with soot, Amy staggered into the middle of the room.

While in the Fourth Form class-room:

Miss Bullivant, who was taking the first session of morning lessons, was blinking rather amazedly at Amy's empty seat.

"Does anyone know where Amy is?" she asked.

Mabs glanced round. Babs set her lips. Jemima polished her eyeglass thoughtfully, and Clara glowered.

Then Frances stood up. "I—I believe, Miss Bullivant, she went to her study. Shall I go and see?" she added eagerly.

"Thank you, Frances, sit down," Miss Bullivant said. "Barbara, will you go and see if you can find her, please?"

Babs rose at once. While the girls glanced at each other, she went out. She reached Study No. 9. She flung the door open. Then she gave a jump at the sight of the sooty person her eyes encountered.

"My hat! Amy! But what's happened?"

Amy panted.

"I—I—it—it fell on me!" she said. "Oh dear! Babs, what—what shall I do?"

"First," Babs decided, "you'd better have a bath! Come on. My hat, you are in a dreadful mess! Let me help you."

She caught her sleeve. For a moment Amy hesitated. Then she allowed herself to be led. Up the stairs Babs climbed; into the Fourth Form dormitory she went.

"Here you are," she said. "Amy, you pop into the bath-room while I dig out some other clothes for you. Sure you feel all right?"

Amy nodded.

"Yes, thank you, Babs."

Babs smiled, though she was still mystified. How on earth Amy had come to get herself in that state passed her comprehension. While Amy darted through the door into the bath-room she unearthed new clothes from her cupboard, and, arraying them on the bed, went to the bath-room door.

As she halted, Babs heard a metallic clump on the floor.

"Amy," she called, "can I help you?"

"No! No—no!" came Amy's voice—it sounded terrified. "It—it's all right, Babs!"

Babs frowned again. Funny. She heard, without intending to listen, another unusual sound—a rather hollow sound, as though something had suddenly been clamped on to a metal tube. Then she heard the water splashing. Ten minutes later, attired in a bath-robe, Amy came out. She looked unusually pale, Babs thought.

She made no comment. Amy, for her part, said nothing, though Babs caught her gaze at the bath-room door rather uncertainly. Gently she helped her to dress.

"Amy, what did you run away for? Why didn't you go into lessons with the others?"

"I—I forgot something," Amy stammered. "Oh, Babs, please don't ask me questions!" she added wearily.

And Babs didn't. But back in the Form-room Miss Bullivant did. Miss Bullivant, in fact, was thunderous.

"Amy, are you aware that you have missed the first half an hour of lessons? And, Barbara, are you aware that you have taken twenty minutes in which to find Amy? Where have you been?"

Babs glanced at Amy. The girls rather curiously glanced at both of them.

"Well, Amy had—had an accident," she said.

"Sus—some soot fell on me in the study!" Amy gasped.

"Soot! Soot! What are you saying? How could soot fall on you? You weren't crawling up the chimney, girl?" Miss Bullivant raved. "Amy, explain!"

"Well!" said Amy, and paused. And Babs, looking at her, saw the desperation in her eyes. And Babs knew that what she said next was a fib, for Amy was no actor. "I—I thought I heard a sound in the chimney, Miss Bullivant, and—and I put my head under to look. And then—"

"Ha, ha!" sniggered Freda Ferriers. "And so you had to have a bath!" Miss Bullivant's lips compressed. "Barbara, you are excused," she said. "Amy, go to your place, and be sure I shall report you for this. Perhaps," she added, "you will refrain from peering up sooty chimneys when you should be at lessons in future. The idea! Now silence, please! Bessie Bunter, take fifty lines for looking round at Amy!"

Bessie glowered. The Fourth became still. But Amy, as dejectedly she slipped up the aisle of desks, caught Frances Frost's look, and, with an inward tremor, turned her face away. If she had deceived Miss Bullivant, she had not deceived Frances.

And Frances, her eyes narrowing, was thinking:

Why had Amy gone to the study? Because she had the wind up! Why had she the wind up? Because she heard the study chimneys were going to be swept—which meant, of course, she had hidden that money in the chimney. Babs barged in. Babs took her to the bath-room. She'd have had the money on her then, because with the sweep coming and everything likely to be moved, she wouldn't have dared risk finding another hiding-place in the study.

Her lips compressed a little as those thoughts crystallised.

In that case, she softly told herself, the only possible place Amy could have re-hidden the cash was in the bath-room.

The lesson resumed. Then suddenly: "Oh!" cried Frances.

"Well," Miss Bullivant glared, "what's the matter now?"

For answer Frances stood up, displaying two ink-soaked hands.

"I—I've had an accident, Miss Bullivant," she said. "My pen jammed in the ink-well, and in pulling it out I upset the ink over myself. Oh dear! Please can I go and wash it off?"

"No! No!" cried Amy, and in sudden fluttering agitation jumped up—for at once she had seen through the ruse.

"Amy, how dare you! Sit down, girl!" Miss Bullivant thundered. "Frances, take twenty lines for your accident, and go and wash that ink off your hands at once."

Frances rose. Amy, with a moan, collapsed. Babs, studying her white face, saw her wild, agitated eyes follow Frances as she jauntily stepped towards the door. And then suddenly Amy turned. She looked at Babs with eyes so desperate, so hunted that Babs felt an inward stab of alarm. The whole expression seemed to say: "Do something, Babs! Please, please do something!"

Babs' face set. Amy was alarmed because Frances had gone out. Amy feared the absence of Frances. Babs didn't know why, but she did understand that Frances' absence in some way spelt peril for Amy. She stood up.

"Miss Bullivant—"

"Yes, Barbara?"

"I'm sorry, but do you mind if I get a handkerchief?"

"Really, Barbara, why can't you remember these things?" Miss Bullivant asked in annoyance. "No—er—well, yes! If you are in urgent need of one, you had better go. But please do hurry," she added.

"Yes, Miss Bullivant."

And Babs stepped out—but not before she caught the grateful, almost worshipping look that Amy gave her. Up the stairs she crept. She reached the bath-room door, and, hesitating a moment, suddenly flung it open.

Frances, hands unwashed, jumped round with a start from the towel-rail as she came in. For a moment her face went livid.

"What—what do you want?"

"You," Babs said. "What are you doing?"

"I'm washing my hands."

"Yes?" Babs eyed her grimly. "Looks like it," she said, gazing significantly at those members. "What have you been messing about here for?"

"Nothing!" Frances retorted sharply.

And she turned towards the wash-basin. Fiercely she cleaned her hands. But Babs, noting her expression in the mirror, frowned. For Frances was smiling—a silky, tigerish smile. Frances, in spite of the alarm she had showed at Babs' interruption, seemed to be extremely pleased with herself!

With Jemima's Help!



"AMY! Amy—my hat!"

And Barbara Redfern blinked a little, as Amy Jones, coming out of the Fourth Form class-room after morning lessons, her face a panicky white, roughly brushed past Bessie Bunter and flew up the corridor in the direction of the stairs which led to the Fourth Form dormitory.

Babs pursed her lips, but she fancied she knew where Amy was going. She

Have you seen

SNOW WHITE and the SEVEN DWARFS—

that fascinating new card game which is on sale at all stationers and toy-shops? It costs only 1s. 6d., and is lovely fun. Get one to-day.

rather wanted to talk to Amy—for if Amy, by her detention, could not attend to the work to be done this afternoon—and seeing that the garden party was to-morrow there was quite an amount of it to be done—it was up to Amy to express any wishes she had in the matter. But it was not that of which she was thinking then. Amy, apparently still on tenterhooks concerning the mysterious secret of the bath-room, had flown there.

Suddenly Barbara remembered that smile of Frances Frost.

She paused a moment. Then determinedly she went after Amy. Up the stairs she flew; into the Fourth Form dormitory she rushed. In the bath-room she heard a frantic scraping, and then a cry which seemed to be wrung straight out of Amy Jones' heart.

"It—it's gone!"

"Amy—" Babs cried.

With some nameless fear tugging at her heart, she flung open the bath-room door. Amy was standing by the towel-rail of the bath-room, staring in stunned bewilderment at it. And Babs saw then that the knob which screwed into the hollow enamel cylinder which was the towel-rail itself, was in her hands.

"Amy, what's gone?" she cried.

"It's gone!" repeated Amy. "Gone—the twen—" Then, starting, she seemed all at once to come to herself. "It's gone!" she dully repeated, and suddenly dropping the knob of the towel-rail, put her face into her hand,

and gave a wild sob. "What shall I do? What shall I do?" she moaned.

"Amy—" Babs gulped. "Amy—"

But Amy, staring at her, gave a choked cry. Then, before Babs could stop her, she had rushed past her and out. Babs heard her thudding feet in the dormitory, heard the door bang as it slammed to, and rather breathlessly bewildered herself by all this, stood torn by two impulses—one to go after the distracted girl, the other to examine the bath-room. Instinct dictated the latter course. Amy was in no fit condition to be talked to now.

What had happened? Why that heart-wrung "It's gone!"? Why "twenty"? Twen—twenty—twenty pounds!

Babs' face lit suddenly as the explanation smote her. Amy—Amy—had she taken Miss Bullivant's money? Had she then been hiding it, frightened to face the Bull? Did this explain the reason for Amy's queer conduct of the last two days? Amy had taken that money—by accident probably. Amy had been hiding it. Frances had found it. Now it was gone.

Who had taken it now?

Babs started forward. She picked up the tow-rail knob. Easy to guess then where the money had been hidden. Easy, looking back, to guess that Frances had taken it. But she had no proof that her suspicions regarding Amy or Frances were correct. Only one thing, indeed, did she feel convinced about—and that was that Amy had never had any dishonest intention regarding the money in the first place. Sheer nervousness and funk would have prevented her from giving it up to Miss Bullivant.

Her heart knew a pang as she thought of the ordeal these last two days must have been to sensitive Amy. Momentarily a fierce gust of anger against Frances welled up within her.

Well, things had got to be put right.

She went downstairs. But she did not go to see Amy. She did not go to see Frances. She went instead to dinner, and after dinner, while Amy hurried away to do her detention, Babs and the rest of the committee went off to superintend the erection of the rose pergola garden party stall. To be sure, there was some grumbling on the committee concerning Amy's absence, and Frances' voice was the lustiest of all of them. Frances said:

"Well, she ought to resign! She's neither use nor ornament! There's the garden party coming off to-morrow—and what has she done towards it? I vote, you girls, we call a committee meeting after tea, and ask her to name a successor."

"Well, hear, hear to that!" Bessie said. "But she needn't name a successor—another girl, you know. I'll take her job."

Again Babs said nothing, but the look she cast at Frances was very strange. With the stall decorating over, the committee took itself back to the school, but Frances, instead of going to her own study, went on to Study No. 9. It was then that Babs drew Jemima aside.

"Jimmy, I want your help," she said.

"Ask, and it shall be given," Jemima cheerfully assured her. "What is it this time? Want me to find the lost continent of Atlantis, or merely climb the North Pole?"

"Jimmy, be serious! It's about Amy." And Babs told her what she suspected. "I'm not sure if Frances

(Continued on page 14)

OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS

Every Saturday your friend PATRICIA writes to you. She tells you about herself, her family and her friends—of news to interest schoolgirls—of things to do and things to talk about—all in that chummy way so typical of her.



DURING the winter-time, this Patricia of yours often envies those people who live in flats. Several of our friends have one, and theirs always look so warm and cosy, somehow.

It is so nice, too, not to have to run up flights of stairs every time you come down to breakfast and find you've forgotten your hankie!

I know my mother is always threatening to have a lift installed in our house—because she is so forgetful about her hand-bag—which is invariably upstairs when it should be down, and down when it should be up!

Though why she should make this threat (even laughingly) I don't know, considering it is big daughter, your Patricia, who does most of the bag-hunting!

All the same, stairs or no stairs, I wouldn't live in a flat for a fortune this weather. Our garden is looking really lovely, in spite of our rather cheerless gardener's constant remarks.

"It's nothing to the big house where I used to be," he mutters, "Why, there, they grew peaches as big as marrows—nearly. And flowers! You could pick a hundredweight an' never miss 'em!"

From which you'll gather that Mr. Herring, the gardening-man (not the fish-monger, as he would be if we were playing "Happy Families") is apt to exaggerate.

And although he pretends to think but little of our garden, I've an idea he's secretly quite proud of it—even if it doesn't resemble Hyde Park in size, as I gather the gardens of the mysterious "big house" did. (Also, why he left this paradise of florists and greengrocers I should like to know, but dare not ask!)

● Such Luxury

Father has treated us to one of those ripping couch-hammocks in the garden.

We were all frightfully excited when it arrived, especially Heath—small brother Heatherington—who insisted on leaping on it to and staying there.

But I'm afraid poor Heath wasn't very lucky, for father caught him.

What the——" he gasped. "Heath, get out of there this instant! I bought that for your mummy and Pat."

Heath started to pout and sulk.

"If you're that tired," said father, turning his back, "you can go off to bed for the rest of the day!"

At mention of "bed," Heath jumped down as if he had been stung, and, running over to father, shoved one very small hand into his,

"I didn't really want to be there, daddy," he said. "I was jus' testin' it, to see if it was strong enough for mummy to sit on. An', please—could I fetch my wigwam and then come and help you make a bonfire?"

Father grinned.

"Come on, then," he said.

"Walla-walla-hoo!" whooped Heath. "Now I'll let you be big chief Eagle-eye," he said generously.

● A Quaint Saying

Yesterday, I was setting the table for lunch—in the garden—in order to help our maid, Olive, get away early, as it was her afternoon off, when I dropped a fork.

"That's a lady," said mother, who was arranging flowers.

And then I remembered that old saying about dropping cutlery. If you drop a knife, it portends a visit from a man; if a fork, then a lady will come. If a spoon, you may expect to see a baby that day.

There is no mention in the saying of nice schoolgirls or schoolboys, I'm afraid.

So I think it should be that a big knife means a man, and a small knife a boy. A big fork denotes a grown-up lady and a small fork a young one, or schoolgirl.

As for the spoons, a big spoon can be any baby up to about eight, and the smaller the spoon the smaller the baby.

It was a big dinner-fork I had dropped, and, believe me, Aunt Monica called during the afternoon. (Though, mind you, I think she'd still have arrived, even if it had been a knife I had dropped.)

Aunt Monica, as I think you know, isn't

of fact, hers have cherry-pink rims, which look very sweet and exactly match her complexion.

After presenting Heath with a kiss and some healthy barley-sugar, and inquiring after his beloved puss-cat, young Minkie, Aunt Monica asked mother to show her the garden.

They were talking very earnestly—and not discussing the garden at all, as far as I could judge.

● Lucky Me!

Then they returned.

"Pat," said Aunt Monica, "I'm going to the South of France again for a fortnight this year. Would you like to come with me again?"

Would I? I have never ceased to think of that holiday ever since Aunt Monica so kindly took me with her last year.

"Oh, I'd love to," I said. "Mother, will you——"

"I've spoken to your mother," Aunt Monica smiled, "and she says she'd be delighted for you to go."

I hugged them both, then Heath, then Minkie.

"Silly child," said Aunt Monica. "Don't thank me; I shall love to have such a nice companion" (which was sweet of her, don't you think?)

So now, as you can just guess, I'm most thrillingly busy, looking out shorts and play-suits and summer frocks, and foolish sun-hats and wondering whether to have an ankle-length beach-coat or a short one?

Which do you think?

● For Summer Days

Goodness, what a lot about me, when I've been meaning to tell you—in response to several requests—how to turn a last year's summer frock that is too tight for you under the arms into a new and very pretty pinafore frock.

In the first idea the sleeves are cut out and the neck part is cut to a fairly low square. Two triangular pockets are cut from the oddments of material and added to the bodice of the frock.

Supposing your frock is extra tight—then the second idea will appeal to you. The top is cut right off, allowing the frock to drop an inch or so for extra length, and shoulder bands are made of pretty cord. A piece of this cord also makes bows to trim the front.

As you know, any odd blouses may be worn under these pinafore-frocks—or they can be worn without a blouse on those hot days on the beach, when sun-bathing is the order of the day.

Bye-bye, all, until next week.

Your friend,
PATRICIA.



my aunt, really; she is my young brother's godmother. And she's not a bit like story-book aunts, who're rather lean and sarcastic, with scragged-back hair and black gabardine frocks with a cameo brooch in the front.

No, Aunt Monica is quite a youthful aunt, not as old as mother, and she dresses very sweetly. She does wear spectacles for reading, but they're not those horrid pinz-nez (pinch-nose) ones. As a matter

KEEP COOL—and YOU'LL KEEP LOVELY

Patricia here gives you some helpful advice on keeping fresh and fragrant through the hot summer days.



PERSONAL DAININESS

The first step towards this is frequent bathing and washing. As you can see, the more acid you wash away from the skin, the less you will perspire.

You should wash the body first with very hot water—and then give yourself a brisk rinsing with cold. But, one warning, this should not take place at night, otherwise you'll be feeling so very fresh, you just won't sleep!

Toilet powder, such as is used for babies, is another aid to this freshness.

When a real heat-wave day dawns, I want you to sprinkle yourself with toilet powder after the hot-and-cold wash. You can buy quite a big tin of this powder for threepence, or you can use boracic powder from the home medicine chest.

Greasy hair is another frequent warm-weather problem, which can destroy the dainty charm of the schoolgirl. Of course, you may wash it more often in the hot weather, say every week, instead of every fortnight.

A DRY WASH

But if this should not be convenient, then I want you to give it a "dry shampoo." To do this, you sprinkle some ordinary household starch over your hair.

You'll look very aged and grey, you'll see, but do leave it on for a minute or two. Then take a clean hair brush, and brush most vigorously. Your hair

will soon be sparkling and soft again, with all traces of oiliness vanished.

COOL COLOURS

"If you look cool, you'll feel cool" is the popular idea and one which I think is quite sound. For I know that if I see two girls together, one wearing a red dress and one a pale green one, the girl in green always looks much cooler.

White also is perfect for hot-weather wear—and is well worth the trouble of keeping it immaculate.

SO GOOD FOR YOU

Plenty of cooling drinks will also go a long way to keeping you fresh. Water, of course, can't be beaten, but if you like it made more interesting, remember that you can buy all sorts of fruit flavours in tablet forms, which turn a drink that is good for you into one that you can't resist.

Food also plays its part in giving you that enviable summer fragrance. As you know, I wouldn't for a moment suggest a rigorous diet for schoolgirls. But I do suggest that by omitting some of the fats from your food you will not do your health the slightest harm, but only good.

And fats, remember, doesn't mean merely the fat on meat, but rich pastries and heavy puddings. These are very heat-making!

Instead of these treats, you can always have an extra apple, some plums or cherries, now, can't you? And who'd say they weren't delicious?

I'M sure there must have been many times when you were envious of another schoolgirl's appearance. Perhaps not of her complexion or long eyelashes—but of that cool-as-mint look which gives such charm. Especially during these sizzling, summer days.

But you need be envious no more, for you shall have that dewy freshness, too.

Quite the most worrying hot-weather problem for the schoolgirl—and for the grown-up, as well, for that matter—is perspiration.

Now I don't want you to regard perspiration as something to be a bit ashamed of, for it is natural to everyone, and is Nature's very clever way of throwing off the excess of acids not required by the body.

After that rather serious explanation, I can now tell you how you can remain sweet and fresh during the hottest days, without trying to undo any of nature's good work.

HATS IN SUMMER MOOD

Ribbon so gay can give an old hat the very latest air of smartness.

YOU must all have noticed how hat trimmings have found their way to under the chins this summer.

Last year all the bright young things wore a ribbon that tied under their hair at the back. But this year we have gone rather Spanish.

If you feel you'd like to wear a ribbon under your chin, then by all means do so.

But do, I beg of you, select rather narrow ribbon, for the wider ones can make you look rather as if you have toothache!

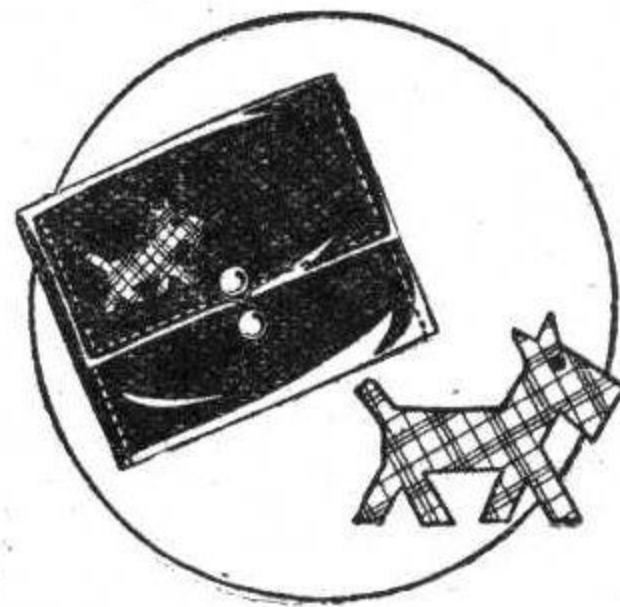
Cut four slots in a summer beret, and thread three-quarters of a yard of ribbon through them, so that it goes right over the beret and ties under your chin.

Can't you just imagine a white or yellow beret with royal blue or navy ribbon to trim it? Very holiday-fied!

Or, as in the lower picture, you can reverse the idea slightly, and tie the ribbon in a bow on the top of your beret. White ribbon on a blue beret would look very smart.

You can even use this idea on a favourite summer straw hat.

It's quite simple to unpick a stitch or so at each side of the hat, where the brim joins the crown, and to slip ribbon through. This goes right over the crown, under the brim, and under your chin again, tying slightly to one side.



A HANDBAG FOR YOUR HOLIDAY

—That you can make yourself.

EVEN tiny tots of four and five are carrying their own wee handbags around with them these days, so you school-girls must certainly have one—especially for your holidays, when you have so many more treasures to look after.

This very novel pochette here can be made in a very short while, and would certainly attract many admiring comments.

You will require a piece of material measuring 16 inches by 9. This material should be something rather firm, like casement cloth, cretonne, or linen.

Fold this over envelope-wise, and then join the side and hem (or run) all the raw edges.

Fasten with two beads or round buttons—one sewn on the flap of the bag and one on the other part. Round the top button, fix a piece of thin cord, or plaited wool, very securely, making a loop that will fix over the lower button.

Now the decoration—a cheery little Scottie!

With the help of the diagram here, I am quite sure you could cut out a doggie like this from a piece of checked gingham material.

Turn in all the edges and hem him on the bag-flap, sewing a little bead or button in place for his eye.

He'll guard your holiday spending money, comb, hankie, and other handbag secrets most faithfully, I'm sure.

(Continued from page 11)

has that money. If she has, we've got to know where she's hidden it. It's my belief she's holding that money over Amy's head as a threat."

"Brainy Babs!" Jemima admired. "Say on!"

"The only place I can think of she'll hide it is in her study," Babs went on. "Well, this is the wheeze, Jimmy. I want you to go to her study now. Hide behind the settee and watch. I'll give it out that there's going to be study inspection. She's bound then to give a last look round to see if the money is safe. Get the idea?"

"Babs, thou thinkest of everything," Jemima chuckled. "I go!"

She went. Babs smiled a little, though her lips were set rather grimly. Meantime, in Amy's study, Frances, lounging on the table, was sneering.

"And so you thought you'd keep it to yourself, eh?" she said. "You thought I wasn't wise. Nice mess now if I told the Bull that you'd spent her money, eh?"

"I—I haven't spent it!" Amy gasped. "I tell you it was lost, and you, you cat—you stole it!"

"Prove that?" Frances asked contemptuously. "I don't know anything

about it! Why should I?—I just supposed you had it, and if the Bull tackles you, you wouldn't be able to deny it, would you? Of course, I don't want to mention my suspicions to the Bull—"

Amy gazed at her in agony.

"Because," Frances cooed softly, "I should hate to see you kicked out—and only a week before breaking up, too. But there's no need for that if you resign, nominating me at the same time as your successor."

"And—and the money?"

"Well, we'll have to do something about that, of course," Frances thoughtfully considered. "I haven't got it, but I dare say when you're ready for it, I can manage to raise twenty pounds to lend you." And she smiled mockingly at the white face of the almost swooning girl in front of her. "Well, are you going to make a bargain?" she added.

Amy sank into a chair. Hopelessly she gazed at the sneering, icy face of her tormentor. Frances held all the winning cards. Expulsion—or defiance of Frances? She shuddered.

"I—I'll resign," she muttered.

"Sensible," Frances nodded. "Now we're getting somewhere. But," she added, "you don't resign, Amy, until to-morrow morning—not, in fact, until just before the garden party begins.

There'll be no time then, you see, to call a committee meeting, and so on. Babs & Co. will just have to accept your nomination, which will be me. And then—then," Frances smiled, "once I'm in charge of that stall, you can have the twenty quid to return how you can to the Bull. You—"

She turned quickly as the door opened, and Barbara Redfern, as if noticing nothing untoward, came in. She looked at the two.

"Frances, study inspection in ten minutes," she said. "You'd better get along."

Frances started. Babs did not miss it, and felt satisfied.

Frances left the room, and hurried down the corridor. Babs, following her, saw her go into her own study, and heard the key click in the lock on the inside of the door. She waited five minutes, then she strolled along.

Frances had unlocked the door. She was glaring as she stood in the middle of the room.

"Here, where are the others?" she demanded. "Didn't you say—"

"Sorry," Babs smiled; "inspection is cancelled!"

And off she went back to her own study. Ten minutes later Jemima, with a soft chuckle, joined her there. Babs looked at her eagerly. Jemima nodded.

"It's there all right—under the floor-board, directly in front of the bookcase. What's the next merry old move, Babs?"

"The next move," Babs said, "is to get that money back to Miss Bullivant. But we've got to do it in such a way that the Bull will never suspect it ever left her study. I've got a wheeze, I think, and I'll carry it out. You know that pile of books the Bull keeps on the side of her desk?"

Jemima nodded.

"What-ho! Say on, child of wisdom!"

"Supposing," breathed Babs, "we put the notes among those! The Bull's bound to move them some time or another. If she finds her notes with her own hands there can never be any question of them being stolen, can there?"

"Not bad!" Jemima conceded. "Not at all bad! But one objection, old comrade!"

"And that?"

"Well, perhaps you don't know. —But the Bull happens to be leaving the school in the morning—goin' to visit some friends or other in London, or something, and has got an extra week's leave in order to do it. Pretty tough if she failed to find the old hoard during the few hours she'll still be at the school—what?"

For a moment Babs thought, her face sharpened by lines of anxiety and worry. Then she spoke again.

"All right!" she said. "All right! Well, we'll do it, Jimmy, just the same. And if," she added thoughtfully—"if, old thing, the Bull doesn't find those notes before she goes—"

"If?" Jemima inquired.

"We'll make her, that's all!" Babs said.

And that night, while Miss Bullivant was enjoying her farewell game of bridge in the Head's private house, a shadowy figure crept from the Fourth Form dormitory. Ten minutes later she returned. The soft breathing of Jemima Carstairs floated to her as she groped her way back to her bed.

"All O.K., Babs?"

"All O.K.!" Babs answered, and crept into bed, smiling with quiet and contented satisfaction.

HILDA RICHARDS

Replies to Some of Her Correspondents.



ANNE STRATTON (Selsey, Sussex).—Though you are evidently one of my younger readers I'm sure you are one of the most enthusiastic, Anne! I'm not surprised to find that Bessie Bunter is your own C. H. favourite, for she seems to have admirers everywhere. I shall look forward to another letter, my dear—so don't forget to write.

DOROTHY PATTERSON (Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada).—Many thanks, Dorothy, for another nice letter. You would be a Second Former if you went to Cliff House. How did the Festival "go off?" I hope everything was a really big success. Juno sends you a tailwag.

"WATTLE" (Adelaide, Australia).—So glad to hear from you, "Wattle"! Jemima Carstairs, your favourite Fourth-Former, has sleek, chestnut hair, worn in an Eton-crop. She is twelfth in form at present. I hope to be featuring her often in future stories, my dear.

"BARBARA" (Penrith, Cumberland).—Delighted to hear from you again. I've had several of your nice little letters now, haven't I, Barbara? You certainly were lucky on your birthday. Perhaps you would like birthdays to come more often than once a year!

"ADMIRER OF BABS, MABS, AND CLARA" (Essex).—Yes, you would be in the Fourth Form if you went to Cliff House, my dear. Your sister would be in the Sixth. It is true that Cliff House was originally an abbey; the abbey was built nearly nine hundred years ago. I've made a large note of your story suggestions by the way. You may write to our young friend, Patricia, at this office. My pet Alsatian, Juno, sends greetings to your own pets.

K. M. E. GRIFFIN (Cheltenham).—As you were so anxious to see your name in print, my dear, I do hope you won't miss seeing this little letter! As THE SCHOOLGIRL is printed some weeks in advance, I'm afraid I couldn't make this reply appear only a fortnight after receiving your letter. Write again some time, won't you?

CECILY BENTLEY (Oxford).—You would be in the Upper Third if you went to Cliff House, Cecily. Your form-fellows

would be Doris Redfern, Madge Stevens, Fay Chandler and their cheery chums. Juno thanks Judy for her greetings, and sends a pawshake. I shall hear from you again some time, shan't I, Cecily?

"INTERESTED" (Somerset).—I have made a large note of all your story suggestions, my dear. Thank you so much for sending them along. You have quite a number of favourites in the Fourth at C. H., haven't you? I hope to be featuring them all in future stories.

"LEWY" (Wales).—Of course I don't mind answering your questions! You would be in the Lower Third if you went to C. H. Yes, there is a Welsh girl in the Fourth; she is Lucy Morgan, who has a very fine singing voice. Lucy hails from Flintshire. The oldest girl at the school is Sarah Harrigan of the Sixth.

"JEANNE" (Uttoxeter, Staffs).—So you would love another story like "No Holding the Firebrand," my dear? I will remember your request, and try to grant it some time. I do hope you are very much better now. Are you back at school? Give my dog, Juno's, love to your sweet little Terrier.

BETTY NAYLOR (Sheffield).—This time I have managed to find space for a reply, Betty! Yes, Babs' family are now fairly wealthy people, but they have known years of hardship. The richest girl in the Fourth is perhaps Diana Royston-Clarke, though Rosa Rodworth and Margot Lantham also have very wealthy parents.

FRANCES D. PENROSE (Paris, France).—Your favourite Fourth-Former's full name is Leila Constance Carroll. Yes, Frances, I'm quite sure Juno would love your funny little Peke. She sends a tailwag in greeting. I nearly forgot to say that I hope to be featuring Leila in the near future. You must watch for stories with her appearing in them!

Jonah's Luck!



SATURDAY, the great day of the garden party, dawned at last. Cliff House, its last-minute preparations energetically completed the day before, was in a ferment then.

The green lawns, where the stalls had been erected, had undergone a surprising transformation. Everywhere were flags, rosettes, and fluttering bunting. The stalls, ranged in a row, made an impressive sight; but there was no question in anyone's mind from the very beginning that the floral effect of the Fourth Form was by far the daintiest and the most pleasing of them all. Early that morning Babs & Co., with Amy, were up arranging it, decorating it.

Quietly Amy had gone ahead with preparation. Her stall—her honour—but she had to give it up!

Breakfast came. Excitedly happy, the chums went into school. Early guests were arriving then; there was an air of happy excitement, of hurry and bustle, throughout the school buildings.



"**THERE** you are," Frances shrieked. "That's the girl who stole Miss Bullivant's money!" And, to Amy's terror, the girl who coveted her role at the garden party flung out an accusing arm towards her.

During breakfast Amy caught Frances' rather grim eyes, and gulped a little.

"Well, Amy, come on!" Babs said, when the meal was over. "Up in the dormitory, you! Mabs, have you got her dress?"

"Yes."

"But—" Amy protested.

"Come on up, goose!"

And Amy was rushed off. But in the dormitory she stood and faced Mabs and Babs.

"Babs—no! I—I can't go on with it!" Amy panted. I daren't go on with it! I mean—I don't want to go on with it! I—I'm resigning!"

"You're not resigning!" Babs retorted. "Who the dickens are we going to put in your place? Off with that tunic, Amy! Mabs, get the dress ready!"

"But, Babs, I can't—I can't! I want Frances Frost to run the stall!"

"But we," Babs said, "don't! Look here, Amy, there's your mother!" she cried, as through the window they saw a little woman appear in the road. "You can't let her down! Mabs, you go and tell Mrs. Jones that Amy will be down in a minute, will you? I'll help her dress."

"But, Babs—Babs—" Amy protested.

But Babs pretended not to notice Amy's distress. Boisterously she clapped on Amy's bonnet; rapturously she clutched at her arm, pretending not to notice how it was trembling. She dragged her to the door.

"This way, old thing!"

"But, Babs, please listen to me!"

"No time!" Babs said briefly.

"Look! Your mother's waiting! Amy, you can't let your mother down!"

Trembling, her head in a whirl, Amy allowed herself to be led away. There was a cheer as she appeared on the school steps. There, her mother was coming forward, with tears in her eyes, to kiss and congratulate her.

"My dear—my dear!" she cried.

"Oh, Amy, you cannot know how happy I am that this great honour should have come to you, my dear!"

Amy gulped. She hated to run away. She saw Frances Frost near the stall. She saw that grim gleam in her eyes, that nodding of her head which said as plainly as anything: "Now is the time!" She faltered.

"What-ho!" Jemima supported.

Miss Bullivant pulled on the last glove with a determined snatch.

"Thank you, Barbara! I am touched by your anxiety. At the same time, I do not think there is any object to be gained by making a further search! I have already ransacked this study from end to end!"

"But, Miss Bullivant, it may be somewhere. Do let us help—"

"Barbara, please do not persist! I am in a great hurry—a great hurry," Miss Bullivant said, with one eye on the clock. "I have a train to catch! The money has obviously been stolen, and until the thief is caught and expelled I do not expect we shall hear any more about it! Now, please!" she added a little exasperatedly. And while Babs and Jemima exchanged a look of dumb dismay she rustled towards the door. "Please come! I am going to lock up!"

"**WAIT** a minute! Wait a minute!"

And as Amy Jones was making her way between the stalls Frances clutched at her arm. "What about your promise?"

"I—I want to tell you something!" she cried. "I want—"

"Amy"—Babs was at her side—

"Amy, please get behind the stall, and stop there for ten minutes—only ten minutes! Don't do anything until I come back—understand?"

Amy looked at her with eyes full of wonder.

"Babs, you—you don't know—"

"I know," Babs smiled softly, "everything! And I think, Amy, everything is coming out right."

And while Amy stared at her, Babs beckoned Jemima and dashed off.

To Miss Bullivant's study they went. Miss Bullivant, in the act of putting on her gloves and looking very despairing, stared at them.

"Why, Barbara! Jemima!"

"Miss Bullivant," Babs blurted out breathlessly—"Miss Bullivant, I—we—Miss Bullivant, have—have you found your money yet?"

"I have not, Barbara!"

"But, oh, Miss Bullivant, we—we came along," Babs said, her eyes travelling to the pile of books on the edge of the mistress' desk, "to ask you if we could help you to make a last search for it!"

Amy stopped. She gazed at her. She gazed at her mother. She gazed towards the school in which Babs had disappeared. And then she paused. Strangely enough, fear had left her now. Babs' promise—"I'll put things right!"—had somehow instilled within her a peace she had not known since that unfortunate moment she had discovered her mistake.

"I'm sorry," she said, "I'm not keeping it!"

"What?"

"You heard!"

Frances stared at her. Her lips came together.

"You know what's going to happen?"

"I'm not resigning!" Amy replied steadily.

"No?" Frances flamed. "All right," she said thickly, "all right! Helen," she shrieked to Helen Hunter, "just come here a moment, please. Before we go any farther I want to tell you all something. I want to tell you about Miss Bullivant's lost money!"

"What?"

"Yes, her money!" Frances' chest was heaving, and Amy, with a low cry, repenting too late of her defiance, gave

back. "She stole it!" she cried, pointing a finger at Amy. "She not only stole it—she spent it! I know! I've known all along! Now let her deny it!"

"Amy!" Helen Hunter cried. And from Mrs. Jones came a cry:

"No, no! My girl is not a thief!" "I'm sorry"—Helen Hunter's eyes were stern—"I have my duty to do, Mrs. Jones! Amy, you will come with me at once, before Miss Bullivant leaves," she said fiercely. "Frances, you had better come, too."

Tottering, almost on the verge of collapse, Amy was propelled forward. And as she went, her mother's sob in her ears, her eyes mechanically sought the school clock. Ten minutes, Babs had said—ten minutes in which to save her! That ten minutes had gone, and of Babs, who had given her the strength to defy Frances to her own ruination, there was no sign!

IN THE study, Miss Bullivant's hand was already on the door handle, when Babs and Jemima, gazing through the window, saw the little procession marching towards the school. Amy, glassy-eyed and white-cheeked, grimly being led by Helen; Frances, her face a spiteful mask of triumph, trailing along at her side. What to do then? How, how, with only a matter of seconds to spare, make Miss Bullivant recover those notes?

Babs' brain worked like lightning. "Miss Bullivant," she cried, "you've forgotten something!"

"Indeed!" "Your—your umbrella," Babs gabbled. "Miss Bullivant, dud-don't go without that! It may rain, you know." Miss Bullivant paused.

"You really think so, Barbara?" "Well, you never know," Babs said, and gazed at the umbrella in question, which stood behind the pile of books. "Oh, please don't take risks!" she cried.

The mistress paused, plainly touched by such consideration.

"Very well, Barbara," she conceded graciously.

She turned. The procession could be heard in Big Hall now. Miss Bullivant was reaching across the desk towards the umbrella—now was Babs' moment. In three quick strides she was across the room. With a: "Oh, Miss Bullivant, let me get it for you!" she jumped towards the umbrella, and as Miss Bullivant was in the very act of reaching forward, crashed against her as though she had slipped.

The result was inevitable. For Miss Bullivant, staggering, caught against the pile of books. With a cry she drew back, frantically clutching at those books to prevent them from falling. One she saved, but the rest shot across the room, and, as they shot, a small bulky envelope flicked back, falling under the mistress' very nose. She gave a cry that was almost a shout.

"Why, my goodness gracious! Barbara—"

Then came, unheard, a knock on the door.

"Oh, Miss Bullivant, I'm sorry," Babs cried. "I'd no idea—"

"Sorry!" Miss Bullivant, quivering, had pounced on the envelope, her hands shaking. "My—my money!" she choked. "My—my—oh, Barbara, how can I thank you! How careless of me! I must have absent-mindedly put it between the pages of one of those books. Barbara—" and then she flung round as the knock at the door was repeated. "Well, well," she cried. "Come in!" And as the procession entered, she started. "Good gracious me, what is this, Helen?"

"Miss Bullivant, Frances has a statement to make!" Helen said.

"Indeed, Frances? Please hurry! I have a train to catch!"

"I want to tell you," Frances said spitefully, "I want to tell you, Miss Bullivant, that it was Amy Jones who stole your money!"

"I—I didn't steal it!" Amy panted.

"And Amy," Frances gleefully went on, "has not only stolen that money, Miss Bullivant; she has spent it!"

"Indeed!" Miss Bullivant looked at her. "And how did you find this out, Frances?"

"She told me!" Frances lied.

"Amy, did you?"

"No! No, I—I didn't, Miss Bullivant!" cried Amy.

"Thank you, that is enough! Now let me say a word!" And Miss Bullivant faced them. "Amy did not steal that money," she said sternly. "Nobody stole it! Thanks to a most fortunate accident I have just this minute found it myself—it was apparently my own carelessness which caused me to lose it in the first place. The money," Miss Bullivant went on, while Amy blinked like a girl in a dream and Frances' eyes almost popped out of her head, "is here!" She produced the envelope. "Frances, you will take five hundred lines for making such a foolish and spiteful accusation! Barbara, thank you—and thank you, Jemima! But I must fly! My train!"

"But look here!" Frances spluttered. "Look here—I say!"

But Miss Bullivant, in sudden frenzy, had bundled her out of the study. And while Frances choked and Amy stared,

not yet understanding, but knowing that an enormous weight had been lifted from her mind, Miss Bullivant clicked the key in the lock and flew—without her umbrella! Jemima chuckled at the look on Frances' face.

"Beaten at the post, what?" she said.

"Too, too tough, old Frances!" Beaten Frances undoubtedly was! Bitter and glowering was she all that day, and what a cheer went up when the news got around!

Happy, happy Amy! And happier still when, at the end of the day, her glowing mother watched her being handed the prize for the best stall. Happy the chums, and happy Babs.

But only Jemima and Babs ever knew the inside story of Amy's great mistake. Even Amy herself never knew the full details. For when later she pressed Babs for an explanation, all Babs said was:

"Don't worry, old thing! Just leave it as it is. All's well that ends well! But—"

"Oh, Babs, yes?" "Next time you make a mistake, tell me!"

"Oh, I will, I will!" Amy said happily.

"And, Amy?" "Oh, Babs, yes?"

"What price your Jonah luck now?" Amy flushed.

"I—I don't think I shall ever believe in that again, Babs," she said softly. "for how could any girl be a Jonah with such a wonderful friend as you?"

To which Jemima, with an approving twinkle in her grey eyes, answered:

"Echo answers how—and how!"

THE END.

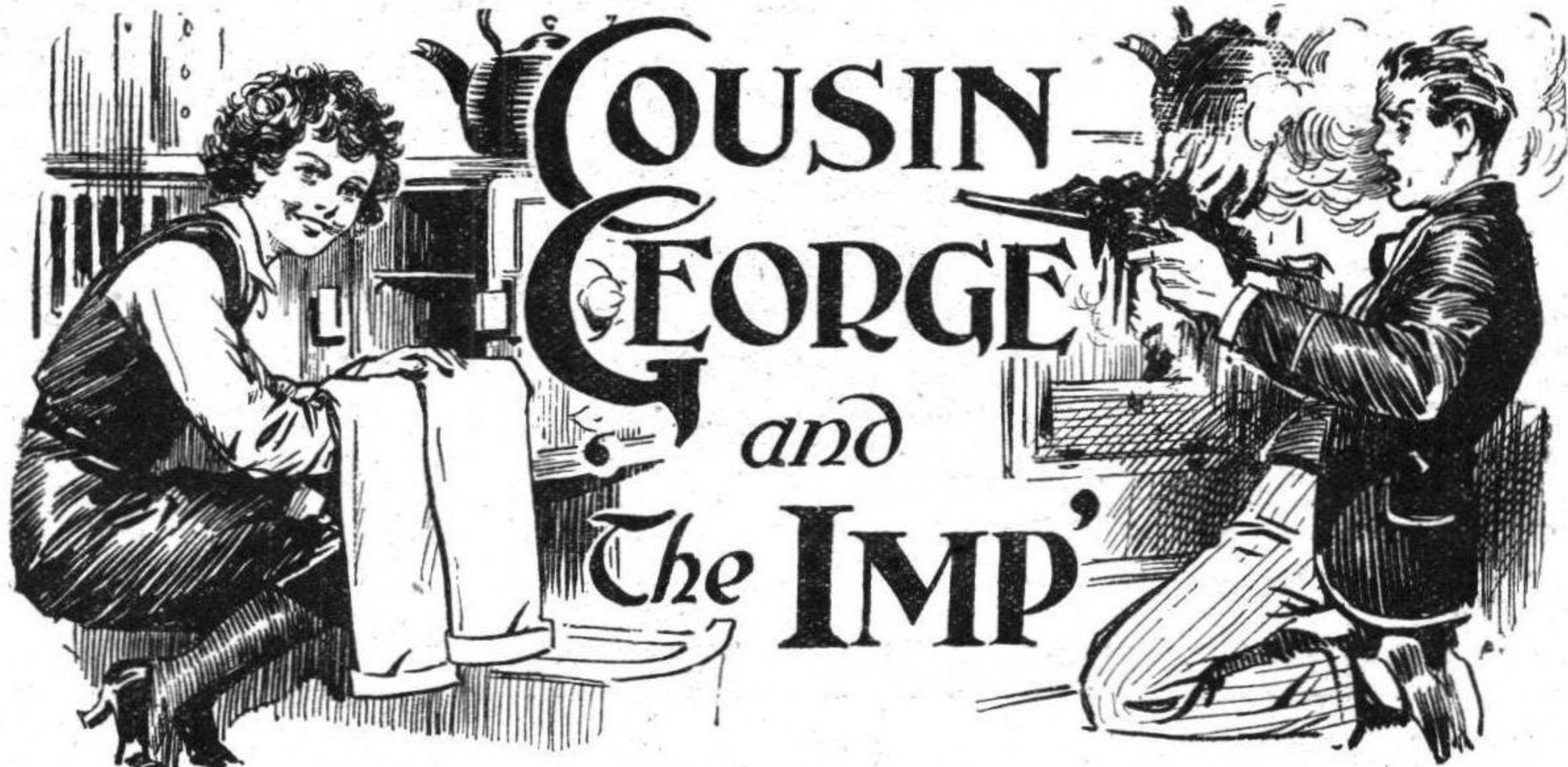


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When the IMP put her cousin's crumpled trousers in the oven, they came out like this—quite immaculate.

I know just how high-spirited you are; and if George should take you, I do want you to remember that you must behave in a most model manner. Remember that Mr. Sibley is his headmaster, and act accordingly."

"Oh!" said the Imp, and managed to repress a faint smile.

For, in her boarding-school days, Hetty's headmistress had been to her like a red rag to a bull. They had never got on well, and Hetty had the idea that headmasters must be as comic, as grim, and as much an obvious target for impish humour as a headmistress.

But she saw what Aunt Miriam meant.

"I shall behave perfectly, aunt," she said, in her primmest manner.

"Very well, dear; now run along and find George. And tell him that the laundry has just arrived. He is expecting his white flannels back."

Merrily enough Hetty skipped along. "Cousin George!" she called, outside George's room. "Aunt told me to tell you that the laundry has arrived."

"Thank you."

He opened the door and looked out, wearing at the moment some old grey-flannel bags, but a most immaculate tennis shirt, and shiny brown shoes.

"And I'll be ever so good, Cousin George," the Imp went on, trying to keep a glimmer from her eyes.

Hetty's Cousin George eyed her from an immense height. He was only an inch or two taller, but he was two years older, and that was what made the real difference.

There were times when Cousin George, in Hetty's company, felt about fifty years of age—and acted like it.

"I sincerely hope you will," he said, in solemn tone. "As you will be alone in the house, you might get up to all sorts of mischief."

Hetty's heart gave a jump.

"Alone in the house? But aren't you taking me to the Head's blow-out and tennis?" she asked, in dismay.

"The—the Head's what?" asked Cousin George, shocked.

"Bun-fight—tea-party," said the Imp, who always felt an urge to use more slangy expressions than normal when

But when Cousin George, anxious to show off, put his Headmaster's trousers in the oven, the result was—ashes.

talking to her solemn cousin. "Aunt said—"

"If mother thinks I am taking you, she is mistaken," said Cousin George promptly. "I'm not. I know you, Hetty. Wherever you are, there's always an uproar. And as my Head will be watching, I don't want to be disgraced by you."

He turned to go into his room, but Hetty gave a yelp.

"Oh, George! You don't mean that."

"Cousin George, please," he reproved, turning. "What will the Head think, you addressing me as George, when I am so much your senior? Have you no sense of proportion? No, I'm afraid not," he added. "You can get the laundry."

The Imp frowned, and nearly told him to get it himself; but she did not want a row, so hurried downstairs.

There were times, though—and this was such an occasion—when Hetty felt that she wanted to be really rude to Cousin George. And one day she might be! But reigning in her natural wildness was the remembrance that she was a guest—and that, her own parents being in India, she had to be a good girl here, or else be sent somewhere worse. To a school where there would be no fun at all.

Downstairs, in her meekest manner, Hetty went, and in the hall saw the laundry box, and beside it, a parcel. Nellie the maid was taking her afternoon off, and had dumped the laundry just inside, not having sorted it yet, so Hetty, snatching up the paper parcel, guessed that it contained George's sparkling, snow-white bags.

"A treat for the Head," she told herself.

And then, glancing at the parcel, she gave a slight start. There was a gummed label on it with a name and address.

"Captain Storm, 'The Schooner.'" Captain Storm, an old sea-captain, lived next door in his ship-shape house "The Schooner"—and unless the

The Imp Gets Her Own Way!

"HETTY! Just one moment, please!"

When Hetty Sonning, known to her intimates as "The Imp," heard her Aunt Miriam call, a spasm of fear ran through her; for Hetty was the kind of girl who spent much of her time in hot-water, and when her name was called by an elder, it usually meant that the water was on the boil, so to speak.

"Yes, aunt, coming!" called Hetty.

She was in her bed-room at the moment, making sure that her tennis-shoes were clean, for she had seen her Cousin George testing a few tennis-balls to see if they were good, which meant that he at least was going to play.

Hurrying along the landing to her aunt's bed-room, Hetty knocked, and glanced in.

Aunt Miriam was due at a meeting of the Debating Society, this being Wednesday afternoon, and she was just putting the finishing touches to her hair. As her face wore a most amiable expression, Hetty gave a sigh of immense relief.

"Nothing wrong, aunt?" she asked.

"Wrong? Oh, no, Hetty! I merely called you in to say that if by any chance dear George should be kind enough to take you with him this afternoon—"

"Is he playing tennis, aunt?" the Imp asked eagerly.

"Yes. As a matter of fact," added Aunt Miriam, not without a ring of pride in her voice, "his headmaster has asked him to tea and tennis, to make up a four. So nice for George."

"And he may take me?" murmured Hetty. "Whoopee!"

Hetty gave a little skip in the air; for she had nothing to do this sunny afternoon, and tennis was just what she wanted.

"Ssh—not so much exuberance, please," reproved Aunt Miriam gently. "That is why I called you in, Hetty."

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trousers had been labelled wrongly, these were his!

"Um," mused Hetty. As the thin paper was torn, she could see the white trousers inside.

Captain Storm was a small man measured vertically, but he was plump—and anything funnier than Cousin George in his trousers Hetty could not imagine.

"Oh golly!" she murmured, her eyes glimmering.

And then, turning the parcel label-side under, she hurried up the stairs. Being a bright-witted girl, the Imp guessed that Cousin George's trousers were next door in a parcel inside the "Schooner," but she had been told to fetch the laundry, so she fetched it.

But no sooner had she reached the top of the stairs than the telephone-bell rang, and Cousin George rushed from his room.

"I'll answer it," offered the Imp.
"It'll be for me," said George, and hurtled down the stairs with a rush. "Oh—yes, Violette," came his voice a moment later. "Certainly, Violette. I'm coming right now. Yes, Violette. Well—I'll see if I can rake up another. Oh, yes, a girl—yes—"

Hetty's heart gave a skip as she heard that; for Violette was the headmaster's daughter—and George's words could have but one reasonable meaning. They wanted a fourth for tennis, even with George present!

The receiver was hooked back, and George, his face pink, his eyes sparkling, mounted the stairs.

"That was Violette, the Head's daughter," he said, and brushed past Hetty.

"Did I hear her ask you to bring someone else to make up the four?" the Imp asked eagerly.

Cousin George frowned upon her. "You shouldn't have been listening," he said coldly, and went into his room.

"The flannels," called Hetty, and tossed them on to his bed, label side down.

While Cousin George finished his dressing, the Imp, out in the corridor, was plunged in gloomy thought. For now more than ever she wanted to play tennis. She had seen Violette play, and knew that she was no Wimbledon star, good-looker and ready flatterer of Cousin George though she might be.

But when Cousin George said "no," it was "no," so even though a fourth were wanted—there would be no tennis for Hetty.

"Serve him jolly well right if the trousers don't fit," muttered Hetty indignantly.

She had only just said the words when Cousin George's bed-room door was swung open. He looked goggle-eyed and pale, and when Hetty glanced at him she giggled.

For Cousin George was wearing a pair of most immaculate flannel trousers that reached little more than half-way down his calves.

"That's right, laugh," he snorted, becoming human in this crisis. "You jolly well would think it fun! How can I go to the Head's tennis party like this?"

Hetty had a final chuckle and then became solemn.

"I could sew something on the bottom and make them look longer," she offered. "Some lace."

Cousin George glared.
"That's not funny," he said. "What am I going to do? I'll look a perfect fright. I've got to wear white bags. The Head always insists for tennis. And this is the only clean pair I've got. Oh, gosh—mother would know how to do something!"

Hetty shook her head.
"Once trousers have shrunk there's nothing much to do," she said, intending to let Cousin George suffer justly

for a bit before telling him they were not his bags.

And then, through the darkness, as it were, there came a flash of light. She suddenly saw her chance.

"You really want them stretched?" she asked.

"Can it be done?" asked George anxiously, his face still pale. "I don't want Violette to giggle at me. You're a girl—you ought to know how to shrink things in the wash—I mean, how to make them right again. Gosh, that laundry!"

The Imp became calm.
"Cousin George, it's easy," she said. "I may be only a girl, but I know something about laundries. I can make those bags just as good as ever they were. In ten minutes you shall have a pair of trousers that fit."

Cousin George frowned at her, not having too high an opinion of the Imp's ability.

"No larks," he said. "You can really, honestly do it?"

The Imp shrugged.
"Of course," she said. "There's a dodge that always works. I'll get everything ready—bring them down in two minutes, and leave me to it."

But at the head of the stairs the Imp paused.

"Oh—one thing. If I do let you have a pair that really fits—you'll take me?" she asked.

Cousin George winced.
"Yes—all right," he agreed without eagerness. "But I'm not promising you can play when you get there!"

"Done," said the Imp, and skipped downstairs.

And George is Inspired!

AS quickly as she could—having been given the trousers by George—Hetty replaced them in the paper, and slipped them into the "Schooner" next door, where the maid gave her the parcel addressed to "Sonning," Sunnyside.

Then she took out the trousers, put the paper wrapping in the gas stove, turned the taps on very low, and whistled Cousin George. When his steps were heard, she took out the paper, put the trousers into it, and popped it back into the oven.

Always an imp, Hetty was pulling Cousin George's leg, her own face solemn.

"Well, where are they?" he asked, marching into the kitchen.

"Nearly done," said Hetty, going to the oven, and opening the door.

Cousin George leaped a foot in the air.

"You've put my bags in the oven!" he howled.

Hetty took them out just before the paper scorched. They were nicely warm, but as clean and dainty as ever.

"There we are," she said, proudly holding them up.

Cousin George goggled at first, then took them in hands that trembled. He was looking for scorches, but there was not one, and his eyes rounded in wonder.

"Great gosh! You don't mean that that stretched them?" he asked blankly. "Putting them in the oven!"

"Oh, tricks in every trade," said Hetty lightly. "And boys don't know everything!"

Cousin George continued to stare, held the trousers against himself, and then, without a word, hurried upstairs.

In the kitchen the Imp gurgled and giggled, then became grave as Cousin George returned wearing the trousers, and beaming happily.

"Hetty—you're a wonder," he said in admiration. "You really are. That's a tip worth knowing. If it happens again I'll just pop them in the oven for a bit. How long?"

The Imp controlled her face.

"Oh, medium gas, ten minutes!" she said airily.

And she thought it better to reserve the truth until after the Head's tea-party.

"Absolute magic," purred Cousin George. "You know, if I hadn't seen them come out of the oven with my own eyes—honest, I wouldn't have believed it!"

"No?" said the Imp.

"No. Sounds crazy. However, if you're coming, go and get smartened up. You needn't bring your racket, though. Put a clean frock on, and do your hair decently."

Hetty needed no telling. In a pretty frock suitable for tennis, she descended the stairs a few minutes later, bearing a racket, just in case someone needed one, she explained to Cousin George.

"Um! Well, remember, no asking to play!" he said firmly.

"No, Cousin George."

But the Imp had her own ideas. Somehow, she meant to play, even if she had to force an invitation.

It was not a long cycle ride to the Head's charming house, and they reached it in good time. Violette, a month younger than Cousin George, was practising, and gave the Imp a nod of recognition, if not of welcome, when Cousin George diffidently introduced her as his kid cousin—aged fourteen and a bit.

"What about the fourth?" asked Violette anxiously. "Mother has had to go out, you know."

She glanced at Hetty, who gave her what she hoped was a winning smile.

"Hetty might spoil the game—good for her age and all that," said Cousin George, "but we want an older girl. We want— Ah!" he ended.

"Yes?" said Violette eagerly. "I knew you'd think of someone, George. You have such an active brain."

Cousin George smirked.

"Oh, I don't know, y'know!" he said modestly. "But how about Claire Mitchell—the prefect at Hetty's school. They say she's pretty hot at tennis."

The Imp uttered a groan; for Claire Mitchell was one of the stickiest prefects at the school.

"That's an idea," agreed Violette. "How can we get hold of her?"

"Hetty knows where she lives. Hetty can go on her bike and ask her," said Cousin George.

He was about to give the Imp more detailed instructions, when a bald-head appeared from an upper window.

"Violette!" called Mr. Sibley, the headmaster.

"Yes, dad?"

"Were these flannels washed at home?"

"Y-yes, dad," said Violette. "Mother got Mrs. Dumble to do them."

"Well, she's done them in. Reach half-way down my calves. What am I going to do? Has the laundry come yet?"

"Oh dear, no, dad!" said Violette, in pathetic dismay.

Hetty gave a sharp start of horror, for on to Cousin George's face had come a smiling smirk of triumph, and he shot a look at Violette—such a look as a knight in shining armour might have given a damsel in distress.

"Leave this to me," he muttered. "Sir," he added aloud, "I can fix them."

"What—fix them? Make them longer? Impossible!" barked the Head.

The Imp shivered with dread.

"Cousin George," she whispered anxiously, as he stepped forward.

But Cousin George waved her to silence.

"I can fix it, sir," he said. "Look at my bags. They're all right now."

"I can't wear your trousers, boy."

"No, sir. . . . But half an hour ago they were like yours—half-way down my calves. . . . But there's a dodge for lengthening them—heat treatment," said George excitedly. "You let me have them, and I'll put them right."

Hetty started forward.

"Cousin George—!" she said urgently.

"Will you leave this to me, Hetty?" he asked, in his most high-hat manner.

"I know what to do. You take that message to Claire Mitchell. Ask if she'd care to make up a four."

"Yes, but—"

But George was already entering the Head's house by the kitchen door.

Loitering in quaking dismay, Hetty felt Violette's hand on her arm.

"This will be such a score for George," she smiled.

"Oh, yeah!" said the Imp dismally.

"I mum-mean—I'll take that message. I'll go now."

But she was thinking in growing horror about the Head's trousers.

Ten minutes in the oven with a medium gas, and the Head would not know they were the same trousers.

In fact, he would not know they were trousers at all.

Searching!

THE Imp cycled at full speed to Claire Mitchell's house, only a quarter of a mile away round the corner, and as she rode she tried to decide how to word the invitation.

If Claire accepted, then there would be no tennis for Hetty. And consider-

ing that Hetty was a good tennis player that was bad luck.

Reaching the gate of Claire's house, Hetty paused, and an idea that had been developing in her mind now came to perfection.

Looking down the road, she saw two girls, rather younger than she was, playing bat and ball outside Claire's house with a red and blue ball, and rackets strung here and there with ordinary string.

The Imp dismounted beside them.

"Just guard my bike for me, will you?" she asked, with a smile.

They obliged, and Hetty walked up the front path, and then, seeing Claire Mitchell in the garden at the back practising tennis strokes, she waved.

Claire Mitchell, wearing a heavy frown, came striding up the side path, to stop a yard or two short of Hetty.

"Were you supposed to be signalling me?" she asked.

"Yes, Claire," said Hetty meekly. "Please will you make up a four at tennis, or are you too busy?"

And the Imp deliberately gestured towards the two little girls.

Claire Mitchell, a prefect and a good tennis player, conscious of her dignity, nearly collapsed as she saw the children with the red-and-blue ball and the string rackets.

"Are you trying to be funny, Hetty?" she asked grimly.

"Oh, no, Claire! Of course, if you're too busy—"

Claire gave a short laugh.

"I am much too busy, but thanks so much for asking me," she said sarcastically. "No, I can't play tennis with you!"

Then, head thrown back, she marched off, while the Imp shrugged and turned away. Thanking the puzzled youngsters, Hetty, smiling, returned to the Head's house just in time for the fun.

Cousin George and Violette were playing singles, while an elderly aunt watched.

But the aunt now sniffed the air, "Violette?" she called.

"Yes, aunt," said Violette.



"PLEASE, would you make up a four at tennis?" asked the Imp, and purposely gestured towards the children. As dignified Claire Mitchell went red with anger, the Imp hid a smile. Her ruse was succeeding!

"Something's burning in the oven I'm sure," said the aunt worriedly. "Unless the house is on fire."

Cousin George gave a violent start, the colour draining from his cheeks.

"Sus-something in the oven? Oh, nun-no! Can't be!" he said in choking tones. "But—but I'll go and look—"

"My golly! Something is burning," said Violette. "Let's go and see."

"I'll go," said George shakily.

And, glancing at his watch, he saw that it was fifteen minutes since he had put the Head's trousers in the gas oven, turned it to medium, and closed the door!

"I'll go with you," offered Violette.

Cousin George groaned in despair. He did not want Violette to witness the terrible scene that must follow.

"No, no! I'll go—"

"But I can come, too—"

"No," insisted George.

And, to Violette's surprise, he rushed away into the house. Banging into the kitchen, he recoiled as he saw a cloud of black smoke issuing from the oven. Then he hauled the oven door open and dragged out smouldering rags.

Cousin George's heart stood still. The Head's trousers!

But terror speeded up his brain. Keenly he looked about him. There was a side door from the kitchen. He dived through it into the garden.

There, rushing to the dustbin, he put the smouldering rags in, and jammed the lid down tightly.

He had returned to the kitchen and just opened the window when Violette entered.

"What ever was it?" she asked.

"Oh—er—just—just some rags!" faltered Cousin George.

From above came an impatient voice.

"Sonning!"

"Yes, sir?"

"Where are my trousers?"

Cousin George swallowed heavily.

"Oh gosh!" he muttered.

And at that moment the back door opened, and Hetty entered.

"Hallo, what's going on?" she asked lightly. "Cooking?"

Cousin George fixed her with a glaring look, and then turned to Violette.

She was looking sorely puzzled and anxious. Something, she could not help noticing, was disturbing George.

"The house isn't on fire? You're not trying to stop me being frightened?" she asked.

"No, no, no!" groaned George. "It's—it's—well, can you tell your father that—that it'll be all right? I mean, say I'll bring his trousers up in three minutes."

"His trousers?" said Violette, puzzled. "Oh, yes—you were unshrinking them! Where are they?"

"In the dus—I mean—I—" Cousin George swallowed. "I'll bring them up," he ended desperately.

Violette, frowning a little, went from the kitchen to take her father the message. No sooner was the door shut than Cousin George swung round to Hetty.

"You— Oh gosh! The thing went wrong!" he said hoarsely.

"What thing?" said the Imp.

"The trousers! Come and look!" said Cousin George.

He turned to lead her to the dustbin; but the Imp stood still.

"You haven't burned the Head's trousers, surely, Cousin George?" she asked.

"I—yes, I have," he said heavily. "It's the end. I'll be expelled. He'll say I did it on purpose. He'll never

believe that trousers can be unshrunk by being cooked in the oven."

"Not unless he's nit-witted," the Imp agreed.

Cousin George gave a start and fixed her with a keen look.

"You don't mean— Gosh! Were you pulling my leg?" he asked, in horror.

The Imp's eyes glimmered.

"I wasn't going to give away my secret method," she said. "Still, no damage done—"

Cousin George, his eyes blazing, took her by the arm and dragged her to the dustbin, whipping off the lid and recoiling from the black smoke.

"Look at those rags!" he said huskily. "They were the Head's trousers."

Hetty looked at them and giggled.

"Head's trousers? Oh, Cousin George, they weren't! These are just cotton rags. Look!"

Cousin George looked, looked again, and then regarded her blankly.

SIX STORIES YOU'LL ENJOY

"Billy and the Kid"—that is the title of a series of delightful complete stories, the first of which appears this week in our companion paper, the **GIRLS' CRYSTAL**. And the author is none other than popular Ida Melbourne.

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"Yes, that's true," he admitted, amazed. "Then—then where are his trousers?"

The Imp marched into the kitchen, followed by her cousin, went to a cupboard beside the stove, and opened the door, taking out a pair of yellowish flannels.

"Here they are—where I put them," she said.

Cousin George breathed in relief like a siphon.

"Oh gosh!" he said. "Saved!"

"Saved," giggled Hetty. "But won't the Head laugh—"

Her cousin became anxious and alarmed again.

"Hetty, you dare tell him!" he threatened. "If you do I—"

"If I do you won't suggest I play tennis? Claire can't come, she's too busy," Hetty said.

There were sounds suggestive of a heavy man's approach, and the Head's voice came.

"Sonning!" he boomed.

George turned, the trousers in his hand.

"I'm sorry, sir; it didn't work," he said. "Awfully sorry—"

The Head, frowning, took the flannels suspiciously.

"You haven't ruined them?" he asked.

"Oh, no, sir!" said Cousin George.

"H'm, just wasting time—keeping me upstairs correcting essays! I'll have to play in these things, after all," frowned the Head. "I wish you wouldn't say you can do things when—"

"Oh, Mr. Sibley!" piped the Imp.

"Well?"

"I've got your other flannels outside," said Hetty.

"What? My others? The ones from the laundry?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, I thought you wouldn't mind; but knowing the van had been at our house and was on its way here, I collected them," the Imp said brightly. "I'll skip out and get them."

While Cousin George stared blankly, Hetty, returning, presented Mr. Sibley with a neat paper parcel, which he took with pleasure and opened, to reveal his best flannels, perfectly laundered.

"You are a very intelligent girl," he said, nearly patting her head. "Very! A pity you did not think of that, Sonning. But there, girls have quicker intelligences than boys."

The grinding of Cousin George's teeth was almost audible.

Violette smiled.

"For one awful moment, George," she said, "I really thought you had put poor father's trousers in the oven; only I knew you couldn't do anything so stupid."

"Oh, no, quite!" muttered Cousin George, and met Hetty's eye. There was a keen look in it, full of meaning.

"How about—how about Hetty making up the four as Claire Mitchell can't come?" he said.

"Oh, I don't mind! Yes, why not? It'll make a game," said Violette. "And she can play with dad."

So Hetty, bubbling with excitement, partnered the Head, and they won the two sets before tea, 6-2, 6-4. But the one after tea—it was a stunning tea with strawberries and cream—went to 8-6 before Hetty and the Head forced victory.

"You backed me up quite well," said the Head, patting her shoulder. "Very well. You must come along again some time."

And then, as they were going, the Head brought up the matter of the flannels again.

"By the way, Sonning," he murmured, "I'd like to know what you intended doing to unshrink those flannels of mine."

Cousin George shifted from one foot to the other; but the Imp spoke up.

"I'm afraid that's a secret—a secret method. But Cousin George hadn't quite mastered it," she said. "I didn't tell him the whole process. You see, it's a deadly secret really—not my own, or I'd tell."

"The laundry's?" asked the Head, smiling.

"No; one of my friend's," said Hetty, with a grin.

"H'm, if it works I'd like to meet the person," said the Head, wishing them good-bye.

"And so would I," said Cousin George—and said it through his teeth!

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

ANOTHER feast of fun with these two delightful characters next Saturday. Don't miss it.

Our Enthralling Story of the Golden West.

GIRL RIDER OF THE BLUE HILLS!



By
**DORIS
LESLIE**

FOR NEW READERS.

FAY THORNTON lives on the Flying H Ranch in Texas with her father, ROBERT THORNTON, and her two little brothers. The ranch is small and not too prosperous. Mr. Thornton is wounded by cattle thieves on the land of wealthy John Hampton, who owns a big neighbouring ranch, and who is their enemy. Mr. Thornton is not seriously hurt, but people are whispering that he is really one of the men rustling cattle. A saddle bag containing articles used by cattle rustlers falls into the hands of Fay and her father. Three of the cowboys who work for Mr. Thornton see the contents of the saddle bag and, thinking that this proves that Thornton is a rustler, they desert the ranch. Fay rides off to try to get them back.

(Now read on.)

A Desperate Race!

IF Lefty, and either Sam or Jim, don't come back to us, old boy, then I reckon things'll be mighty bad. But Lefty'll come back. Sure he will. I'll make him, somehow—and then perhaps the others will come back as well."

There was a note of fierce determination in Fay Thornton's voice as she spoke, her lips close to the ear of her stocky little range pony. And her brown eyes, stared fixedly down the winding, dusty trail, now shrouded in the cool shadows of a Texan evening.

The Flying H Ranch, her home, was threatened with disaster.

Three of the cowboys, having seen a cattle-thief's implement in the kitchen last night, had left them, believing it to be proof that her father was a cattle-thief, and with only four cowboys remaining, she and daddy could never run the ranch.

There was only one thing to do, as more men must be obtained and none were available in Redland Gulch—ride to the home of one of them, Lefty Mason, and persuade him of daddy's innocence—beg him to return. If he did, Fay was confident the other two deserters would follow suit.

"Oh, I sure don't blame them for quittin', Starlight," she murmured, tight-lipped, "only I wish to goodness they'd realise the truth."

For the truth was that the cattle-thief's implement they had seen belonged to an unknown man, whose saddlebag Fay had found in Redland Gulch on rodeo-day.

Clippity-clop, clippity-clop! On she rode, until presently she reined in, two miles from the ranch, where the trail curved in a wide semicircle, revealing the little township straight ahead of her, nestling in the valley.

But Fay had no eyes for it this evening. Her gaze went to the right, far away across limitless slopes and plains, ridges and valleys, and rocky, sandy ground dotted with cactus, to where a switchback panorama of mounds guarded the horizon.

The Blue Hills! That was her destination now. Somewhere at the back of those rugged, mist-shrouded mountains Lefty Mason had his shack.

"Down we go, old boy," she said, gently tightening the reins.

LOST IN THE BLUE HILLS, WITH A LITTLE GIRL TO PROTECT.

As sure-footed as a mountain goat, Starlight slithered down a stony slope, and then set off on the long trek over that constantly changing country to the foot of the Blue Hills. By the time Fay reached them, the sun had almost sunk from sight.

The ground here was rocky and boulder-strewn. Carefully steering Starlight over it, Fay headed him into one of the numerous gorges and canyons that cut avenues through the solid rock, a trail which she knew would bring her out to a fertile valley behind the mountains where Lefty Mason lived.

A cool breeze wafted little clouds of dust into her face as she rode along, but her neckerchief, pulled up right to her eyes, afforded good enough protection.

"Guess we must be near Hampton's land now," she soon began to muse, and then broke off, jerking bolt upright in the saddle. "Why—gee—what was that?"

For from somewhere a great distance away had come a deep, reverberating boom.

Tensely Fay listened. The sound was not repeated, and she frowned. Queer! It had seemed like an explosion, as if men were blasting, dynamiting. And it came from Hampton's land, too. Then she gave a shrug. Oh, well, what he did on his own property was no business of hers.

"Come on, Starlight!" she said, picking up the reins.

They went on for another quarter of a mile. And then there came another sound. A drumming sound, growing louder and louder, from around the bends of the gorge ahead of her. At the same time, she felt the earth tremble; could catch, now and then, loud frenzied bellowings.

No need to tell Fay what that meant.

"Gee!" she muttered, white-faced. "A stampede—some of Hampton's cattle! And coming this way—down this gorge! Quick, boy! Back—back!"

A tug on the reins, and Starlight was backing into one of the ravines that branched off the gorge. There, knowing they were safe, Fay waited with fast-beating heart.

Nearer and nearer came that deafening drumming. And then, peeping out from her hiding-place, Fay saw the cattle appear. In a solid mass of struggling, terrified beasts that completely blocked the gorge so that those on the outsides cannoned against the walls, they charged along.

Despite herself, Fay's nerves tingled. Thank goodness she'd heard them in time. To be caught by that oncoming army of maddened steer would mean certain death, trampled beneath—

In sheer horror Fay's thoughts came to an abrupt stop. A figure riding a small pony had just emerged from another of the ravines. It was the figure of a very small girl. Fay recognised her jet black hair at once. Tina Mason, daughter of the very man she was travelling to see.

And there she was, stricken with childlike terror as she looked round, right in the path of that raging sea of cattle.

For a second Fay was paralysed herself. Then she acted; acted without thought for her own safety.

Out she charged into the gorge, shouting at the top of her voice to try to

make herself heard above the thundering and bellowing.

"All right, Tina—I'm coming! It's me—it's Aunt Fay! I'm coming, darling!"

The stampede was less than a hundred yards behind her as she tore towards the child. Somehow she willed herself not to look back. On and on she raced. As she neared the little one, she leaned sideways out of the saddle, bracing herself to snatch Tina in her arms.

Now—now! Fay was laughing. She wanted Tina to think this was some thrilling new game. As gently as she could, she caught the child around the waist, but, even so, Tina gave a little cry of fright as she was whirled through the air and into Fay's strong embrace.

"Aunt Fay's dreadful sorry, dear," Fay whispered, holding the child close. "She didn't mean to hurt you. But you're all right now. Look! We're going to ride ever so fast, just like a motor-car!"

"But—but, Aunt Fay," Tina piped, her little eyes round with wonder, "why is all those an'mals havin' races like that?"

"'Cos they—they're 'tending to be motor-cars, too," Fay said breathlessly. "Now hold on to me ever so tightly—just like you do when you love me lots an' lots!"

Little Tina was still frightened; still uncertain. But she clung to Aunt Fay's neck, and Starlight raced as he had never raced before. In a cloud of dust, he tore down the gorge, around one bend after another.

And all the time, getting louder and louder, that avalanche of maddened animals came in blind pursuit. The air was hideous with their bellowings and clattering; the ground trembled beneath their onslaught.

Disaster came terribly suddenly. Starlight trod upon a rounded stone. In a twinkling, he had crashed to the ground. Even so, Fay was not entirely unprepared. As she fell, throwing herself clear of the rolling pony, she held Tina close and twisted so that it was her own body which received most of that jarring impact.

Starlight floundered up. But there was no time to remount. The stampede was almost on them. What happened during the next few seconds was all a nightmarish whirl to Fay. She was scarcely conscious of any clear impression at all. She did know that she managed to scramble behind a boulder that lay in the centre of the gorge, carrying a sobbing, whimpering child with her, and that she shielded Tina with her own body.

Then the whole world seemed to become a chaos of pounding hoofs, struggling, massive bodies, and tossing horns.

In two separate streams, one on each side of the boulder, the cattle were charging past, so close to where she lay that their stamping hoofs showered her with dust and stones!

She Mustn't let the Kiddy Suspect!

QUIVERING a little, Fay crooked an arm under Tina's head.

"There, honeybunch!" she whispered, forcing a smile. "You're all right here."

She hated herself for that lie; for it was a lie, a lie that wrung her heart. And Tina was not deceived. How could she be, when those thundering animals kept charging past them in two unbroken streams?

"Oh, I see not, I see not all wight,

Your Editor's address is:—Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Please send a stamped, addressed envelope if you wish for a reply by post.

BETWEEN OURSELVES



MY DEAR READERS,—Your Editor is in holiday mood, as I am sure most of you are!—and he is finding an office in London not the best place to spend these glorious sunny days we have been having.

You see, I have only just returned from a short holiday, and I'm afraid that during my first day back my thoughts occasionally went drifting away to a long stretch of smooth sand and a grand horse called Rajah on whom I used to ride along by the sea quite a lot.

I had a little adventure with Rajah which has its amusing as well as exciting side. Apparently he had been ridden a lot by a man who made a habit of calling in at a hotel just back from the sea-front.

Well, I was galloping Rajah along the sands with a relation of mine named Basil and a very nice young schoolgirl who is a reader of the SCHOOLGIRL. We drew level with the hotel, and without the slightest warning Rajah swerved. Before I could check him he had rushed up the beach obviously determined—despite what I thought about the matter—to pay his customary visit to the hotel!

Fortunately I managed to check him when we were over the beach. Otherwise the visitors at the hotel might have had the somewhat surprising experience of seeing a horse trotting in amongst them!

The exciting side of the affair was that the other horses promptly followed Rajah, turning so quickly that Basil was thrown off. Fortunately he wasn't at all hurt, and our young schoolgirl companion remained in the saddle quite safely. Pauline—that was her name—rode very well. And now, while on the subject of holidays, I must tell you that

BABS & Co. ARE IN HOLIDAY MOOD.

Yes, next week's story of the Cliff House chums is the one preceding a grand and colourful series of holiday adventures. And what an exciting story the preceding one is!

Jack Trevlyn, tomboy Clara Trevlyn's very popular brother, plays quite a big part in it, and the theme of the story is—treasure! The chums get on the trail of an ancient map, which is the clue to a hidden pirates' horde on a lonely tropical island.

And I may tell you now, girls, that the hunt for the treasure is to be the theme of Babs & Co. on holiday. That delightful madcap, Celeste Margesson, will be with them, too, so you can guess that Miss Richards will give you a series of stories you won't easily forget.

In the meantime you have the pre-holiday story next Saturday, which is entitled: "Treasure Trail at Cliff House."

There will, of course, be the usual features—another instalment of that very colourful serial: "Girl Rider of the Blue Hills"; a complete laughter story of Cousin George and The Imp, that delightful tit-bit, Pat's Pages, and yet another Cliff House Pet.

Until next Saturday, then, girls.

With best wishes,

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

Aunt Fay!" she quavered. "I don't like those nasty an'mals. They're after me! I knows they are! An' they're making such a dreadful noise. Oh, Aunt Fay—Aunt Fay," she cried, "don't let them find me!"

"Why, of course I won't let them find you, honeybunch!" Fay said. Somehow, she kept her voice calm; somehow, she made herself playfully rub her nose against Tina's. But it was dreadfully hard when such terrible danger threatened them on both sides. "An—an' do you know, honeybunch," she went on brightly, "it wouldn't matter very much if they did find you, 'cos they're only playin'. They're playin' hide an' seek, an' we're the hiders an' they're the seekers."

"But—but they looked awfu' angwy, Aunt Fay," Tina demurred.

"That's 'cos they're 'tending so awful hard—"

Still that thundering horde swept by. Still the earth trembled, and stones went flying over them. Some bruised her body, but she did not move. For Tina's sake she must stay where she was.

Once her heart went icy cold as one animal, crashing against the boulder, plunged upward and reared for one terrifying second above her, its forelegs threshing the air. And then, just as it was about to plunge down upon them, another animal sent it falling sideways, and the oncoming stream of others carried it away.

Hours seemed to pass, hours of torment. But at last, with unbelievable suddenness, the tail of the stampede went by. All was eerily peaceful, only a fog of choking dust remaining to testify to the terrible menace that had swept through the gorge.

With Tina in her arms, Fay rose shakily. She was trembling with reaction, bruised in places, and just a trifle dizzy, but her broad smile was genuine enough.

"That tricked them, honeybunch!" she laughed. "An' now we'd better take you back home, I guess!"

Tina, pulling a playful little grimace, hugged Fay, and then glanced up and down the gorge.

"Where's Jockie?" she asked.

"Jockie?" said Fay, and felt a twinge of sadness. Jockie was Tina's pony. No need to ask what had become of him. Poor little chap, he'd gone down beneath those driving hoofs. "Oh—oh, Jockie's gone to chase those naughty animals, I reckon," Fay said unsteadily. And then she became suddenly very empty inside. What about her own beloved range pony? What about Starlight? Where was he? Had he—had he suffered the same fate as Tina's pet?

With child-like innocence, Tina was wondering the same thing.

"An—an' has Starlight gone to chase nasty an'mals, too?" she asked.

"I—I 'spect so," Fay said. She put Tina down to the ground and held her hand. "Let's see if we can find them, shall we?"

Fay did not say what was in her mind. But there was a precipice near by. Some of the cattle were certain to have fallen over that. And Fay, leaving Tina some distance off, went and stared down it. Her face was very white and her hands were clenched when she rejoined the little one.

Tina looked at her appealingly.

"Did you see Starlight an' Jockie?" she asked, grasping Fay's hand.

Fay shook her head. She hadn't seen either of the ponies, but she had seen enough to know that if they had indeed been swept over the precipice, they couldn't possibly be alive.

"Oh, no, honeybunch!" Fay said, a little unsteadily. "I—I didn't see them, 'cos I think they've gone home to bye-byes. They—they must have been dreadful tired after running like that, mustn't they?"

"Uuum!" Tina agreed, tongue in cheek. "An—an' I'se tired, too, Auntie Fay, an' I want to see daddy and mummy. Please, Auntie Fay, can I go home now?"

She tugged upon Fay's arm, and hand-in-hand they began to retrace their steps up the dust-filled gorge. Tina kept up a run of bright, vivacious chatter, and Fay, for the youngster's sake, responded to it as gaily as she could. But her heart was filled with grief.

She had lost a very dear, very precious friend to-night. Poor, devoted Starlight! He'd always been so loyal and brave. And now, in trying to save her and Tina, he had taken his last good-bye.

Presently—

"Oooo, look, Auntie Fay!" Tina piped, breaking into Fay's thoughts. "Look! Daddy's hair cut!"

And she pointed to the ravine from which she had emerged into the path of the stampede. Fay, shaken out of herself, smilingly frowned.

"Hair cut?" she echoed. "Hair—" And then, in sudden understanding: "Oh, you mean short cut, honeybunch!" Laughing, she pinched Tina's rosy cheek. "A short cut to daddy and mummy, eh? That's swell! Come on! And you be a big, clever girlie and show me the way, won't you?"

Anything that would get them to Tina's home swiftly would be swell, for darkness was coming on apace. Tina, thrilled at the chance of being guide, eagerly tugged Fay along, down one ravine into another, around corners and twists and turns, until Fay felt thoroughly bewildered by it all, and apprehensive, too, for they seemed to be getting nowhere.

Finally, at a spot where several ravines branched off, she halted.

"Are you really, truly sure this is the way home, honeybunch?" she asked.

"Oooo, I'se not sure!" was Tina's ingenuous reply. "I thought you were 'tending you didn't know. Jackie knows. I just go with him."

Fay compressed her lips. Oh, golly, what a pickle now! No doubt about it. They were lost—lost in the heart of the Blue Hills. For Tina, innocently imagining this was a game, had dragged her off on a wild, aimless course that had brought them, goodness knows where.

Grasping Tina's hand, she entered one of the ravines. She had no idea where it would lead, but for the sake of the child's peace of mind, she mustn't let her know the truth. On and on they walked, until Tina's little voice piped up, very coy and tentative.

"I'se—I'se not a very big, little girlie, are I, Auntie Fay? Not as big as your brother Bobbie, are I?"

"Why no, dear," Fay said, wondering what the child meant. For she could see no reason for this sudden comparison between Tina and her own young brother. "You're not quite as big as Bobbie. Soon, maybe, but—"

"An—an' you do cawwy Bobbie sometimes when he's tired, don't you, Auntie Fay?" Tina went on.

Of course, it was out then, and Fay, laughing, swooped down and gathered Tina up in her arms.

"And you're just a teeny-weeny bit tired, honeybunch?" she said. "All



DESPERATELY trying to soothe the scared little girl, Fay protected her with her own body as the stampeding herd thundered past the rock. The danger was not yet over . . .

right, Auntie Fay'll carry you. You're not so very heavy."

Not to start with, perhaps, but by the time Fay had carried the child a quarter of a mile, over rocky, uneven ground, her arms were aching. She simply could not endure it any longer.

"Look, honeybunch!" she said. "You'll be a big, brave girlie and walk a little way now, won't you? Auntie Fay isn't nearly as strong as she thought. Her arms ache so much."

"Poor Auntie Fay!" said Tina, and hugged her. "There! Has that made you better? An' now I'll be ever such a big, brave girl." But just as they restarted, she clung to Fay's arm with both hands. "Please, Auntie Fay," she said yearningly, "I'se awfu' firsty!"

"I've got the very thing for that," Fay declared, hitching off her water-bottle. "Lots an' lots of lovely water. Here you are, darling."

Unscrewing the cap, she held the bottle to Tina's lips. Eagerly Tina drank, and Fay tenderly watching her, became suddenly aware of her own parched throat. She could do with some water, too.

But Tina, not knowing, not understanding, drank her fill, and when Fay took the bottle into her hands again it was empty.

"Aren't you firsty, too, Auntie Fay?" Tina said, blinking in surprise as Fay replaced the cap and slung the bottle beside her.

"Not—not yet, I guess," Fay said. She patted the child's cheek. "Now let's see about bye-byes, shall we?"

For a short distance Tina, refreshed by that drink, struggled along bravely, but at last she stopped. Oh dear, her feet ached so much, and she wasn't such a very big girlie. Would kind Auntie Fay carry her again?

"Why, sure!" Fay agreed, readily enough. "I'll give you a piggy-back. That'll be gorgeous fun, won't it?"

"An—an' I'll help you, Auntie Fay, by carryin' this," Tina said, when she was clinging to Fay's back. She took the water-bottle into her hands. "Oooo, it's ever so heavy, isn't it? And now you won't have to carry it,

Auntie Fay, 'cos big, strong Tina's going to carry it for you."

"Then off we go!" Fay cried gaily, and strode away at a brisk walk.

It was easier, carrying Tina in this fashion, and it pleased the child, who prattled away quite merrily for a time. But Fay, for all her pretence at gayness, for all her relief that Tina was contented at the moment, could not rid her mind of the fears that crowded into it.

They were lost, utterly and completely at the mercy of luck!

As the moon rose the air became chilly. It made Tina shiver at first, and to warm her Fay took the child into her arms again. And then later on, as tiredness began to steel over Tina, she grew afraid.

"Oh, Auntie Fay, I want my mummy and daddy!" she said, a sob in her voice. "Why don't you take me home? Please—please, I want to go home!"

Fay stopped. With tender compassion, she looked down at the child's white face, at those big, brown eyes, now filled with tears, turned so beseechingly up to hers. And her own voice was tremulous as she spoke.

"You'll be with mummy and daddy ever so soon now, honeybunch."

But some instinct told the child of Fay's inner agitation. Her eyes filled with terror; convulsively she clung to Fay's neck.

"I don't believe you, Auntie Fay!" she choked. "I want my mummy and daddy! We're lost. I knows we're lost! You don't know where my mummy and daddy are, and—and I want them. Daddy, mummy!" Her voice rose to a childish scream. "Where is you? I want you—I want you—I want you!"

Triumph—and Unpleasant Surprise!

SOMEHOW Fay fought down her feelings.

"Ssssh, honeybunch," she whispered. Dropping to the ground, she cradled Tina in her arms, and rocked her gently to and fro. "It's all-right. Daddy and mummy are

coming to find us. And—and they told me they wanted you to go to sleep so that when you wake up you'll have a lovely surprise. Look! I'm going to bye-byes. You go to bye-byes with me!"

Fay closed her eyes. Tightly she clasped Tina to her, protecting her against the raw night air. An age seemed to go by. Tina whimpered, and once or twice cried out weakly:

"Daddy—mummy. I wants you so much." But eventually she grew very limp in Fay's arms, and her eyes were shut.

Drawing in a quivering sigh of relief, Fay rose, careful not to disturb her slumbering burden. Then, carefully picking her way over the rough ground, she went on again into the night, desperately seeking for some avenue of escape from the bewildering maze that hemmed her in.

She seemed to cover miles. Her body began to ache and her parched throat burned. She stumbled, and had to halt to replenish her ebbing strength. Once or twice she rested on a stone to ease the strain on her arms.

But at last she emerged into a broad plateau. And there, far away in the distance, rising behind another hill, she saw a faint spiral of smoke.

Delight and despair mingled in her heart. Tina's home! Somewhere at the back of that hill. They had gone past it, around it! And now, even though she knew where it was, she must tackle another hazardous journey through canyons and ravines that might trap her again.

"Guess I might know the right trail," she mused, "but I wish I could be sure."

With Tina growing increasingly heavy in her arms, Fay stumbled across the plateau. She had covered half a mile when something happened—something so wonderful, so unbelievable at first, that Fay felt she must be dreaming.

Whinnying its joy, a horse came limping towards her from some bushes.

"Starlight!" Fay cried. Her voice rose, trembling with excitement. "Oh, Starlight, it—it can't be you! Here, old boy—here!"

But it was her beloved pet, safe and sound, except for a sprained foreleg. Laughing, half-choking, Fay hugged him with one hand. Then she lifted Tina on to his back, carefully holding her there.

"Tina's home, old boy! You know where it is, don't you? Go on, Starlight!" she breathed, trusting to her pony's instincts.

Exhausted though she was, she wouldn't ride him herself because of putting too much strain on Starlight's injured leg. And so she stumbled beside him, supporting Tina in the saddle, with her last remaining strength.

It was half an hour later when a frantically searching Lefty Mason came upon them at the edge of the valley where Tina lived. Then Fay sank unconscious, and remembered no more until she found herself lying on a bunk, with three people bending over her.

"Feelin' all right, Miss Fay?" asked Lefty Mason. He was a youngish man, but his voice was husky, his face haggard and strained.

"Sure," said Fay, and smiled feebly. "A little tired, mebber. But—" In astonishment, she looked at the well-dressed youth standing behind Lefty. "What are you doing here?" she exclaimed.

For Douglas Lessiter, the mysterious young Englishman who was a guest at John Hampton's ranch, was the last person to be visiting the Masons.

"Oh, I was riding this way when I bumped into Mr. Mason searching for Tina," was Douglas' reply. "But I say, that was pretty good work you did in the stampede!"

Before Fay could reply, Lefty Mason laid a hand on her arm.

"Miss Fay," he said, gulping, "I—I jest don't know what to say to yuh. Yuh saved my kiddie's life. Oh, she's told me enough for me to put two an' two together—an, she's quite hunky-dory," he went on, as Fay started to inquire. "But yuh saved her—not so long after I walked out on yuh—"

Fay's hand closed over his, Steadily she looked into his eyes.

"That's why I was ridin' to see you, Lefty—to beg a favour of you, and to explain about those—those things you saw in the kitchen last night. My father's no rustler," she stated proudly, "and—"

But Lefty wouldn't listen. Instead, he talked to himself, unable to hide his emotion, his gratitude to her, and his bitter self-reproach. He wanted to show that gratitude. No longer did he believe ill of her father. Her denials were good enough for him. And if they'd have him back—why, he'd ride there now if she gave the word.

"Oh, Lefty," Fay cried, her eyes shining, "that's grand of you!"

"And I'll lend a hand, too, if you'll have me," put in Douglas.

"An' mebber I kin get Jim Orr back as well," Lefty went on, one huge grin. "Sam's with Hampton, but Jim's free, an' he'll listen to me!"

Fay tingled to a delicious thrill. Everything was so wonderful that she could even feel tolerant towards Hampton, whom she knew had been trying to poach her cowboys. Her mission had succeeded even more than she'd dared hope.

"Oh, I'm so happy," she breathed, looking from one to the other.

"And now," smiled Douglas, "I'll just bear the glad tidings to your pater. Be back in the morning to meet you."

Briskly he strode off. Tina's mother, her young, pretty face white and tear-stained, bent over Fay and kissed her on the forehead.

"Thank you, honey, with all my heart," she said, her voice breaking. "An' now"—she gave a breathless little laugh—"now jest yuh get all the sleep you can."

And sleep Fay did—soundly. But soon after dawn she was up, none the worse for her experience, beyond a little stiffness, and ready for a romp with Tina, who now looked back on her adventure with childish glee. An enormous breakfast, another romp, and then a hail from Lefty, at work on his vegetable garden, brought Fay running outside. Douglas was returning. But not alone.

There were three riders instead of one, and Fay's eyes sparkled as she recognised Douglas' companions. No mistaking those two small figures clad in dungarees and mounted on diminutive range ponies, the one with wind-tossed, golden curls, smaller and plumper; the other inches taller, and with lank dark hair that frolicked madly in the breeze.

"Bobbie! Ted!" she shouted.

Yelling at the tops of their voices, and waving their floppy straw hats, they came streaking towards her. It was the elder boy who won. Slipping from the saddle, he grasped Fay's hands, his face one huge grin, though he looked rather awkward when she bent and kissed him.

"Lo, sis!" he said cheerily. "It's mighty good to see you again!"

"It's mighty nice of you lads to ride out and escort me back!" Fay replied, patting his head. "Everything O.K. at home?"

"Sure," Ted nodded. "Dad's fine. But we had a scare last night—leastways, Bobbie did. You see, we woke up, and when we couldn't find you, we—that is, young Bobbie—thought as you might have got into trouble. But I—I sure knew you c'd take care of yourself, sis," he added, grinning. "Gosh, fancy you saving Tina like that! I'm gonna tell all the chaps at school. But here's the kid."

The kid it was—in other words, six-year-old Bobbie. Chubby, rosy-cheeked, he arrived on the scene like a human tornado, all flying arms and legs. Hardly waiting to rein in, he hurled himself out of the saddle, clutched at Fay's neck to save himself from falling, and, clinging there like a limpet, simply smothered her with kisses.

"Gee, Bobbie! Oh, gee, you're suffocating me!" Fay laughingly gasped.

Ted looked on with mild disapproval. Being three years older than his brother, he had reached the stage where it wasn't considered the thing to show your emotions too much.

"My sis!" Bobbie cried scrummily. "Ooo, it's just—just gorjus having you back again! Ooooooooooooo!" He shuddered, pulled an awful grimace, and squeezed Fay's neck as tightly as he could. "There!" he gasped. "That's how glad I am to see you, sis!"

Fay smiled tenderly. She didn't doubt that both of them, in their different ways, had been alarmed at her absence last night; and daddy, too, until Douglas' arrival with the news.

But here was Douglas now, approaching at a sedate trot. Seeing her looking in his direction, he gave a gesture of greeting.

"Now, boys, run along and see Tina. You've time for just a short game," she urged, giving them a little push towards the shack. "I want to talk to Douglas."

The boys scampered off. Fay, turning to meet Douglas, at once noticed how serious he looked.

"Why, Douglas," she said, "what's wrong?"

The young Englishman's steady blue eyes looked down at her from his horse for an instant. Then, slipping from the saddle, he stood before her, fingering his neat felt hat.

"I—I'm sorry, Fay!" he said. "I wish to goodness it was someone else who had to do this, but—I've bad news for you!"

Fay's heart froze. "Dad!" she cried, starting forward. "Daddy—he's—he's not—"

"Oh, it isn't your dad, old thing! He's tophole—great! No, Fay, it's something else—something to do with the ranch; just one of those things that might happen to anyone in these parts. That big water-hole of yours, down near the boundary by the pine-trees"—Douglas laid a comforting, steadying hand on her shoulder—"it's drying up!"

Slowly Fay raised a hand to her cheek. In growing dismay, she stared at Douglas.

For if that water-hole dried up completely, it would mean their cattle would have nothing to drink! And without a regular supply of drinking water, the herd would perish!

FROM one difficulty to another!
It's a hard fight for Fay. You must read how she tackles this fresh problem—in next Saturday's issue.