

"THEY COULDN'T UNDERSTAND JEMIMA!" Magnificent LONG
COMPLETE Cliff
House Story inside.

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EVERY **2^D**
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Incorporating
"SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN"



**"AFTER THEM, CLARA!
IT'S THE ONLY CHANCE!"**

An exciting incident from
this week's grand story of
Babs & Co.

Strange Jemima Carstairs stars in this Long Complete story of the chums of Cliff House School.



They Couldn't Understand JEMIMA!

Was Jemima Jealous?



"**B**YE-BYE, Jack!" called Clara Trevlyn.

"Don't forget to drop us a card!" sang out Barbara Redfern.

"Give our love to la belle France!" cheered Mabel Lynn.

"And mind, forsooth; you are not ill crossing the Channel!" Jemima Carstairs chipped in.

Six girls, gaily waving, stood on the main-line platform of Courtfield Station as the boat-train express steamed out on its way to Folkestone.

The six were Barbara Redfern & Co. of the Fourth Form at historic old Cliff House School; blue-eyed Babs herself, captain of the Lower School; Clara Trevlyn, the tomboyish games captain of the Lower School; gentle Marjorie Hazeldene; Jemima Carstairs, of the neat Eton crop and the monocle; plump Bessie Bunter; and golden-haired Mabel Lynn. The last two were Babs' study-mates and particular chums.

Out of a window, farther along the train, the handsome face of Clara's elder brother, Jack Trevlyn, leaned at a perilous angle, waving a vigorous farewell with his hat.

"Sus-send me a stick of rock!" called Bessie Bunter.

"Oh dear! Mind the tunnel!" Marjorie shrieked apprehensively. "Jack!" she shrieked.

But there was no need to worry, imminent though danger seemed from gentle Marjorie's vantage point. Certainly it looked, as the train raced round the bend to plunge into the tunnel, as though heedless Jack would get his head

knocked off; but the railway authorities, apparently, had made allowance for that. Still waving as he disappeared, the cheerful face of Jack vanished.

"Well, he's gone!" Clara said, with a sigh. "My hat, what it is to have a brother who's never in the country for more than two minutes together! Poor old Jack!"

"Lucky old Jack, you mean!" Babs chuckled. "Isn't he on some Secret Service work, or something? Anyway, don't look so fed-up, chump! He told us himself that he'd be back inside a week. We—Hallo!" she added, staring round at the sound of running feet.

"Excuse me," a panting voice cried,

By

HILDA RICHARDS

Illustrated by T. LAIDLER

"is—is that the boat train just gone out?"

"Why, yes!" Babs said, and regarded the man who had just run up—a rather powerful-looking man, inclined to stoutness, but with beaming good humour radiating from his face. "Oh dear! What a shame!" she cried. "You've lost it!"

"Too tough—what?" Jemima said.

The man wiped his brow. Ruefully he shook his head.

"No, I haven't lost it, but I've missed someone who was travelling on it—a very dear young friend of mine! Just my luck!" he added, with a groan. "And after my tear to get here, too! Goodness knows what young Trevlyn will be thinking of me, after promising to give him a send-off—"

Clara started.

"Young who?"

"Trevlyn—Jack Trevlyn." He glanced at her. "Phew! Talk about being in a Turkish bath! Don't suppose you've ever heard of him!" he added, with a smile.

Clara grinned.

"Well, just a bit!" she chuckled. "You see, Jack Trevlyn is my brother. And we've just seen him off! I'm Clara Trevlyn."

"Good guns!" The man stared. "Clara! Why, of course! Jack's spoken so often about you in the past. My name's Wallasey," he added, beaming. "Jack and I were friends in Nigeria."

"What! Not Walter Wallasey?"

Clara whooped.

"Why, yes!"

"Well, my hat!" Clara enthusiastically smiled at him. "Of course I know you! You gave Jack his first job out there, didn't you? Girls, come and meet one of Jack's big heroes!" she cried.

"Mr. Wallasey, from Lagos! But Jack never mentioned you were coming!" she added.

He smiled.

"Jack," he said sorrowfully, "didn't know. I was with him last night; he's been on the Continent a few days, hasn't he, on some sort of British Government work? He just mentioned he was going off by this train, so I said I'd come along here and see him off. Unfortunately, though—with a sigh—"my confounded old bus sprang a puncture on the way up from Sarmouth, and changing the wheel just used up the minutes I had to spare."

"Tough—what?" Jemima Carstairs sighed.

"Still, I'm rewarded." Mr. Wallasey smiled. "If I missed Jack, I've met his

sister; and my wife and I have heard so much about you, Miss Trevlyn, that we've both been dying to meet you! Of course, I should have remembered you were at Cliff House School," he added. "But, now we're together, what about you and your friends coming along and seeing Mrs. Wallasey? And perhaps—with a twinkle in his eyes—"you wouldn't say 'No' to a spot of tea?"

"I should say we wouldn't!" plump Bessie glowed approvingly. "I could eat a hippopotamus, you know! Oh, really, Babs, what's the matter with my face?"

Babs coloured. She had been trying to warn her plump chum about her manners by a swift glare; but Bessie, especially when food was in the offing, was oblivious to such hints.

"Now, tea," Bessie went on, and beamed at the jovial Mr. Wallasey again—"I think that's the rippingest suggestion I've heard sus-since—"

"Somebody invited you to dinner—what?" Jemima blandly chuckled. "Scuse her, Mr. Wallasey; Bessie's our pet hoggin's!"

"I'm sure," the man said laughingly, "the title is entirely undeserved. Well, what about it, girls? Clara—I may call you Clara, mayn't I?—please introduce me to your friends. We've taken a little place in Sarmouth Cove," he added, when the introductions were effected, "and we're stopping there for a month or so. The car's outside, and, with a bit of a squeeze, you can all manage to get in, I think. Sorry to have missed Jack, though!" he added regretfully.

Eagerly the chums followed their host out of the station, in the yard of which a rather ancient-looking but extremely roomy car was parked.

"This is the bus," he said jovially. "Clara, will you sit next to me?"

Clara climbed into the front seat. Babs & Co., sorting out themselves in the body of the car, sat down. Mr. Wallasey started the engine and engaged gears, and they were off.

"Well, well, and here we are!" Jemima bubbled. "Free buggy ride; free tea! Are we in luck, old Spartans?"

In luck they certainly were. Silently and smoothly the car bowled along. Very soon the little fishing village of Sarmouth was sighted, with the glinting sea. Then suddenly the car took a swift turn towards the coast.

"And there," Mr. Wallasey beamed, "is Sarmouth View!"

"You mean that's where you're living?" Clara asked.

"Yes."

With interest the chums regarded the large, pretty cottage which now confronted them, its reddening virginia-creeper making it a splash of colour against the dark green of the downs. A sweet place, a restful place—a place somehow one would have expected to find the genial Mr. Wallasey occupying.

"Nice old spot, isn't it?" he chuckled. "The best of it, though, is the garden. The garden runs right down to the sea, and there we've got our own little bit of foreshore, a boathouse, and our own outboard speedboat. But here we are," he added, as the car drew up outside the cottage. "And there's my wife, Hi, Emily!" he called, beaming. "Visitors for tea! Come and meet Jack Trevlyn's sister."

Mrs. Wallasey sauntered across the lawns. A short, mild-looking woman, with greying hair, she smiled.

"Well," she said—"well, I do declare! Welcome, girls! How lovely to see you all! Come into the cottage, will you? And fancy running into

Jack Trevlyn's sister! We've heard so much about you, Clara."

Clara laughed, her eyes sparkling now. The chums laughed, too, in thorough good humour. In the tiny hall of the cottage a maid relieved them of their hats and coats.

"This way, girls!" invited Mr. Wallasey.

He led them into the dining-room—a pretty, low-ceilinged apartment. There tea was already laid, and such a tea that even Bessie Bunter's eyes glistened.

"Sit down, girls; get busy!" he invited. "No formalities, you know! What did you say, Miss Carstairs?"

"Oh—er—nothing!" Jemima beamed. "Just burbling out of the vacuum I call a brain, you know! Nice old rock cakes, what? Not a bit like my geological specimens."

"My wife makes those," he said, and beamed at Emily Wallasey, who laughed and blushed. "Nice, eh? I'll have a cup of tea—just one cup of tea," he added. "When you've finished, girls, we'll go and inspect my new outboard speedboat. Any of you drive a speedboat?"

"Yes, I do!" Clara said eagerly. "At least, I know how to! You do, too, don't you, Jimmy?"

"Eh?" Jemima, thoughtfully staring into space, came to herself with a start. "Mo'-boat? Oh, yes, rather, you know!"

"Well, Clara," said Mr. Wallasey beamingly, "how would you like to try

But when Clara returned three minutes later she was alone.

"Jimmy isn't in the cottage," she announced, frowning. "I asked the maid, and she said the last she saw of Jemima was walking in the garden, and that was a jolly good twenty minutes ago. Oh, my hat, look at the time!" she added, glancing at the cuckoo clock on the wall. "At this rate I'll never get a turn in the old boat. Well, come on! Blow Jimmy! Let's go!"

"Well, if everybody else is agreeable," Mr. Wallasey murmured, glancing round.

They all were. They were, if the truth be told, feeling slightly annoyed with the immaculate Jemima then. Jemima was mysterious and an inscrutable girl at the best of times; but this, they all felt, was a bit thick, especially when she must know how Clara was itching to try out the new motor-boat.

They rose and followed their good-natured host as he led the way through the chrysanthemum-fringed path to the strip of private beach, where there was a little landing-stage. Beyond the horizon the sun was blazing in a glorious splendour of red and purple and gold, revealing the lines of a small white yacht which stood a mile out to sea.

But Clara had no eyes for that. "Well, this is ripping!" she enthused. "But where's the speedboat, Mr. Wallasey?"

Mr. Wallasey was frowning.

That unusual Fourth Former, Jemima Carstairs, had always been rather a puzzle, even to those who knew her best. But no one had ever doubted her loyalty as a friend. How then to explain her sudden change of manner towards Tomboy Clara Trevlyn? How to explain her thwarting of one of Clara's dearest ambitions, her repeated efforts to hamper the Tomboy in her pleasures?

my boat out after tea? Would you like that?"

Would she? The sudden fiery crimson which surged into the Tomboy's cheeks was answer enough to that question. Once or twice Clara had handled old Ben Barrowby's boat, and the keen enjoyment and zest of those experiences had made her eager for more. Only one thing better than possessing her own car could Tomboy Clara visualise; that was possessing her own motor-boat.

"You mean it?" she cried. "Why, certainly I mean it! Pardon, Miss Carstairs! Did you say something?"

"I said," Jemima murmured, "that if you wouldn't mind excusing me for a few moments, I'll go and get my handkerchief, which I've left in my coat pocket."

Receiving her jovial host's consent, she went out.

Five—ten minutes went by. "Well, there we are; I've finished!" Clara announced, with an eager glance towards the garden. "Mr. Wallasey, can we go now?"

"But your friend, Miss Carstairs?" Mr. Wallasey objected. "Had we not better wait for her?"

Clara glanced anxiously and impatiently at the door. Another five minutes went by. The chums frowned. "Well, where the dickens has she gone?" Mabs cried. "Her tea's all cold as it is."

Clara fumed. "Trust Jimmy to do something funny!" she said. "Wait a minute; I'll go and find her."

"I don't know. Funny!" he mused. "It was left—" And then he started.

"Look, there it is!" He pointed out to sea. The chums stared. Half a mile from the beach there came a faint thrum-thrum. They saw a line of foam cutting across their vision. There was a small, high-powered outboard motor-boat, and in it was—

"Jemima!" breathed Marjorie. "Oh, great gracious! Jemima's taken the boat out!"

"J-Jemima!" Clara stammered. They all stared, hardly able to believe their eyes. But there it was—no doubting it now. That was Mr. Wallasey's boat, and that girl who was seated in the cockpit was Jemima, for a certainty. Clara turned red.

"Well, of all the cool nerve!" she cried. "Bother it! She knew I wanted to try it out!" She cupped her hands to her lips. "Jimmy! Jimmy, ahoy!" she bawled.

But Jemima, if she heard, took no notice. The boat continued on.

"Jimmy!" shouted Babs. On went the boat, running parallel with the shore. It turned, skilfully handled, shooting back.

Clara clenched her hands. Furious and smarting the Tomboy looked then. Jemima must be able to see them, but she seemed oblivious to everything except the speedboat which, it must be admitted, she was handling with skill.

"For the last time!" Clara cried. "Now, all together!"

And they all cupped their hands; with

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all the force of their lungs they shouted:

"Jim-my!"

The cliff echoed back the cry.

As if nothing was unusual, Jemima continued to chug merrily on.

"Well, she's dished me!" Clara said at last, with a glance at her watch. "Got to get back to school," she added to Mr. Wallasey, who gave her a sympathetic smile, though he frowned a little at the chugging boat. "Nice trick that is to play!" she said huffily. "Hallo, she's coming in!"

Coming in Jemima was. At last she had headed the boat's nose towards the shore. Grim, annoyed, the chums watched.

Jemima brought the boat gently alongside the landing-stage. She raised a flushed face towards them.

"What cheer, comrades! Quite a nifty little old tub," she said. "Quite enjoyable little trip, thanks."

Beaming, she climbed out, apparently unaware of the stony stares of the chums.

Mr. Wallasey frowned.

"I'm afraid," he said, "you have disappointed Clara very, very much, Miss Carstairs. I don't remember giving you permission to take that boat out."

"Eh? Don't you?" Jemima frowned. "Well, well, come to think of it, you didn't!" she added. "Tut, tut! Unpardonable bad taste. Shocking. My abject apologies. Clara, old thing—"

"Oh, rats!" Clara said gruffly and disappointedly.

"Clara, please say that you aren't cross," Jemima pleaded.

Clara glared. Clara never could admit anything she wasn't feeling.

"Don't be funny!" she said.

"But," Jemima said, "I'm not funny, my dear old Clara! I saw the boat. Thinks I to myself, thinks I: Well, Jimmy, boy, what about giving the old nautical knowledge an airing, and then—"

"And then," Clara said bitterly, "you were in it. Then you were out enjoying yourself. Then you pretended not to see us or hear us. Then you just forget decent manners and behaved like a selfish hoggins—knowing all the time that the trip had been promised to me. If that," she added tartly, "is what you call playing the game, I don't, Jimmy Carstairs! I think it's just rank bad sportsmanship! You know there isn't time for me to have a ride now."

"Oh, my hat!" Babs said anxiously.

"Clara—"

"Rats!" Clara said gruffly.

"But please—don't row." Mr. Wallasey looked serious. "I'm sorry," he said, as if it had been his fault that Jemima had taken the boat out, "but please don't quarrel. I'm sure Miss Carstairs didn't intend to deprive you of a treat, Clara—and, anyway, there are plenty of other times. The boat's yours," he added. "Come down as often as you like. Come down when you like. Take it out any time it pleases you. Look here, what about having a shot on your own to-morrow?"

Clara stared at him.

"Oh, goodie! You mean that?"

"Of course I do."

"Then—then," Clara's eyes shone, "could I come down to-morrow morning—before breakfast?"

"Why, of course," he said jovially. "Any time."

"Generous, what?" Jemima beamed. "Too, too big-hearted of Mr. Wallasey. Well, there you are, Clara, old Spartan. What you haven't gained on the swings—"

"Thanks," Clara retorted tartly. "No thanks to you. Anyway, you haven't explained—"

But Jemima shook her head sadly, and Babs, glancing at her, frowned a little. Babs found herself sharing Clara's resentment against Jemima.

Yet, the whole trick was so unlike Jemima that she felt herself at sea. Had Jemima forestalled Clara simply to provoke Clara? Had Jemima been so jealously anxious to try out that motor-boat first that she had kept it out longer than she intended? Or had—

She looked at Jemima. But that mysterious Fourth Former, apparently completely absorbed in the task of polishing her monocle, gave neither clue nor answer to the questions which pulsed through her mind.

Where are Clara's Shoes?



"H E'S a sport!" Clara Trevlyn declared enthusiastically.

"R a t h e r!"

Mabel Lynn agreed.

"Not only a sport, but an angel, what?" Jemima answered. "Nifty little boat he's got! You'll enjoy handling her, Clara!"

Clara, wending her way back to Cliff House with her chums, grunted. Delighted as Clara might be at the prospect of handling the boat, she hadn't yet forgiven Jemima for having stolen her ride.

"Still intent on having a merry old ride before brekker?" Jemima inquired.

"Well, any objection?" Clara sniffed.

"Me? What objection could I have? Tut, tut!" Jemima beamed.

"Nay, nay, fair comrade, I sigh with envy to feel your merry old enthusiasm! Spartan thou art and Spartan thou must act, I suppose; but for me the snug old sheets and the merry old hot-water bottle these nippy autumn mornings! Fond of Mr. and Mrs. Wallasey, aren't you?" she added casually.

"I think," Clara said in a tone which challenged argument, "they're the nicest people I've met for a long time."

"After which," Jemima beamed, "there is nothing more to be said. Well, well, flog the flagging feet and let us trickle on! Here's the merry old seat of learning!"

The "old seat of learning"—or the gates of Cliff House School—had just loomed into view along the road, and, as luck would have it, first prep bell was ringing.

The party broke into a run. Breathless and flushed, they arrived at the gate just as crusty old Piper, the porter, was issuing from his lodge to close them for the night.

Merrily they scampered in, leaving Piper glaring after them. Up the Fourth Form corridor they made their way, Clara still overbubbling with joy and eagerness about the prospect of unlimited rides in the speedboat, Babs & Co. contentedly smiling.

It is to be feared that the Tomboy's prep, in consequence of the new excitement, rather suffered that evening.

And it is also to be feared that after prep, in the Common-room, Clara for once proved herself something of a bore. When Clara had a new hobby to discuss, that hobby enthusiastically occupied her thoughts to the exclusion of everything else. From that moment, Clara was living in speedboats.

And that night, it is certain, Clara dreamt of nothing but speedboats—until she awakened to find the slanting beams of the morning sun on her face. Frantically she grabbed for her watch.

Ten past six. Oh, great goblins!

Ten past six—and rising bell at Cliff House was at seven-thirty. Pedalling

as hard as she could go, it would take her twenty minutes to cycle to the Wallaseys' cottage, twenty minutes back. That would give her a little more than half an hour with the speed-boat—but, by gosh, it was worth it.

Up in bed like a jack-in-the-box Clara popped, feverishly groping for her dressing-gown. It was a morning with that misty nip so characteristic of autumn, but Clara did not even notice that. Out of bed she was in a flash, and swinging round to plunge into her gown, knocked over the glass of water by her bedside. Rosa Rodworth's sleepy voice arose.

"My hat! Who's that? Can't any of you sleep?"

"B-r-r-r!" Clara said, not very intelligently.

"What are you doing up?"

"Mind your own!" Clara snapped.

She rushed to the washstand. Clara, at the best of times, was never soundless. The noise of cold water splashing woke others. June Merrett snorted.

"Who let the hippopotamus out of its pool at this time of the morning?" she grunted. "My hat, what a row! Clara—"

"Shurrup!" Clara said, briskly towelling herself.

She hummed as she went back to her bed, grasping up her stockings. Whish! on they went. Now her underclothes; now her tunic. She laughed softly as she threw back her head, thinking with thrilled delight of the trip which awaited her.

Now her shoes.

Clara groped under the bed. With a cluck of impatience, she groped farther along. She'd put her shoes there for certain—where were they now?

Impatiently she got on to her hands and knees. Then she blinked. For of the shoes there was no sign.

That, at least, was a serious matter to Clara Trevlyn, owner of the biggest feet in the Fourth Form, because it meant that she, unlike other girls who momentarily found themselves deprived of walking gear, could not conveniently borrow anyone else's shoes.

"I say, where are my shoes?" she asked of nobody in particular.

"Babs—"

"Eh? Oh, yes, wassermarrer?" Babs murmured sleepily.

"My shoes! I've lost them!"

"Well, jolly well find them!" came Lydia Crossendale's angry voice. "My hat, this dormitory is like sleeping with a menagerie!"

"Look here, who's got my shoes?" Clara cried.

"Ask Napoleon, look you," retorted Lucy Morgan. "What are you doing running around in the middle of the night, anyway?"

"It's not the middle of the night, it's daylight," Clara breathed wrathfully, "and I'm going motor-boating. Where are my shoes?"

"Perhaps they've gone on before you and are waiting outside," suggested June Merrett, and there was a chuckle.

"Although," she added, "what you want a motor-boat with shoes like yours for, I don't know. Fix an engine in one of them and you'd have a real old royal barge!"

Clara snorted. Furiously she hunted round. Twenty past six now—and half the dormitory, sleepily awake, were not inclined to be either sympathetic or helpful.

Red-faced, she stood up at last.

"Somebody in this dormitory has pinched my shoes!" she said fiercely.

"I want my shoes!"

"And we," retorted Diana Royston-Clarke, "want our sleep. Buzz off!"

"But I can't buzz off without shoes!" Clara hooted.

"Then borrow a couple of coal scuttles!" Rosa cried bad-temperedly.

"He, he, he!" tittered Freda Ferriers. Clara's eyes glistened.

"I suppose," she asked wrathfully, "you think it's funny? I suppose it's no end of a joke to hide my shoes? I suppose that the joker jolly well knows it's almost too late for me to go boating?"

"Well, that's one good boat saved from being wrecked!" Freda tittered. "He, he, he!"

"Clara! It is zat you borrow mine!" Marcelle Biquet beamed.

There was a laugh at that, for the little French girl's feet were the smallest, in the Fourth Form.

"Still," Babs said anxiously, "it is rather a shabby trick. After all, it's cheating Clara of her chance! Now who's hidden them?"

There was no reply.

"Tough, what?" Jemima said. "Sure you didn't go to bed in them, old Spartan? Look at your feet!"

Clara was furious now. The precious moments were slipping—slipping, and with them once again the opportunity she had looked forward to so much. In another ten minutes or so it would be hopeless.

Babs threw the sheets aside.

"Well——" she said. "Oh, come on! Turn out, everybody. Look under your beds! They must be somewhere!"

She turned out of bed. One or two others got out with her. Several girls grumpily turned over; a dozen others, however, followed her example. June Merrett, the practical joker, a twinkle in her eyes, was one of them.

"Jimmy, aren't you going to help?"

Babs asked.

Jemima sighed. "Ah, me!" she said. "Is there no peace for the naughty old wicked. Up the A.R.P. and down with the ginger beer and all that sort of merry old tuffins! All in a good cause, what?"

She climbed out of bed. By that time June Merrett & Co. were peering under beds. June, with that impish sense of fun never for very long restrained, was solemnly crawling from bed to bed. All at once she let out a bleating "Ba-a-a!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Ba-a-a!" solemnly bleated June again, and pretended to skip on all fours. "Baa-a-a!"

There was another laugh—not, however, shared by the wrathful Clara. But the crawling girls had their cue now! Anything in the nature of a lark or a rag irresistibly attracted the Fourth. A chorus of "Baa-a-a's" went up as girls solemnly crawled on all fours around the room.

"Girls——" protested Babs.

"Ba-a-a-a-a!" came a perfect howl.

"And wuff-wuff!" chirruped Jemima.

"Yap, yap! I'm the tough old sheep dog! Whoops, Diana! Keep your fleecy away from me!" she added as Diana cannoned into her.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ba, ba, ba!"

The search had become a glorious rag now. Everybody was out of bed, everybody crawling and baa-ing. Somebody else became a dog; somebody started to roar as the Big Bad Wolf among the fold! Those not baa-ing were just shrieking—with laughter! Such a din! And the minutes slipping by!

"Look here——" yelled Clara.

"Ba-a-a!"

And then, when the fun was at its

height, when all hope of a trip in the boat that morning was gone——

Crash!

The door flew open. A voice thundered:

"Girls! Girls! How dare you!"

Looking rather like real sheep then, the "girls" scrambled to their feet to gaze in dumb dismay at the stern form of Miss Kathleen Keys, the gym-mistress and duty-mistress for the day.

"Take twenty lines, every one of you!" she snapped. "And I should be very much enlightened, Barbara, to hear why the whole Form is behaving in this ridiculous manner before rising-bell! Explain!"

"Well," stammered Babs, "we were looking for Clara's shoes!"

"Indeed!" The mistress' angry eyes glimmered. "Somebody has hidden them?" she guessed. "Who?"

No reply.

"Very well!" Miss Keys looked stern. "Such pranks must cease!" she said. "The shoes obviously are in this dormitory, and if they are not on the floor they must be somewhere else——"

"Deduction, what?" Jemima murmured.

"I beg your pardon, Jemima?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing," Jemima said airily. "Just musing, you know——"

"You know nothing of these shoes?"

"Oh, Miss Keys!" Jemima sighed with sad reproach.

Miss Keys stared at her. Miss Keys was a keen woman.

"That is no answer, Jemima!"

"No, Miss Keys! Negative, what?" Jemima said.

"I believe," Miss Keys said keenly, "that perhaps you do know something about this, Jemima! Anyway, I will start searching with you. Open your locker!"

Jemima hesitated. Then, as the mistress stepped forward, she gave a sigh and threw open the locker. Clara instantly gave a yell:

"Jimmy, you cat! My shoes!" Everybody stared. In Jemima's locker were the missing shoes!



"You Sneak, Jimmy!"

"I CAN'T make it out!" Barbara Redfern worriedly said. "It's not like Jimmy!"

"Not like her or not, there's no mistaking that she did it!" Clara Trevlyn snorted. "Jimmy's just got a rotten, jealous little bee in her bonnet about that speedboat. She just doesn't want me to handle it!"

"But I'm sure——" Babs protested.

"Oh rats! I'm sure, too! She ruined my chance of taking it out last night, didn't she? She ruined it again this morning! She might think it's a joke, but I think it's a mean and caddish trick!"

"But, Clara, she didn't admit she'd hidden your shoes——"

"And she didn't deny it," Clara was quick to retort. "Just burbled a lot of silly nothings—as usual! If that's her idea of being a friend, it's not mine! Anyway, I'll have a ride in that speedboat this afternoon, Jemima or no Jemima!"

Barbara Redfern sighed. It was after breakfast that morning, and she, with Clara, was in Study No. 4. Clara, by that time, had convinced herself that jealousy on Jemima's part was responsible for the trick she had played, but Babs was reluctant to believe that.

Babs knew Jemima for a queer, secretive, mysterious girl, but also a true and loyal pal. Those babblings of hers—which caused people who first met her to dub her as a first-class chump—covered the workings of a shrewd, cool brain. Not like Jemima, certainly, to be jealous. Not like her to have played the trick she had played in dorm, that morning. Babs was puzzled.

But to quick-tempered Clara it was plain. The evidence spoke for itself!



EVERYBODY stared. In Jemima's locker were the missing shoes. "Jimmy!" cried Clara furiously. "My shoes!" Gravely, Jemima polished her monocle.

As a consequence, Clara, that fine October morning, was not feeling too well disposed towards Jemima Carstairs.

Lesson-time came. As usual, the class tramped into the Form-room. As usual, Clara and Jemima occupied the same desk. And, as usual, when Miss Grey, acting temporarily for Miss Charmant who was away on rest, entered, the whole Form jumped up and chorused its usual good-morning. It was as they were sitting down that Jemima made the first overture.

"Clara, old Spartan—" she murmured.

"Rats! Don't talk to me!" Clara said gruffly.

"But I'd like to say—"

"Then don't!"

"Jemima, you are talking!" Miss Grey said severely. "Clara, too. Let there be no more of it, please."

Clara reddened. Lydia Crossendale, the snob of the Fourth, sniggered spitefully, and then scowled as the snigger was rewarded with twenty lines. Jemima sighed.

"Ah, how are the best of us misjudged!" she said forlornly. "Wouldst that I could be as other girls—"

"Oh, shut up! Don't talk to me!" Clara said snappily.

"But I wasn't talking to you, old Spartan; just burbling sorrowful and secret thoughts, what—"

"Jemima! Clara! You are talking!" Miss Grey rapped. "Take twenty lines each!"

Clara glared at Jemima.

"Thanks!" she said bitterly.

"But my dear old Spartan!" Jemima murmured in surprise.

"Jemima! Clara! How dare you?" Miss Grey frowned. "Take another twenty lines! Have you not learned that talking in class is forbidden?"

Clara turned a beetroot-red this time. The glance she fixed on Jemima was fierce.

"Look here, are you trying to get me into another row?" she hissed furiously.

"Oh, Clara! Tut, tut! Banish the base thought from your mind. Ahem! Look out!" Jemima added. "The Eye is upon us again!"

The "Eye" belonging to Miss Grey was. Exasperatedly she stared at the two girls.

"I am aware," she said, with a hint of sarcasm, "that you two have much in common. But I sincerely wish you would find other opportunities to discuss your interests. Friendship is all very well—"

"Friendship!" burst out Clara scoffingly; she could not help it.

"Clara!"

"Ahem!" Jemima rose hastily. "Ahem! Clara didn't mean that, Miss Grey."

"I think," Miss Grey said, a little tartly, "that Clara can speak for herself. Do I understand, Clara, that you and Jemima were not discussing things—that you were quarrelling?"

Clara's face became fiery.

"I—I—"

"Clara, please answer me!"

"Well, not—not exactly," Clara answered. "We—we—you—you see—"

"I am afraid," Miss Grey returned a little coldly, "I do not see! I am sorry. I always understood that you and Jemima were friends. However, as you cannot apparently sit together and agree, you had better separate. Brenda Fallace, please change places with Clara."

There was a titter from Lydia Crossendale & Co. Clara clenched her

hands. Higher and higher rose her sense of resentment against Jemima—for it was quite obvious that Miss Grey was putting her in the wrong. She didn't mind changing places one little bit. In fact, she preferred it now. But to change it for the second bottom position in the class! To go into the desk which was usually known as the "duffer's desk!"

Overwhelmed by a sense of her wrongs, she leapt up.

"But, Miss Grey—" she protested.

"Clara, you heard?"

"Yes, I heard. But why," Clara asked mutinously, "should I go to the bottom of the rotten class? I mean—well, dash it, it wasn't my fault!"

"Clara, how dare you!" Miss Grey looked angry. "You will change places as I said—this minute!"

Clara, her Trevlyn pride fiercely up in arms, stood mutinously still.

"Clara!"

The Tomboy did not move. An electric silence fell over the class-room. Jemima stood up.

"Miss Grey, may I say something?"

"Jemima, please say nothing!" Miss Grey retorted. "I think, by the appearance of things, you have already said enough. Clara, you are rankly disobedient, and for your insolence and the use of ill-mannered slang in class you will be detained this afternoon. Now take Brenda's place!"

Clara blinked.

"De-detained!" she cried. "Oh, Miss Grey, I want to go somewhere this afternoon!"

"You should have thought of that!" said the mistress. "Another act of disobedience on your part, Clara, and I shall report you to Miss Primrose. Now do as I say."

There was no help for it then. Amid a murmur from the class, Clara moved out. Again Lydia & Co. tittered; again Clara clenched her hands. Detained! Put down into duffer's desk with Bessie Bunter! And all through Jemima!

Clara choked.

Slowly she walked out, followed by the sympathetic glances of her chums. They did not realise, as Clara had failed to realise, that Jemima was not really at the bottom of her troubles.

Clara, ready for any act of hostility on Jemima's part, had simply mistaken her advances in the first place, with this dire result to herself.

At last the bell sounded for dismissal. One of the first up was Clara; one of the first out of the class-room. A volley of jeers assailed her as she went down the corridor.

"Who's a duffer?" Lydia Crossendale jibed.

"Who's Not-so-clever-Clara?" giggled Freda Ferriers.

"Oh, be quiet, can't you?" Barbara Redfern snapped. "Clara, old thing—"

Clara, clenching her hands, strode on. She felt she wanted a breath of fresh air. Down the stairs she hurried; into the quad. There Babs, Mabel Lynn, and Marjorie Hazeldene caught up with her.

"Clara, old thing—"

"Oh rats!" Clara said crossly.

"Clara, don't ride the high horse—"

"High horse!" Clara snorted.

"Wouldn't you be on the high horse?" she asked bitterly. "What have I done to Jemima that she should suddenly turn on me like this? What the dickens is her silly game? But if she thinks," she added furiously, "that I'm not going to try that speedboat, then she's jolly well mistaken! I'm going!

And I'm going," Clara stated definitely, "this afternoon!"

"But, Clara," Marjorie protested anxiously, "you'll only get yourself into more hot water. You can't break detention!"

"Can't I?" Clara's expression was very determined. "Just wait! Just watch! Babs, will you have my bike for me in the woods about three?"

Babs looked apprehensive.

"But, Clara, you're never going to the Wallaseys?"

"I am!" Clara snapped.

"Spoken," a voice put in, "like a Spartan! But a very foolish old Spartan, methinks! Alas, my Clara!"

Clara swivelled. Jemima, sadly and sorrowfully shaking her head, stood at her side.

"Are you talking to me?" she asked curtly.

"I was—yes. Feel in a bright and chatty mood, what?" Jemima beamed.

"As I was saying—"

"Then don't!" Clara said.

"Oh, but my old Spartan—"

"And I'm not your old Spartan! I—I'm nothing to you, Jimmy Carstairs!" Clara said, between her teeth.

"When you learn how to treat a friend as a friend expects to be treated, then you can speak to me again. In the meantime," she added angrily, "I'd be jolly grateful if you wouldn't talk to me. I'm finished with you, Jimmy Carstairs!"

"Clara!" cried Babs.

But Clara, with a toss of her unruly curls and holding herself very erect, had tempestuously stormed away.

"Peeved, what?" Jemima asked thoughtfully, adjusting her monocle. "Such a naughty, naughty little temper—"

Babs turned upon her.

"But you must admit," she accused, "she's got some reason for it!"

"Admit!" Jemima's grey eyes opened in surprise. "Oh, beloved Babs," she sighed, "that you, too, should think such naughty thoughts concerning your innocent Uncle Jimmy!"

Babs breathed hard.

"Jimmy, stop rotting!" she said. "For goodness' sake let's get this thing straight! Last night you took out that speedboat when it had been promised to Clara—"

"Alas!" Jemima sighed. "Is that one act of guilty folly to pursue me through all my youth?"

"This morning," Babs went on, unheeding, "you hid her shoes."

"Did I?" Jemima vaguely shook her head. "I haven't said so."

"This afternoon," Babs added, "you got her detained."

"Pure old misunderstanding, old thing!"

"Jimmy, there's no misunderstanding—"

Babs choked down her exasperation. "There's pretty small doubt now that you've got some scheme on against Clara. She thinks you're jealous because of the speedboat; but—well, oh, bother it, I can't believe that! Jimmy, what is the game?"

"Game?" Jemima murmured vaguely.

"What bee have you got in your silly bonnet?"

"My bonnet," Jemima sighed, "is a hat. And as for having bees in it, beloved—well, I assure you that I just couldn't live in a hat that had turned itself into a hive. Tough on Clara," she added. "Tough on me. But these things will happen."

Babs glared.

"Are you going to explain?"

"But what," Jemima asked blandly, "could there be to explain, except that I am the most misunderstood old

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Spartan alive? Ahem! By the way, Babs—

“Well?”
“Has Clara heard from brother Jack yet?”

Babs stared.
“No, not that I know of. Why?”
“Just wondered,” Jemima replied vaguely. “Just wondered, you know. Well—well, do my old ears deceive me, or is that cheerful gong summoning us hungry mortals to the banqueting hall? Babs, beloved, let us stagger to the festive board!”

Babs gazed at her. Impossible—just utterly impossible—to make head or tail of Jemima. Jemima the bland, Jemima the apparently foolish, so skilfully and artfully turning every question, leaving one wallowing in a sense of mystery.

Together they tramped into dining hall. Again it was noticeable that Clara ignored Jemima, even though Jemima herself seemed anxious to catch her eye. The meal finished, Jemima approached her.

“Clara—” she started.
Clara turned her head and walked out of the room as if Jemima had not spoken.

Jemima sighed, frowning at Lydia Crossendale, who was grinning. Rather thoughtfully she took herself off, and for quite a long time after that was not seen. Meantime, Clara, grimly determined to see the Wallacees that afternoon, made her full arrangement with Babs & Co. to smuggle out her bicycle into the woods. She then reported to Grace Camperhill, the prefect on detention duty, and took her place in class. Grace frowned at her.

“You will write an essay on deportment and good manners,” she said. “Meanwhile, I shall lock you in the class-room. Mind you behave yourself.”

Clara pulled a face. Grace went out, locking the door behind her.

Clara knew enough of Grace to know that she would not see her again till half-past four. Tons of time, she reflected, to get to Sarmouth View, have a spin in the motor-boat, and come back again. A quarter of an hour she

waited, then silently crossed to the window.

She grinned.
The window was pushed up; a moment later she dropped on to the lawn. With a quick look round, she darted into the shrubbery. Not spotted. Good!

Now the way was easy. Through the shrubbery she went. Ahead of her loomed the hedge, at the other side of which excavating workmen had just constructed a new ditch, in the soil of which Jemima Carstairs had recently found some rather unique flint implements—Jemima having a passion for unearthing archeological relics.

Clara reached the hedge; she clambered through it; then softly she dropped into the six-foot ditch, and, gurgling at her success, climbed up the slippery slope on the other side of it. So far so good. She was free at last.

But was she?

For even as she climbed out there came a cry from the hedge farther along; and Clara, spinning round, felt her jaw drop in utter dismay as she saw Grace Camperhill, with Jemima at her side, striding towards her.

“Clara!” Grace cried.

Clara stood still. Her eyes were on Jemima suddenly, however. She was remembering, with a sudden pang, that Jemima had overheard her making arrangements for this break with Babs & Co. at midday.

“So this,” Grace cried angrily, as she came up, “is how you do your detention, is it? This is what happens as soon as my back is turned. It’s a good job that I—” And then she stopped, glancing at Jemima. “Clara, you will come back with me to the class-room,” she said.

“Oh tut-tut!” Jemima murmured.

“Grace—”

“And thank you, Jemima, for bringing me here,” Grace said. “I’m much obliged to you.”

Even Clara, prepared almost as she was for the confirmation of her suspicions, started at that; then her face grew bitter.

“You—you beastly sneak, Jimmy Carstairs!” she said, between her teeth.

“You awful thing!”

“Clara, come along!” Grace snapped.

And Clara, with a final furious glare at Jemima, was tugged away.

One Round to Clara!



“**D** OUBT? There wasn’t a possible shadow of a doubt!” Clara

Trevlyn averred furiously. “Jemima knew I was going to break detention. She knew that I should go through the gap in the hedge. Well, there she was, as large as life, waiting for me with a prefect!”

“But,” Barbara Redfern argued, “it might have been an accident.”

“It might!” Clara scoffed. “Jolly funny sort of accident!” she said bitterly. “It sounded like an accident, too, didn’t it, when Grace turned to her and said, ‘Thank you, Jemima, for bringing me here?’”

There was a buzz in the Fourth Form Common-room, where, furious, Clara, just released from detention, made this announcement. Friends of Clara and Jemima exchanged uneasy, doubtful glances. Lydia Crossendale & Co. smiled sneeringly; the rest of the Form, however, looked rather grimly angry.

For it was apparent to all now that Jemima was deliberately doing her best to get Clara into hot water. The Fourth didn’t care a rap about Jemima’s little mysteries, but the Fourth as one girl loathed sneaking.

And, according to Clara, Jemima Carstairs had sneaked—in the most blatant manner.

“Well I guess, before we condemn, we’d better hear Jemima’s version of it,” said the American junior, Leila Carroll. “Sure, it’s only fair to give her a chance to explain. Where is she, by the way?”

But nobody knew the answer to that one. Since Clara had been caught, Jemima had not been seen.

Babs shook her head. Deeper and deeper her worry. More and more her puzzlement. She had to believe Clara; Clara would never make up a story like that. At the same time, everything that was happening was so contrary to the nature of the Jemima she knew.

A momentary silence followed Clara's outburst. It was broken by the opening of the door.

And every eye was upon the girl who entered—a girl with a cheerful, beaming smile on her face, a monocle stuck in one eye. She nodded amiably.

"What cheer, comrades? Nice spot of weather we're having during the old sunshine! The breeze rustling in the woods and the birds singing tra-la-la, and all that sort of natural old bosh! Well, well, here we all are, and if anybody's going to invite me to tea, I'm not going to say no, what? But," Jemima frowned, "are we all so merry and blithe? Methinks I detect few smiles on the countenances of the members present. What's happened?"

"You know," Clara said grimly, "what's happened?"

"Oh? Do I? Thanks!" Jemima chirped. "So pleasing to think you've got something before you knew you had it, what? I mean to say, if I know, there's no sense in asking any old questions, is there? Makes life so much easier, you know—"

"You sneaked!" Clara said accusingly.

Jemima blinked.

"I did?"

"You did."

"Oh!" said Jemima, and polished her monocle. "You know, it's strange," she observed thoughtfully. "I think I'll have to go and see myself and ask myself about these things."

"Jimmy, don't rot!" Clara said impatiently. "You're not just going to pass this off. You don't deny, when I was breaking through the hedge, that you came along with Grace Camperhill?"

"Tut, tut!" Jemima sighed. "No, beloved."

"You don't deny, I suppose, that you brought her along?"

Jemima glanced at her queerly. "All these things I do not deny," she murmured.

"Then," Clara said, "you sneaked!"

"Oh! Shrewd!" Jemima observed. "A real bit of Sherlock Holmes' deduction. Well, well, and that is how I sneaked, is it? And now prithee, tell me one other thing before you cast me in the dreary dungeons. Why, beloved, did I sneak?"

"Because—" Clara glowered. "But you jolly well know why you did it! You wanted to stop me from going to see the Wallaseys. If you want the candid truth, Jimmy, you're just jealous because they're letting me have that speedboat whenever I want it."

Again Jemima eyed her. Babs, watching her, wondered at the peculiar expression which for a moment flitted across her smooth face. Then she sighed.

"After which," she sadly observed, "I've not a merry old leg to stand on, have I? Ah, me! How black and ungrateful is life! May I? Oh, yes?" she beamed as the door opened to admit Dulcia Fairbrother, captain of the School.

"Clara wanted on the phone!" she said. "Urgent!"

Clara gulped. She glared at Jemima, who, as if nothing had happened, sat down and picked up a magazine.

Out went the Tomboy, while the Form stared at Jemima. That cool, inscrutable girl had practically admitted that

she had sneaked; Jemima had not tried to deny that she was jealous of Clara.

And yet, there she was, just behaving as if nothing had happened. A few moments passed, and then Rosa Rodworth sniffed.

"Well!" she said.

"Well?" Jemima blandly looked up.

"Bucket!" she said hopefully.

"Eh?"

"Isn't it some sort of game you're playing?" Jemima asked innocently.

"Tut, tut! Have I got hold of the wrong end of the merry old maypole again? You say 'well'—I say 'bucket'; association of ideas, what? Now let me give you one—Aha!" she added, as Clara came in again.

But a Clara whose face was rosy with excitement, whose eyes were gleaming.

"It's from the Wallaseys!" she cried, referring, of course, to the telephone-call.

"Mr. Wallasey wants to know why he hasn't seen me." She cast a belligerent look at Jemima, who, however, was not gazing at her. "They want me to go down now."

"But the time!" Babs cried.

"Oh, stuff! There's plenty of time—an hour and a half, in fact," Clara said.

"Jimmy, I'll talk to you later," she added grimly. "Meanwhile, whoops!"

She went out, disappointment, anger forgotten then in the excitement of at last trying the new speedboat. Off with a rush she dashed to the cloak-room, there feverishly grabbing up her hat and coat. Hurriedly she struggled into them. Then she made for the door. And there, suddenly, she stopped, her brow darkening. For between her and the door was Jemima.

"You!" Clara glared. "What are you doing here?"

"Oh, just going for a walk, what?" Jemima said blandly. "So good for my old rheumatics, and so forth. As you're going out, I thought perhaps we might trickle along together, having a heart-to-heart chat en route."

"In other words, you want to come to the Wallaseys with me?" Clara accused.

"Well, I had some vague idea of wandering in that direction," Jemima admitted.

"Then thanks!" Clara snorted, her eyes glimmering. "I don't trust you, Jimmy Carstairs. And if you think you're going to trail around with me, you've got another think coming! And don't follow me!" she cried, as Jemima, smiling, walked after her.

"Well, the air is free, isn't it?" Jemima asked. "I mean to say, if I want to walk I can walk, can't I?—And then suddenly she gave a gasp. "Hi, backwater!" she yelled. For Clara, with a sudden push, had sent her reeling back. Before Jemima could recover, Clara had darted through the door and locked it after her.

Jemima clenched her hands.

"Clara, you fool!" she gasped.

But from Clara, running down the passage, came only a laugh.

Jemima frowned. Strange the expression on her face then; strange in its tenseness, its anxiety. Clara, for once, had beaten her. Clara—

She rushed to the window—just in time to see Clara sprinting for the cycle-sheds.

"Hum! Not clever, Jimmy, old lad! Not half clever," she told herself angrily.

She went towards the door again, listening. Ten minutes—a quarter of an hour passed before she heard a step coming up the corridor. Then, politely, she knocked. The step paused, the key creaked. Barbara Redfern stared at her in surprise.

"Jimmy, you! How did you get locked in here?"

"Oh, just an accident," Jemima smiled—"a silly old accident which I ought to have prevented! Too, too tough! It's too late now."

"Too late? What do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing—just nothing!" Jemima said blandly. "A fearful habit, speaking thoughts aloud—what? Well, well, all we can do now is to wait and watch the merry old developments. Post in yet, Babs?"

"You know it came in half an hour ago."

"Did Clara hear from brother Jack?" Babs stared.

"Jimmy, why are you so interested in Clara's brother Jack?"

"Well, isn't he our friend?" Jemima asked. "And aren't we all interested in our friends? Thanks for releasing the prisoner!"

And Jemima passed on, leaving Babs staring after her and wondering, wondering.

Jemima went off to her own study. There she had tea. Shortly before gates closed she went down to the Common-room, just as Clara, her face radiant with excitement, came in. At once she was the cynosure of all eyes.

"And you had a ride in the speedboat?" Babs asked.

"Did I?" Clara cried. "I took her all round Belwin Island. She's beautiful—she's lovely! And the best of it is, I can still take her out whenever I want her!"

"Dig in the eye for you, Jimmy!" Lydia Crossendale sneered. "Hear that? Clara's been out in the speedboat!"

Jemima did not seem disturbed. She ambled up, with a pleased nod.

"Glad you enjoyed it," she said. "Nifty little ship!"

"What! You're not jealous?" Freda Ferriers scoffed.

"And why," Jemima asked, "should I be jealous? As one mariner to another, I'm jolly glad—what? Far be it from me to keep the good things of this life to my selfish self! Clara beloved, how did you find our friends the Wallaseys?"

"Eh? Oh, ripping!" Clara said.

"But I'm not talking to you!" she said, remembering. "That reminds me, Babs. The Wallaseys are paying us a visit to-morrow. I've invited them to tea after the hockey match with the Upper Third."

"To tea?" asked Jemima.

"Any objection?" demanded Clara.

"Well, what are you grinning at?" she added.

But Jemima was not grinning. She was smiling—a queer, enigmatic sort of smile; a smile somehow of relief, of an expectation fulfilled. From that moment she took no further interest in the question. But later, when she was in her own study, she smiled again.

"So far, Jimmy, all is well," she murmured. "All is very well, forsooth. And to-morrow they're coming here—to tea! Aha!"

And Jemima nodded mysteriously and pleasantly, as if that prospect gave her great and unbounded pleasure.

Jemima Prepares Tea!



"JEMIMA!" "What cheer!" Jemima Carstairs looked up. "But why Jemima?" she asked of Clara, who had stopped her in the Fourth Form corridor. "What has happened to the dear old Jimmy touch?"

Clara compressed her lips. Though she had relented a little since her trip in the speedboat yesterday, she had by no means restored Jemima to full favour. Not in a hurry could Clara forget that Jemima had, apparently, sneaked on her.

"Just wanted to remind you," Clara said, without troubling to reply to that question, "that you're playing hockey this afternoon against the Upper Third."

"Aha!" Jemima murmured regretfully.

"What do you mean—'Aha'?"
 "I mean, I have some sad and heart-breaking news for you. Little Jimmy, the pride of the side and the hope of the team, has an extremely urgent and not-to-be-put-off engagement. Tough on the Fourth—very. But how the girlish hearts of the Upper Third will lift when they learn they have no longer the hockey terror of Cliff House to contend with!"

Clara glared. Jemima was far from being a hockey terror. Jemima was, in fact, far from being an expert player at all. In a more serious match Clara would never have thought of including her.

"You mean you can't play?" she asked.

"Bright girlie! Nothing escapes you! Sad as my heart is at the prospect, that, alas and alack! is the truth. Break the news gently to the rest of the team, and tell them to bear up, and all that sort of stuff, you know! Too sad!"

Clara looked at her. Then deliberately she crossed her name out of the list she carried in her hand.

"You would," she said, with a hint of bitterness in her voice, "let the side down at the last minute! Jolly good job I've got June Merrett to put in your place! Why couldn't you have told me of this engagement before?"

"Well, truth to tell," Jemima murmured, "there was some difficulty. You see," she added, and obviously prepared to launch into a long and involved story, the climax of which would be as obscure as the beginning, "it was like this—"

"Thanks, you needn't explain!" Clara said curtly. "All the same, thanks for letting me down!"

And Clara strode on.

Jemima looked after her, sighed, shrugged, and then went into her own study. It was a half-holiday that afternoon at Cliff House, and, as the weather was fine, most of the girls had already taken themselves off. Strangely enough, in spite of her urgent engagement, however, Jemima seemed in no hurry to move.

By the window she sat, her oval face wearing an inscrutable smile as thoughtfully she polished her already gleaming monocle.

Half an hour—an hour went.

Then Jemima started as she saw Clara leading her hockey team towards the pavilion on Little Side. Leisurely she rose, crossing to the cupboard. From that cupboard she took an apron, which she donned and, looking at herself critically in the glass, tripped along the corridor until she reached Study No. 7, the apartment which Clara shared with Marjorie Hazeldene and Janet Jordan.

Politely she knocked. Receiving no reply, she went in.

"Aha!" she said.
 There was nobody there. As she had guessed, both Clara and Marjorie were playing in the match, and Janet Jordan was acting as linesman to the team.

Jemima beamed. For one who had an urgent engagement, she was singularly

unhurried as she closed the door behind her, stared thoughtfully at the table, and then, most amazingly, removed the tablecloth and spread over it a clean white tea-cloth.

"Nice!" she murmured. "Well, well, well! Get on, old Jimmy, old lad! Do the chores! Up, the housemaids! Now cups, saucers, knives, spoons, and all the rest of the old accessories!"

She hummed a tune. Out from the cupboard she got cups and saucers, polishing each before arranging it. Now knives and forks, salt and pepper—

"What-ho! Looks business-like," she murmured. "Jimmy, old boy, you're wasted at Cliff House. You should work in a teashop. What-ho! Now for the grubbins itself!"

The table, bare and bleak when she had entered, now began to look quite festive. She cut bread-and-butter, trimmed the cake; she mixed the salad,

"Good work!" Clara glowed in the pavilion. "Lovely stuff, June! I'm jolly glad now Jimmy Carstairs didn't play. But— Oh, my hat! Babs!" she cried.

"Yes, old thing?"

"I've just remembered. Mr. and Mrs. Wallasey—they're coming to tea, and we haven't done a thing towards it! They'll probably be in the school by this time."

Babs started guiltily.

"Oh, great gollykins!" she said. "Come on!"

Feverishly they dressed. How the dickens had they come to overlook the visit of the Wallaseys? Though stores had been laid in, nothing was prepared—it would be just too awful to have to keep their guests waiting while they bustled around. Clara breathed hard.

"Babs, you take them to your study. Marjorie and I will get the tea ready in Study No. 7. O.K.?"



"DON'T follow me!" Clara cried, and giving Jemima a push, she fled from the cloak-room, slamming the door behind her. "Clara, you fool!" gasped Jemima. Strangely anxious her face was then.

and opened the glasses of paste. She then polished the chairs and swept the hearth, and was almost finished when a maid popped her head in at the door.

"Oh, Miss Carstairs," she said, "do you know where Miss Trevlyn is? There are two people here—a Mr. and Mrs. Wallasey."

"What-ho! Expected!" Jemima beamed. "Show them up, wiltst, fair maiden? Miss Trevlyn," she added, "will be here in a few moments."

The maid smiled. She disappeared. Jemima cast a swift look through the window and nodded as she saw Clara & Co., having finished the match, walking off the field. The match had been a good one—an entirely satisfactory one, indeed, if only because June Merrett had shown unsuspected prowess as a goal-scorer, June having scored four of the five goals by which the Fourth had beaten its not-so-happy rivals.

"O.K.!" Babs said. "Finished dressing?"

"Yes."

And out of the pavilion they fairly flew. Into the school they pelted, just in time to meet Sally, the maid, descending the stairs. Clara button-holed her.

"Sally, have two people—a Mr. and Mrs. Wallasey—called?"

"Why, yes, Miss Trevlyn; they're in your study now. Miss—"

But Clara did not listen to the rest. Apprehensively she was skimming up the stairs. Red-faced, she reached the Fourth Form corridor, Babs and Mabs and Marjorie and Bessie Bunter in tow. Wondering how on earth she should excuse her neglect, she halted outside Study No. 7 and turned the handle. Then she jumped.

"My hat!" she cried.

And stared as if her eyes would pop

out of her head at the gleaming table in front of her, perfectly and completely laid, at the boiling kettle on the fire, and the smiling, be-moocled girl who, between Mr. and Mrs. Wallasey, beamed at her.

"What cheer? Welcome to the festive board, old Spartans!" Jemima chortled. "Behold, in your one and only Jimmy, housemaid No. 1. How'm I doing?"

"You—you did this?" Clara stutted.

"All my own work!" Jemima declared proudly. "Clever of me, what?"

Clara blinked. "But—but I thought you had an engagement?"

"Dear old thoughts! Never let you down, do they, old top? Right again. I did have an engagement, and—with a mysterious smile—"I've kept it. In fact," Jemima murmured, "one might almost say I'm still keeping it, if you get my meaning—which, I perceive, you don't! Well, well, here we are, all merry, chirpy, and bright, what? But what about greeting our respected guests?"

Clara flushed at her neglect, and beamingly welcomed the Wallaseys. Truth to tell, she and the others were rather dazed. What an extraordinary girl, this Jemima! What an unguessable quantity!

But there was no doubt that she had saved their faces in front of their guests and prevented them a great deal of trouble. Even Clara, nettled as she was, felt herself unbending. She gulped.

"Well, thuth-thanks, Jimmy!" she said.

"No thanks," Jemima said. "No thanks, I assure you. Just invite me to tea."

After all she had done, they couldn't very well refuse that request, though Mr. Wallasey looked just a little taken aback.

"Oh! Are—we are all taking tea together?" he asked.

"Just that!" Jemima said. "Any objection?"

"Good gracious, no!" he laughed. "The—the more the merrier," he said.

"Ahem! You've certainly got a fine tea!" he added.

"Yum, ripping!" beamed plump Bessie.

The chums sat down. Jemima beamingly made the tea. And a cheerful meal that was, in all truth; though, to be sure, Jemima did not say much, and Mr. and Mrs. Wallasey, for some reason, seemed just a little disappointed. But Babs was glad—glad at last that Jemima had come to her senses, glad that Clara, grateful for her good turn, seemed to be so willing to heal the breach.

They talked of things—of the hockey match, of the speedboat, of the house by the sea, and of Jack Trevlyn's adventures in Nigeria, many of which—most of which—even Clara had never heard of before. Time passed.

"Ahem! If I may ask one question?" Jemima suddenly interrupted. "Touching the subject of Jack, Clara—"

"Well, yes?" Clara asked.

"Have you heard from him yet?"

"Why, no."

Jemima nodded. But again Babs sent her a flashing glance. Why, in the name of all that was mysterious, was Jemima so interested in Jack Trevlyn's doings?

"Oh, good gracious! Look at the time!" Marjorie Hazeldene exclaimed at last. "Ten minutes to go, girls, and then it's prep."

"Prep?" Mr. Wallasey asked.

"Preparation," Clara explained.

"For to-morrow's lessons. You'll hear the bell go presently. That means that all visitors must be off the premises and we poor mutts have to get down to it and slave for an hour. Oh dear, I'm sorry!" she added, as she saw the look which crossed his face. "I—I didn't say anything wrong, did I, Mr. Wallasey?"

"Wrong? No!" He laughed. "Did I look as if you had? Truth to tell, I was enjoying myself so much that it came quite as a shock when I heard the time. Well"—he sighed and rose regretfully—"I suppose that means we must be going. By the way, Clara, I wonder if I could put rather an important phone call through from here? I suppose you have a phone?"

"Yes, of course," Clara smiled.

"I'll come with you and show you where it is."

She led the way through the door, leaving her chums chatting to Mrs. Wallasey. In the corridor outside Mr. Wallasey smiled at her.

"Well, thanks for your invitation; it's been delightful!" he said. "At the same time, Clara, I did hope to get a word with you alone. There's something I want to tell you—something I wanted to show you, too."

"Oh!" Clara cried.

"I suppose," he said wistfully, "you couldn't get along to the house some time—without your friends? Some time in the near future, I mean. I was hoping to ask you to come back with me this evening. I suppose it's too late now?"

"Well, yes, it is, rather," Clara said, and felt a bit of a churl suddenly for not having thought that these people might not have wanted to be burdened with her chums; felt, too, that she must make it up. "Look here, I'll tell you what," she said, "let me come along later."

"Later? But won't you be going to bed?"

Clara chuckled.

"I shall—officially," she said. "But it won't be the first time I've been out when I'm supposed to be in bed. No, don't look worried; there's not much risk, and I'd love to come along. Could I get along, say, about half-past ten?"

Clara chuckled.

"I shall—officially," she said. "But it won't be the first time I've been out when I'm supposed to be in bed. No, don't look worried; there's not much risk, and I'd love to come along. Could I get along, say, about half-past ten?"

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"Well, that would be lovely. But please—please don't risk trouble. At the same time, I've got something I think you'll be interested in, and it's something I've got to send away to-morrow Half-past ten, then. Is this the phone?"

"This is it," Clara nodded, and waited while he went into the box, and smiled as he came out again, his message apparently delivered.

"Well, thank you," he said. "Till to-night, Clara."

"Till to-night!" the Tomboy assured him.

He went back to the study. Just time had the chums, Jemima among them, to accompany Mr. and Mrs. Wallasey to the gates before prep bell rang. Strolling back, Jemima threw the Tomboy a rather queer glance.

"Nice people, what?" she asked lightly.

"Topping!" Clara said, glowing with enthusiasm.

"Seemed to know quite a lot about your brother Jack that you didn't know?" Jemima questioned.

"Yes, didn't they?" Clara laughed.

"Wait till I see him, the secretive duffer! All the same"—she paused, flushing a little—"Jimmy, I—I haven't thanked you yet for being so jolly decent in preparing that tea."

"Then," Jemima smiled, "don't, please! All in the day's work, what? Pleased and happy to have been of service, what? Such a change for Uncle Jimmy to rustle around handing out the glad and helping hand."

"You know, Jimmy, you are funny," Clara decided, with a frown. "I'm hanged if I can make head or tail of you! Why the dickens can't you always be like this?"

"Well, aren't I?" Jemima asked.

"Well, you know you aren't! Just—just a blessed bag of mystery half the time. Even now you haven't explained—"

"Prep!" Jemima said abruptly.

"Run, run, comrades! Run as fast as you can! Didn't I hear the bell?"

She hadn't. It seemed as if Jemima wanted to avoid an awkward question by suddenly breaking into a sprint, though prep bell was ringing when she reached the Hall, and breathlessly they hurried up the stairs.

Clara mused thoughtfully. What a puzzle Jimmy was! Never a girl to harbour resentment, that jolly good turn of the afternoon had almost wiped out her old hostility, but not quite. All the same, she was relieved to have made it up, though some of the meaner spirits in the Form, hoping for a final flare-up between the Tomboy and Jemima, were faintly disappointed to discern, later in the Common-room, those signs of reconciliation between them.

And ordinarily that reconciliation would have ripened into the old strong friendship had it not been for what happened in the dormitory that night.

When Clara, keeping her promise to visit the Wallaseys, was dressing in preparation for her bounds-breaking expedition, Jemima's voice sounded in a whisper:

"Clara—that you, old Spartan?"

"It is," Clara grumbled. "Don't make a row."

"Pretty risky, isn't it?"

"Well, I'm taking it!" Clara defiantly retorted. "Anyway, shurrup! You'll wake the others."

Jemima's lips came together a little. In the darkness she rose. Fortunately her bed was in deep shadow, so that Clara did not see what ultimately transpired; did not know Jemima was feverishly dressing.

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SNOW WHITE
AND THE SEVEN DWARFS



"WHAT cheer? Welcome to the festive board, old Spartans!" Jemima chortled. Clara & Co. gaped. They had dashed up to the study to prepare tea for Mr. and Mrs. Wallasey—but Jemima had already done the job. Why?

The Tomboy, however, was ready first, and, tiptoeing to the door, went out. One minute later Jemima went out after her.

"Clara!" she breathed, as she reached the top of the stairs. "Clara!"

Clara looked back. For a moment she saw Jemima's face, then hurried her steps.

Jemima breathed hard. There was real anxiety on her face now. She, too, hurried, reaching the lobby just as Clara was clambering over the sill. She called again.

"Clara! Wait a minute!"

Clara paused. Her face was furious. "Look here, Jimmy—"

"I'm looking." Jemima's face was serious. "Clara, don't do it!" she begged. "Don't! I know where you're going."

A glimmer came into Clara's eyes.

"And you're trying to stop me again! I thought—with a deep breath—"you'd come to your senses. Jimmy, don't be a fool! Get back!" she cried, as Jemima made a movement to throw one leg over the sill.

But Jemima's face was determined.

"I have a fancy," she muttered, "for a stroll in the midnight moonlight. Whither thou go, there also I goest! Never shall it be said that a Carstairs—ow!"

And Jemima let out a gasp, as Clara, her face suddenly furious, gave her a push. She staggered back.

In a moment Clara had slammed down the window, at the same time ramming her glove between the framework of the upper and lower panes so as to form an effective wedge. Then she scooted.

Jemima, recovering, leapt forward. She gripped the beading and lifted; but the glove, wedging the window, held it, for the moment, firm. Again Jemima heaved, this time putting all her strength into the effort.

Crash! Like a shot from a gun the window skidded up.

"Oh Jehoshaphat!" gasped Jemima.

And blinked as there came a cry, as the door of Miss Bullivant's study near by opened, and Miss Bullivant, a startled figure in a white nightdress, advanced.

"Jemima!" she cried. "How dare you? Jemima—" And then, through the window, she saw Clara running in the moonlight. "Why, bless my soul, if that is not Clara Trevlyn!" she cried. "Jemima, what are you doing?"

Jemima sighed. "Woe is me!" she murmured.

"That is no answer to my question! You were breaking bounds?" Miss Bullivant accused.

"Alack!" Jemima sighed. "You were breaking bounds with Clara?" Miss Bullivant went on.

"Doth it seem," Jemima asked, "that I was breaking bounds with Clara? Look where she is; look, forsooth, where I am. If I was breaking bounds," Jemima went on ruefully, "I should be out there—now, wouldn't I?"

Miss Bullivant stared at her hard.

"Please, Jemima, do not ask foolish questions. Hum!" She frowned. "Well, Clara is certainly breaking bounds," she said. "Apparently you had something to do with it. Jemima, you will take a hundred lines and go back to bed at once!"

"And Clara?" Jemima asked apprehensively. "Miss Bullivant, don't be too hard on her, please!"

"I shall deal with Clara," Miss Bullivant retorted acidly, "as I think fit! Now, please go to bed, Jemima, otherwise I shall take you to Miss Primrose."

Jemima shook her head. With an appealing, but entirely lost, glance at the mistress, she turned forlornly on her heel. Miss Bullivant, rustling into her study, donned her clothes. An hour later, hearing the window pushed open, she stepped out. Clara, in the act of climbing the darkened sill, almost fell over as she silently loomed up.

"And so, Clara, this is how you behave when you are supposed to be in bed?" Miss Bullivant raged. "This is how you so gracefully comport yourself? You think, do you, that you can break bounds with impunity? Unfortunately for you—thanks to Jemima—I was made aware of your lawlessness. To-morrow morning, Clara, I shall report you to Miss Primrose. Now go to bed."

Clara gazed at her dumbly. But she wasn't thinking of her punishment. She wasn't thinking of Miss Bullivant. She

was thinking of those three words of Miss Bullivant's—"Thanks to Jemima." Jemima, again thwarted in her intention of following her, had deliberately sneaked upon her!

Bitterly she stormed off, her face white as she stamped dormitory-wards. She opened the door, and in a voice sharp with scorn and anger, she rapped one word:

"Jemima!"

Jemima started up.

"Oh, Clara, old Spartan—"

"You sneak!" choked Clara.

"I say, what's up?" cried Barbara Redfern, raising her head. "Clara—"

"She sneaked!" Clara pointed a quivering finger at Jemima. "That cat tried to follow me out and I stopped her. Just to get her own back, she went to the Bull and sneaked, and the Bull was waiting for me when I came back."

"Oh, my hat!"

The whole of the Fourth was stirring now.

"But—but—" Babs leapt out of bed. "Clara, steady!" she cried. "How do you know she sneaked?"

"How? By the strongest evidence in the world!" Clara cried. "The Bull told me herself. And that," she cried bitterly, "is the girl who calls herself a friend! Sneak, Jimmy Carstairs—sneak!"

Jemima winced, but from the dormitory came a gasp. Every eye—and every eye was grim—was suddenly upon her. Babs glanced at her.

"Jimmy, what have you to say?"

Jemima shook her head.

"And what, forsooth, should I say?" she asked wearily. "Hasn't our beloved said all for me? Never, never correct your betters as my old nurse Honour-anium used to say to me when I was an infant sitting upon her knee; and never, being the mountain of obedience I am, have I done so. Still—"

"Oh, chuck rotting!" cried Rosa Rodworth. "Did you sneak?"

"Well, if I said I didn't, would you believe me?" Jemima asked sadly.

"Jimmy, did you?" cried Babs sharply.

"Yes, she jolly well did!" cried Lydia Crossendale. "This isn't new; she sneaked yesterday, didn't she? She's

(Continued on page 14)

OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS



YOU remember I told you about the dart-board—or darts-board if you prefer it—that your Patricia and her family have at home?

Well, so far, it is still very popular, and doesn't look like finding its way into the loft—where many dusted treasures do!—for a long time yet!

I also told you about the big backing-board—a yard square it is—that father made to hang behind the dart-board to protect the walls of our sitting-room, which are the delight of mother's heart.

Now we have invented a new rule.

If a dart should miss the dart-board and the backing-board altogether and lodge in the wall—then the thrower must pay a penny into the telephone box.

The telephone box, I should explain, is a box that stands beside our phone. If people—not members of the family—ask to use the phone, they pay the price of the call into the phone box, you see.

It may sound rather mean just on first hearing of the idea, but, of course, it isn't really, for otherwise, our phone bill might be so big that we should have to have it cut off. And one of mother's friends has a weekly habit of telephoning—on our phone—to her mother in Scotland! (I only hope the old lady doesn't move to America!)

After all that explanation—which, on second thoughts, I'm quite sure you nice, understanding young things didn't need—I must just add that threepence so far has gone into the telephone box as a punishment for darts being aimed at the wall.

And, believe me—mother was the one who aimed them there!

You can just imagine how we've teased her about it.

● An English Test

As you're all so very busy at school these days, and in thorough work-ish mood (perhaps!)—here's a little English test for you.

You know all about Split Infinitives, don't you? (If you shouldn't, well, just skip the next paragraph or so.)

So now I want you to read through this little piece of wisdom and see how many Split Infinitives you can find in it.

“To completely understand a girl, it is necessary to have known her in her own home. Lily had to visit Alice many times before she was able to appreciate her for the charming girl she was.”

Have you found any?

I won't tell you the number now, but you'll find it at the end of my letter. Mind you don't peep till you've formed an opinion of your own!

PATRICIA is every schoolgirl's own friend, young and understanding of all schoolgirl joys and problems. Each week she writes to you in that cheery and chummy way which has so endeared her to you all.

● A Pretty Blotter

I wonder if you collect picture postcards? If anyone had asked me that question, I should promptly say “No,” for I don't exactly collect them as a hobby.

All the same, I have got quite a number of postcards in the drawer of my own little writing bureau.

These have been sent to me at various times, and either because they have exceptionally pretty pictures on them, or because of the stamps—I just haven't liked to part with them.

If you have any treasured cards like this, what do you think of the idea of using two of the prettiest to make a very novel and useful little blotting pad?



You'll want some blotting paper, of course. If you haven't any to spare at home (and if your school's as mean with it as mine was!) then you'll have to buy a penny sheet.

Do choose a pretty colour though, as you're risking a penny. Green, blue, or maize colour would be very sweet—and a change from pink or white.

Fold this and cut it up into sheets the same size as the postcards.

Then place about six sheets between the two cards, which now form gay covers. With a meat skewer, or scissors, jab two holes right through all the thicknesses and thread coloured cord or ribbon through as a fastening.

It would certainly be much admired at school—

It would look very effective on the desk or writing bureau at home—

It would make a very welcome little present to a chum, or a grown-up—

And it would be a popular “buy” on a stall at a sale of work.

● Coloured “Specs”

Quite a number of schoolgirls wear spectacles these days, don't they? But gone are the days—thank goodness!—when it was thought that they spoiled a girl's looks!

All the same, I must say I am thrilled to see that coloured frames to ordinary spectacles are becoming more and more fashionable. (I think the idea must have sprung from sun-glasses, for I know I had coloured rims to mine at least three years ago.)

They're so much more cheerful than

the brown, or goldy rims, don't you agree?

My rather-rich friend, Esme, who wears spectacles for reading, has just treated herself to a pair with green frames. And she looks perfectly ripping in them.

Aunt Monica—who isn't my aunt really, but my young brother's godmother—has a grey-rimmed pair and a cheery red-rimmed pair. The grey-rimmed pair she wears for every day, and the red ones when she goes gay in the evenings.

Now, my mother is thinking of having new frames, and I'm trying to persuade her to buy light blue, for mother's eyes really are the loveliest blue.

Other colours I have seen in these frames, are a honey yellow, colourless white, and flesh pink (which suits most people).

But the optical experts do say that only the soft colours should be chosen.—the frames with the more intense shades tend to be brittle and snap easily.

So remember this, all you spectacle wearers—and I do hope there'll be no school rules about the colour “specs” you wear!

● A Comfy Fit

I expect you have fished out all your autumn frocks now and have been busy sewing on fresh collars and cuffs to make them gay-looking for the chillier days.

But there is sure to be one frock among your collection that's not as comfy as it might be, owing to the rate at which you have grown.

So perhaps you'll decide to turn it into the ever-useful pinafore frock and wear it at week-ends with different blouses and jumpers under it.

To do this you must cut the neck part to a deep square and cut the sleeves right out. All raw edges must be neatly bound with bias binding or tape.

Even then, if you have grown width-ways more than you had imagined, it is just possible that the pinafore frock is just a little tight across the bodice.

In this case, you can give it the Tyrolean peasant effect. Make an opening down the front. Bind the edges and make little buttonholes down each side.

Through these you must thread coloured ribbon or cord.

Bye-bye, my pets, until next week!

Your friend,

PATRICIA.

ANSWER to English test in column 1: There is only one Split Infinitive in the paragraph—“to completely understand,” which should read: “to understand completely.”



AWAY FOR THE WEEK-END

A really delightful little storyette for the girl who likes to have lots of friends—both schoolgirl and grown-up.

TO be invited to stay with a chum for a whole week-end is a thrill indeed, now isn't it?

So you can just imagine how excited Molly Kent was when her friend, Angela Brown, asked her to stay with her people at their little cottage in the country for two whole days.

Of course, Molly dashed home and told her mother—who was almost as pleased as she was. For, you see, the Kents lived in the town and the Browns in the country. (Angela came to school by train each day.)

THE LETTER.

"I expect Mrs. Brown will be writing, dear," mother said to Molly. "Sure enough that evening came a letter."

"Dear Mrs. Kent," Molly's mother read out. "We have heard so much about your daughter, Molly, and she and Angela are such good friends, that we'd love to meet her. Can you spare her to come and stay with us for the week-end after next? They can travel by Angela's train after school on Friday, and we will see that Molly is back home by eight o'clock on Sunday. We have arranged a little tea-party on Saturday to celebrate my daughter's birthday. I am so looking forward—"

"Oh, mother, I may go, mayn't I? And what shall I wear?" asked Molly all in one breath.

"Of course, silly girl," said mother. "And now let me think. This is a very nice letter of Mrs. Brown's, by the way. Do you notice, that she mentions times and dates—as one always should when sending out an invitation?"

Molly almost snatched the letter from her mother's hands.

"She mentions the party, too, mother," she said. "I suppose that's so that I shall take a suitable frock?"

Mrs. Kent nodded and then sat down to write a note of thanks right away to Mrs. Brown and say that Molly would be delighted to spend the week-end with her.

THE WEEK-END.

And then came the Big Day. Molly had washed her hair on the

Wednesday, so it looked its best on Friday.

Mother had done the packing. The suit-case contained Molly's pleated skirt and yellow jersey with the knitted beret to match the jersey.

The blue velveteen was packed, complete with black dancing pumps and sun-tan-coloured stockings—for the party. There was also a petti to wear under this.

An extra pair of stockings, a woolly scarf, three hankies, brush and comb, sponge bag containing her washing things—that was all. Oh, except for the birthday present for Angela!

Molly left her case in the school cloak-room all day.

After school she and Angela made for the station, and Angela insisted on carrying her case.

At Angela's cottage Molly was first introduced to Mrs. Brown whom she liked at once.

Mr. Brown arrived home later. He was jolly nice, too.

Angela and Molly played "Snow-White and the Seven Dwarfs" during the evening after supper, and they both went off to bed together.

SATURDAY.

"Happy birthday, Angela," said Molly first thing in the morning, and presented her with the little manicure set that she had brought along for her.

Molly made her own bed, for Mrs. Brown hadn't a maid. She wore a jumper and skirt.

During the morning the two girls went with Mr. Brown in the car to do some shopping. Molly wore the beret to match her jumper.

After lunch, Molly asked if she might help prepare Angela's tea-party, so that it should be a surprise for her. Mrs. Brown said it was a lovely idea.

At three o'clock Angela and Molly changed their dresses. Molly wore her velveteen with black shoes and sun-tan stockings; Angela had a new silk dress.

The party was a great success, and Molly helped with the washing-up afterwards.



They just listened to the wireless that evening—and then bed.

SUNDAY.

Next morning Molly wore her jumper and skirt again, and after breakfast they all went for a walk.

After dinner, Molly and Angela washed up, while Mr. and Mrs. Brown snoozed in front of the fire.

The two chums went for a walk on their own, gathered some beech leaves for Molly to take home to her mother, and then returned to find tea was ready.

Molly went up to Angela's room to pack her case after tea, and they spent two hours at it, for Angela was showing Molly all her treasures.

GOOD-BYE.

Supper was early, and then came the time to say good-bye.

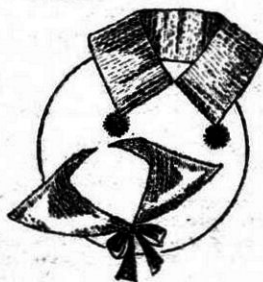
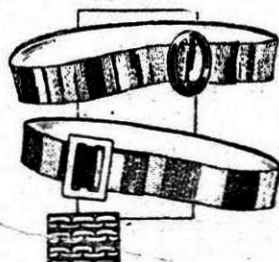
Mr. Brown insisted on driving Molly all the way home, which was a great treat.

Molly hadn't forgotten to thank Mrs. Brown and Angela very much for her lovely week-end, and at home she asked Mr. Brown in to meet her own mother and father.

When he had gone, mother said Molly must sit down and write a note of thanks to Mrs. Brown, even though she had thanked her already.

Then the family had to hear all about the week-end.

The result is that Angela is coming to stay with Molly before very long. And Molly is making plans already!



KNITTING ODDMENTS

Collars and belts for you who like knitting to make in a moment.

HERE are two very pretty belts for you who like a little spot of knitting to make in an odd moment—and with odd pieces of wool, too.

For both belts, cast on 10 stitches, using No. 9 knitting needles.

The top belt is made of multi-colours. Knit garter-stitch (plain both sides) in different colours for what length you like, changing the wool when you feel like it.

The lower belt is made in squares. Knit for about ten rows, and then change the colour of the wool.

When both belts are long enough to go around your waist, sew stiff ribbon to the backs to keep from stretching, and a buckle at one end. Then each can be reversed, giving you four belts in all.

COLLARS, TOO.

If you are pleased with the belts, you might like to make collars to match. Cast on 26 stitches, and knit for 14 inches for the top collar. Make two woolly bobbles and sew to the corners.

The second collar is made from two pieces. Cast on two stitches and increase one stitch at the end of each row until the collar is big enough to go halfway round the neck of your frock.

The other piece is knitted in exactly the same way for the other side.

Worn on plain frocks, these collars and belts would come in for lots of admiration.

(Continued from page 11)

tried her best all along to make things as sticky as she can for Clara Trevlyn. Well, bother Clara Trevlyn, I don't care a rap for her; but it's just about time Jimmy Carstairs learned that she can't go sneaking whenever she feels inclined. And I vote," Lydia cried, "we send her to Coventry!"

"Hear, hear!" cried Freda Ferriers. "But—" Babs cried.

"Yes, send her to Coventry, look you!" Lucy Morgan agreed.

"We don't want a sneak in the Fourth!"

Everybody forgot, in the excitement which flared out, where they were. Half the Form were for sending Jemima to Coventry; the other half, led by Babs, were for making Jemima explain. The uproar was at its height when—

"Snick! went on the light. Miss Bullivant, a quivering figure of fury, stood by the door.

"I should like to know," she said icily, "what you girls consider you are doing? Are you aware it is almost midnight? Are you aware that you are disturbing half the school? Every girl in this room," Miss Bullivant snapped, "will be detained after lessons to-morrow afternoon. And, in addition, you, Barbara, for failing to keep order, will do a hundred lines!"

"Oh, my hat!" came a smothered groan.

And, smarting and furious, the girls stared at the mistress as she went out, switching off the light. As soon as the mistress' footsteps died away, Rosa sat up.

"And that's that!" she said bitterly. "Detained! Detained—all of us—because of a rotten sneak! Jimmy Carstairs!"

"Woof!" said Jemima.

"Are we going to put up with it?" Rosa demanded.

"No!"

"Are we going to send her to Coventry?"

"Yes!" came the chorus.

"Is everybody decided?"

"Yes!"

Rosa drew a deep breath.

"Then," she said, "that's the verdict of the Form, Jemima Carstairs! From this moment you are in Coventry; from this moment nobody speaks to you, and if anybody is even seen speaking to you, they go to Coventry, too. Is that understood?"

"Yes."

"Jemima!"

But from Jemima's bed came a sleepy grunt.

"Bow-wow!" it said. And Jemima, amid the glares of her Form fellows, calmly settled down to sleep.

In Coventry!



"NICE spot of weather we're having, what?" Jemima beamed.

Diana Royston-Clarke looked at her and passed without a word.

"As I was saying to Diana," Jemima murmured, as Marjorie Hazeldene came up the corridor.

Marjorie turned red and went on.

"Er! Ripping film in Courtfield," Jemima said brightly, as Leila came along.

Leila shrugged. As if she had not seen Jemima, she went on.

"Well!" Jemima said, apparently talking to herself. "Well, well! Singu-

larly uncommunicative world we have this morning, Jimmy, old girl—singularly uncommunicative. Strange, silent women and all that sort of stuff, making of the old British bulldog breed. Methinks we will filter towards the Common-room." And she did, beaming in at the door on the girls. "Cheers, old Spartans!"

The "old Spartans" favoured her with a withering look, and turned away.

"Pretty nice weather you're having here, what?" Jemima said chattily. "It's not so bad, either, in Coventry. But, of course, we people in Coventry are used to storms, you know! Anybody like a coughdrop?" she added inconsequently, producing a paper bag from her pocket. "Guaranteed to kill or cure within three hours, and can always be used, my dears, as a reviver for drooping hydrangeas!"

Nobody spoke. Jemima sadly put the bag in her pocket again.

"No customers?" she asked. "Tough! Awful to totter through this wicked old life trying to do good turns for people who don't want them! Shall I read to you? Rather a new experience being able to read to the jolly old Fourth without interruptions. What about a slice of this—'Geological Formations in the Cretaceous Era!'?"—and blandly she drew out a small book. "Now listen!"

But nobody wanted to listen to Jemima. There was a hasty movement towards the door at once.

Jemima smiled. She put the book away. Very thoughtfully she followed them out, making her way to Study No. 4. Clara was in that study, talking to Babs and Mabs, and seeing that the door was open, Jemima heard her voice half a minute before she reached the door.

And Clara, rather breathlessly, was saying:

"Yes, that little Egyptian figure Jack gave me before he went away. Would you believe it, Babs! Mr. Wallasey's got a figure exactly like it! Of course, I told him about the one Jack had given me, and he said it's one of a pair, and the two of them together are very valuable."

"I say," breathed Babs. "What a thrill. Let's have a look at it, Clara." The Tomboy crossed to a drawer and produced the little figure. The chums stared at it.

"Doesn't look very valuable," commented Mabs. "But what are you going to do, Clara?"

"Why, I'm going to take it along to Mr. Wallasey this afternoon," said Clara, replacing the figure in the drawer. "He's going to get it valued."

At that moment Jemima's bland face poked into the study.

"Morning, Spartans!"

The "Spartans" twisted round. Clara glared and turned away; Babs coloured; Mabs developed a sudden and concentrated interest in the flowers in the vase on the table.

"Dumb, what?" Jemima said. "Shocking disease with which the old Form is afflicted this morning. Why not come into Coventry with me? Pretty jolly being in Coventry, you know," Jemima added cheerfully. "I'm the only one allowed to speak. Well, so long! Think it over, forsooth."

And Jemima ambled off. Certainly she did not seem to be taking her punishment to heart. To anyone else Coventry was a dreaded sentence—but trust Jemima Carstairs to react to it in a different way from anyone else!

Lessons came—Jemima in no wise disturbed. Break came, followed by dinner. After dinner, lessons again,

and after lessons a gloomy Fourth Form remained in the class-room for its detention.

Miss Bullivant arrived and called the roll. She paused, however, as she announced Jemima's name.

"Jemima? Is she here?"

There was a rustle in class. Everybody twisted round. And then girls blinked: faces expressed astonishment. For Jemima's place was empty. Obviously she had slipped out after lessons.

"My hat! What's the idiot up to now?" Clara Trevlyn muttered.

"Clara, take fifty lines for talking!" And Miss Bullivant gazed grimly at Jemima's empty seat. "Now, to work, girls!"

They settled down to work, anxious eyes upon the clock. Twenty—thirty—five minutes went by. Then the door came open, and everybody stared as, framed in the doorway, unburied, calm, unruffled and serene as usual, Jemima appeared.

Miss Bullivant's brow was like a thundercloud.

"Jemima, where have you been?"

"Ahem!" Jemima beamed. "Heart-breaking as it is to relate it, Miss Bullivant, I've been to Coventry!"

"Coventry?" Miss Bullivant stared. "Jemima, do not be ridiculous!"

"But 'tis true," Jemima said sadly.

"In fact, Miss Bullivant, I believe I'm still there! Have you ever been to Coventry, Miss Bullivant?"

There was a titter from the class. Miss Bullivant turned red.

"Jemima, you are perfectly absurd!" she snapped. "You will go to your place. And just to impress upon you that it is an offence to come into detention half an hour late, you will remain behind after the class is dismissed and will write one hundred times: 'I must curb my sense of humour'—if yours can be called a sense of humour!" she added with a sniff.

Sorrowfully shaking her head, Jemima went to her desk. The class settled down again.

"Anyway, serve her jolly well right!" Clara muttered to Janet Jordan. "Silly, funny idiot!"

The time dragged away. But at last Miss Bullivant gave the order "Dismiss."

Babs looked at Jemima sitting wearily at her desk. For a moment her heart knew a pang of pity; for a moment she almost forgot Jemima was in Coventry.

"Well, chip, chip!" that girl said sadly. "Me for the merry old treadmill! Give my love to the Wallaseys," she added blandly to Clara.

Clara, with a frigid lift of her shoulder, gave her a glare and walked out.

But Babs was shaking her head. Even now, despite the evidence, she could not in her heart of hearts believe that Jemima was the sneak she had been judged. All those incidents, so clearly stamping her as the guilty one, were so utterly unlike her.

"Oh dear! I wonder," she said as she, Clara, Mabs, and Marjorie Hazeldene went off down the passage, "whether we are right, you know? It seems rotten for poor old Jimmy—"

"Oh stuff! Poor old Jimmy just got what she's asked for!" Clara retorted gruffly. "Anyway, never mind her now. Babs, you—you don't mind if you don't come with me to the Wallaseys?" she asked. "Mr. Wallasey asked me if I would come alone."

Babs shook her head. "No, not at all," she said a little worriedly, still thinking of Jemima. "Got the parcel ready?"

"There it is!" Clara said, flinging open the door of her study.

On her desk, neatly bound up, was the parcel she had made during break. That parcel contained the small Egyptian image which Jack had given to her before his departure, saying that it might make an ornament for Study No. 7's mantelpiece.

"Here we are!" Clara said jovially, and caught the parcel up. "I'm off! Whoopee! See you at call-over, Babs!"

She laughed cheerily. Babs smiled a little as the Tomboy breezed out. But she was still thinking—and feeling, somehow, sorry—for Jemima. Funny, she reflected, that Jemima had been up so against Clara. Funny that she had tried to interfere so much in her friendship with these Wallaseys—such nice people, after all!

"Well, let's go and have tea!" she said to Mabs.

Mabs agreed. Off they went. In Study No. 4 they prepared tea, were in the act of sitting down to it, when there was a knock on the door. The

Blankly she and Mabs stared at each other.

"Wallasey!" exclaimed Mabs.

"They—they were after that figure?"

"And—and Clara's taken it to them!"

It was unbelievable. It was incredible that two such nice people—And then, in a flash, Babs was remembering the utterly casual way in which they had met the Wallaseys, this queer preference of Mr. Wallasey to get Clara on her own. Her face blanched.

"It's we—we who have been the fools!" she said. "Oh, my hat! Mabs, quickly! Phone them up! See if Clara is there yet. We've got to stop her from handing over the parcel at all costs."

Mabs, in a moment, flew off. Babs nodded at the boy.

"All right, you can go," she said. "We'll send the answer from Friar-dale."

The boy went off. Babs sat down. Her mind was reeling suddenly. Oh,

me, the Wallaseys have just been using that speedboat as a bait to win Clara's confidence and friendship. Come on, we're going to see Jemima. She might tell us something! "Come on!"

And she breathlessly flew to the classroom. She burst the door open. And then she blinked. Jemima was not in the room. But Miss Bullivant was! And Miss Bullivant was quivering with rage.

"Jemima—" she choked. "That girl—she has broken detention!"

"Jimmy—you old Wizard!"



"ONLY one thing now," Babs said. "Get to Sarmouth View!" If Clara has handed over the package, we might be able

to get it back!" Mabs breathlessly nodded. They were rushing for the classroom now.



"SHALL I read to you?" beamed Jemima, not a whit disturbed because the Fourth had refused to speak to her. "What about a slice of this—'Geological Formations in the Cretaceous Era'?" Cheerfully she began to read, and very hastily the Fourth Formers retreated.

telegraph boy from Courtfield, a buff-coloured envelope in his hand, peered in. "Oh, Miss Redfern, I've a telegram—for Miss Trevlyn," he said. "Miss Trevlyn isn't in, and it's prepaid."

"Oh!" said Babs. She took it as he held it out. She frowned. A telegram was an unusual thing, and this one, obviously, had to have an answer. She looked at Mabs.

"Shall I open it?" she asked. "Well, yes," Mabs said. "If it's fearfully important we can get Clara on the phone at the Wallaseys, perhaps, and send back the reply. Perhaps it's from Jack," she added.

And from Jack Trevlyn, at present in France, it was. But the message it contained! Babs' eyes grew wider and wider as she read it.

"On no account tell anyone about Egyptian figure" (it ran). "Have just received information it contains highly important plan. People masquerading under name of Wallasey, and residing near Cliff House, are after it. Wire if it is still safe. If I don't get figure back, I shall lose job. "JACK."

fools, fools! All the time those Wallasey people had been playing with them; all the time masquerading as Jack Trevlyn's friends. No wonder now Mr. Wallasey seemed to know about so many of Jack Trevlyn's adventures that Clara had never even heard of. He had been making them up, of course.

And—and—Jimmy? Babs jumped. Jimmy! She knew something about this then. That explained her mysterious behaviour; that explained why Jimmy had tried to prevent Clara and the Wallaseys getting into close contact. Oh golly! Why hadn't she connected the two before?

Mabs came back. She shook her head. "Nobody in," she said. "All right," Babs said between her teeth. "But come on, Mabs! Jimmy knows about this!"

"Jemima?" Mabs asked, staring. "Jemima!" Babs nodded seriously. "Isn't this why she's apparently been making a dead set at Clara? Doesn't this explain a lot? Clara thought it was because Jimmy was jealous of that speedboat—but it wasn't! If you ask

"And Jimmy—" But Babs shook her head. Where Jemima, the one girl who might help them in this crisis was, there was no saying. Jemima was out of the hunt.

In the meantime, two scoundrels were getting away with a document that might be valuable to the British Government. Clara's own brother stood to be disgraced in his task.

And all the time they had never suspected—

But reflections were of no use then. The thing was to undo the mischief which had been wrought. A phone call to the View had failed—but Clara must be there. No time did Babs and Mabs waste. Just in case of trouble, they collected Jean Cartwright, Leila Carroll and Janet Jordan, and grabbing bicycles from the shed, raced away.

Twenty minutes later they reached Sarmouth View, but the cottage was deserted.

"Well, if Clara's here, I guess she's on the beach with that speedboat!" Leila opined.

It was the most obvious suggestion in the circumstances. Down to the bottom

of the garden they flew. Then Mabs pointed.

"I say, look at that yacht! It's moving!"

"And look," Babs shrilled, "at Clara!" She pointed to the small speedboat between themselves and the yacht, which was steaming out to sea. "Clara!" she shrieked.

Clara heard. She raised a hand.

"Clara—quickly!"

But Clara, her face rosy, her whole being quivering with the joy of handling the boat, was being as quick as she could. Anxiously, frantically, Babs & Co. hurried down to the landing-stage. Clara, her face one big smile, drew near, nearer, smartly slowed the boat round, brought it to a standstill, and jumped out.

"Isn't she a beauty?" she cried.

"But, Clara—"

"And guess," Clara cried eagerly. "Oh, Babs, just guess! They've given me the boat—just given it to me!"

"Oh, my hat! And—and where are they now?" Babs gulped.

"They've gone off on the yacht with some professor Johnny to get that silly image valued."

"You mean you've handed over the figure?" Babs breathed.

"Why, yes! Well, what's the matter with that?" Clara stared. "They've given me the speedboat. Here, is—Babs, what's the matter?"

For answer Babs weakly passed the telegram. Clara looked at it, jumped, looked at it again, and then her face turned white, as she swivelled round and looked towards the yacht.

"Oh golly, Jack!" she groaned. "Babs, I'm going after them," she added fiercely, and dropped back into the speedboat.

"It's the only chance," gasped Babs. "After them, Clara!"

Came a roar from the little speedboat's engine. Away it shot, spray flying high. But Clara had only shot seawards some twenty yards when the engine coughed and spluttered. The speed dropped.

Watching anxiously, the chums saw Clara turn in a sweep and come back to the landing-stage. The Tomboy's teeth were clenched.

"Out of petrol," she gritted. "Babs, we've got to get some, quickly. I'll go—" she paused as a hail came from along the beach.

A slim, immaculate figure with a beaming smile and a glistening monocle came strolling on to the scene.

Clara glared at her.

"Don't worry us now," she snapped. "Anyway, you're in Coventry."

Jemima shook her head.

"Not so!" she said. "This is where my sentence ends. Perhaps," Jemima added gently, "you'd better talk to me for once, because I think, if you want to know, that I can tell you something about your Wallasey friends. Hope they enjoy the trip," she murmured. "They'll love the little surprise at the end of it. Tough on them running off with a packet of your lines, Clara!"

"Lines?" Clara asked blankly. "What the dickens are you talking about?"

"Just lines," Jemima said, "and something else! Ahem! Where is the little joker?"

Diving her hand into her pocket, she produced an object, the sight of which made Clara's eyes almost pop out of her head. For it was—

"The Egyptian image?" she queried. "Jemima, where did you get that?"

"From the merry old parcel you so kindly left in your study," Jemima murmured.

"Then—then that's why you were late for detention?" Babs gasped.

"Alas! That is so."

"But—but," Clara almost stuttered, "what, then, was in that parcel I've just handed over to them?"

"Just lines!" Jemima said. "Your lines! I packed it very neatly and very, very carefully—in fact, I think I made rather a good job of it," she added thoughtfully.

Clara's face was a study.

"Oh, my hat! Jimmy—" she choked. "And I never guessed! But how the dickens did you find out?"

"Well, there's little to tell," Jemima grinned. The day before you met those Wallasey people—such naughty old villains—"

"Yes?"

"I was flint-hunting in the old sand pit—some nifty little Palaeolithics I found, too, I heard people talking. I heard the name of one I know—Clara, and so I listened in. Well, I couldn't quite get the hang of the conversation, but they said something about making it easy to get hold of you by tempting you with the speedboat."

"Oh!" Clara said, clenching her fists. "Go on!"

"And the next day Mr. Wallasey arrived at the station. So aha, think I, the plot is working. I had an idea, you know, that they were going to kidnap you, or something. I tried, in my feeble way, to warn you, but you were so all-for-the-Wallaseys that you wouldn't listen."

"Yes," Clara agreed thickly.

"And so," Jemima murmured, "in my own blundering way I determined to keep an eye on things, and, if possible, to keep you from getting into close contact with them. What a jump you gave me when you went off that afternoon after shutting me in the cloak-room—and what relief when you came back, announcing that invitation to tea! For then," Jemima resumed, "I knew they didn't want to kidnap you, otherwise they would have done it then. So, think I to myself, they're after something else."

And Jemima, in her own careless way, went on, went on to explain how, to prevent private communication she had got herself invited to tea, how later, in Courtfield, she had seen Mr. Wallasey purchasing an image just like the one Clara possessed—how, from that moment, she had guessed the real plot, and set out, in her own way, to foil it.

"And that is why you brought Grace Camperhill after me?" Clara said. "To stop me from meeting them?"

"Not so, fair maiden, not so!" Jemima murmured. "That was one of those unforeseen old accidents! Grace wanted to know where I found my flints in the ditch. I took her."

"And last night," Babs asked, "when you were supposed to have sneaked to the Bull?"

Jemima explained.

"Oh!" Clara looked at her. Then she shook her head. "Jimmy, I'm sorry," she said sincerely. "I didn't know. All the time you were only trying to save me—and I—I thought—oh my hat! Kick me for a fool!" she groaned.

"Jimmy—"

Jemima smiled.

"Shall we," she said, "say nothing more about it, old Spartan? Now, let us dally forth and humbly face the angry Bull, who is doubtless rather interested in my unfinished detention. But to-morrow," Jemima said, "to-morrow, beloveds, we shall all look forward to our morning prayers with relish."

"And why?" Babs asked.

"Because," Jemima beamed, "I've let the old police know that Mr. and Mrs. Wallasey are international spies, and even at this moment they will be on the look out for them. Oh, by the way!" she added to Clara. "Do you know what's in that image?"

"No."

"Just the key to a code which the Wallaseys, having lost to Jack—who didn't know—were anxious to get back. I believe," Jemima murmured, "that it will mean a lot to the British Government, and considerable kudos for friend Jack. I took the liberty of having a look. No harm, what? All friends again now?"

"Friends!" Clara gulped. "Jimmy, you—you mysterious old wizard!" she breathed. "I'm a chump, a pig. I'm—"

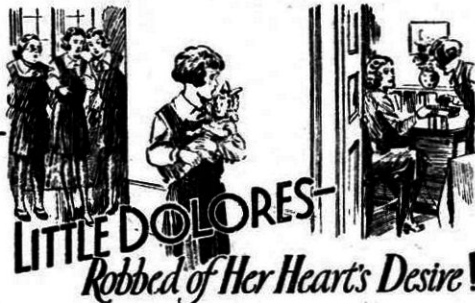
Smilingly Jemima took her arm.

"Shall we," she asked, softly, "trickle, old thing?"

Trick'e they did—to give Cliff House the shock of its life when everything was explained.

Miss Bullivant, in the circumstances, decided to turn a blind eye to Jemima's misdemeanours!

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.



Little Dolores Essendon, the smallest, most winsome, most lovable girl at Cliff House School, had one abiding ambition—to fag for the school's popular Head Girl, Dulcinea Fairbrother. And suddenly the chance came. Dolores was radiant. Babs & Co., who set out to help her, were delighted. But another prefect, for her own ends, was determined that Dolores should fag for her! Why? That was the problem Babs & Co. had to solve. Don't miss this appealing HILDA RICHARDS story. It appears COMPLETE next Saturday.

Opening Chapters of a superb New Adventure Story.

Guests at Mystery Manor!



By
**ELIZABETH
CHESTER**

Warned Off Their Holiday!

"IS the next station the one for Hawsley Manor, please?" Hilda Farrel, bright-eyed, brown-haired, asked the ticket-collector on the speeding train that question as she gave him her ticket.

Hilda and her friends, Beryl Lorimer and Judy Brough, were sharing a compartment of the corridor express train, bound for a holiday as paying guests at Hawsley Manor.

And Hawsley Halt, Hilda had found, was the next station.

The ticket-collector, taking their three tickets, shook his head.

"No, miss. Not the next station—that's just the halt. And here it is, too," he added, as the train's brakes went on. "But you stay where you are, if the Manor's where you're going. A queer old place that, I'll be bound—and queer's the stories I've heard lately. Got a rare old history."

"Good," said Hilda, with a smile. "All the more fun. But, anyway, ours is the next station but one, I suppose, so we'd better get our things ready."

"Next but one—Hawsley Station," he agreed, and went into the corridor as the train pulled to a stop.

Hilda stood up and started getting things down from the rack.

"You know, girls," she said, in thrilled tones, "I've a feeling that this is going to be the holiday of our lives. A grand, historic place—"

"With secret corridors," said Judy eagerly. "And perhaps a ghost, you know—"

"Ugh! Not a real ghost," shivered Beryl Lorimer. "I don't think I should like that very much."

For Beryl, although not really nervous, hadn't Judy's adventurous disposition, nor Hilda's calmness and competence. Romance rather than adventure appealed to Beryl, so she really preferred reading about ghosts to meeting them in lonely corridors.

"Don't worry I dare say it's just a modern guest house now," said Hilda. "But it's a cheery place, because my uncle went to see if it would be a good spot for us to stay."

"I'm just aching to see it!" said jolly faced Judy. "Help me down with this bag, Beryl—"

"Look out! Don't tread on Marcus!" exclaimed Hilda. "Here—Marcus!"

There was a thumping sound as of a tail meeting the floor, and a lovely big setter came from under the seat, where he had gone for some cool and for room to stretch.



"Get your case down, darling!" said Hilda. "And—oh—" she broke off with dismay. "His ticket. I quite forgot! My golly! The man will think we tucked Marcus under the seat because he hadn't his ticket—"

"Well, where is it?" asked Beryl. Hilda did not answer, but signalled Marcus to get down his case. She had spent hours training him, teaching him tricks, and Marcus, being a very clever dog, had proved that the time had been well spent.

Jumping on to the seat, he took the handle of the small leather case in his teeth and dragged it down. It was his

"KEEP AWAY FROM HAWSLEY MANOR!" said the mystery note. But that only made Hilda Farrel and her chums more determined to investigate.

very own case, in which were packed collar and lead, brush and comb, a few "toys," his licence and medicine.

But there was something else of importance there, too.

"Ticket," said Hilda. "Fetch it out, boy!"

Marcus looked at her solemnly, and then, suddenly understanding, he tugged at the little cord projecting by the latch of the case. The spring-loaded lid flew up, to reveal, resting on top of a towel—his very own—his ticket.

He twisted back his legs, and soon his sharp teeth gripped it.

"Now take it along to the man," said Hilda, smiling. "Look—there he is—"

Some people were getting off the train, and the ticket-collector was standing back, waiting for their luggage to be passed out across the corridor.

"The dog forgot his ticket," called Hilda.

Marcus proudly trotted up to the man and touched him on the leg with his paw.

"Hallo—I say, smart dog!" the man exclaimed, and took the ticket.

Marcus, his job well done, would have walked back then, only he heard a familiar name mentioned.

"Hilda Farrel," said a woman outside. "She's on this train, I think. Miss Hilda Farrel—bound for Hawsley Station—"

Hilda herself did not hear, for she had gone back into the compartment to arrange the luggage for a quick "getaway" at Hawsley Station; but to Marcus the name was familiar—it struck a chord in his mind.

"Woof!" he said. "Woof, woof!" The woman had an envelope in her hand, and she passed it through to the ticket-collector. Before he could take it, however, Marcus jumped up and whipped it from the woman's hand.

"Here—come back!" called the man. But the woman, not knowing quite who had taken the envelope, since the window opening was high, walked away.

Returning to the compartment, Marcus tapped Hilda with his paw and sat up.

"Hallo, old fellow! Why—what's that?" asked Hilda in surprise, and took the note.

At the same moment the ticket-collector arrived.

"Just a minute, miss—is that for you?" he asked.

"Why, yes—I'm Hilda Farrel," said Hilda, surprised. "Whoever gave my dog this?"

"A lady who hurried away," said the collector. "But, my word! That dog of yours is smart! Knew the name. Snatched it from her, he did!"

"For us! Oh, golly, but why?" breathed Beryl in dismay, as Hilda

gave Marcus a pat of approval. "Don't say that we can't go there now?"

"Measles or something," added Judy. But Hilda, wasting no time in guessing, opened the envelope and took out the single sheet of paper.

The message was short, but sinister:

"Do not go to Hawsley Manor. If you do, you will regret it. It is haunted. Not only that, but—"

There the message ended abruptly, as though the writer had been interrupted. There was no signature, no address, no indication whence it came.

Judy and Beryl, reading it over Hilda's shoulders, gave little gasps of dismay.

"Haunted!" said Beryl. "Oh—oh, I say—"

But Hilda swiftly turned at that moment and looked through the window to where a woman, who had just left the station, was turning into the lane. All Hilda saw was her back view—that of a slim, slightly built woman in a grey suit.

Then, as the train gathered speed, she was blotted from view.

"Of all the mysterious things!" murmured Hilda blankly.

"Haunted?" shivered Beryl. "A real ghost! Oh, Hilda, ought we to go?"

"What-ho!" said Judy eagerly. "All the more fun, I should say. And I jolly well want to find out what else there is queer about the place, too."

She looked at Hilda, for Hilda was in charge, the eldest by a few months. Besides, being the most capable one of the three, she automatically took leadership.

"Go," she said slowly, frowning. "What else can we do? How do we know that that message wasn't a joke—even though it doesn't seem likely that a grown woman would play a practical joke. As for the place being haunted—if it does seem ghostly, then we'll have to share a room to-night. That is—if anyone's scared."

"Hear, hear!" exclaimed Judy, her eyes sparkling. "My word, yes, Hilda! I'm not afraid of a ghost."

Marcus, ears twitching, sat listening, wondering what this important talk was about.

A mile or two down the line was the station, and already from the windows the outline of the old Manor could be seen through the trees. Hundreds of years old, besieged in the Civil War, the hiding-place of refugees, it well might harbour a ghost.

"There it is—that must be the place," said Hilda, leaning out of the window. "You know, something tells me that this is going to be our most thrilling holiday ever!"

"My word, yes," Judy agreed, thrilled.

"Y-ye-es," murmured Beryl doubtfully.

While Marcus, pushing his nose against the glass, stared out to see what it was held their attention, and decided that it was a ginger cat walking along a fence. The bark he gave, though, echoed his mistress' word, for it meant "My, what fun, eh!"

But not quite the sort of fun Marcus imagined!

All Set for Adventure!

"WELL, here we are!" said Hilda.

And there they were, on the platform of Hawsley Station, a minute after the train had steamed out. Other passengers, un-

hampered by so much luggage, had already left the station, and the three girls and Marcus were alone.

"And how do we get from here to the Manor?" asked Judy, who had just gone out to look in the station yard.

"There isn't a car. Those three women took the last one."

"Wait until it comes back," said Hilda practically.

Having made sure that all their luggage had been dumped from the train, Hilda went into the station yard herself, arriving there just as a taxicab loaded with luggage came into view.

"Here we are—we can have this," she said. "When it's emptied the people out."

The taxicab pulled up, and three people who seemed a little excited and perturbed alighted.

"We're well out of that awful place," said a slim young woman.

AFTER LESSONS—LEISURE

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It is No. 652 of the SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN LIBRARY—one of the four superb October issues, published on October 6th, price 4d. each. And that remarkable girl, Diana Royston-Clarke, the "Firebrand" of the Fourth, plays a very important role. Don't miss it whatever you do. Here are the three other magnificent October numbers, all of which you will simply adore.

No. 653. "The Wedding at Morcove," in which Marjorie Stanton tells a story of the early exploits of Betty Barton and her chums.

No. 654. "Not Wanted at Phantom Ranch." Gail Western's fascinating and colourful story of the great open plains.

No. 655. "Patsy Never-Grow-Up." A really topping laughter-story by that most accomplished humorous writer, Rhoda Fleming.

"Preposterous," said a stout man. "Porter, get this luggage on to the London platform."

Hilda stood back as the luggage was lifted down, a task that took a few minutes. But presently the load was removed, and the taximan paid off.

"Is the taxi free now—can we hire it?" asked Hilda. "If so, there's a whole load of luggage on the platform."

"Yes, miss, but I'm meeting some people from the four-thirteen," said the driver. "Unless, of course, you're the party. You for the Manor?"

"We're for the Manor," nodded Hilda, "and we came in on the four-thirteen, so all's well."

At that the portly man who had arrived in the taxicab turned.

"All's well? Don't be so sure of that if you're going to the Manor," he said. "We've just come from it; and that's what you'll do if you have any sense."

Hilda stared at him, and Beryl gave a little gasp, blinking with alarm. Even Judy was taken aback.

"Why, what's wrong?" asked Hilda. "My uncle saw the place and said it was very nice—"

"Indeed," said the portly man grimly. "Perhaps he didn't spend a night there. I asked for a room to myself, and I expected it to myself. I didn't expect to share it with the ghost of Sir Walter Tomnoddy, or whoever it was."

"Or be kept awake all night by sobbings and wailings," snapped the slim young woman. "And—mind, father," she added sharply, "here comes the girl from the Manor."

The clomp of a pony's hoofs could be heard, and Hilda saw a pony and trap swing in through the station entrance. The pony was stepping it out in spanking style while the girl on the seat stood up and waved.

"Whoa!" she called. "Whoa, Willy—whoa!"

The pony reined up, and the girl lightly sprang down.

She was a pleasant-faced girl, but worried-looking at the moment, and she still wore a white overall, that told Hilda she had rushed away in a hurry from household duties.

Not seeing the three girls, who were hidden by the taxi, she hurried to the portly man and his daughter.

"Oh, please!" she gasped. "I'm most terribly sorry, but it won't happen again. Do come back. We'll do everything we can to make you happy and comfortable; and I swear there's never been a ghost until just lately."

It was such an earnest appeal that Hilda, Judy, and Beryl were quite touched by it; but the portly man was not.

"I don't care what there was once, there is a ghost now!" he stormed. "Why did the butler leave?"

The girl sighed, and shrugged.

"Oh dear, he—he was frightened by a noise! Only a noise—"

"Only a noise?" cut in the slim young woman. "The noise of dragging chains. Only a noise, indeed! And that scream I heard, what was that?"

The girl from the Manor gripped her hands.

"We'll clear out the ghosts. We—we'll do what we can," she said earnestly. "And you did say you were staying for a month—"

But no matter how she argued or appealed, the stout man, his wife, and daughter had made up their minds. They were going, even though their holiday plans were ruined.

"No use arguing," he said crisply. "I refuse to stay, and you can thank your lucky stars, my girl, that I am not suing your father for damages—damages to our nerves!"

With that he and his family strode off. The girl, after a step towards them, turned—and saw the three chums.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, taken aback. "Oh dear! And you are the new paying guests? And—and you heard it all? So you won't be staying either."

Her tone was so dismal and pathetic that even if Hilda had made up her mind not to go to the Manor, she just could not have been so brutally frank as to say so.

"Is it as bad as they made it seem?" she asked, with a half-smile.

"A real ghost—and noises!" added Beryl shakily.

"And we can actually see the ghost?" burst in Judy eagerly.

The girl looked from one to the other, her expression showing weariness and yet whimsical amusement, too.

"Oh, that ghost!" she said. "Just when daddy and I see a way of making the old place pay so that we can go on living here—this happens. And honestly, it never showed itself until we started to take in paying guests."

She looked at them in appeal. "Please give us a chance?" she pleaded.

The taximan stood by with a trunk, looking at Hilda.

"Well, miss—what is it? Back into the station, or up on top?" he said.

Hilda turned to Beryl then, knowing that Judy was eager to go, but uncertain whether Beryl was really frightened by the idea of a ghost.

"I leave it to you, Beryl," she said. "And if it will make any difference, we can share a room—or can't we?" she asked the girl.

"You can," nodded the girl eagerly. "Of course. By the way—I'm Lavender Mortimer, housekeeper, parlourmaid, and everything else, too. Of course you can share rooms if you like; do anything; treat it as your own home. Only do, do please come, and prove that the ghost just isn't anything much."

Beryl sighed a little, and then nodded her head.

"Yes—all right," she said. "We'll come."

"You, Judy?" asked Hilda.

"Betcha," smiled Judy.

There was no need to ask Marcus. He had already taken his seat in the cab.

Hilda, smiling, turned to Lavender.

"Then it's settled," she said. "Even though this is the second warning—"

"The second?" asked Lavender, when she had expressed her joy. "How the second?"

Hilda took the mystery-note from her blazer pocket.

"Someone went to the trouble of going to the halt, and putting this on the train for us," she said gravely.

"Another guest, I suppose, or a servant, perhaps. Anyway a woman, although we only saw the back view of her."

Lavender's brows furrowed as she looked at the note.

"But—but this is amazing," she gasped. "Whoever can it have been? Not a servant—and not a guest, either, because those three were our first. And why should she want to warn you? Why should she want to damage us—why—"

"Someone trying to damage you?" exclaimed Hilda sharply. "My word—and a ghost would do it. It's already driven three people away!"

Lavender shook her head, as though the problem was beyond her.

"Y-yes, it does seem like that—only I can't think of anyone who'd really



HILDA'S pulses raced as she and Lavender watched Marcus clawing at the wall. The "ghost" had disappeared through that panel—a secret opening!

want to harm us, even though we are in debt—and—"

But she did not finish that sentence, blushing a little as though she had said too much.

"It would help if we could see that woman again," Hilda exclaimed. "Then we could find why she sent the warning—and how she knew we were coming, and by what train, too! I say—there's a mystery here, you know."

"I should say there is!" cheered Judy.

"And it may not be a real ghost?" gasped Beryl in relief. "How splendid!"

"It would be marvellous, wonderful, if we could prove there wasn't," said Lavender eagerly.

Then Marcus woofed in impatience from the car. He did so hate hanging about!

"All right, Marcus—coming," said Hilda. "Lavender—meet Marcus of Deleigh—"

Marcus gave his paw; Lavender patted his head, and they were friends at once. Then, the luggage now aboard, Hilda, Judy, and Beryl climbed into the taxi.

"See you there," called Lavender.

"And thanks—thanks so much for giving us a break!"

The last the girls saw of her as they looked from the windows of the taxi, Lavender was persuading Willy the pony that he had eaten enough grass, and must come home now.

"Phew—and now for it," smiled Hilda, her eyes shining. "I like that girl Lavender, and I've a feeling I'm going to like the Manor, ghost or no ghost."

"Yes—and if it isn't a real ghost—it can look out for itself," said Judy, with a nod.

Ghost! That word again, thought Marcus, and sat frowning, in the middle of the best seat, while Beryl had second-best on one of the small "occasionals."

The Ghost-Hunt!

HAWSLEY MANOR stood at the end of a long drive through an avenue of splendid trees. All around in the parkland were other trees, all graceful, and of many kinds, slender and tall, stout and thickly

leaved, beeches, elms, poplars, birch—a whole forest of them.

There were spreading grass-lands, too, magnificent tennis courts, a lake, a rippling stream, rolling hills, and beyond, on the sky-line, an old black mill with its arm spread like a traffic policeman, as though trying to halt the march of time.

When Hilda, Judy, and Beryl dismounted from the taxi they stood entranced, looking at the old, weathered beams showing black against the white of the walls, the latticed windows, the creeping wistaria, and the lichened roof.

"It's going to be fun," murmured Hilda. "Come on, girls; if the butler's left, there may not be anyone to help in with the luggage."

But the main door opened, and a middle-aged man with a solemn face stepped out. He was dressed in the stately attire of a butler, although his manner suggested that he might be a rather jolly fellow.

"Golly, the butler didn't bunk, after all!" said Judy.

"Are you the butler?" asked Hilda.

"At your service," was the grave answer. "Pray go inside and make yourselves quite at home while I lift in this luggage, young ladies. There is tea served in the hall, although water has yet to be added to the pot. If you wish to remove the stains of travel—and trains are uncommonly dirty—you will find a wash-place to the left just inside the door."

But Hilda loitered as she heard him sigh on stooping to hoist a trunk.

"Here, give a hand, girls!" she said.

"No, no!" protested the butler anxiously. "Pray allow me!"

"You're not lifting those heavy trunks alone," said Hilda quickly, and almost with indignation, for he was plump and middle-aged, with a part-bald head.

And before he could protest further she took the other handle and hoisted.

"All together," said Judy. "Many hands make light work."

Looking quite shocked, the butler allowed them to help; and, indeed, without their aid he could hardly have managed.

Dumping the things in the hall for the time being, they found the wash-place, and were soon feeling ready for tea.

But by that time Lavender had returned.

"Oh dear! No one to get you tea," she said.

"But there was," smiled Hilda. "The butler got it for us."

"The butler? He's come back? Oh cheers!" said Lavender, almost skipping with glee. "I do think you've changed our luck. Oh, I'm so glad you came!"

Then she hurried through the swing doors, almost bumping into the elderly butler.

Lavender stopped, closing the green baize doors behind her, and fixed the butler with a wide-eyed look.

"Dad!" she gasped.

"Shush—shush!" he implored her. "Shush, my dear! Noblesse oblige, you know. Noblesse oblige," he said.

"Never has a Mortimer failed his guests. The butler has bolted, so henceforth I must buttle—if that's the word. And don't you dare give it away. Lavender my pet! If they ask where your father is, say he's got gout and is keeping to his room—anything!"

"But, daddy," she protested, "you just can't! Why, all the portraits in the hall will fall out of their frames in horror. You're the squire, you know."

"I'm the butler," her father insisted. "If it's good enough for you to cook, wash-up, and make beds, then it's good enough for me to wait at table. Remember I was an actor once."

her father," said Judy. "Wonder if Lavender made these cakes herself? They certainly look good. And that jam! Golly, what a scrummy tea!"

They got busy with glee, and Beryl, looking about her, was now far less nervous than she had been; for this seemed a restful old house, with its thick beams and the great open fireplace, and not even the old pistols and blunderbuss over the fireplace made it seem at all alarming.

They soon fell to discussing the ghost again, and the mysterious message, wondering who could have sent it, and why. But studying it carefully told them nothing further about it.

"But wait a bit," said Hilda suddenly, as an idea came to her. "There's just a chance we can find out who sent it very easily. Marcus!"

"Marcus?" echoed Judy, and then laughed. "Oh, Hilda, I know he's a wonder dog, but how ever can he possibly find that out?"

Hilda smiled.

"Why, haven't you seen his trick of returning things to people? You've seen me take a card from a pack, give it to someone to shuffle in with others, and then let Marcus pick it out. He's right nine times out of ten."

Judy and Beryl could not deny that, having helped with the trick themselves.

"I'll give him this letter," Hilda said.

"And as soon as a woman appears—"

Beryl nearly dropped her cup then,

"Oh, but—but I saw her!" she gasped. Lavender went quite pale, and then blushed.

"You don't mean—you haven't seen the—the ghost?" she asked.

"Is the ghost a woman?" said Hilda sharply. "A woman in modern dress?"

Lavender shook her head.

"I don't know," she said slowly. "I—I really don't know. But if you saw someone she had no right to be here."

"Then," said Hilda, jumping up,

"let's hunt for her."

In a moment all four girls and Marcus began to search. There was no sign of anyone downstairs and, with Lavender leading, they were half-way up the broad staircase when there came from above them a sound that brought them to a halt, a sound that made their blood run cold.

First there was a crash and then—then a high-pitched scream.

"Oh!" cried Beryl, and clutched Hilda.

Marcus' ears rose; Judy took a step forward—and Lavender, white as a sheet, ran up the stairs, to halt on the landing appealing to them to follow.

"You were right—there must be someone in the house," she cried. "Someone playing ghost!"

Hilda, pulling herself together, ran after her, and Marcus bounded at her side.

"Seek 'em out, Marcus—find 'em!" she cried.

With Beryl running after Judy, beseeching her to wait, they turned the corner of the landing, and Marcus, racing ahead, slithered to a standstill outside a door, just as though it had closed in his face.

Lavender and Hilda reached the door together. Lavender opened it, stared in, and gasped in relief.

"No one here," she said.

But Marcus jumped at the wall, then scratched at it, whining with excitement.

"No one under the bed," said Lavender in relief, "nor in the wardrobe. No one here at all. It must be another room. Besides—"

But she did not care to add: "This is your room." But it was.

Hilda, however, was looking at the oak-panelled wall and at Marcus pawing there, and she guessed that his dog-sense was surer than theirs. Someone had been in the room—and someone had surely gone through that wall—through the panel.

Thinking quickly, she turned to Lavender.

"Yes—in another room. Come on, Marcus!" she cried.

Out of the room went Lavender, and with her, after a peep in, Judy and Beryl. But Hilda deliberately hung back, and then, pushing the door to, caught Marcus by the collar.

Without speaking, she warned him with upraised finger to be quiet.

For whoever had hidden behind that panel had heard the door close, the departing steps, the fading voices, and would hardly guess that Hilda and Marcus remained.

Hardly breathing, Hilda watched the panel; and then, even though she had expected it, she felt a thrill as it slowly moved, bringing a black gap of darkness.

But Marcus could be held no longer. With a snarl he rushed forward at the panel, banging his weight against it.

WHAT is the secret behind the panel?

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And pushing open the green baize door, he marched through, bearing the teapot on a tray.

"Dear dad!" sighed Lavender, a suspicion of moisture in her eyes. "What a grand man he is!"

Watching through the part-open door, she saw her father take the teapot to the old oak table by the window, and put it down there.

But what she did not know was that the door had not been properly closed, and in consequence every word of her conversation with her father had been clearly heard by the paying guests. They had heard, but they did not intend to let him guess.

"Play up!" whispered Hilda, her eyes glimmering as he turned away.

Only when he had disappeared did the three girls giggle; but very softly, for really they were touched by his fine spirit in rallying round to help his daughter.

"What a pity we heard!" sighed Hilda. "But we mustn't let on that we know, although really I don't think anyone would mistake him for a butler."

"I should have guessed," nodded Beryl, who had never guessed anything right in her life. "There's an air about him."

"They're both grand, Lavender and

for looking across the hall she had seen the green baize door open, and now through that door peered a dark-haired, pale-faced woman.

"Oh—look!" she gasped.

But before the girls could turn the door closed again.

"What was it—the ghost?" asked Judy sharply.

"No—no—a woman," said Beryl. "My golly—and she heard what we were saying. She might be the very woman."

Hilda jumped up in excitement.

"My word, yes! Come on!"

But Judy snatched at Hilda's arm, for the green baize door was opening again. This time it was Lavender who came through, dressed in a trim maid's costume and with smiling face.

"Had a good tea? I'm so glad," she said. "I do so want you all to be happy here. We'll do everything we can."

"Oh—Lavender!" said Hilda, in a quiet tone suggestive of importance that impressed Lavender. "Who is the woman who looked through the door just now?"

Lavender stared at her, surprised.

"A woman? There's no woman here," she said. "Just dad—just the butler and me, you know."

Hilda shot a look at Beryl and Judy. Beryl had gone quite white.

Romance, Glamour and Breathless Excitement in this Fascinating story.

Princess to Save Leiconia!



FOR NEW READERS.

PAMELA COURTNEY, an English girl living in the romantic little Balkan kingdom of Leiconia, is asked to impersonate the Princess Sonia. Sonia must go abroad in order to save the country—but nobody, except Prince Alphonse, must ever suspect that Pamela has taken her place. Thrilled beyond measure, Pamela agrees. She is so like the princess that a wig makes her Sonia's double. Her chief adviser is the Grand Duke Bernard, who does not know of the masquerade and whom she dislikes and suspects. On the second day of her imposture a boy climbs over one of the balconies of the palace and accuses her of not being the princess.

(Now read on.)

A Friend After All!

“WHAT—what did you say?” breathed Pamela.

Her voice trembled.

Despite her tremendous effort at self-control, her attempt to infuse indignation and imperiousness into it did not succeed.

The young fellow, hoisting himself to a sitting posture on the parapet, folded his arms.

“You heard what I said,” he calmly replied, his frank brown eyes fixed upon her face. “I said: ‘Who are you?’”

Pamela drew herself up. There was a dignity in her bearing that she certainly did not feel.

“I,” she said, “happen to be the Princess Sonia Alexandrine!”

A momentary gleam of admiration showed in his eyes.

“You do it well!” he admitted quietly. “But it’s no use.”

“Really,” Pamela protested, “you are quite the most ill-mannered person I have ever encountered! I’ve a good mind to—to—”

She broke off, simply because she hadn’t the faintest idea what she had in mind. But her remarkable young visitor was not so lost for words.

“Why don’t you stop pretending?” he said scornfully, and yet with a certain attractiveness. “You’re no more the Princess Sonia than I am—less, in fact, because I used to live here once! Now, then, I don’t want to threaten, but you’re going to tell me who you are and what all this is about—at once!”

Pamela leaned against the parapet, trembling slightly.

“Who was this young fellow? What had brought him to the palace?”

He said he had once lived here. Was that true? There was something about him that she liked, in spite of his truculence. He seemed honest and sincere. But he must have had some very strong motive in risking breaking secretly into the palace grounds.

What was that motive? Pamela asked herself. Yet before she could find an answer she was thinking:

“He knows my secret. There’s no sense in trying to bluff any longer. I daren’t create a scene.”

And so—

“Very well,” she said, sighing heavily.

“I—I’m not the princess. You’re right. But”—and she looked at him pleadingly—“how did you guess?”

“I didn’t guess. You told me.”

Pamela Courtney was thrilled to the heart when she was asked to impersonate the Princess of Leiconia. She little dreamed of the amazing adventures in which she would become involved.

“What?” Pamela ejaculated, and stared, dumbfounded.

“Yes. Don’t you remember? You were talking to yourself about Sonia. A very bad habit, and one, I’m afraid,” he added, his voice suddenly hardening, “that’s going to get you into rather a nasty jam!”

Pamela caught her breath. But she was beginning to recover her composure.

“Anyway,” she said, “now that I’ve introduced myself—at least, to admit who I’m not—perhaps you’ll tell me who you are?”

“A friend of the Princess Sonia’s.”

“A friend?” echoed Pamela incredulously.

“A friend—yes. And it seems it’s a good thing I came here to-night. The princess evidently needs my help more than I thought. Tell me”—he seized Pamela’s arm—“what have they done with her?” he demanded.

Pamela did not reply at once. This midnight intruder was grievously concerned on the princess’ behalf. Of that there could be no doubt.

She decided to be frank with him.

Glancing behind her to make sure that her room was deserted as when she had stepped on to the balcony, she lowered her voice. Then, quite simply and as briefly as possible, she told the amazing story of her impersonation.

At first the young fellow scoffed, then he tried to raise objections. But, finally, he was impressed.

“It—it’s staggering!” he burst out. “You—helping the princess like this, and I thought—”

He checked himself.

“But never mind,” he went on quickly, and now his rugged face was aglow with excitement. “Pamela—you’ll let me call you that, won’t you?—Pamela we can work together for the princess—you, because you love it; I, because of what she did for my father.”

It was his turn to become reminiscent then, and Pamela found herself thrilled by his story. His father had been one

of the City Guards for many years, until some two years ago. Then a charge of treason had been brought against him. A faked charge, the young fellow declared. His father had flown to the mountains, taking him with him, and there because of the bitterness he felt against the throne, he had indulged in banditry.

As an outlaw, he had been a model of kindness, gallant even in his crimes. But he had been caught. Princess Sonia, intervening, had not only spared his life, but completely pardoned him.

Alas! it was almost too late. The once loyal servant of her Highness had died soon afterwards.

“But because of what the princess did for my father I—Paul Naldi—would serve her well, my life! I know that she has enemies.”

“So do I,” said Pamela tensely. “But how did you know that?”

By
DORIS LESLIE

Paul smiled, as if to himself. "Among the peasants I have good friends—I have been on the alert myself. To-night, I caught startling whispers. I learned who is behind the moves that would deprive the princess of her throne."

Pamela, heart beating quickly, leaned towards him.

"Who?" she asked. "The same person," Paul fiercely muttered, "as brought the charge of treason against my father. Someone you've probably met by this time."

"You mean," said Pamela breathlessly. "You mean—"

Paul lowered his voice.

"The Grand Duke Bernard!"

Pamela clenched her fists. It was no surprise, but it was a shock—a staggering shock to find her suspicions borne out like this. So the Grand Duke was Sonia's enemy; the Grand Duke was her enemy, a traitor, plotting the downfall of the princess whom he professed to serve.

"Can you prove this—denounce him?" she gasped.

"No, worst luck," Paul confessed, with a rueful grimace. "The Grand Duke's too cunning for that. But, Pamela, if we joined forces we might be able to bowl him out! Will you?" he begged. "It may be the only way to save the Princess—"

There was no need to tell Pamela that; no need to plead for her co-operation. The Grand Duke was not only a menace to the absent Sonia, he was a menace to her, too.

"I'll do all I can to smash the Grand Duke's plans!" she vowed.

"Well said," Paul nodded quietly. "You'll do, Pamela, but you'll need my help. I'll keep my eyes and ears open among the peasants; you do your bit here, in the palace. Between us—"

He broke off. A cough had sounded, startlingly loud, from behind them. In a moment, Pamela had spun round. Her face blanched as she saw a shadow on the floor of her room, a tall, thin shadow, that was swiftly moving towards the open french windows.

"Oh, my goodness," she panted. "The Grand Duke!" Desperately, she looked about her. "Quick, Paul—over the parapet again. Down the ivy! I'll go and meet him—"

Paul, with an athletic heave, slid over the side and dropped out of sight in the gloom.

Round to the french windows whirled Pamela.

At that moment the Grand Duke stepped through them. His face was grim. His eyes, dark and glittering, looked past her, scanning the balcony in both directions.

"Why, hello, uncle!" Pamela exclaimed, in apparent surprise. "What's brought you here?"

He did not answer the question. Finishing his scrutiny, he adjusted his monocle and eyed her queerly.

"What were you doing out there, my child?" he demanded.

"Merely having a breath of fresh air before going to bed, uncle," Pamela returned, with an easy shrug that cost her every atom of effort she could summon.

"Alone?"

"Of course," said Pamela, laughing.

He frowned.

"Curious, my child." His dark eyes were fixed, unwinkingly upon her. "As I crossed your room I could have vowed I heard voices!"

"Voices?" Pamela echoed the word rather shakily. "Why, uncle, that's not very surprising. I was talking to myself, you see."

And she smiled amusedly.

Your Editor's address is:—
The SCHOOLGIRL Office, Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

BETWEEN OURSELVES



MY DEAR READERS.—Are you making sure of securing one of our marvellous Parisian Pearl Necklaces? At the bottom left-hand corner of our back page appears the third of the little tokens which, cut from six consecutive issues of the SCHOOLGIRL, will help you to qualify for the most beautiful treasure ever offered to schoolgirls.

I'm afraid I haven't space here to give you complete particulars of what else you have to do to secure one of those lustrous Parisian Pearl Necklaces for yourself, but No. 478 of the SCHOOLGIRL, which contains full details, together with the necessary form, is still obtainable from the following address:

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Simply send them threepence in stamps, to cover the cost of the paper and postage, and then YOU will have the opportunity of securing this superb treasure.

And now I can pass on to other exciting matters. First, have you read the superb opening chapters of "Guests at Mystery Manor"? If so, I know you'll agree that I didn't in the least exaggerate when I praised it so highly last week. If not, you've a gorgeous treat to come.

Speaking of treats to come automatically brings me to next Saturday's Cliff House story, for if ever there was a treat of enthralling reading it is

"LITTLE DOLORES—ROBBED OF HER HEART'S DESIRE."

You remember lovable little Dolores Essendon of the Cliff House Second Form, don't you?

One of her greatest ambitions is to fag for Dulcia Fairbrother, the popular head girl of Cliff House. And the chance comes! Isn't Dolores elated? Her heart's desire will be fulfilled at last. But—not quite.

For another Sixth-Former, Helen Hunter—big sister of Eunice, Dolores' chief enemy in the Second Form—has other ideas. She needs a fag, too. And she has a very selfish reason for wanting her own sister to fag for Dulcia.

So little Dolores is not only robbed of her heart's desire, but made to wait on a girl who is bullying, harsh and selfish. Poor Dolores. A wretchedly unhappy time she has; so unhappy, in fact, that Babs & Co. rally to her aid. That brings them into conflict with Helen Hunter. One thing leads to another. The trouble spreads. And little Dolores' plight is made worse than ever.

This is quite the most appealing story Hilda Richards has ever written.

As usual, next week's number will also contain further instalments of "Guests at Mystery Manor" and "Princess to Save Leiconia," as well as more of Patricia's Bright and Useful Pages, so—order your copy now.

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

The Grand Duke's puzzled look vanished. He grunted. But for something which happened then, the incident might have ended there.

As Pamela made to step through the french windows there came a noise from below the balcony.

The Grand Duke, spinning round, hesitated for just a moment. Then his hand flashed to a hip pocket; something glinted in the moonlight. Pamela, seeing a small pistol, thrust a hand to her mouth to choke back the cry that tore its way to her lips.

Before she could move herself, the Grand Duke had darted to the parapet. He leaned over, levelling the gun towards the ground.

"Come out, whoever's there!" he barked. "Come out—or I'll fire!"

Pamela Defies the Grand Duke!

TIME seemed to stand still for Pamela.

Frozen with horror, she could only stare at the Grand Duke's menacing form, as it leaned over the parapet.

Paul had been caught! She could picture him now, crouching down there in the shadows, peering up at the Grand Duke, at the glinting gun in his hand, torn between loyalty to her and his own safety.

But—stay! There was something wrong. The Grand Duke had not carried out his threat. Half a minute must have passed since he made it, and still he held his fire, turning this way and that as he stared down to the grounds below.

Only one thing could it mean, and Pamela's heart gave a tremendous leap for joy.

The Grand Duke had failed to detect Paul.

Somehow, Pamela roused herself. "Uncle, don't—don't be silly!" she cried, darting to his side. "There's nothing to worry about. One of the palace cats, I expect."

And she, too, scanned the darkness below them. Not a movement among all that thick cluster of shadows.

"We'll soon discover!" the Grand Duke said grimly.

Next moment he had fired into the air.

The echoes of that shot had barely died away when Civic Guards bearing rifles and swords, appeared from a dozen different directions. They gathered beneath the balcony, springing to attention and saluting smartly as they recognised Pamela.

"An intruder!" barked the Grand Duke, leaning on the parapet. "Scour the grounds!"

The guards rushed away. Pamela drew a deep breath.

"I—I think you're making a lot of fuss about nothing, uncle," she said, turning away to hide her pallor.

"We shall see," said the Grand Duke. "I may, of course, be wrong," and he shrugged. "But the next few minutes will prove whether I am or not."

He bowed, and strode from the balcony.

Pamela stared after him. Was the Grand Duke still suspicious? She could not be sure. But if Paul was caught—

Pamela went to the balcony again, and stared about the darkened grounds. Then she returned to her room and agitatedly paced the thick, luxurious carpet.

Presently she realised something; something that came as a thunderbolt of marvellous relief.

Over half an hour had passed since the Grand Duke had ordered the search, and—nothing had happened! All was silent in the grounds. No disturbance. Not even a voice during the whole of that time.

Paul had got away! Pamela's fears vanished. With a gay laugh she began to undress; with a smile she slipped between the cool sheets.

Thank goodness Paul was safe. How he had achieved the apparently impossible feat of eluding the Civic Guards, Pamela neither knew nor cared. All that mattered was that her new-found friend and ally was still free—free to help her save Princess Sonia from her enemies.

"This must be a nasty shock for the Grand Duke," Pamela mused, and her eyes twinkled in the darkness.

She was not afraid of the Grand Duke. She was so divinely happy in her new existence that she felt incapable of being afraid of anyone. What if there was danger? With Paul's help she'd frustrate the plot against the throne, and—

"Go on having the most wonderful time of my life," she breathed.

And Pamela turned over and went to sleep.

THE DAY of the State Ball!

Such a tremendously thrilling day for Pamela. A thrilling enough day for a real princess, to whom the affair was an annual event. But to one who was sampling it for the very first time—and to whom everything connected with it was deliciously fresh and enchanting—it was one never-ending source of seething excitement.

An atmosphere of festivity seemed to pervade the whole palace. When Pamela was awakened, as usual, by the entry of her chief maid, Rowena, bearing her breakfast on a silver tray, she detected it at once.

"Good-morning, Rowena," she said, as the girl propped up the pillows behind her. Then she laughed. "Goodness, how busy everyone is! I can hear them from here."

For, very faintly, sounds suggesting a great deal of hustle and bustle came from another part of the palace.

"If your Highness wishes it, I will order them to cease," said Rowena, promptly and deferentially, but without apparent emotion.

"Cease?" Pamela exclaimed. "Good gracious, no!" She picked up a spotless white napkin, bearing in one corner the twin-eagled crest of Leiconia. "Let them carry on, Rowena, as much as they like. It's rather thrilling—"

Of course it was thrilling. Wasn't it all for her? If Pamela had had her way she would have gone along and watched the preparations being completed, but that was out of the question. Princesses simply didn't do that sort of thing.

And besides, Pamela's time was not her own to-day, as she discovered the moment she had dressed.

For Prince Alphonse appeared. Tall and aristocratic, with his greying hair and trim little beard, he greeted her with as much affection as though she were really his niece.

And then, as they went downstairs together, treading the rich red carpet on the broad staircase, he referred to the incident of last night. The Grand Duke had mentioned it.

"I am sorry you were unduly alarmed, my dear," said the prince. "Bernard is over zealous, I am afraid."

Pamela laid a hand on the prince's arm.

"Uncle," she said, her eyes looking

frankly into his. "There's something you ought to know."

And there and then she told him about Paul; that it was he who had created the diversion last night; that he had told her of the real nature of the Grand Duke; and that he had sworn to help her, out of love for his country.

Prince Alphonse was at first dismayed. Then he gave a shrug.

"Well, so you have discovered the truth, my dear," he observed. "I had hoped to keep it from you, but perhaps it is for the best, after all. I remember young Naldi. A fine young fellow. But you must be careful, both of you, my child."

Pamela breathed a sigh of relief. It was good to have shared that secret with the prince, and as he admired and trusted Paul, and Paul was obviously safe, everything had worked out to perfection.

A footman opened the doors of a lounge for them to enter. As she passed



PAMELA turned swiftly, forcing herself to smile, as the Grand Duke stepped on to the balcony. If he spotted Paul, clinging to the ivy, the game would be up!

the man's bowing figure, Pamela remembered something.

Yesterday the Grand Duke, in a fit of temper, had threatened reprisals against one of the palace gardeners. Pamela had no wish deliberately to cross the man whom she knew to be a traitor, but whatever took place in the palace did so in her name! And so—

Smiling, she stopped before the footman, who sprang erect.

"There was some trouble with a gardener yesterday," she said. "Do you know what happened?"

"The gardener, your Highness," said the footman, set-faced, "was dismissed, I believe."

Pamela felt a surge of indignation. But, as though she was really utterly indifferent, she nodded.

"He is to be reinstated at once," she said coolly.

"Very good, your Highness!"

The footman permitted himself a little pleased smile, as if it were he receiving this unexpected reprieve. He bowed again.

Pamela passed on, meaning to overtake Prince Alphonse, who, in surprise, had turned to await her in the lounge.

But at that moment a thin, briskly strutting figure, gorgeously arrayed in the uniform of a colonel, emerged from an ante-room. The Grand Duke!

His brow thunderous, his thin lips compressed into a hard, vicious line, he strode up to Pamela, gesturing the footman to wait without so much as a glance at the man.

"Sonia!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, uncle?" Pamela said.

Tumultuous were her heartbeats then. She knew what was coming.

"Did I hear you rescind one of my orders, Sonia?" the Grand Duke snapped.

"You did, uncle," said Pamela, fighting down the tremor in her voice.

With a quick, nervy gesture the Grand Duke screwed his monocle more firmly into his eye. He turned to the footman.

"My orders are to stand! Go on, man!" he rapped; for the footman, embarrassed and bewildered, stood there gaping from one to the other. "The gardener is to go at once! Tell him to pack—this instant!"

Preparing for the State Ball!

PAMELA bit her lip. She did not know what to do for the best. All her instincts cried out against the injustice of the Grand Duke's conduct. And yet it was so undignified, so humiliating, to squabble with him before one of the servants.



But not for long was Pamela undecided. There was a right and a wrong. She could not stand by and see a man so harshly treated as the Grand Duke meant to treat the gardener.

"Stop!" she cried in a ringing voice. She stepped past the Grand Duke. "You may go," she told the footman quietly. "Carry out my order."

"Yes, your Highness—"

"Sonia!" the Grand Duke choked.

"At once!" Pamela insisted.

"Yes, your Highness!" And the footman turned away.

"Sonia—girl—have you gone out of your mind?" The Grand Duke was almost incoherent with rage. He seized her wrist. "Do you know what you're doing?"

Pamela looked at him. Suddenly she felt cool, confident. To Prince Alphonse, who agitatedly came hurrying up, she gave a swift glance. Plainly it said entreatingly: "Leave this to me, please!" And the prince, fingering his trim beard, held back.

"There is no need to make an exhibition of ourselves before the servants, uncle," Pamela said quietly to the Grand Duke.

"You—you have defied me!" the Grand Duke grated.

Pamela, looking far more calm than she felt, drew herself up.

"I'm sorry, uncle," she said quietly, "but there was no other way of seeing justice done. The gardener did not deserve to be dismissed. And I'm sure," she added, with the trace of a smile, "that you'd have regretted it yourself afterwards, when you'd had time to think things over."

"Someone else may regret this one day, Sonia," the Grand Duke said fiercely.

"Bernard!" expostulated Prince Alphonse.

But Pamela felt quite capable of dealing with the situation. Calmly she faced the Grand Duke.

"If you think I have done wrong, summon the council; let them decide," she said. "But, remember, uncle, I am ruler of Leiconia! And it is my wish that the gardener stays!"

And, without waiting to see the effect of those words, she rejoined Prince Alphonse. As soon as they were alone she looked at him, trembling with reaction.

"Did—did I do right, your Highness?" she asked anxiously.

"You did magnificently, my child—magnificently!" Smiling, he patted her cheek. "You kept your dignity under great provocation. No princess could have been finer. I am proud of you!"

And Pamela, thrilled beyond measure, then gave a silvery laugh.

But almost immediately she had to turn her mind to other things. There was so much she had to learn about the State Ball.

Prince Alphonse led her to a quiet corner of the palace grounds, and there, closeted in a charming rustic summer-house, surrounded by flowers and green lawns, and with doves and pigeons tamely strutting about at her feet, she was initiated into the secret of some of the things which would be required of her that evening.

Then, as soon as that was over, a drive with the prince and the Grand Duke. The streets of Tolari were crowded. Peasants had journeyed in from the mountains to watch the celebrities arriving later in the day. It was an unexpected thrill for them to see the princess—and, had they but known it, an even greater thrill for her!

Pamela tried not to betray her emotion; but she could not hide the sparkle in her eyes, nor the gay flush of her cheeks, as cheer after cheer greeted her along the route.

When she arrived back at the palace she was breathless, but radiantly happy. Oh, it didn't matter that she wasn't the person everyone had thought!

"I wonder if Sonia feels like this?" she mused during lunch.

It came as a pleasant shock to discover herself musing about anything during a meal at the palace; a sure sign that she was settling down—becoming more at home during all this elaborate ritual.

After lunch a rest in her boudoir, at Prince Alphonse's gentle suggestion. After the rest, tea—taken quietly by herself—and then the most intoxicating experience of all.

Dressing for the ball!

It was like a dream. Rowena appeared with her five assistant ladies-in-waiting. In the manner of a well-drilled army they attended Pamela—swift, silent, efficient. Her wishes were interpreted almost before they had occurred to her. A mirror was always at hand, held at the very angle she desired. While one maid slipped on her shoes—white satin, and fitting so snugly over her feet—another dabbed powder on her shoulders with a long-handled puff.

Pamela, bright-eyed surveyed herself in one of the mirrors of her dressing-table. Then she caught sight of Rowena at her back, holding up the frock she was to wear.

It really was a lovely frock—and so simple, too! It was a picture dress in white taffeta covered with little rouched baskets, from which peeped the tiniest artificial flowers. Simple, yes, and, in some respects, unassuming; but, then, very often the most beautiful things in life were simple and unassuming, Pamela found herself reflecting. And there was no doubt about the beauty of this frock.

Eager to try it on, she rose to her feet.

Such a flutter then. Each of her six attendants lent a hand, reverently lifting the frock above her outstretched arms as if it were too precious to touch. But at last she had wriggled into it; was standing before one huge mirror, with others on the walls beside and behind her, so that she could see herself a dozen times and from a dozen different angles.

"It is charming, your Highness!" murmured Rowena, her hands clasped. "Very charming!" agreed Pamela, her cheeks flushed.

"And now—your Highness' jewels." Jewels!

Pamela's heart leapt. And when she gazed into the silver casket which Rowena, with a little curtsy, held out to her, she almost betrayed herself with a gasp of wonder.

Necklaces, bangles, brooches, clasps, tiaras! There were rubies, diamonds, sapphires, pearls—oh, so many different precious stones, radiating so many different twinkling lights, that Pamela got into quite a whirl, trying to separate one from another.

With trembling fingers, she selected a long, finely graduated rope of pearls. Instantly they were plucked from her grasp by one of her attendants and secured around her neck.

Again she dipped into that treasure-trove. An exquisite little tiara this time. Then a watch, with diamond-encrusted band.

Inwardly a quiver, she glanced at herself in the mirrors again.

A glow of pride crept into her eyes. Impostor or not, no one could deny that she looked a princess. And she felt a princess, too!

"Thank you, Rowena!" she said. "Thank you all!"

And, radiant-faced, she went from the room, through a bowing lane of ladies-in-waiting. How her heart-beats quickened as she began to descend the broad, curving staircase, with its thick-red carpet, towards the spacious hall below.

Prince Alphonse was to meet her outside the ball-room. Together they would enter it. And for her it would be not only the most enchanting of all the wonderful experiences she had so far had in her new life, but—the biggest, most dangerous ordeal yet!

"I wish Paul were here!" she thought. "He seemed so capable. He could have helped me!"

She was nearing the hall. Two of the many liveried manservants were talking together, apart from the rest. And Pamela, her presence not yet suspected because of the high balustrade, chanced to catch part of their conversation.

"I will take it to the Grand Duke. It may be his."

"He was on the balcony last night?"

"Yes, my friend. The chances are it dropped from his pocket as he leaned over to see what was there. A cat!" The man laughed. "The Grand Duke is nervy these days. But all the same, he may be grateful for the return of his wallet."

And, with a gesture of his hand, he strode away.

It was the gesture that brought Pamela to a stricken halt.

For in that waved hand was—a wallet!

And Pamela knew, from what she had overheard, that it had been found beneath the balcony of her room. But it was not the Grand Duke's. He had not leaned far enough over the balcony for anything to fall from his pocket. It was someone else's—someone whose identity would be discovered the moment its contents were pried into; someone whose liberty would suffer as a result.

"Paul!" she breathed hoarsely. "Oh, it's Paul's!"

She stood there, stricken for the moment, as a host of alarming thoughts crowded into her brain.

One glance at the contents of that wallet and the Grand Duke might discover the truth about Paul's activities.

For the Duke was no fool. He would instantly realise that someone had been in the palace grounds; someone who had no right to be there. And if the wallet revealed Paul's identity, the Duke would be able to put two and two together.

He'd remember Paul, a son of the man he had forced to become an outlaw; the man for whose death he was indirectly responsible. And he'd realise how much the young fellow must hate him.

It would not take the Duke long to suspect something of the truth; that Paul was his enemy, working against him. But supposing—supposing he guessed Paul's motives in breaking into the palace grounds?

"To see me?" Pamela mused.

Utterly disastrous that might be. The Duke, taking no chances, would contrive to bring about Paul's arrest. He would have Pamela herself watched. One false move, and she might be exposed, too.

Only one thing could avert that disaster. Somehow she must prevent the Grand Duke from seeing Paul's wallet? But how—how?

For the manservant, bent upon a reward, was ever now approaching the apartments of the Grand Duke!

ONLY Pamela can save her new friend and helper. But how? You will discover that next Saturday, and also read of Pamela's thrilling adventures at the State Ball.