

“JUNGLE JESS COMES TO CLIFF HOUSE!”

Enthralling LONG
COMPLETE school
story inside.

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THE NEW GIRL
ARRIVES—
WITH HER PET!

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Barbara Redfern, Marjorie Hazeldene & Co. meet an old friend in this magnificent long complete story

JUNGLE JESS

Comes to

CLIFF HOUSE!



Jess Surprises the School!



"LOOK! There's her car!" cried blue-eyed Barbara Redfern excitedly.
"Jungle Jess has arrived!" crowed Mabel

Lynn.

"Come on! Let's give her a welcome!" whooped Clara Trevlyn.

"I sus-say, you gig-girls, wuw-wait for me!" panted Bessie Bunter. "Oh crumbs! I sus-say, where's Marjorie?"

"Here, Bessie!" And gentle Marjorie Hazeldene, her face flushed, her eyes shining, caught the plump girl's arm as a stream of other girls, all looking excited, rushed across Big Hall of Cliff House School.

Excited—yes! And curious, a great many of them. Not many of the girls in the Fourth Form knew Jess Pickering—or, as she was invariably called by Babs & Co.—Jungle Jess. But they had heard of her, they had read of her. And everybody was anxious to meet her.

For Jungle Jess was the girl who had spent nearly all her fifteen years on a South Sea island, her sole friends the monkeys and the leopards, over which she had established an undisputed mastery.

And now she was coming to Cliff House as a scholar, coming to rejoin her friends of Pirates' Island, and especially Marjorie Hazeldene.

She was here!

At least, her car was here, the chauffeur visible at the wheel as it purred up the drive. Eagerly the girls swarmed towards it, forcing it to

stop. There was a clamour of impatient voices.

"Jess, Jess, Jess!"

"Open the door!" cried Barbara Redfern, and herself grasping the handle, jerked it forward. "Hallo, Jess!" she called, and then stopped. "Golly!" she gasped. "She—she's not there!"

"What?"

And everybody, coming forward, stared. For what Babs said was true. There were rugs; there was a handbag in the back of the car; there were also a pair of shoes, a pair of stockings, and a Cliff House hat. But of the jungle girl herself there was no sign.

"Well, where the dickens is she?"

"Beg pardon, misses!" The chauffeur climbed down from his seat. "But if it's Miss Pickering—"

"It is!"

"Then she ain't here!" the chauffeur said. "I left her on the road a mile behind—and her without shoes or stockings, and no hat an' all! She said her pet felt car-sick, though how she knew a thing like that beats me! Ay, a wild 'un is that Miss Pickering! Never know what she'll do next. She got out of the car, and after asking me

where this here school was, said she'd walk!"

"Oh!" went up a disappointed gasp.

"Then—then she won't be here for some time?" Marjorie Hazeldene asked, her face falling. "Oh dear! And I—"

And then suddenly she swung round with a startled expression on her face. For from the branch of the towering tree under which the party stood, came a sudden vibrating, musical cry:

"Chak-ka!"

"Ciel, what is zat?" Marcel Biquet gasped.

"Chak-ka!" came the cry again. There was a rustle, and then a brown hand suddenly appeared together with an olive-tanned face framed in a mass of glistening black hair. "Hallo, Marjorie!" cried a merry voice. "Marjorie, here I am! Up the tree!"

"Jess!" shrieked Babs, Mabel Lynn, Marjorie, Clara, Leila Carroll, and Jimima Carstairs in the same breath.

"Funny, eh?" Jess asked, her tanned face breaking into a smile. "I give you a surprise, you see! Why do you not laugh?" she added, frowning.

"Oh, kik-crumbs! I sus-say, she'll

kill herself!" Bessie cried. "Jess, you duffer! Gig-get a ladder, somebody!"

"No ladder!" Jess laughed deliciously. Her speech was quaint, short and clipped, for her English was still rather childlike. "Jess come down! Jess come now!"

While everybody gave a start of horror, she gracefully slipped from the branch, and falling through the air, just in time it seemed, caught the bottom-most branch and swung there.

And then, although it was a space of ten or twelve feet to the ground, she dropped easily among them, hardly bending her knees at the impact, and looking just as fresh and serene and calm as if she had stepped from the car.

Dressed in Cliff House uniform, she nevertheless was somehow a compelling figure. Very straight she stood, her lithe, shapely figure supple with grace and, in spite of its slimmness, giving a suggestion of strength. Her black eyes, matching her hair, were dancing with pleasure and with fun. But there was still about her something of that untamed thing whom Babs & Co. had first encountered on Pirates' Island.

"Marjie!" she cried happily.

And she darted forward, flinging herself upon that girl. Liking Babs & Co. as she did, there was no one quite like the gentle Marjorie in the eyes of Jungle Jess.

The girls stood round, watching, blinking, all struck into silence for the moment at the sight of this unusual girl who, from now on, was to take her place among them. Then, from Rosa Rodworth came a sudden shrill cry.

"Oh, my hat, look! A leopard!"

Above them there was a rustle in the branches. And then a cry that was almost a shriek went up. For among the bottom branches of the tree something was moving—a great tawny spotted shape, whose gleaming eyes, shining with a greenish sheen, were fixed upon them. A leopard it was.

"Run!" shrieked Lydia Crossendale.

"No!" cried Babs. "You ninny, let me explain—"

But panic at the sight of that fearsome animal had gripped the girls simultaneously. One terrified look they cast towards the leopard; with one accord turned and rushed. Jungle Jess laughed.

"They 'fraid of Kullo," she chuckled. "All people 'fraid of Kullo. But why? Kullo is only a cat—and people in this country have many cats, even if they be not so big as Kullo! Marjie, you not 'fraid?" she added.

Marjorie smiled as she eyed the great animal, and Babs, Mabs, Clara, Leila and Jemima were not at all scared. Bessie Bunter, like the other six, had had previous experience of Kullo on Pirates' Island. She blinked a little apprehensively, however.

"Kullo come from Pirates' Island," Jess said. "Kullo, chup!" she cried, giving an order to the leopard, and Kullo, with a sleepy blink, sat down. "Now, my friends, you shall shake hands with him!" she ordered. "Marjie, you first. Bessie Bunter, be not 'fraid!"

Marjorie laughed. The fleeing girls had stopped now. From the bottom of the Schoolhouse steps they were watching with uneasiness and with awe. Wonder was in their eyes as they saw first Marjorie then Babs approach the animal; as they saw Kullo, in bored majesty, lift one furry paw, extending it to each of them in turn. Muriel Bond frowned.

"Well, he can't be so wild," she opined. "Look, even old Bessie is shaking his paw!"

That was true. Courage began to flow back into them. One or two of the

By HILDA RICHARDS

Illustrated by T. LAIDLER

holder girls edged a few steps farther forward.

In the midst of the scene which ensued, there was a rustle behind them.

"Hallo! What's all this?" asked a voice, and a scowling girl came hurrying down the steps. "Where's Marjorie Hazeldene? I want—" and then she, too, stopped and stared at the sight in front of her; of Marjorie now stroking the head of Kullo; of Jungle Jess talking animatedly to Barbara Redfern.

"Wh-what's this?"

"Please, Rona, Jungle Jess Pickering has arrived," Joan Sheldon Charmant said.

"But where did that wild animal come from?"

"That's Jungle Jess' pet leopard!" Joan explained, with a wink at the other girls. "Awfully pretty thing, don't you think? Do go and shake its paw! It seems quite the most fashionable thing to do!"

Rona Fox, prefect of the Sixth, vice-games-captain of Cliff House, paused, blinking a little. Not a nice girl at the best of times was Rona Fox, with her spiteful little tricks. At this moment she looked more bad tempered than usual.

"Go on!" giggled Eleanor Storke.

Fresh from Pirates' Island comes Jess Pickering, the girl who has spent most of her life with wild animals. She is the most unusual, and at the same time one of the most likeable, girls ever to become a scholar at Cliff House. Her quaint ways, her disregard of discipline, her amazing methods of tackling problems, bring trouble to her, especially in her efforts to help Marjorie Hazeldene and Babs & Co., her old friends. But Jess arises above all difficulties in sensational fashion.

Rona compressed her lips. She looked uneasy for a moment. Then she saw Bessie—and well, what Bessie Bunter, the biggest funk at Cliff House, was not afraid of, she wasn't going to be afraid of either. Boldly she stepped out, halting at a safe distance.

"Marjorie!" she called.

Marjorie turned with a start.

"Oh, Rona, yes?"

"What is that wild animal doing here? Don't you know it is terrifying the school? Tell that girl to take it away at once!"

"But, Rona, it's quite tame—really—while Jess has charge of it!" Marjorie protested.

"It looks it!" Rona snapped. "Take it away!" she ordered.

"Kullo my pet!" Jess protested.

"I don't care if it's your father! Take it away!"

"You bad girl!" cried Jess angrily. "I not take him away! When my grandfather write for me to come here he ask if I could bring my pet, and your big mistress, Primrose, said yes!"

"And you told her, of course, that it was a leopard?" Rona sneered.

"No, I didn't! Why should I say he is a leopard? I said my pet was a big cat—and a big cat he is! Where I go, Kullo goes, and not for a bad girl like you will I take him away!"

"Oh, Jess!" Marjorie protested ap-

prehensively. "Jess, please don't—don't talk to her like that! She's a prefect!"

"Prefect—word not understand! She is a bad, naughty girl!" Jess said sternly. "Not like her!"

Tomboy Clara Trevlyn grinned at the suddenly furious expression on the prefect's face. One or two of the girls in the rear, overhearing that retort, giggled loudly.

Before Rona could make a retort, a fresh figure arrived on the scene. This time it was Miss Primrose herself, blinking a little nervously at the huge, tawny shape in the quad.

"Re-ally!" she said. "Really! What is this?"

"Miss Primrose, I protest!" Rona cried. "I am being ridiculed! This girl Jess Pickering has just arrived with this wild animal, terrifying the whole school, I have ordered her to remove it, and, in reply, I have received nothing but insolence—"

"Ahem!" The headmistress shook her head. "Please, Rona, be patient!" she said. "Jess is very, very new, not only to our ways, but to the ways of all civilisation. My dear, I am Miss Primrose," she added kindly to Jess. "Ahem! You—your animal—"

"Kullo like you! Kullo purr!" Jess said. "Come 'long and don't be 'fraid, Miss Primrose. He will not eat you, though he would like to eat bad girl! Kullo, chup!" she ordered, and Kullo resignedly sat down again. "You shake paw, Miss Primrose."

"Er! Really—" Miss Primrose said with an audibly nervous gulp. "I—really think, my dear, we had better take that action for granted."

"You shake his paw!" Jess ordered. "Then Kullo like you. Kullo know I ask you to shake his paw. If you do not Kullo will not like you! Prarra!" she said to Kullo, and as Kullo solemnly extended his furry paw, Miss Primrose came forward a step and gingerly touched it, drawing back rather hurriedly.

"Very nice! We all friends now!" Jess said serenely. "I take him into school and find him choc-lat."

"Er, yes!" Miss Primrose said. "But, Jess, my dear, I am afraid I cannot allow him in the school. In the school no pets are allowed—not even domestic cats, you see. I am afraid I did not understand, when I gave permission for your big cat to come to Cliff House, that it was a wild animal. Until we can make further arrangements, I really think you had better house him in the empty monkey's cage in the Pets' House. Marjorie, will you show Jess where that is, and then please bring her along to me? And, yes," she added, "please persuade her also to put on her shoes and stockings! Rona, I would like to talk to you!"

Rona scowled. She darted a glare at Jess, who replied with a grimace. Then she looked at Marjorie, made as if to

say something, and apparently thinking better of it, followed Miss Primrose with a shrug. Jess, red-eared, glared.

"I not take Kullo to Pets' House!" she said. "Kullo my friend! I want him! Kullo live with me in the jungle; Kullo sleep with me in the jungle; sleep with me at home! If Kullo not wanted here, I go back home!"

"But, Jess, dear!" Marjorie cried. "Please, please try to understand! Here we have discipline!"

"Dis'pline word not understand!" Jess said mutinously.

"She means rules," Babs put in gently. "Rules, Jess. You understand that? We have many rules, and one of them is that pets are not allowed in the school. You see, they have a sort of school of their own," she added, pointing, "and live all together like the girls."

"And—can I see him when I want to?" Jess asked.

"Oh, of course!"

The jungle girl puckered her lips. Marjorie gazed at her entreatingly.

"Jess, please! It—it's quite all right," she said. "Let us take him!"

"I take him, yes?" Jess smiled at her softly. "If you ask, Marjie—I love you!—then I do. You tell me always the right thing to do, do you not? I speak to Kullo!" she added seriously, and, bending down, whispered something in a queer, hissing sort of voice into the leopard's ear. "Now Kullo knows. We go."

And off, relieved, they went, to be greeted by a noisy barking and howling of dogs as they reached the Pets' House. Jess blinked.

"Oh, so many dogs and cats!" she cried delightedly. "So many pet friends for Kullo! Kullo like them all! But so noisy, yes? They make great din! Calla!" she called suddenly. "Calla!" And to Babs & Co.'s amazement the noise in the Pets' House became instantly hushed as though all at once every animal in it had lost the power of giving tongue. "You see, they obey me!" Jess added proudly.

"Shucks!" breathed Leila Carroll, in wonder.

And Babs noticed, with something akin to awe, how all the dogs gazed at Jess as she walked among them, while Kullo, like a well-trained puppy, trailed at her heels. The big monkey's cage was reached at last. At a word from Jess, the great leopard jumped in, and the cage was closed.

"Bye, Kullo!" Jess said regretfully. "I come to see you—many times. Do not fret. Now, Marjie, you take me to your school," she said simply.

Marjorie laughed. With Kullo under lock and key, she felt happier somehow. Watched by the leopard, they trotted off again, Jess frantically turning to wave until, at last, the cage was out of sight. Once more they arrived in the quadrangle, to be surrounded by a breathless crowd of girls, all clamouring to be introduced, all clamouring to talk.

Jess laughed.

"Nice girls; many of them," she said. "They your friends, Marjie?"

"Yes," Marjorie said, with a smile.

"They are lucky girls—to have you for a friend," Jess said simply. "But none of them can love you as I love you, Marjie. It has been so strange, since I came back from Pirates' Island. I am so lost without my leopard and my monkeys. Also I care not for the silly boots and shoes, the heavy clothes I am dressed in. Much better was my leopard skin on Pirates' Island! But now I am happy," she added simply, "now I am with you again. You tell me what to do, and I do it—for you."

"Then first," Marjorie laughed, "put on your shoes and stockings, and then we will go and see Miss Primrose. Then," she added, with a twinkle in her eyes, "I will show you something."

Jess beamed. Willingly she obeyed. Walking uncomfortably in the shoes, she was conducted by Marjorie, but followed by a crowd, to Miss Primrose's study. Miss Primrose smiled.

"I hope," she said, "you will be happy here, Jess. Marjorie, as I understand you are Jess' great friend, I want you to look after her until she has settled down. Just until she has found her feet in the school, I am putting her in the Fourth Form."

"Not learn much yet," Jess said doubtfully. "I'm not clever girl, Miss Primrose."

"I have made allowances for that," Miss Primrose told her, with a kindly smile. "It is more necessary, in the beginning, Jess, that you should be among your own friends and girls of your own age. We shall not expect anything in the way of wonders from you for a little while—later, when you feel that you are thoroughly at home here, we will consider the scholastic aspect. For the time being it is most essential you should be happy and learn to live the life of these other girls. For the present, Marjorie, I have arranged that Jess shall share your study with Clara Trevlyn and Janet Jordan."

"Oh, thank you!" Marjorie breathed gratefully.

"In the meantime, Marjorie, I hope you will not neglect your work for the school homework exhibition at Courtfield. You will bear in mind, will you not, that we have entered that exhibition, and have paid for the site of the stand?"

"Yes," Marjorie stammered.

And she led the way out, looking happy. Jess beamed.

"You are pleased, yes?" she said softly. "Oh, Marjie, what a nice big mistress, Miss Primrose is! I like her, Marjie, but I do not like the bad Rona girl, because she is wicked! But what is the exhibition?" she added curiously. "What work do you for that?"

Marjorie attempted to explain, choosing her words carefully, remembering that Jess, with only ten weeks of civilisation behind her, was still very much in the infancy stage as far as speech was concerned. But she explained with enthusiasm, with pride, for the school homework exhibition was something very near and dear to Marjorie's heart. Apart from that, it was occupying Babs & Co.'s attention almost exclusively at the present time.

For success in the homework exhibition meant big things for Marjorie Hazeldene:

Once a year the School Homework Exhibition was held in Courtfield Town Hall, and each school for twenty miles around had its own stand. Various prizes were offered for the arrangement of exhibits, but the biggest prize of all was the Lantham Prize, given for the best and most original exhibit of all. Marjorie's idea had been a folding screen for the stand, richly and colourfully embroidered in wool.

There had, of course, been the usual preliminary competition at Cliff House. One design per Form was allowed, and Marjorie, to her own delight, had won that competition, narrowly beating the design sent in by Rona Fox of the Sixth.

Such a triumph, that, for the Fourth. No wonder everybody had been madly excited, and no wonder Rona Fox, bad-tempered at the best of times, had been the most embittered girl in the school

since she had learned of her failure. And now, with Primmy's blessing, Babs & Co. were feverishly pushing ahead with the screen, the screen itself being made of four embroidered sections which, when completed, would fit together to make a glorious picture in wool.

"And—and if I win the twenty-five pound prize at the competition," Marjorie told Jess, "the money will go to my father's parish fund to provide happy Christmases for poor children. But, oh, there is so much to do!" she added. "And we haven't much time. But look!"

And then she threw open the door of Study No. 7.

Jess looked. Then her face flushed with admiration. Fond of colour, the things she saw then delighted her. In front of her, along the back of the settee, were ranged four embroidered panels, not yet finished, to be sure, but with the outline of the design traced on the canvas, leaving nothing to the imagination. It depicted the old-time Cliff House, a silhouette of black, green, and crimson shadows, with, behind it, a setting sun shot with colours. But in place of the sun itself, the Cliff House crest gleamed.

"Oh, it is nice!" Jess breathed. "Marjie, I help, too?" she added eagerly.

"Well, if you can," Marjorie doubtfully smiled. "We'll have to see, Jess. In the meantime, we're all putting in a whole afternoon on it. To-day is a half-holiday, you see. We—" And then she started, twisting round at the sound of footsteps at her back, and smiled a little as she saw Rona's face peering into the room.

"Oh, Rona, do you want me?" she asked.

"I do!" Rona glared at the unfinished screen. Jess, watching her, saw the scowling, jealous expression which came into her face. "I want you for duty this afternoon, Marjorie."

"But—but, Rona, I've got this screen to do!" Marjorie faltered.

"That," Rona sneered, "isn't my affair. You will do as you are told. This afternoon you will go to Miss Bullivant's study, which has just been redecorated. You will put it in order. And not until it is in order will you leave it. And don't"—she rapped, "talk back to me! You hear?"

"Yes, Rona; but—"

"No buts!" Rona snorted. "Do as you are told!"

And with a glare, she walked out again, leaving Marjorie looking so utterly dismayed and startled that Jess moved nearer to her.

"Marjie, what does she mean?" she asked indignantly.

"She means," Marjorie groaned, "that instead of getting on with the screen, I've got to do other work. And that means," she added in despair, "that the screen will be held up. At this rate we'll never be able to finish it in time for the exhibition!"

Jess Tidies Up!



"THE meanie!" Clara Trevlyn burst out hotly.

"The awful spoilsport!" Mabel Lynn cried indignantly.

"She's just trying to hold things up!" Barbara Redfern put in angrily. "She's just mad because our design was accepted in place of hers! This is Rona's way of getting her own back."

"Sure! And just her way," Leila Carroll dryly opined, "of seeing that

there'll be no exhibit from Cliff House at the exhibition. She knows there are parts that only Marjorie can do. Well, what's to be done?"

There was a blank and angry silence in Study No. 7.

Seven girls were in that study: Babs, Mabs, Clara, Janet Jordan, Marjorie Hazeldene, Leila Carroll and Jungle Jess. The time was after dinner at Cliff House—a meal which Jess had not shared with the others, having been invited, according to the custom extended to all new girls, to her first meal with Miss Valerie Charmant, her future Form-mistress.

The chums had met to work, under Marjorie's instructions, on the screen, but the gathering, hearing the news for which spiteful Rona had been responsible, had rather resolved itself into an indignation meeting.

"But why not," Jess asked, "say to this bad girl Rona you will not go, Marjie?"

"Because," Marjorie said distractedly, "I can't. Rona's a prefect. When Rona gives an order we have to obey, you see."

"If the job is done, will it be all right then?" Jess asked.

"Well, of course."

"Then," Jess said, and laughed, "I have the idea. You girls all work on your colour picture. I cannot work on the colour picture because I do not know what to do. But I can do the job, being strong. Marjie, please!" she begged.

The chums looked at each other. That certainly was an idea.

"And Rona," Janet said thoughtfully, "won't be likely to come along. I happened to hear Miss Charmant telling her that she wanted her to help with the Form indexes this afternoon—so that will keep her busy. Well, Marjorie, what about it?"

Marjorie looked a little doubtful.

"You're sure you don't mind, Jess?"

"For my Marjie I love to do it," Jess answered simply. "Show me the place and the work."

That decided it. After that it would have been churlish to hesitate further. So off with Marjorie Jungle Jess contentedly trotted, happy to be of some service, and reaching Miss Bullivant's room, they went in. The room, as Rona had said, had just been redecorated, but although the carpet had been laid and the pictures hung, it was in a frightful state of disorder. A great pile of books lay strewn over the carpet; the curtains, still unhung, were spread over the easy chair.

"Tidy the books," Marjorie advised. "Just fold the curtains and put them on the settee. Anything you're not sure about you'd better put on the desk there—Miss Bullivant will attend to them, I expect. All right, Jess?"

"Oh, yes!" Jess beamed.

"Then—then you don't mind if I leave you?"

Jess laughed, anxious and eager to get on with the work now.

Marjorie went, closing the door behind her, and Jess, kicking off her shoes, eagerly advanced towards the mound of books. Effortlessly she gathered half a dozen of them together, and then looked round. Tidy them, Marjorie had said. But where to put them?

Jess blinked. Never in her life had she tidied a civilised room before. She looked for a bookcase of the sort she had observed in Study No. 7, and then shook her head. For to Jess' untrained eye there was no bookcase in the room at all. Actually there was. In fact, three of

them. They stood against the opposite wall, still draped in the dust sheets which the decorators had used to prevent them being splashed.

Then her eyes lighted on the polished surface of Miss Bullivant's mahogany desk.

She laughed then. Marjorie had said "if you are not sure, put things on the desk." So Jungle Jess, with an armful of books, tripped towards that desk. Neatly she stacked them on top of each other, then took another armful, stacking them on top of the first. Then another armful.

The pile grew and grew and grew into a wavering column.

And Miss Bullivant, very preoccupied, did not notice Jess for a moment. Jess, deeply absorbed in her delightful task, did not see her. Into the room Miss Bullivant staggered, and unable to close the door behind her, left it open. An impish gust of wind caught it. There was a sudden crash as it slammed back into the framework. Then—

"Ooooooh!" shrieked Jess. And too late she stepped forward—much too late. For the great column of books, heeling over, shot with majestic grace towards Miss Bullivant, and Miss Bullivant, up to her own chin in oddments, did not see until—whiz! The top of the falling column cascaded over



"COME here, you little wild-cat!" shrieked Rona furiously. But Jungle Jess gave a merry laugh. "Come and get me," she called. And next moment, to everyone's horror, she had gone hurtling through the air like a diver—straight for the trapeze!

her, causing her to drop her belongings and bringing her to the floor with a thud and a shriek.

In fury she glared up.

"Girl!" she choked.

Jess, from the desk, stared down at her indignantly.

"You are a clumsy woman!" she reprimanded severely. "Why did you not shut the door properly?"

"What?"

"Now look at the beautiful work which you have undone!" Jess said angrily.

Miss Bullivant blinked.

"Mum-my gracious!" she gasped.

"Girl, do you know who I am?"

"I do not know and I do not care!"

Jess said angrily. "I only know that if you hadn't come in like this you would not have spoiled all the nice work for Marjie! Many, many minutes have I taken to raise this pile of books, and now look at it!" she cried indignantly.

"I shall tell Marjie about you!" she threatened. "And if Marjie does not do anything I shall tell the big mistress!"

Miss Bullivant spluttered. She rose to her feet.

"Who—who are you?" she choked.

"I am Jess Pickering," that girl retorted. "I am a friend of Marjie."

"Oh, I see; the new girl from the South Seas? Hum"—and she brushed herself down. "Young lady, I will have you know," she rumbled, "that I am a mistress here."

Jess did not look abashed.

"And I," she said, "am a schoolgirl here. Now will you please go so that I

Jess gurgled deliciously. It was rather fun stacking the books like that. Quite a spice of adventure seeing how many would go on top of each other without falling down. Up, up the column went, and still the books on the floor remained unexhausted. One more, two more.

"Ah—oo!" Jess breathed.

In her stockinged feet she climbed on to the desk, holding her breath as the pile rocked. It righted itself, remaining motionless. On tiptoe Jess reached up to place a volume on top of the pile. And as she did so, the door came open.

A tall, thin, rather vinegary faced woman came into the room, staggering under two armfuls of oddments.

It was Miss Bullivant, the mathematics mistress.

may finish my work? And please, when you come back, do not bang the door!" she added severely.

Miss Bullivant gazed at her. She had heard all about Jess, of course, and perhaps she realised the futility of argument. No more she said, but flinging round tramped angrily out of the study, while Jess, with a glower, jumped down to retrieve her fallen books. Up the stairs Miss Bullivant raged, and in the Fourth Form passage swung wide the door of Study No. 7. Six girls, busily engaged upon the embroidery of the back screen, jumped round.

"Marjorie!" Miss Bullivant choked. "Oh, dear, yes?" Marjorie said. "Did you—did you authorise Jess picking to tidy up my study?" "Oh, my hat!" Babs muttered. "Miss Bullivant—"

"I am not," Miss Bullivant said acidly, "talking to you, Barbara. Marjorie, I demand an answer to my question. Not only has that girl caused me to suffer considerable bodily discomfort; she has been most rude. I want to know, Marjorie, who authorised you to delegate that duty to a new girl?"

Marjorie crimsoned. "I—I'm sorry," she muttered, "but Rona—"

"Rona?" a voice put in near the door, and Rona Fox herself appeared, looking with quick puzzlement from the dismayed chums to the angry Bull. "Miss Bullivant, am I under discussion? What's the matter?"

"So!" she said, when Miss Bullivant had explained, and looked at Marjorie with that unpleasant smile of hers. "I am sorry, Miss Bullivant, but Marjorie certainly had no instructions from me to hand over the task to anyone else, much less an utterly new girl."

"Thank you!" Miss Bullivant said, while the chums glared angrily at the prefect. "Marjorie, you will take fifty lines, for not obeying orders," she said. "Now, you will come with me. Get rid of that—that wild girl, and tidy up my study yourself. You understand?"

"Oh, but, Miss Bullivant!" Babs cried. "Can't—can't you let someone else do it? We're working on the screen for the exhibition."

"That is no concern of mine," Miss Bullivant said stiffly. "If you could not see your way clear to finish the exhibit without sacrificing other duties, you should never have taken it on. Marjorie, go at once!"

And Marjorie, gulping a little, went. But she went anxiously, heavily-hearted, worried now. Every moment away from that screen was a precious moment lost. She reached Miss Bullivant's room, to be greeted with a whoop of joy from Jess.

"Marjorie!" she cried delightedly. "Marjorie, you come to see?" she added, pointing eagerly at a newly erected column of books on the desk. "Marjorie, am I not tidying well? But just a short time since," she added, frowning, "a foolish woman, wearing glasses over her eyes, came in and upset everything! Marjorie, why do you look so sad?" she added anxiously.

Marjorie shook her head. Gulpingly she told her.

"Oh!" Jess said. "But, Marjorie, am I not tidying well?"

"I—I'm sorry," Marjorie said. "I should have told you. I never thought, of course; but those books have to go in the cases. But still, never mind now, Jess dear. Miss Bullivant says I have to carry on, and I shall have to carry on."

"You mean you are in trouble," Jess asked, "through me?"

"Jess, no; not through you."

"Then through that bad girl Rona?"

"Yes."

Jess' dark eyes flashed. "That girl is wicked," she said. "She does not like you, Marjorie. I think perhaps I should beat her."

"Oh, Jess—Jess, no!" Marjorie cried. "For goodness' sake get those dangerous ideas out of your head! You would get expelled!"

"Expelled—word not understand," Jess said, puzzled. "But if you do not wish me to beat bad girl, I will not do

so. And yet—" And then she paused, gazing wistfully at Marjorie. "Marjorie, I am sorry," she said yearningly. "I seem to make great trouble for you. I go."

And she went. But if Marjorie fancied that Jess had abandoned any sort of reprisal against Rona, she was mistaken, for Jess went straight to Rona's study, having already been shown round the school by Miss Charmant. She did not knock at the door—those little courtesies she had still to learn. She turned the handle and boldly entered.

Rona was not there.

Jess set her lips. Well, she would wait, she told herself. She was going to warn Rona to keep her hands off her beloved Marjorie. Meanwhile—and then her eyes fell upon a bowl of fruit on the table, and those eyes hungrily gleamed, for Jess, during her life on Pirates' Island, had lived chiefly on fruit, and, delicious as that dinner in Miss Charmant's study had been, she had not enjoyed it.

Calmly she stretched out a hand; calmly picked up a banana. In a few seconds that banana was no more, and Jess started on another. She was eating her fourth, when the door opened again and Rona Fox came in.

She stopped, thunderstruck at the sight of Jess, one of her bananas to her lips.

"Why, you—you little pirate!" she gasped.

"I come from Pirates' Isle, yet I am not a pirate," Jess informed her. "I like you not, Rona Fox, but your fruit is good. Were you a nicer girl I would ask you to eat with me."

"You—you ask me to eat my own fruit with you?" Rona choked. "Why, you awful savage! Put that banana down and get out of here! Get out quickly! Do you hear?"

And Rona, beside herself, made a quick grab for the jungle girl.

As well try to catch an eel as Jungle Jess, however. With an ease that was contemptuous she just shrugged herself aside. Rona, caught momentarily off

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MISS PRIMROSE was grim. Rona had reported that Jungle Jess was missing, and that was inexcusable. "Do you know where she is, Marjorie?" the headmistress demanded. And at that moment—"Hallo, Big Mistress!" cried a cheery voice, and Jess popped into view from under the bed. Ill-natured Rona had been neatly tricked!

her balance, found herself, instead of grasping Jess, pitching forward, and desperately clutched the nearest thing to hand in order to right herself—that thing being the curtain. The curtain, unfortunately, had not been designed to withstand such lusty treatment. Down with a rush it came, smothering Rona in its folds.

Jess, staring, went off into a peal of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! You do look funny!" she said.

From the folds of the fallen curtain Rona's red and angry face glared at her. Furiously she leapt up, cast the curtain from her, and made a rush. But this time Jess, a glimmer of mischief in her eyes, skipped through the open door.

"Come here!" Rona choked. "You come and catch me!" Jess teased.

Rona breathed hard. She forgot her dignity—the fact that she was a prefect. After Jess she dashed.

But, Rona, if she was bigger and older than Jess, was no match for her. Jess had spent her whole life in skipping out of danger of some sort or another, and she just pranced down the corridor, provocatively within Rona's reach, and yet most tantalisingly always just out of it, when Rona put on a furious spurt.

Down the stairs they went, along the lobby which connected the school to the big gymnasium, and then into the gym itself.

"Stop! Stop, you little savage!" Rona panted.

Jess laughed. Now she was in the gym. Half a dozen girls, disporting themselves there, turned to stare as pursued and pursuer arrived among them. Rona shrielled to Frances Frost:

"Frances—stop her!" The unpopular Fourth Former grinned. She came forward, stretching out her arms. Not by an inch did Jess swerve, but, her black eyes gleaming with mischief, suddenly and most astonishingly gave an upwards leap. And in the gym there was a concerted

gasp, for, as gracefully, as effortlessly as her own beloved Kullo, Jess had jumped clean over Frances' head!

And, skipping on, she reached the long rope which hung from one of the oak beams supporting the rafters. While everybody blinked in amazement and awe, she had caught it. As agile as a monkey she swarmed up it, and, leaping from the rope to the beam, sat upon it and owlishly gazed down.

Rona, crimson-faced, shook her fist. "Come down, you—you young monkey!"

"Monkey not polite word," Jess said gravely.

"Come down this instant!" Jess shook her head.

"Not coming down! You fetch me," she advised.

There was a titter from the girls in the gym.

Rona set her teeth. If there was one thing Rona hated more than anything else, it was to find herself being ridiculed. Jess had not only ridiculed her; Jess was positively humiliating her!

Right! Wait till she laid hands on her, that's all!

"You come?" Jess asked interestedly.

Rona did not reply. Fiercely she seized the rope. Not for nothing was Rona vice-captain of Cliff House games, and not for nothing had she earned Cliff House's gymnasium medal last term. Up she went, while everybody watched with gurgling interest.

Not until Rona was within a foot of the beam on which she sat did Jess move. Then, with a suddenness that startled everyone, she leapt to her feet. While Rona, gasping, levered herself on to the beam, Jess, with the ease and surety bred by her life among the trees of Pirates' Island, nimbly tripped along it, and, at the end of the beam, stopped. Rona panted.

"Come here!" "You come and fetch me!" Jess replied.

There was another giggle from the watching girls. More and more were crowding into the gym. Again Rona

set her teeth. Well, she had the little wildcat now. And holding on to the beam, she cautiously began to work her way along it.

"Stand up!" Jess advised. "Ha, ha, ha!" came from below.

Rona gulped. She dared not stand up. Athletic she might be, but she had not the same confidence as Jess. Nearer and nearer she worked. Four feet more, and she would have her.

Excitement was tense now. What was going to happen?

Suddenly Jess stepped towards Rona. With a jump that would have been spectacular on the ground, she cleared her head, and surely, effortlessly, alighted on the beam in Rona's rear.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Frances Frost, white faced. "S-see that?"

"Jess!" cried Rosa Rodworth.

But Jess laughed if she had done anything extraordinary, she did not seem to be aware of it. While Rona turned around, she reached the rope again. This time she unhooked it. Rona gave a hoot.

"You little fool!" "Good-bye, Rona!" Jess called. "I go!"

And she went, while the girls below stood frozen with sheer horror at the audacity of her behaviour. Just as if she was taking a header into the swimming bath, Jess straightened up. Then without, it seemed, even a glance, launched herself through the air towards the trapeze which hung from the next beam, ten or fifteen feet away. She caught it, swung on it; hardly out of breath, dropped to the ground. The momentary silence was followed by a yowl of laughter as Rona, from her lofty perch, wrathfully glared down.

"You little fool! You've stranded me!"

"Strand—word not understand," Jess replied. "You sit there and come to your senses, eh? Very nice you look up there, Rona."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the crowd. "How can I get down?" Rona shrieked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That you think about for yourself," Jess advised carelessly. "It will do you good to stay there for a while, while my Marjie can get on with her work in peace. To-night, if you are good," she added, "I will bring a ladder and rescue you."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the crowd. Rona choked. Ridiculous she looked in that moment. More than ridiculous she felt when Jess, with a sad shake of the head, moved off, disappearing through the door.

Without further thought, apparently, for Rona, she walked up to Study No. 7.

Marjorie, just having finished her duties in Miss Bullivant's study, had rejoined Babs & Co. there, and they were all working with feverish industry. She smiled at Jess as she came in, and Jess quietly took a seat in the corner of the room, and fascinatedly watched.

"Oh, it is clever!" she said. "How hard you work—all of you! Please do not stop for me. I love to watch."

She had forgotten all about Rona then. Her attention at once was occupied in the interests of this new diversion. Half an hour went by, the chums too intently busy even to talk. Then the door opened again, and this time Dulcia Fairbrother, head girl of the school, came in.

"Marjorie, Miss Bullivant wants to see you," she said.

Marjorie sighed. Rather apprehensively she went out. Miss Bullivant, in her newly decorated room, was looking stern as she entered, and by her side was a furious-faced Rona Fox. Marjorie blinked.

"You—you want me, Miss Bullivant?"

"I do." Miss Bullivant frowned. "I want to tell you, Marjorie, since you have accepted responsibility for Jess Pickering, to keep her in order. It is not your duty to provoke Jess into insulting and humiliating a prefect."

"I?" Marjorie cried, in astonishment.

"You!" Miss Bullivant frowned. "Please, Marjorie, do not simulate such false surprise. What happened in the gymnasium may not have been your fault, but you were undoubtedly the inspiring force behind Jess' conduct, and as Rona has most rightly complained to me about that, I am ordering you now to keep that girl within bounds. You understand?"

"Y-yes," stammered Marjorie; but she didn't. "But may I say—" "You are not allowed to say anything. You may go."

And Marjorie, still dazed but burning-eared, went. What on earth had Jess been doing now?

Too Difficult for Jess!



BUT Marjorie was not long in discovering that—and not from Jess. The story of Jess' victory over unpopular Rona was all over the school by that time, and the school, to Rona's disgusted fury, was chuckling.

For twenty minutes Rona had remained on the beam, while half the school had gathered to grin at her discomfiture. Finally, she had been rescued by Miss Keys, the gym and drill mistress, who had caused a ladder to be fetched.

And Rona, seething, bitter, had

stormed off to Miss Bullivant who, as duty mistress for the day, received all such complaints. In Miss Bullivant, herself upset by the girl from Pirates' Island, she could not have found a more ready sympathiser. Obviously it was of no use arguing with Jess; and obviously, since Marjorie had been more or less put in charge of her, she was the one to be reprimanded.

But Rona had not finished with Marjorie yet.

Tea came, with Jess among her friends in Study No. 7. Though she liked the sweet cakes, Jess had not yet found a liking for English tea, and, to Bessie Bunter's loud-voiced horror, drank just plain water. After tea, being restive, she went off with the chums to see Kullo. While they were away anxious Marjorie got out her work again. The others could do no more on the screen until she herself had accomplished more.

But hardly had she threaded her first needle than the door came open. Rona, her eyes gleaming, stood there.

"Oh, here you are!" she said. "I want you to go to Courtfield for me."

"But—but my work?" Marjorie faltered.

"Never mind your work—if you call that work," Rona said, with a disdainful sniff. "Your job is to obey orders. Come on!"

Marjorie distressfully sighed. What a callous girl Rona was! Still, there it was. She had the power and the authority; hers was the voice which must be obeyed. Going to Courtfield and back at this hour meant, of course, that it was just hopeless even to contemplate working on the screen again that evening.

And so it proved. It was time for prep when Marjorie came back. After that there was supper; then call-over, followed by bed. Jess saw the worried look on her face as they climbed the stairs together, and shook her head.

"Marjie, why do you look so sad?" she whispered softly.

"Do I? I—I don't mean to look sad," Marjorie forced a smile. "I—I'm just a little worried, that's all."

"About the colour picture?" Jess asked.

"Yes."

"That bad girl Rona—she will not let you get on with it?"

"Well, yes," Marjorie admitted.

"But, Jess," she added, in alarm, "you—you mustn't say anything to her!"

"I will do as you wish, Marjie," Jess said simply.

But there was rather a grim look on her sun-tanned face, a rather determined thrust to her chin. With Marjorie at her side, she walked into the dormitory. There, watched by the interested eyes of the Fourth Form, she had her bed pointed out to her—next to Marjorie's, of course—undressed, and got into it. Miss Bullivant came to put out the light, and the Form, one by one, dropped off into slumber. Then suddenly Marjorie, feeling unaccountably chill, was awakened.

The window behind her was wide open. And Jess' bed was empty.

Oh, great goodness! What had happened?

Anxiously she sat up in bed. And then she jumped again as a soft laugh floated from the window, and a dark, graceful shape was for a moment silhouetted against the moonlit sky. It was—

"Jess!" Marjorie breathed. "Where have you been?"

"To see my Kullo," Jess explained.

"Sleeping here, I heard him in the

distance, whining. Kullo was calling, for never before have we slept away from each other. So I went."

"Oh, my goodness! But how did you get there? Jess, you might have broken your neck!"

Jess laughed softly.

"Not so, my Marjie. You should remember that I can climb. The creeper on the walls here is strong, and I am careful. Now Kullo is happy, though I am not very fond of these soft beds in which you lie. Good-night, Marjie!"

"Good-night!" Marjorie whispered, shaking her head.

And from then until the morning she did not awake again. Even so, however, she was up before rising-bell, to find that Jess, despite the earliness of the hour, had already disappeared, leaving a pile of bedclothes on the floor.

She folded them and put them back. She did not worry about Jess then. Jess, she guessed, would be with her beloved Kullo. Desperately up against time as she was, Marjorie required every moment she could spare for her precious screen.

For an hour she worked solidly—this time not interrupted by Rona, who, never guessing what she was about, was still sleeping. At breakfast Jess, flushed, bright-eyed, turned up. After breakfast came assembly, and then class. Jess, with the rest of the Fourth, tramped into the class-room.

Marjorie was rather apprehensively wondering how Jess would react to lessons. The Fourth was interested, too. But for a few days, at least, until she had become accustomed to routine, Jess had been excused actual work in the class, being provided with picture-books to scan in the meantime. All considered, however, she got through very well—until afternoon lessons.

Then the chums marched into the class-room again, Jess in their midst, to find, in place of their beloved Miss Charmant, Rona Fox herself. She looked grim.

"Sit down, all of you," she said, "and please understand, there's going to be no nonsense! Miss Charmant is busy on other work this afternoon, so I am in charge of this Form! Jess Pickering, what are you fidgeting for?"

"Fidgeting word not understand!" Jess said.

"Well, stop dancing about!"

"I am not dancing about!" Jess said indignantly.

"And don't answer back! Sit down!"

Jess glared. She looked at Marjorie, who, with a nervous nod of the head, signed to her to obey. Immediately Rona pounced upon her.

"Marjorie, take fifty lines for wagging your head!" she cried.

"My Marjie was not wagging her head!" Jess cried furiously. "You are a bad, nasty girl!"

"And take fifty lines yourself for being impertinent!" Rona snorted.

"Ahem! Rona, Miss Primrose has given orders that Jess is not to do lines!" Barbara cried, springing up.

"Oh! And why?"

"Because," crowed Mabs, "she can hardly write yet—that's why!"

"Then," came Rona's retort, "Marjorie can jolly well write them for her!"

"Oh stuff! Play the game!" Clara Trevlyn cried disgustedly.

"Clara, you are detained for an hour after lessons!"

Babs looked grim.

"Rona, as captain of the Form, I protest!" she said indignantly.

"And you're detained with her!"

Rona snapped. "Now get on with your

work! Marjorie, stop winking at Jess!"

"I wasn't winking!" Marjorie protested.

"Don't answer me back!"

"But—"

"All right, you've brought it on yourself! You'll share detention with Clara and Barbara! Anybody else want detention?" she asked, gloating round.

There were murmurs, some angry, glowering glances. It was pretty obvious to everybody now that Rona, through Jess, was "picking on" Marjorie—and the chuma. It was pretty obvious to Babs & Co. that the real reason behind the "picking" was to prevent them from getting on with the exhibition screen. Protest Babs had threatened to do, and protest she would—this time to Miss Charmant. But that hardly helped at this juncture. Before the protest was put the punishment would be carried out—which meant another valuable hour knocked off the already diminishing time left to them for their efforts.

Marjorie bit her lip. She was beginning to despair now of ever finishing off the screen, and if she did not finish it there would be no exhibition for Cliff House—and no possibility of that badly needed twenty-five pounds to swell her father's Christmas fund for his poor parishioners. Oh, it was a shame—a dreadful shame!

Lesson progressed in a sort of silence of suppressed fury. Jess, looking at her picture-books, shook her head, not quite understanding what everything was about, but really distressed to see that overshadowing anxious look on the face of the girl she loved best. Dismissal came eventually, but Marjorie, Babs, and Clara did not move. Jess approached them.

"Marjie, are you not coming to get on with the colour picture?" she asked.

Marjorie shook her head.

"But why not?"

Marjorie explained.

"Oh!" Jess said. "Oh!" And she looked with smouldering eyes at the door through which Rona had disappeared. "I understand!" she said. "I understand well now! The nasty girl does not want you to do the work. Now I will find her, and then I will carry her off to some place and shut her up! Then you will be able to get on with your colour picture!"

"Oh goodness! Jess, no, no!" Marjorie cried frantically. "Oh dear! Can't you see, old thing? That—that would only mean more trouble! Please, Jess, don't do anything to Rona!"

"Is that your wish?" Jess asked, with a stare.

"Yes."

Jess nodded. Rather slowly she drifted out. With unusual thoughtfulness she made her way back to Study No. 7, and there, pulling the canvas screen from the corner, eyed it doubtfully. She did so wish to help Marjorie—did so wish to take that troubled look from her face and make her happy; and happiness, she knew, would only come to Marjorie with the completion of this screen. Could she—Jess—finish it for her?

She eyed it. She sighed. Yesterday she had watched intently and eagerly. She thought she had an idea of how it was done. If she could do it, it would so help dear Marjie.

She took up the bag containing the needles and the wools.

Well, she would try.

Once Jess made up her mind, she would go through with it. Now, without any further hesitancy, she threaded

a needle and started to work. In went the needle through the canvas; prod! out it came at the other side—and Jess gave a little cry as it pierced her hand, causing the blood to flow. She must be careful.

She pushed it in again. This time she did not prick herself. Feverishly she worked—stitch, stitch, stitch. Then, at last, she turned the canvas over and looked at it. And as she looked, her face, turned pale. What she had done she did not know, but she did know that the result was the most inexpert-looking mess that she had ever seen.

"Oh dear! I—I've ruined the colour picture!" she whispered tremblingly. "What—what will Marjie do now?"

Unorthodox Problem-Solving!



"JESS, dear, what is the matter?" Marjorie Hazeldene looked curiously at the brown, worried face of the jungle girl as she asked that question.



RONA glared. "You!" she exclaimed. "Me," said Jess, calmly seating herself on the back of the arm-chair and taking one of her enemy's apples. "I stop with you this afternoon—so that you not disturb Marjie and my friends!"

The time was after tea in Study No. 7, and Marjorie, having finished her lines, was doing her prep. Thanks to the spitefulness of Rona Fox, no work had been done on the canvas that afternoon, and it seemed as if no work would be done at all that evening, for after prep was supper, to be followed by call-over.

Jess glanced apprehensively at the corner where the screen was deposited. She averted her head.

"Nothing, Marjie," she said.

"But, Jess, you are behaving so queerly?"

"Am I?" Jess turned; then, suddenly anxious, came over to her. "Marjie, I am thinking thoughts," she said. "I am seeing that I have made mistakes. Marjie, I was so very anxious to see you again that I

asked to come here so that I could be with you and live with you—"

Marjorie smiled.

"Well, goose, the wish is granted, isn't it?" she asked.

"Yes, Marjie, but now—now—"

Jess gazed at the canvas again, and gulped. She wanted to tell Marjorie what she had done—but she could not bring herself to do so. She had not the courage—she, Jungle Jess, who, until this moment, had never been afraid of a single thing in her life before. "Marjie, it is not that," she said wistfully. "I love you, as you know. I want to be with you always. But here, in this big school, I am only worrying you. You are getting into trouble through me."

"Oh, Jess, you silly!" Marjorie dimpled.

"And your picture—"

"Jess, don't worry, I'll find time to finish it—somehow."

"Marjie, it—it is not that. It—" and Jess looked at the screen again. "Marjie!" she cried, to that girl's astonishment. "Oh, Marjie, if you knew what a bad, wicked girl I have been!"

And to Marjorie's utter consternation she rushed to the door and, tugging it open, bolted into the corridor. She couldn't—just couldn't tell her what she had done. It would break her heart to see the worry that would come into gentle Marjorie's face.

And yet, what could she do? Something she had to do. Sooner or later Marjorie would find her ruined canvas; sooner or later she would have to know.

Jess drifted out of the school. Her steps, almost mechanically, took her to the Pets' House. There she climbed into Kullo's cage, and there, for an hour or more, she remained with her adored pet, whispering her troubles into his ear. It was dark when she left, and Cliff House was ablaze with light.

On the steps of Big Hall she met Rona.

Rona was looking pleased.

"So!" she said. "You've turned up, have you? I suppose you know you've missed call-over?"

"Call-over word not understand."

"Then," Rona said, with grim satisfaction, "you can jolly well come now and see Miss Primrose. You've been reported."

Jess shrugged. She didn't mind seeing Miss Primrose, rather liking the "big mistress."

Miss Primrose was stern but kindly when she faced her.

"You must get to understand, Jess, that rules here are made to be obeyed. If you do as you like, then every other girl is entitled to do as she likes. I do not want to punish you, having regard for the peculiar circumstances of your case, but I really must warn you, my dear, that if this goes on I shall have no recourse but to send you away from the school. You understand?"

"Understand well, Miss Primrose," Jess said.

"Very well, my dear, you may go. Rona, please take her to the dormitory."

Rona nodded. She was a little disappointed. She had rather hoped that Jess would have got a wiggling. As they went down the passage together, she looked at her.

"Lucky, aren't you?" she sneered.

"No," Jess replied. "How may I be lucky when I find myself with you?"

"Now then, don't be cheeky!" Rona scowled.

Jess sniffed. She said no more. They had reached the dormitory then, and while the Form stared, she climbed into bed. Rona put out the lights, and presently sleep fell upon the inmates of the room. But Jess didn't sleep.

Jess was still worriedly thinking—of Marjorie's beautiful colour picture!

"Oh dear! What could she do?"

She tossed. She turned. Never in her life before had Jess been unable to get to sleep almost immediately she rested her head. Apart from the worry on her mind, Jess was not used to sleeping in these soft beds.

Presently she rose. In the darkness she removed her bedclothes and spread them on the floor, half-under her bed.

That was better. For the first time her worries became obliterated. In two minutes she was fast asleep.

And so, therefore, did not see the dormitory door open; did not see the cautious, rather malicious face which peered into the room.

That face belonged to Rona Fox.

Rona was on the prowl. Rona was still remembering what Miss Primrose had said to Jess—"If this goes on I shall have no recourse but to send you away from the school"—and with the malicious hope of catching Marjorie or Jess in the act of something they shouldn't be doing, she was now prying.

The first glance into the Fourth Form dormitory brought a flush of triumph to her face.

Jess' bed, tumbled, dishevelled, was empty, and the window next to Jess' bed, as last night, was wide open.

"Aha!" breathed Rona. "I suppose," she added softly to herself, "she's gone to see her leopard. What a chance!"

She chuckled. Through the school she hurried, to tap on the door of Miss Primrose's study. Miss Primrose, a little testily—for she was just finishing work for the day—bade her come in. Rona explained.

"What? You say Jess is out, Rona?"

"I do! I heard a noise in the Fourth Form dormitory, and looked in," Rona said. "The window was open and the girl gone. I expect, Miss Primrose, we

shall find her in the Pets' House. Shall I go and see, or will you?"

"We will go together," Miss Primrose said shortly.

They went, Rona hugging herself with gloom. Well, this was one step nearer the kicking out of that little savage, she told herself. They reached the Pets' House, to be greeted immediately by a furious rattling of chains and a discordant clamour of barking voices.

"Really!" Miss Primrose said.

"Rona, are you sure?"

"Perfectly, Miss Primrose," Rona answered smoothly.

They went on, calling at the dogs to be silent. They reached the end cage, from the floor of which Kullo blinked out with bored, sleepy eyes. Of Jess, however, there was no sign. Jess, blissfully asleep on the floor of the Fourth Form dormitory, was unconscious of the sudden energy of a spiteful prefect and a tired, vexed headmistress on her behalf!

"She—she must be here," Rona said, less certainly.

But Jess, obviously, was not there. With growing exasperation Miss Primrose wasted a further ten minutes searching around, and then, with decided chill in her attitude, suggested they should go back to the school and see if Jess had returned. Rona was a little uneasy then. But she cheered as soon as they reached the Fourth Form dormitory, and the headmistress switched on the lights.

"You see, Miss Primrose, she is not in her bed!" she crowed triumphantly.

Miss Primrose's lips came together in a thin line.

A dozen or more girls had awakened now. They were all blinking in sleepy astonishment at the headmistress and the prefect. Miss Primrose gazed at Babs.

"Barbara, do you know where Jess is?"

"Why, no," Babs said.

"Marjorie, do you know where she is?" Miss Primrose cried.

Marjorie bit her lip.

"Oh dear! I—I'm sure, Miss Primrose, she isn't far away."

"That is truth," said a voice, and while Miss Primrose blinked, a cheerful, tanned face peeped up from under Jess' bed. "Hallo, Big Mistress!" Jess said cheerfully. "But what do you here? Do not your rules say that girls may sleep during the night?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" sniggered Lydia Crossendale.

Miss Primrose stared.

"Jess, why are you not in bed?"

"I am—on the floor, Miss Primrose!" Jess said. "Your beds are soft, and I like not soft beds; also, I am greatly worried in my mind, and in a soft bed I cannot sleep."

"And—and you have been there all the time?" Miss Primrose stammered.

"Yes, Miss Primrose."

"I see," Miss Primrose turned red.

She flung round on the giggling Rona. "I really wish, Rona," she said in tones of such icy reproof that Rona winced and the Fourth Form chuckled, "that you would make certain of your facts before you bring me out on such fruitless errands! You should be aware by this time that Jessie is not an ordinary girl."

"Y-y-yes," stammered the crimson Rona.

"I—I—I'm sus-sorry, Miss Primrose."

"And I," Miss Primrose returned frigidly, "am extremely tired and vexed. Jess, you may remain on the floor, if you wish. Be sure, my dear, that you are well wrapped up. In the meantime, Rona, I forbid you to come prowling around this dormitory again after lights out. Good-night, girls."

And she went out, leaving the Fourth Form chuckling. Rona, with a glare at Jess which almost sent the Form off into convulsions, followed her.

"Bad girl try to make trouble!" Jess said gravely. "Nasty Rona, making poor Big Mistress get out of bed."

They chuckled again. Some of them went to sleep, still chuckling. Jess settled down with the rest, wondering at Rona's action, trying to sort out its significance in her own mind, and vaguely certain that in it was contained some new effort to make trouble for her beloved Marjorie. Why did Rona hate her Marjorie so?

And why had Rona taken Miss Primrose to the Pets' House?

Jess' heart suddenly leapt as that memory came back to her. She thought of Kullo. Had Rona, failing to work mischief on her and Marjorie, tried also to work mischief on Kullo?

It is to be feared that Jess, as far as the things and people nearest her heart were concerned, did not probe very deeply. The very fact that Rona had been to visit Kullo filled her with a vague sort of alarm. Back in a flash went the bedclothes. Without troubling to dress she advanced to the window, staring anxiously into the moon-bathed grounds of the school towards the Pets' House. For a moment she stood still, listening, and then her face grew keen. No other ear in the school could have detected the whine which smote upon her hearing then, but Jess heard it, and Jess knew it. Kullo!

In a flash she was on the window-sill, reaching out towards the ivy.

There were not many girls in Cliff House who would have climbed that ivy in the broad light of day without their hearts in their mouths, but Jess clambered down it without apparent thought. Swiftly she ran to the Pets' House, to be greeted by a low purr of pleasure from Kullo.

Without hesitation she entered the cage, talking to him in a soft, crooning voice. Well, all was well with Kullo; the bad girl, at least, had done no more harm to Kullo than that of disturbing him in his sleep. Relieved at last, she gave him a good-night hug and turned back towards the school.

As she did so a light, shining from one of the windows in the Sixth Form passage, attracted her attention. She paused a moment, staring with her keen, jungle-trained eyes at the figure which could now be observed moving about in the room. It was Rona Fox.

Rona—the bad girl. Did she never sleep, then?

Curiosity drew Jess towards the window. Silent as a cat, she approached, staring in interestedly. Rona was there. Rona was at work on something—and Jess, for a moment, caught her breath, because the thing looked so astonishingly like one of the panels in Marjorie's folding screen. A second glance, however, told her that it was not so, although it was very much like Marjorie's.

It did not occur to Jess why Rona should be working on such a similar design and making such a similar screen. All she saw was a certain finished part of the screen. It was a similar part which she, that afternoon, had spoiled—which Marjorie, so far knew nothing about.

A sudden idea came to her.

She broke away. Ten yards to her right was the small arched door which was only used by prefects during the day, and which, of course, was kept locked at night. There was a bell rope attached to that door, and Jess gave it a lusty tug. Ring, ring, ring! went the echoes along the Sixth Form quarters.

She tugged again.

Then she heard footsteps on the other side. She recognised them at once as Rona's. Back she doubled to Rona's window. With one thrust of her arm she flung it up, leaned through, and grabbing up the panel, shot back towards the Fourth Form dormitory.

By the time Rona had somewhat testily unlocked the door, Jess was already swarming up the ivy, and, panel under her arm, crossed the dormitory, opened the door, and padded down the corridor to Study No. 7. There, with a happy smile, she placed Rona's panel among Marjorie's panels. Then she went back to her bed on the dormitory floor.

In the morning, Marjorie was surprised by the radiant smile she gave her. "Marjie, I am content again now," Jess said. "Yesterday I was so unhappy that I wanted to go. But not now—not now, because I have put right the great wrong I did."

"But, Jess, what great wrong?" Marjorie asked.

"You shall see," chuckled Jess. "Come to the study."

Marjorie blinked. But she went down to the study. Jess readily went to the corner where the panels were stored. Triumphant and proudly she produced that which she had taken from Rona's room last night. Marjorie gaped.

"Jess, did you do this?"

"Alas, no!" Jess shook her head. Somewhat apprehensively she produced the panel she had so badly embroidered. "This nice new picture I got for you, Marjie, because I did this to yours."

"But—" Marjorie stuttered, and jumped round as Babs, Janet, Clara, Mabs and Jemima Carstairs entered the room, to stare in horror at one panel and in amazement at the other.

"This I did to yours," Jess explained, "because I so much wanted to help you, but I have not the trick of working the needle."

"But—but where," Marjorie stuttered, "did you get the other one?"

"Does that matter?" Jess asked.

"Jess, you must have got it from somewhere! It—it looks as if somebody else is working our idea," Marjorie said. "Jess—"

Then she paused as the door came open, as Rona, looking perfectly furious, stormed into the room.

"Oh!" she said, and stood for a moment, staring at the panel. "You!" she ground out. "I had an idea this was some trick of you kids! Marjorie Hazeldene, put that panel down—this moment!"

"But, Rona—"

"Put it down—or, rather, give it to me!" Rona stormed. "I suppose this is why you rang the bell last night—to trick me out and pinch this?" She glared round. "You rotten gang of conspirators!" she added bitterly. "You awful little thieves! I've a good mind to report you for this!"

"No report—no!" Jess stepped forward. "I took the panel," she said. "And I think you're horrid to come calling my Marjie names because of what I did!"

"You mean they put you up to it!" Rona raved.

"Put you up to it no understand!" Jess said. "Marjie knew nothing."

"Marjorie," Rona ground out, "is behind all your tricks! Don't tell me lies! Anyway, you're all in it, and you can all dashed well take two hundred lines. And if," she threatened, "they're not in by tea-time this afternoon, I'll jolly well report the lot of you, and then see what happens!"

"But look here—" hooted Clara. But the door had slammed. Rona, storming, furious, had gone! In blank dismay the chums looked at each other. Marjorie bit her lip. "We'll never, never get it finished!" she said despairingly. "Never! Tomorrow it's got to be in. We—" And she gazed sadly at the mutilated canvas. "Jess—"

Jess' face was working. "Always I do the wrong thing!" she said sadly. "Always, when I help, I do you harm! Yet it is not fair that you should suffer for what I have done," she added, with a flash of spirit. "And it is not fair that the bad girl should take so beautiful picture away. Marjie, I go and get it back!"

"No, no!" Marjorie cried. "Jess, please! Oh, my goodness! Wait—wait a minute!" she cried desperately, and hopelessly gazed at the unfinished panel again. "We could finish this," she said. "It will be easy enough to take out Jess' work. But the time?" she added desperately. "What are we to do about that?"

Clara looked mutinous. "We'll get on with it!" she said.

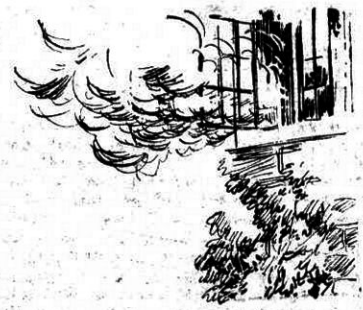
"But the lines?"

"Blow the lines! Dash it, if we don't do them, we'll only get them doubled! The great thing is that we've only one afternoon to work on the canvas, and this afternoon it's got to be! I vote we forget the lines!"

But Babs shook her head. "And you can bet," she said, "that Rona won't allow us to forget them! She'll be popping in every so often to see that we're getting on with them."

"Well," Clara agreed, "we'll risk that, too! Somehow we've got to get that thing finished—we will get it finished, and blow Rona! But why," she added, staring at Jess, "is she working on the same sort of screen?"

"And using practically the same design?" Mabel Lynn put in.



"And exactly the same framework?" Janet Jordan said. "My hat! I wonder if—"

They stared at each other with startled faces as the suggestion struck them all simultaneously. Babs compressed her lips.

"That's it!" she cried. "That's why Rona is so jolly anxious to keep us away from finishing this! Rona's doing a screen, too—on the sly! My hat! Don't you see the idea now? Supposing she can prevent us from finishing this by to-morrow? Then along comes artful Rona. She's got her own screen! She'll offer it in place of ours!"

"And if she wins," Jemima put in thoughtfully, "she grabs the old booodle, what? Nifty scheme, henchmen! Twenty-five pounds jingling in Rona's pocket is better than any old twenty-five pounds rattling in the collecting-box of Marjorie's father's parish—or so Rona thinks! Well, are we to follow Spartan Clara's scheme and be dashed to the consequences, or what?"

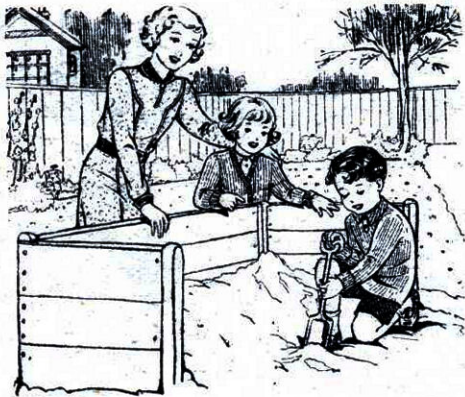
"We'll do it!" Babs said. "But if only there was some way of keeping her

(Continued on page 14)



WHILE everyone looked on in horror, helpless to rescue Rona Fox from the blazing upper room, Jungle Jess ran forward. Her intention was startlingly clear. She was going to climb to the aid of her enemy!

OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS



No wonder *PATRICIA'S* weekly chatter is so popular with schoolgirls. It is gay, helpful and friendly—written by a delightful young person who understands so completely all those things so near and dear to a schoolgirl's heart.

YOU'D think with all the games and gym and outdoor exercise that schoolgirls have these days, that they wouldn't be troubled with "beauty problems," now wouldn't you?

Yet, you still have them, you poor pets. They're different problems from the grown-ups' ones, of course—and rather more important too, in your Patricia's opinion.

So if any of you think I'm going to start talking Beauty—all about matching up lipstick with nail varnish, or whether to use gold-dust or violet eye-shadow—let me assure you quickly that I'm not.

No, the "beauty problems" I'm more concerned with are much more real to growing schoolgirls who are anxious always to look attractive—as we all are.

● Three Worries

Over-plumpness can be just as serious a worry to the schoolgirl as to the older person, I know.

I would never suggest dieting—but I don't hesitate to tell you that if you cut sweets and rich cakes from your weekly treats, you will honestly be slimmer.

Nothing else would be required—just eat out sweets and cakes. In a week, I assure you, you plump ones, you would be more slender.

Then to help along the good work, there's nothing like ten minutes' skipping in the garden before breakfast.

● Oh, To Be Taller

To girls who sigh and long to be taller, I'm afraid I can't give you any Alice-in-Wonderland treatment that will make you shoot up like a beanstalk over night. (My fortune would be made if I could, for many of the wealthiest film stars would sell their yachts and swimming pools in order to add inches to their height, you know!)

But I can help a little.

Sleep, and lots of it, is essential if you wish to grow taller, for while you are asleep you grow.

Stretching exercises are excellent. Neck-stretching, spine-stretching, arm-stretching and leg-stretching. Try this stretching every single morning as you lie in bed. Stretch and stretch—just like the family cat does.

And try it again at night just before you go off to sleep. (It's jolly toe-warming, too, incidentally!)

● An Ever-Present Problem

Now, finally, for that other schoolgirl beauty problem, which is always cropping up—those wretched pests—Spots!

First, I must explain that very roughly speaking, there are two kinds of "spots."

There are those, such as blackheads, whiteheads and red, bumpy spots, which suddenly appear on face or back without

any warning. These come from within and are nothing to do with the condition of the skin itself.

Then there is the other variety which appears on the surface of the skin in patches—not singly. Which irritate, and even come to little "heads."

Since the first type of "spots" comes from within, it is obvious that they must be cured from within, too, isn't it? They show the blood-stream is out of condition, so this must be purified.

In these days most schoolgirls know all about the importance of taking care of the tummy—which controls the blood—of eating plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, of a little "dose" occasionally. (Six prunes before breakfast is one of the nicest doses I know.)

With all this knowledge you and mother between you can soon evolve a little plan that will make these spots vanish like magic, now can't you?

But the second type is a little more stubborn, and must be treated with great care.

The face—or the affected part—must always be kept scrupulously clean. You should wash in warm water—rain water, for preference—using a soft face flannel, or your hands, and a sulphur soap.

Sulphur ointment may be applied to the "spots" at night. Plenty of water should be drunk between meals—and because this is cheap, don't think it isn't a really excellent treatment. It is. Plenty of exercise should also be taken.

It was a famous American beauty specialist who said that a five-mile walk is more beautifying than five hours spent in a beauty parlour.

So remember all this, my pets—and let's hope that your beauty problems will soon be all over.

● Gay Collars

Collars do make such a difference to a plainish frock, don't they? A drab collar can make a frock look like something that orphans used to wear, while a pretty one can turn it into a dress that a juvenile film star would rejoice in.

Here are three very simple and pretty ideas that you might like to copy next time you think your dress needs a new collar.

The first is just a piece of ribbon, long enough to fit the neck of your dress. To this band is sewn loops of ribbon. Yes, that's all.

The second idea is a circle of material cut to fit your dress—perhaps you have an old collar you could use as a pattern. The edges are notched and hemmed, and a brooch is pinned in the front.

The third collar is made of a square of material, with a hole cut in the centre for the neck. It is slit in the front, and buttonhole stitch—in a contrasting colour—is worked all round the edge. It fastens with a bow of ribbon to match.

● For Sewing Experts

You who really enjoy sewing might like to make yourselves this very useful sewing apron.

You would require a piece of material measuring 32 inches by 14.

This is gathered on to a band of material measuring 36 inches by 5, folded in half, lengthwise.

A pocket, 14 inches by 9 inches, is stitched on to the centre of the apron and divided down the centre with a row of back-stitching. You can trim the top of the pocket and the band of the apron with running stitches in coloured embroidery silk.



● New Shoes

Don't you love new shoes?

I adore them. They always make me feel so good—more even than a new coat or hat might do.

Last Saturday I bought a new pair at my favourite shop in the gay and giddy West End. It took ages.

To begin with, I have rather a small foot, and secondly, my heels are so narrow that it is quite difficult to find a shoe that grips comfortably there.

But at last I tried on a dream pair in black, made of antelope skin.

Court shoes they were, and, as you know, these should fit just a spot better, if possible, than the tie-up variety.

These seemed perfect—and only just a tiny fraction too big for me around the heel.

At one time a shop assistant would offer to have a piece of chamois leather glued into the heel just to give that extra grip. But not at this posh shop—oh no!

"We will take the heel in—just the tiniest piece, madam," said the assistant. "Take it in!" I exclaimed. "That sounds like dressmaking!"

"It is the same," the assistant said. "Nowadays, we can unpick the back seam of the shoe and make it a little smaller—just as you would a dress that was too big."

Isn't that a marvellous idea? It's the first I had heard of it. Do tell your mother about it, and see if she knew of it.

Bye-bye now until next Saturday.

Your friend,

Patricia





All who love a party will enjoy this article. Patricia describes a jolly go-as-you-please affair—just the thing for November 5th! And she has planned a rough time-table of events, too.

WITH Guy Fawkes' Day coming on a Saturday this year, it should make a jolly good day for a party.

So see what mother says to the idea, especially if your birthday is round about now.

Perhaps many of you already have quite a lot of pennies invested in firework clubs, so that the "eats" will remain the biggest expense of the party.

But these need not be costly, you know—not if you plan the party in advance.

The first step in planning a Guy Fawkes' party is to decide how many guests you can accommodate in your house.

As we're hoping it will be fine so that you can all go into the garden for quite a bit of the time, I think twelve guests would not be too many.

You should invite them in good time—at least a week before the party—either by letter, by invitation card, or by phone.

MAKING PLANS

Do tell them exactly what time you'll be expecting them, say that there will be tea and fireworks. But don't forget to say that it will add to the fun if they bring their own fireworks as well—for the more the fireworks, the more the noise and glee!

Now for some suggestions as to what to wear and what to have to eat.

Warm clothes are definitely indicated for a party of this kind, so keep your timsy party frock for festivities later on.

with the bath-room stool pressed into use as well! So I suggest a buffet tea for this high-spirited, do-as-you-please affair.

In setting the table, stack a pile of twelve plates and arrange twelve cups and saucers at one end of the table. Lay twelve knives in a row and have twelve paper serviettes ready. (All this is supposing you have the twelve guests, of course.)

I think sandwiches are always popular at a tea-party, don't you? (And are much easier to eat when standing up than bread and jam, say.) Allow four dainty sandwiches to each person—filled with potted meat or fish paste, cream cheese and cucumber, tomato, jam, or nut and honey.

POPULAR TREATS

Then have small cakes—perhaps homemade—allowing two of these for each guest. A big fancy cake in the centre of the table, some biscuits, sweets, and fruit would most certainly fill up any hungry corners and make the table look very colourful, too.

Tea, cocoa, or lemonade to drink would be very popular, I'm sure.

Most of the guests will stand up while eating, I expect, so you, as hostess, will be kept pretty busy handing all the goodies around.

I expect you or mother will say, "you must all help yourselves," but there are always shy young people who simply won't do this. So they must be your special care.

FUN ON FIREWORKS DAY!

A pretty jersey and a skirt, a woolly dress, or just your school tunic and jumper would be perfect.

But if you should wear a lighter frock, don't forget to have a cardigan handy to slip over it, for you'll be dodging out into the garden several times, I expect.

During the evening you might like to pass round biscuits again, or the remains of the big cake. Or mother might even have prepared a magnificent trifle, blancmange, or fruit jelly for this treat.

A PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

And now I've prepared one of my time-tables for you—which I know you all like, whether there's a party in the air or not—giving you an idea of how to plan out the party, though it can be varied according to your own family's arrangements, naturally.

A BUFFET TEA

Tea need not be a sit-down affair at all. In fact, it might be impossible for mother to rustle together twelve chairs—even

Four o'clock.—Guests arrive and are escorted straight into the garden to meet others before removing clothes. Here, all help with the building of the bonfire while it is still daylight. But please see that you ask father's instructions first, and carry these out for him if he is not at home to help—which I hope he will be. All fireworks should be arranged for the evening's fun.

Four-thirty (about).—A game of "statues"—with a difference. You don't ask for the prettiest or the daintiest pose, but the best "Guy Fawkes' statue." The girl who wins must have a small reward.

Five o'clock.—Indoors to wash hands and take off coats. Then tea. This will be a jolly affair and last about three-quarters of an hour, I expect.

Six o'clock.—A competition game—the prizes being the honour of letting off some of the fireworks.

Six-thirty.—Into your coats again and out to the garden. Here the "Burning of the Guy"—supervised by father, who'll love it. Then the setting off of any spare fireworks and the dancing round the guy. This will take about an hour.

Seven-thirty.—Indoors again, and then the supper treat should be handed round and something to drink offered.

Eight o'clock.—Games, dancing, and general good times until nine—when I think it's about time for the guests to go home.

P.S.—This is a party the family dog will NOT enjoy—even if he is given some chocolate biscuits. So do please remember to put him in his bed and tuck this in the quietest room. Otherwise he'll be frantic, poor pet, at all the cracks and bangs.

IF YOU LOVE GLOVES

Not everyone does, we admit, but they are precious things, so here are some tips on their care.

WHEN buying new gloves, be sure to tell the assistant the size you take. If you don't know it, then let her measure your hand. She will ask you to clench your fist, and will then try a glove across your stretched knuckles.

IF your hands are hot and sticky, you'll probably have some difficulty in getting into new leather gloves; but don't let this persuade you to buy a pair that is too big for you.

WHEN you get new gloves home, sprinkle a little boracic powder—or starch—into them. They'll slip on so easily then. (At many good shops, the assistants will do this for you before the trying-on.)

WOOLLY gloves are much less trouble to buy, but they will wear out. So it's a bright idea to buy a card of darning wool to match at the time you buy the gloves.

WASHING gloves at home is quite simple—providing the

gloves are of the washable variety. But please don't attempt to wash leather gloves unless "washable" or "lavable" (in French gloves) is printed inside—or unless they are chamois leather, which we all know washes as easily as silk.

A LATHER of soapy water—only just warm—should be prepared for glove-washing. The gloves should be placed on the hands, and should be washed gently, just as if you were washing your hands. All leather varieties should also be rinsed in soapy water. A teaspoonful of glycerine can be added. This makes certain that, when dry, they are as soft as new.

DON'T peg out woolly gloves. Lay them flat on a towel or paper to dry.

LEATHER ones should be puffed into to blow out the fingers to shape. These should dry as flat as possible, too.

BROWN leather ones wear for ages and need very little cleaning. If they do get grubby or stained, try putting the gloves on your hands and cleaning them with a dab of cream furniture polish. Stains can be removed with a drip of benzine or petrol—away from the fire, of course—and polished up afterwards.

"Jungle Jess Comes to Cliff House!"

(Continued from page 11)

from coming along and catching us out!"

Jess looked at her curiously. But Jess, at that moment, said nothing. Her face, however, was rather thoughtful when breakfast bell rang and they all went out again. It was still more thoughtful in class that morning. And immediately after dinner, when the chums gathered in Study No. 7 for the great effort, Jess, instead of accompanying them, went along to Rona Fox's study. There, quietly, she opened the door, let herself in, closed the door again and pocketed the key. Rona, hearing a movement, glared round.

"You!" she exclaimed.
"Me!" Jess said. "Although I like not the idea, I am going to stop with you this afternoon!" And easily she seated herself on the back of the arm-chair; thoughtfully she helped herself to one of Rona's apples. "This I am doing because my Marjie and her friends are working hard, and I do not want you to disturb them!"

Rona glared.
"Why, you cheeky little wretch!"
"Wretch word no understand!" Jess said, contentedly munching. "Do what you want to do," she added kindly. "I watch."

Rona breathed hard.
"Will you get out of this room?"
"Some time!" Jess replied.
"If you don't get out, I'll throw you out!"

Jess stood up.
"I do not want to fight you!" she said seriously. "Marjie say nice girls do not fight. If you try to throw me out, I shall fight, though, for I am strong and I can beat you very easily!"

Rona blinked at her. It dawned upon her then that Jess, despite the difference in their ages and their size, was probably right.

"Well, if you don't get out, I'll shout!" she raved.
"Not good shouting," Jess retorted calmly, "for then the girls think you are afraid of me!"

Rona gritted her teeth. That, also, was true. She caught up an apple.
"I'll give you three seconds to unlock that door and get out!" she raved.
"I stop!" Jess retorted.

"One—"
The jungle girl went on contentedly munching.

"Two. Are you going?"
"No!" Jess answered doggedly.
"Three. Well, are you going?"
Rona roared.

"After tea!" Jess assented.
Rona gave a furious gesture. Then—up came the apple. Straight as a die it whizzed for the jungle girl, but Jess, with a shrug, just ducked. The apple flew on; there was a crash as it hit the window and disappeared through it, followed by a cry from outside. Rona, her face suddenly white, rushed to the window and threw it up.

And then she almost fainted as she saw, in the quadrangle below, Miss Bullivant—Miss Bullivant, her pince-nez broken on the ground, furiously rubbing her head.

The missile, apparently, had gone astray with the worst of results!

Mystery of Marjorie's Masterpiece



"I MIGHT have been stunned! I might have been seriously hurt! In fact," Miss Bullivant said, bristling with anger, "I am most seriously hurt!" She glared at Rona. She glared at Jess, who, the

key of the door in her hand, had just let the mistress into the study. "What is—is the meaning of this horseplay?"

Rona shook her head.
"I am sorry, Miss Bullivant, but I am afraid the missile intended for me hit you by mistake! This girl"—she pointed at Jess—"came into my room and locked the door. I ordered her out. She refused to go. I tried to take the key from her, and she flung an apple at me which missed—"

Jess' eyes opened wide.
"But I didn't!" she cried.
"The girl," Rona went smoothly on, "as you see, is an utter little savage, Miss Bullivant—not fit to be in a decent school!"

"But that bad girl threw the apple!" Jess indignantly protested.

"Please," Miss Bullivant rapped, "do not tell stories, Jess! You do not suggest, surely, that Rona would smash her own window? If another girl assaulted a prefect in this way she would be immediately expelled! You will come with me to the headmistress!"

"But—" Jess cried indignantly.
"And not another word, girl! Come!"

Rona grinned. Jess, a sulky look on her face, went out. To Miss Primrose's study Miss Bullivant led the way, but Miss Primrose, they learned, was at her private house. Thither they went, to be received by a rather weary-looking headmistress in her drawing-room. Her face was grave when she heard the latest details of Jess' supposed escape.

"I am sorry, Jess, but this time I must punish you," she said. "My dear, do not protest! It is obvious that until you have learned a lesson you are not altogether suited to mix with the other girls in the school."

"But, Miss Primrose—"
"And so," Miss Primrose went on, "I propose, for twenty-four hours, to separate you from your fellows. You will stay here, in my private house, having intercourse with no one. Rona, since you are off duty this afternoon, you can take care of the girl. I will see that you are relieved by another prefect after tea."

Rona's face fell as she thought of Babs & Co.
"Jess," continued Miss Primrose, "you may have the run of the garden and of the house, and a room will be prepared for you to sleep in. But you are not to move beyond the fences."

Rona scowled. Jess smiled a little. She understood that, and understood that if she was a prisoner, Rona was, too, for the time being. Would Marjorie and her friends get through in time?

Marjorie and the chums were at that moment working like Trojans in Study No. 7.

Three o'clock came—four o'clock. By that time the screen was nearly done. Another half an hour, and Marjorie looked up with a rosy face as she put in the last stitch.

"Done!" she cried jubilantly. "Done! Babs, put it up! Let's have a look at it!"

The screen on the settee was reared up. The chums, gazing at it, glowed.

"Really, it was a work of art. And, in spite of all Rona's efforts, it was finished now—ready to be despatched to Courtfield Hall to-morrow."

"And, I say," Babs suddenly chortled, "have you noticed anything? Rona's not been in!"

"Oh, my hat, no! Wonder what's happened to her?"

They stared at each other. In the excitement of finishing their task they

had forgotten all about Rona. Marjorie frowned.

"And Jess," she added, with a touch of apprehension. "What has happened to her? We haven't seen her all the afternoon, either! Oh goodness! I wonder if the little chump's got something to do with Rona—"

She never finished the sentence. For, at that moment, there came a clump on the door. It was Rona's own fierce face—Rona, just relieved by Miss Primrose, who glared in.

"Have you kids—" she began spitefully, and then her eyes fell upon the completed screen, raised, as if for her benefit, in front of the door. And suddenly her attention switched from the chums. For a moment a wild, jealous light flamed in her eyes, to be followed by a bitter sneer on her face. Then she turned.

"So!" she said. "That's it, is it? You put your jungle friend up to keep me occupied while you finished this? And you haven't done your lines, of course?"

"Ahem! Sorry, Rona," Babs murmured.
"Then consider them doubled!" Rona snapped. "Marjorie, Miss Primrose wants you in her study!"

And slam! went the door as, quivering, she went out. But the chums only grinned. Four hundred lines, after all, was a cheap price to pay for having outwitted the prefect. Marjorie's face, however, became overshadowed.

"Oh goodness! What did she mean by saying we put Jess up to detain her? Has that imp been up to her tricks again?"

They shook their heads, a little uneasy now. Jess, obviously, had something to do with the marvellous non-intervention of Rona into their labours.
"Perhaps," Babs said hesitantly, "that's what Miss Primrose wants to see you about."

Marjorie nodded. She went out, glad that the work was done, but filled with a new foreboding concerning her jungle friend. She reached Miss Primrose, to find that good lady looking rather stern and serious. In a very few minutes she was in possession of all the facts—at least, the facts that Miss Primrose knew.

"But—but, I'm sure, Miss Primrose, that Jess wouldn't do a thing like that!" she cried.

"In a girl of that nature," Miss Primrose replied, "one cannot be sure of anything, Marjorie! I am beginning most seriously to regret ever having allowed her to come here. I only hope that she will benefit from this lesson. Meantime, my dear, at her earnest pleading, I have decided to stretch one small point—but one only. You may go over to my house and see her. Return in ten minutes."

"Yes. Thank you, Miss Primrose!" Marjorie gulped.

"And—oh, Marjorie, what about the screen? You know, of course, it has to be despatched to-morrow?"

"It is finished," Marjorie said, and felt a grateful glow towards Jess, who had made that great sacrifice in order that it should be finished.

"Thank you. I will see it presently. You may go now, Marjorie."

And Marjorie, apprehensively, went, almost running to the Head's house, to be greeted by a shriek of joy from a barefooted Jess, who came clambering down from the apple-tree in Miss Primrose's garden. Excitedly she capered up to her.

"Marjie!" she screamed in delight, and threw her arms around her.

Marjorie smiled faintly.
"Jess," she said, "tell me what happened?"

And Jess, her face shadowing, told her.

"But I didn't do it," she said indignantly. "Bad girl threw the apple and blamed me! But it does not matter," she added softly. "Here I am happy and content, and do not bring more trouble on you. Here I may walk about with no nasty shoes and horrid stockings, and, as you see, I have trees and grass. Marjie, did you finish the colour picture?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Then," Jess said simply, "what could be more lovely? You are happy; I am happy; and if they will just let me see you and Kullo, I shall never, never want to go back into the school! Do not worry, my Marjie."

Marjorie went back, happy and relieved. Perhaps, she reflected, Jess' punishment had been just as well. There, at least, she was out of danger; there, at least, she could not possibly get into trouble—or so she thought. But even of that Marjorie took a second consideration when, getting up in the middle of the night to get a drink of water, she happened to glance through the window, and saw, in the bright moonlight, a dark figure sneaking across the grounds into the Head's garden, and saw it swing into a bedroom window. Jess—of course. But where had she been?

Marjorie sighed. Doors, windows, even walls, it seemed, would not hold that young sprite. Probably she had only been to see Kullo; but, thank goodness, she had not been spotted by anyone else!

Morning came—the morning on which the work of art was to be sent to the exhibition hall. All last evening the folding screen had been on view in Big Hall, applauded and admired by the whole school.

Half of the Forms in the school had already made their own exhibits, which were to form part of the stand's contents at the exhibition, and were only waiting for Miss Primrose to tell them to hand them in.

Excitedly Marjorie & Co. dressed. For one last look at their screen, they galloped in a body downstairs. And then there was consternation.

For of the folding screen there was no sign!

"Well, Primmy must have moved it," Babs opined. "Tough luck! I rather wanted to take a snap of it before it went. Anyway, let's go and ask Primmy if it's available."

"Come on," Clara said.

But Miss Primrose, when they asked her, looked blank.

"I have certainly given no order with regard to the removal of the screen," she said. "You are sure that it has gone?"

"Then—somebody else must have taken it!" Marjorie faltered. "Oh dear! We'll make inquiries, Miss Primrose."

And inquiries they did make throughout the school. Everybody, last night, had seen the screen; but nobody had moved it. If it was the work of a practical joker, the object of the joke was obscure. Obviously, it had not been stolen by burglars, for many other valuable things had been in the screen's vicinity, and they remained untouched. Miss Primrose, when the loss was reported to her by the consternated searchers, looked stern.

"It must be in the school," she said. "Some foolish girl, with a misguided sense of humour, is playing a joke, I presume. Well, it must be found—and found quickly! If the exhibits do not reach the hall by midday, our entry is

cancelled. I will make inquiries myself."

Miss Primrose did so, still without result. Marjorie was looking distressingly white then. Babs & Co., puzzled, anxious, were beginning to feel that the worst of disasters had happened. At assembly, Miss Primrose made a stern announcement, calling upon the practical joker to give up the screen. Still no reply.

The school buzzed. What had happened to the exhibit?

Then another surprise came.

This time it was connected with Rona Fox. For Rona, it was said, rather than see Cliff House miss the chance of earning a prize in the exhibition, had offered a very similar screen of her own which she had made, Rona carefully explaining that, inspired by Marjorie's design, she had copied it in its main details to present to an aunt of hers.

"Aunt!" Clara snorted furiously. "Aunt my foot! This is what she's been waiting for! And—yes, if you ask me, she knows something about our screen! It's she who hid it; just to get her own on view! I vote we tell Primmy!"

"And how," Babs asked, "are we going to prove anything if we do tell Primmy?"

At that Clara fell mutinously silent. Apprehensively they awaited developments. They learned, with some satisfaction, that Miss Primrose was still intent upon the original screen being found, however. Just before classes she addressed the school again.

"Rona," she said, "has been kind enough to offer us her work as a substitute for the canvas screen which Marjorie and her friends have completed. While thanking Rona for her generosity, I am, at the same time, reluctant to accept her offer, while I feel that the original screen is hidden somewhere in the school—"

Clara cheered.

"Therefore," Miss Primrose went on, "I am authorising you all now to make a thorough and complete search for it. To that end I am excusing everyone, except the Second Form, from first period of morning lessons. Every girl in the school will take part in this search, and if it is not found by midday, then we must accept Rona's offer. You will hunt over the school from attic to roof—"

There was a gasp at that. Babs glowed. But Rona, listening, suddenly turned pale. Anybody watching her then might have wondered at that nervous twitch of her lips. Before the meeting was finished, she disappeared from the hall.

Her face was white with fear. She hurried along the corridor. Up the stairs she climbed. Finally she came to the attics, and, opening a door, went in, locking the door behind her. Unnoticed by her in her excitement, the key dropped out of the lock, falling into a crack in the floor.

She looked around. The attic, one of the largest at Cliff House, was littered with oddments—mainly soft furnishings which had been stored here until they could be sorted. On top of a pile of lace curtains which had previously adorned the window of Miss Bullivant's redecorated study, lay four panels, their worked faces placed face together, and the whole secured by a piece of strong string. Rona gritted her teeth.

"I must destroy them!" she told herself.

Her eyes travelled to the fireplace. It was a large one, built on the floor. Downstairs she heard the mutters and the rustles as the meeting broke up.

Feverishly she seized a newspaper, caught up several old cricket stumps, and built the foundations of a fire. Then, from her pocket, she produced a box of matches.

With a scared glance towards the door she knelt; with trembling fingers struck a match.

There was a splutter, a hiss. The match, as if damp, fizzled for a second, then burst into flame. Rona put the match to the fire, which flared up, never noticing that the curtains which covered the window were now ablaze. For the match, a double-headed one, had parted on contact with the tinder paper, and one head had flown straight to those curtains.

The fire blazed.

The wood was crackling now. The room was full of smoke. Still feverish, frantic, Rona did not observe that the curtains behind her were fully alight; that pieces of them, burning away, were falling on Miss Bullivant's curtains under them. She caught the tied-up screen; with a gesture of desperation she threw it on the fire, and breathed in relief as, almost instantly, the canvas frames burst into flame.

"Done you!" she muttered. "Done you, Marjorie Hazeldene! That's goodbye to your screen! Now—now we'll see whose design is to be shown at the exhibition!"

She watched, until she suddenly became aware of sharp heat on the back of her neck.

She spun round, and then started back, her eyes distorted with horror. Beneath the window, roaring furiously, the curtains were going up in great flames. She had set the attic alight!

For one moment Rona stood, quivering and transfixed. In that moment she saw that the room was doomed. Near the window were wooden cases; near the cases were several oddments; old brooms and brushes, a few battered drawers from repaired desks, a black-board easel. Once that lot caught alight it—

She gave a cry. She rushed to the door; feverishly seized the handle.

And then her heart seemed to drop into an icy abyss. For the door, locked, and its key gone, would not move!

Her Enemy to Thank!



"FIRE! Fire! Fire!"
"Look! Look!"
"The attic's ablaze!"

Cliff House, scared, wondering anxiously, called from its hunt in the school by the fire alarm, was gathered in the quad.

The rolls at that moment were being called. While watching the blazing attic, girls were mechanically answering their names.

Rather scared, rather thrilled, they watched. How, or by whom, that fire had been started, no one knew; and though it seemed to be confined only to one attic, the situation was serious. Already the village fire brigade had been summoned, but minutes must elapse before its arrival. In the meantime, the school was helpless.

For their ladder would reach only half up the ivy-clad wall.

Miss Primrose, fluttering to and fro anxiously, was calling for results of the roll call.

"Second—present," Miss Grey reported.

"Lower Third—present," Miss Bullivant reported.

Upper Third present was announced. Miss Charmant, with a sigh of relief,

reported the Fourth as all present. Lower Fifth were present, too; so was the Upper Fifth. But when Miss Primrose called Dulcia Fairbrother—

"Rona Fox is absent!" said the head girl.

At the same time Babs pointed a quivering finger towards the blazing window of the attic.

"Look!" she shrieked.

Everybody looked. Then a great gasp of horror went through the ranks of Cliff House. For, plainly in the framework of flame, a white, desperate face had appeared—the face of Rona Fox. Wildly she gazed down at them for a moment. Her lips opened to voice words which did not reach them. Then suddenly across the smouldering sill she slumped.

"Oh, my hat! She's fainted!" cried Clara.

"Rescue her! Quick!"

"But how? We haven't got a ladder!"

Simultaneously half a dozen girls had burst forward. But even as they ran, they realised that rescue was impossible. The attic, on the very top of the school building, was utterly inaccessible without a ladder.

"Dulcia, send the prefects into the school!" cried Miss Primrose. "Try to reach her!"

Dulcia nodded. She and half a dozen prefects, accompanied by three of the mistresses bolted pell-mell into Big Hall. Trembling and anxious, the school waited, looking at that unconscious figure slumped across the sill. Then, on the fourth floor, a window was pushed open. A billow of smoke came out with it. Dulcia's face, white and tense, peered down at them.

"Miss Primrose, we—we can't do it—the stairs are alight!"

"Then come down!" Miss Primrose cried, and almost sobbed. "Quickly—please! We—we—we—"

And then she broke off, as suddenly from the garden of her own house, a figure came running. "Jess!" she cried. "Jess, where are you going?"

"Jess—" shrieked Marjorie.

"It's the jungle girl!" went up a shout from the whole school.

And Jess it was. Jess, her face earnest. Neither to right nor left did she look. Straight for the school wall she ran. Miss Primrose tried to head her off, but Jess slipped under her outstretched arms. Then she had reached the wall.

"Oh, look, look!" almost sobbed Babs.

The school was looking, tensely, apprehensively, holding its breath.

Look at Jess! Oh, look at her! Now she had caught the ivy, was climbing, climbing! The skill of it, the daring of it, the braveness of it!

Up, up—just like a monkey!

Fascinated eyes watched the jungle girl, sure-footed, safe. Now she had reached the first floor, now the second. Quicker than a cat she climbed, her black hair glinting against the green ivy, her strong hands seeking handhold after handhold. Now she was at the third floor, now the fourth, where the ivy grew thin. Look, she was falling—and then a long-drawn "a—ahah—oh, hurrah!" came from the crowd as she found firm hold again.

Look, she had reached the fifth floor!

An involuntary cheer broke out.

Now up, up! Look at her! Nobody but she who had been born and bred in the jungle, who had lived in trees and on mountain slopes, could have done it—no, no one! Now watch her!

Nearer, nearer she was approaching that vital window.

"O-oh!" Marjorie suddenly said, and slumped on the ground.

Tense, breathless, the school watched, thrilled at the sight, but sick with horror at what might be the result.

Jungle Jess advanced. Now she was at the window-sill. They saw her tug—then, lo!—she was pulling Rona out of the window. She was hoisting her on her shoulder. And she was clambering down.

She could never do it—never!

Hand over hand—any moment they expected to see her fall. But no! By a miracle it seemed she clung on, and more slowly, more cautiously she descended, the unconscious girl over her shoulder. And now they saw that half her hair was singed, that her own clothes were burned.

Back, back! She had passed the fifth floor. Now the fourth. Now the third. Hurrah! She was out of danger!

Half the school rushed forward.

And then—then she dropped, and she was among them, blackened, burned, singed, but happy and whole. Gently she lowered her rescued girl on the ground, and then turned to Marjorie, now recovered, running towards her.

"Nasty girl!" she said, a little faintly. "Marjorie, I did not want to save her, but I knew you would like me to, and so I did! Look, she opens her eyes; she speaks!"

"Jess!" gasped Rona. "Jess, you—you rescued me!"

"For Marjorie's sake!" Jess replied simply.

"For Marjorie?" Rona shook her head. "And—and after what I have done to Marjorie!" she muttered.

"Jess, do you know why I went up there? No; I must tell you—I must tell you all! I went there because last night I stole Marjorie's screen. I got frightened this morning when Miss Primrose suggested the search. I went to destroy it by fire—"

"And—and now?" Babs asked breathlessly.

"I'm sorry. It—it has been burned!"

There was a deep silence. Miss Primrose bit her lip. But Jess laughed.

"Bad girl, listen!" she said.

"Marjorie, you listen, too. Bad girl, you

did not destroy Marjorie's screen. The screen you burnt was your own." And while everybody blinked, she chuckled a little. "Last night," she said, "I was out. I saw you take Marjorie's screen into the attic. When you had gone I took your screen and put it in its place, knowing that you meant harm to Marjorie. Marjorie, if you go to Rona's study you will find it there. Look! Bad girl has fainted again!"

"Bad girl" had, just as the fire-engine from Friardale Village clanged into the gates. But Rona was not the only one. For at that moment Jess healed over, swayed, the pain of her burns at last overcoming her.

"Jess!" Marjorie cried. "Jess—"

"Marjorie, I go to sleep!" Jess murmured, before, with a sigh, she collapsed. "I am so happy I get your colour picture!"

AND LATER, when the fire was extinguished, happily not having spread too far, an excursion was made to Rona's study, and there, as Jungle Jess had said, was Marjorie's screen which she had saved. Great the jubilation then. And greater still, later, when at the exhibition, that screen won the twenty-five pounds. In good humour they took the bus to Courtfield Hospital, where both Jungle Jess and Rona, in bed side by side, were recovering. Jess smiled.

"If I have done you one good turn, I am happy," she said. "For now, Marjorie, your English doctor say I must leave you for a time to get better. But I am happy, too, because of something else"—she smiled at Rona—"bad girl and I friends," she said simply.

"Friends!" Marjorie cried.

"Friends!" Rona said quietly.

"Jess saved my life. She taught me that in the end scheming doesn't pay! Marjorie—Jess—both of you, I am sorry! Can you ever forgive me?"

"Oh, Rona, yes, yes!" Marjorie replied, but Jess, shaking her head, said:

"Forgive word no understand! Understand only love. I love my Marjorie!" she added simply.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.



Tremendous excitement at Cliff House School. A famous film company to "shoot" part of their latest production on the school premises; some of the girls to play crowd parts; fun and thrills for everyone! But for ambitious, super-confident Diana Royston-Clarke it means more than that. Diana fondly imagines that she will be given the juvenile lead in the film. And when she isn't; when someone else, belonging to the film company, gets that coveted role—well, Diana becomes the same old Firebrand, reckless, ruthless, vengeful, riding roughshod over everyone in order to achieve her heart's desire, and yet, every now and then, lapsing into that strange noble streak which is the redeeming part of her character. Don't miss this wonderful Hilda Richards story, featuring Babs & Co. It appears next week.

Our Thrilling and Intriguing Adventure Story.

Guests at Mystery Manor!



FOR NEW READERS.
HILDA FARREL, with her chums **BERYL LORIMER** and **JUDY BROUGH**, and her clever dog **MARCUS**, go to **Hawsley Manor** for a holiday as paying-guests. The manor is owned by the father of **LAVENDER MORTIMER**, with whom the girls become friendly, and is the Mortimers' means of livelihood. A strange woman is "haunting" the house, using secret passages, in one of which the girls find a paper referring to hidden treasure. A woman detective, **THELMA HARKNESS**, arrives to solve the mystery. During a game of charades a ghostly figure appears. Hilda rushes to trap it, telling her chums to keep everyone else in the room!

(Now read on.)



By
ELIZABETH CHESTER

"What is all this?" asked Mr. Bates testily. "Who was hammering at the door? And—good gracious!—is that Miss Harkness in the cloak?"

The woman detective was wearing the hooded cloak which she used when exploring the secret passages; but she very quickly explained it away without giving a hint as to why she really wore it, for the Bates family did not know that she was a detective.

"It is my kit for the charade," she said artfully.

"But what happened?" asked Mrs. Bates nervously.

"Something pretty queer," frowned Miranda, "judging by the odd way Hilda behaved, almost as though she had seen a ghost!"

An ominous silence fell, for, although Miranda had spoken lightly, she had hit the nail on the head so unexpectedly that the girls did not know what to say.

But Hilda, realising that silence was more sinister than any words, gave a jerky laugh.

"You're too good at guessing. You

ever, nor of the furniture having been disturbed.

"Baffled again!" exclaimed Thelma Harkness. "But if you had been less stupid, you little nin—"

"You mean if you hadn't bumped into me!" said Hilda hotly. "I was nearly there—"

"I bumping into you!" said the woman detective indignantly. "Why, I had almost reached the door!"

The hall light blazed on at that moment, and Lavender's father came hurrying forward in alarm, dressed still as the butler, a role he intended to maintain as long as there was no real butler to serve the guests.

"Good gracious! What ever is happening, Miss Harkness?" he asked, with

out giving a hint as to why she really wore it, for the Bates family did not know that she was a detective.

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Clever Explanations!

HILDA FARREL raced across the dark hall to the doorway in which the ghostly phantom of the Cavalier still showed.

Behind her, Judy and Beryl were inside the drawing-room, pretending to tug at the door, with the sole object of making believe it was locked, and so preventing the paying-guests from seeing the "ghost." For if they did they might be driven in terror from the house.

Hilda did not believe in ghosts, and the mere fact that a mystery woman was known to be prowling the old manor house was proof enough that the seeming apparition was nothing but a clever fake.

By speed she hoped to reach the spot before the artful contrivance could be made to disappear.

And she was running so fleetly that she would have succeeded but for a collision in the dark.

All at once Hilda bumped into someone, and, staggering back, cannoned into a piece of furniture.

"You little stupid!" muttered the voice of Thelma Harkness, the woman detective. "Why didn't you keep clear?"

Hilda, recovering herself, saw that the ghostly apparition had vanished, but the sound of hammering on a door came from the same direction.

"Open this door!" snapped Thelma Harkness.

Hilda ran to it and tried the handle.

"The door's not locked!" she exclaimed.

She pushed it wide, but the woman detective brushed her aside and snapped the light switch. But no light came, and, instead, she raked the darkness with her pocket torch.

The room was one facing east, and, used for breakfasting, of medium size. There was no sign of anyone in it, how-

THE CHUMS HAVE A RIVAL IN THEIR SEARCH FOR THE SECRET OF THE OLD MILL—AND ONE WHO NEVER REVEALS HERSELF!

concern. "Please do not make such a disturbance!"

The detective turned.

"Someone was in this room faking an apparition," she said. "I should have solved the mystery but for the interference of this girl!"

"Yes; and I should have done so but for your bumping into me!" retorted Hilda. "Now the mystery woman has got away again."

The drawing-room door was open now, Judy and Beryl having been unable to keep up the pretence for long.

In a chattering, excited group, Mr. and Mrs. Bates, Miranda, their daughter, and Judy and Beryl hurried forward, and there was no possible chance of keeping from them the fact that something most unusual had happened.

guess the first syllable, and practically the second, too—practically—"

Mrs. Bates let out a gasp. "Well, really, was that the second syllable of the charade?"

"You gave us all quite a start!" reproached Mr. Bates heavily. "Besides, one syllable should not be acted until you have left the room after the first."

"Of course!" cut in Miss Harkness. "I warned you of that!"

She had not done so, of course; but the remark and tone helped to carry off a difficult situation.

"But the hammering—" murmured Mrs. Bates.

Another slight pause ensued, while Hilda, Beryl, Judy, and the detective exchanged questioning looks.

"Oh, that," said Hilda—"that—"

"Syllable No. 2," nodded Miss Hark-

ness. "I think it had better be enacted again, girls."

Hilda and her chums were only too glad of the respite.

"Oh, rather!" said Beryl. "That'll be the best thing for everyone," agreed Judy eagerly.

Miranda still looked a little perplexed and faintly suspicious; but Mr. and Mrs. Bates, relieved to know that something was not seriously amiss in the house, returned to the drawing-room. All might have ended well had not the sound of a deep-throated bark come to their ears from somewhere quite close at hand.

"The dog!" said Mr. Bates. "Ah, we might have guessed it!" said his wife. "That wretched dog!"

Hilda swung round, completely bewildered; for she had left her pet Marcus in her bed-room, yet his bark came distinctly from the morning-room.

She ran to the door, the detective at her side. Together they hurled the door open and looked into the room. There was no sign of Marcus, but his barking continued, nevertheless—from behind the panelling.

Once again Marcus had found the secret way down to the lower floor known only to himself!

The Detective is Annoyed!

"HOW on earth does he do it?" said Hilda worriedly. "Marcus, quiet!"

"Leave him. He'll get back," said Thelma Harkness, taking Hilda's arm. "We shall arouse suspicion if we stay."

Turning back to the others, she gave a short laugh.

"The dog, as usual," she said.

"Why, Marcus was upstairs!" said Beryl, who never knew when silence was golden. "How queer!"

"He can walk down," said Hilda. "But the door was closed," pointed out Beryl.

Judy nudged her at that point, and Beryl, with an understanding "Oh!" shut up at last.

"I should be pleased if the dog were kept in a room upstairs!" said Mr. Bates testily. "I hope there will be no more alarms, and I sincerely hope that he keeps quiet in the night! If my wife hears sounds in the night she is likely to be alarmed!"

"I shall start thinking of ghosts!" shivered Miranda.

"Well, don't," said Hilda. "Count

sheep, and go to sleep! Shall we get on with the charades?"

The rival team returned to the drawing-room; but Hilda & Co., remaining in the hall, found that their clever explanation of the commotion had given them a hard nut to crack in the way of a charade. They had originally decided on "portmanteau," and just acted "porte," the French for door, when the ghost appeared.

"What on earth can that second syllable be?" asked Hilda, with a frown.

"The whole word has got to be port—something," sighed Beryl. "Portcullis. I suppose cullis isn't a kind of ghost?"

"We'll have to get something instead of port—change the whole thing," said Hilda. "A word with a second syllable cry, and perhaps the third rap or knock—"

After five minutes' discussion Hilda suddenly thought of lachrymal.

"Well, what does it mean?" asked Beryl.

"Tearful," said Thelma Harkness, and added grudgingly: "It might do. In the first syllable—'lach'—Hilda lacked the word one must suppose, and by stretching a point in pronunciation the second syllable could be cry, and as for mal—I suppose it will need a sea journey for mal-de-mer; in other words, sea-sickness."

"Then we can all go in weeping," nodded Judy.

"Only why the hooded cloak?" said Hilda.

"That was to make it more difficult!" chuckled Judy.

They argued for a few more minutes and decided that as "cri" was the French for cry, and they had been talking French, they could explain away their version of the second syllable.

At any rate, the result was that Lavender, Miranda, and Mr. and Mrs. Bates debated the problem for twenty minutes, while Hilda slipped up to assure herself that Marcus was safe.

Marcus had found his way back to the bed-room and was quite all right, so Hilda, leaving the light on for him, went down again.

Nobody guessed "lachrymal," but the guessers had their fun explaining how badly the word had been enacted, and then acted "indicate." This they divided as inn-dick-eight, impersonating an inn, whistling as canaries, solemnly parading round the room in a figure of eight; and finally, to show the whole word, indicating one out of a number of books placed on the table.

It was unguessed, so honours were even, and Hilda, Judy, and Beryl were able to show just where it had failed to be quite clear and just.

But in merry mood they ended the evening, with Mr. Bates showing them some card tricks.

"And so to bed," yawned Lavender.

But Hilda, Judy, and Beryl exchanged quick glances; for they at least had no intention of going immediately to bed.

They had not forgotten their vow to visit the Old Mill, taking Marcus for his night run! But they breathed not a hint of it, and said their good-nights and went to their rooms.

"Liking it here?" Lavender asked, as they said good-night to her.

"Grand," said Hilda.

"Lovely fun," agreed Beryl. "And I don't think I'm really afraid of the ghost, either, although I do hope it doesn't come into my room!"

"It won't," said Lavender confidently. "Miss Harkness is going to

Your Editor's address is:—
The SCHOOLGIRL Office, Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

BETWEEN OURSELVES



MY DEAR READERS,—News of Claudine again! Claudine, I should explain for the benefit of new readers, is my niece, a very charming, well-intentioned, but occasionally misguided young lady.

The other day Claudine and I went riding. As Claudine was in the beginner stage, she was given a nice, docile, well-behaved horse which would give no trouble; but being Claudine, she steadfastly refused to accept the animal. No. She wanted my mount. I demurred, pointing out that not only was my horse rather high-spirited, but that I had got used to it, the horse had got used to me, and—well, Claudine hadn't had many lessons yet, had she?

But arguing with my determined young niece is like arguing with a moving staircase. Claudine got her own way. She mounted my horse and away she went—literally! The horse, sensing she was a stranger, promptly bolted. Claudine vanished from view. And we came upon her half a mile down the lane, sprawling in the grass, while the horse grazed placidly near by!

Unhurt and smiling wryly, Claudine got to her feet. "I'm going to ride the boulder back to the stables," she declared. And before we could stop her she'd remounted and set off. And the amazing and praiseworthy thing is, she did ride him back, perfectly safely.

Claudine has the makings of a very good horsewoman!

And now let me pass on to the very exciting subject of next week's Cliff House story. The title is:

"THE FIREBRAND'S BID FOR FILM FAME."

and I'm sure you'll all be delighted and intrigued to know that tempestuous, self-willed Diana Royston-Clarke is once again well in the limelight.

What excitement at the famous school when it becomes known that a notable film company are to use Cliff House as the "background" to one of their big productions. Everybody is thrilled beyond measure, Babs, Bessie, Clara, everyone! For some of the girls will be used as "extras," to play in crowd scenes.

But that isn't sufficient for Diana—naturally. Diana, being so different from the average girl, being so ambitious, conceited, and cocksure about her own ability, fondly imagines that she will be given the juvenile lead in the film. (For one thing Diana's father has a big financial interest in the company, and Diana assumes that that is enough to get her the role straight away.)

That, however, is where Diana makes one of her usual mistakes. She doesn't get the part. It isn't even offered to her. Instead, it is given to a member of the film company, a clever young actress who thoroughly merits the honour.

And Diana— Well, Diana is furious, bitter, vengeful. So "that girl" has cheated her out of the part, has she? All right. Then she'll deal with her; she'll get the part herself no matter what she has to do. And ruthlessly Diana sets out to shatter the other girl's chances.

But even while she is doing that, Diana is also allowing that strange "better self" of hers to influence her dealings with someone else. A stranger needs help. Diana unselfishly gives that help.

More I must refrain from telling you now, but I'm sure you've read enough to know that there is a speculative treat in store for you next week.

As usual, of course, our next issue will contain further magnificent instalments of our two wonderful serials, together with more of Patricia's Bright and Useful Pages, so do please make sure of your copy well in advance.

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

keep up for another hour or two, so don't get agitated if you do hear a few odd noises!"

Hilda beckoned Lavender into her room then, and produced the slip of torn paper that she had found under her wardrobe. The sight of it rounded Lavender's eyes.

"My goodness—another clue! Miss Harkness will be thrilled with this!"

"You mean to give it to her?" said Hilda, a little dubiously.

"Oh, yes!" Lavender answered, in some surprise. "As she's here to solve the mystery, and knows about the treasure, she ought to have it."

A rap on the door made them turn, and as Hilda called out it opened to admit the detective herself. She saw the paper and stepped forward, frowning.

"Where did you get that?" she exclaimed.

"Marcus found it," said Hilda, not liking her tone. "And if only Marcus could speak, the whole mystery would have been solved already. A pity we haven't got his brain!"

Marcus thumped his tail in approval, but Thelma Harkness was not amused, as the glint in her eyes showed.

"The dog found it by the simple process of stealing it from my cloak," she said curtly. "And but for him the mystery might already have been solved, for I should have caught that woman. Please understand that unless you girls stop interfering, I shall throw up the case. I have told Mr. Mortimer so!"

Hilda drew up indignantly. "But we can hardly lose all interest—" she began, only to be cut short.

"You may do as you please, but if there is any more interference," said the woman detective in her grimmest, most schoolmistressy tone, "I shall leave the house, and let you carry on unaided. No doubt you think you could do so."

Hilda nearly said "Yes, rather!" but saw the look on Lavender's face. Lavender was quite dismayed.

"Oh, Miss Harkness, don't do that!" she begged earnestly. "If that mysterious woman isn't found, I know something dreadful will happen. The Bates family will leave—and there are some other people expected. It will just ruin everything if they do see a ghost!"

Miss Harkness nodded her head in agreement.

"I appreciate that. If the ghost is seen and the Bates leave, it will be very hard indeed to get other guests once the rumour spreads in the village or is reported in the papers!"

"The papers—oh goodness! They mustn't hear of it!" gasped Lavender in horror.

Hilda was sorry for her, knowing how much it meant to her that this old manor house should remain her home. And it could not do so unless it could become self-supporting with the patronage of paying guests.

"Don't worry—it won't get into the papers," Hilda assured. "The mystery will be solved long before that, Lavender."

Thelma Harkness walked to the door.

"It is understood, then?" she asked, looking back. "There is to be no interference?"

Lavender glanced at Hilda in appeal, and Hilda knew that she was expected to give an undertaking that she would not interfere.

"We shall not interfere with you or handicap you in any way at all, Miss Harkness," she said.

But she took care to withhold a promise not to seek the ghost herself. For Hilda had not formed a very high opinion of Miss Harkness, and she was as eager for the mystery to be solved as Lavender herself was.

Fortunately, the detective seemed satisfied with that, and, bidding them good-night, went off.

"I'm awfully sorry, Hilda, that she's so difficult," said Lavender, with a smile. "You three have been most frightfully decent, rallying round, and I really don't think a detective is necessary; and yet, perhaps, it is safest."

"Yes, you never know—she might find out something," said Hilda.

They talked for a moment or two longer, and then Lavender, yawning, remembered that she had plenty of work to do in the morning, and would have to rise early.

When she had gone Hilda waited,



SUDDENLY clutching Hilda's hand, Judy pointed to the Old Mill. "Look," she whispered. "A light!" Somebody else was trying to discover the ancient building's secret.

"Of course," said Judy, who had a wonderful collection of cigarette cards. "Mills were greatly improved in Stuart times, you know—and that was when the Cavaliers roamed about with their wigs and whatnots."

"And is this a Stuart mill?" asked Beryl.

"Most likely," said Hilda.

"It is. Picture forty-three is just like it," said Judy.

"The Stuarts were kings, though," said Beryl.

"What's that got to do with it?" asked Hilda.

"I shouldn't have thought they'd have had mills," objected Beryl. "I thought mills were for milling things like flour."

"So they are," said Judy, puzzled.

"What about it?"

"Well, why should the Stuart kings have milled flour with all their money? Unless it was a game, and they sort of went out and sailed their mill as little boys sail boats or something."

Judy giggled; for Beryl's ideas were quaint.

"The king didn't sail his own mill," chuckled Hilda. "And anything used and made in Stuart times can be called Stuart, duffer. But don't chatter. That mystery woman may be hunting here somewhere—"

"Might be—" began Judy, and then clutched Hilda's hand. "Look! A light!"

For with startling suddenness a light had appeared in the Old Mill, shining through a window high up in one side. It was not so much a window as an opening; and they were able to see the old wooden walls inside.

"My golly—she is there!" gasped Hilda. "I say—we may catch her."

"She's after the treasure all right—hot on the scent," breathed Judy.

"And we're hot on her scent—shush," warned Hilda. "Creep forward."

The three girls crept towards the Old Mill. For fear of revealing their presence to the searcher inside, Hilda did not use her torch, but groped round the old building warily, until at last she called a halt.

"My goodness, we've been one and a

listening, for a while, and then put out her light. Taking her electric torch from her dressing-table drawer, she made sure that it was in order, and then donned her thickest walking shoes.

A few minutes later Beryl and Judy tapped on the door.

"Hallo," said Hilda softly, as the door opened. "Ready, kiddlets?"

"Ready," said Judy. "Not a sound, though. Better wait for another ten minutes until all the lights are out. Got the clue?"

Hilda had made a note of that slip of paper she had shown to Lavender, and now they read it over. A simple message, it seemed to provide but little for them to work upon—but one thing was clear, they must go to the Old Mill.

"Fortune's wheels turn, even as the sails of the Old Mill," read Hilda.

"Digest this well so that the inner meaning shall be mastered, for who today is poor may to-morrow be rich."

"So now—to ye Olde Mille," nodded Judy. "Come on, all of us!"

Mill of Secrets!

"WELL, and here we are. The Old Mill," said Hilda.

The Old Mill was nearly a quarter of a mile from the manor house, on rising ground. It had not been used for more than a hundred years, and it had a forlorn appearance as it stood out in the surrounding darkness.

half times round at least, and there's no way into the place," she exclaimed, puzzled.

She had expected to find some steps leading to the upper portion, but if there had ever been any they had since been removed.

"Well, how did the woman get in?" asked Judy. "Take a flying jump, or did she bring her own ladder?"

There was no sign of a ladder, and although they went right round the mill again, they found no means of climbing in—not without taking chances in the dark with footholds.

"I say," breathed Beryl.

"Well?" said Hilda.

"I'll wait here if you're going round again," said Beryl. "And if she comes out anywhere I'll yell."

But Hilda was not intending to make another circuit. Musing in deep thought, she looked up, wondering however the woman had managed to get in.

Then she wandered away, and Beryl, to attract her attention, made a hissing sound.

"Sssh—you'll make Marcus bark," warned Hilda anxiously.

"That's what I want to say—he's gone. Where is he?" asked Beryl.

Hilda looked about her, and called softly. When she had moved in all directions without hearing or seeing him, she became quite alarmed.

"My goodness—he hasn't wandered off and got lost?" she asked, bewildered.

"He was here a few minutes ago," said Judy. "How funny! You'll have to whistle."

Hilda walked away from the mill for twenty paces, and then gave a high-pitched whistle.

Three times she gave it, and at the second time the light in the mill went out.

Woof! came Marcus' reply. Woof! It was an echoing bark as though made in some hollow space, and Hilda wheeled.

"The mill!" came a shout from Judy. "He's in the mill. Hark!"

Marcus' bark changed to a snarl, and then to a yelp. And all the sounds came definitely from inside the mill. Marcus had found his way in.

"Marcus—Marcus—here, boy!" called Hilda.

Marcus barked excited reply, and they could hear his pattering steps inside the mill, hear him scratching.

Since the woman must have been alarmed, Hilda flashed on her torch.

The rays fell upon the mill, and she hurried right round it, searching for the way in. High up on one side was a door, but it was heavily battened outside, and there were only two broken steps left of a flight that had once reached down to the ground.

Nor did the sails come anywhere within reaching distance.

"How on earth did he get in?" asked Hilda blankly. "Come out, Marcus—quick! Phew-w-w-w-w!" she whistled.

Inside the mill, Marcus ran in all directions, trying to find his way out, and presently he found the flap through which he had entered. From the other side he had been able to push it, but from this side pulling was necessary, and that was something Marcus found very difficult.

He banged at the flap with his paw and whined, but banging it only tended to fasten it more securely. So he snarled at it, and still it did not move.

Outside, Hilda turned desperately to her friends.

"There's only one thing for it—we must get a ladder," she said. "We've got to get the poor chap out—he's trapped. That woman may have shut him in."

"Yes, closed a door on him," nodded Judy. "But where can we get a ladder?"

Beryl remembered seeing one in the manor house grounds near to the tennis courts, and as Hilda could think of no other solution, they retraced their steps.

But they had gone hardly more than a hundred yards when Marcus, growing desperate, used his nose to lever the flap aside, and working it open a little way presently managed to wriggle his head in and force it wider open.

Joyously he galloped on, down a flight of steps, turned right, and then into a dark cavern.

But there he paused uncertainly; for this was not the way he had entered. He had used an entrance found quite accidentally when he was hunting for rabbits, and to tell the truth, had fallen into a tunnel rather than found his way to it intentionally.

The tunnel in which he now found himself was a different one, however, and he went along it warily.

Ahead he scented someone, and heard faint scraping sounds. Nose down, he hurried on, and, with such speed that only a second or so later he came upon a woman cautiously groping her way ahead on all fours.

The woman turned, and with a length of solid-rubber struck out at him. Although the blow could not do damage it could land with stunning force, and Marcus, wincing, drew back and shook his head.

Not being savage, he never attacked except under extreme provocation or when ordered to do so by Hilda. Now, worried rather than angry, he waited until the woman had crept ahead.

Once or twice the woman stopped and turned, as though trying to catch him off his guard, but Marcus was ready enough for that. He always acted a split second before the woman did, with the result that she invariably found him well out of reach.

Finally, just as if he was planning to allay her suspicions, he stood still for some time, waiting until the woman had gone almost out of sight.

In the distance, the woman turned again, peering back. She evidently did not see Marcus, and probably fancied he had gone back, for she went on again at once. That was Marcus' chance. Warily he followed her.

Hilda, Judy, and Beryl, meanwhile, had found the ladder resting against the wall near to the tennis courts, and between them they managed to lift it.

"My golly, it's going to be fun carrying this a quarter of a mile!" said Judy.

"Oh, we'll manage!" said Beryl, swinging her end round with a crash of glass.

"Sh! Goodness, what was that?" asked Hilda.

"Glass, dear," said Beryl. "It always makes that noise. I think it must be a window or something. Probably the end of the ladder caught it."

Hilda sighed, while Judy giggled.

"We'll wake the whole house in a minute," Hilda said. "You'd better let me lead, Beryl, and you go in the middle."

The ladder was lowered, and they changed places; but they did not pick it up again, for a sound came that gave them pause.

Woof!

It was Marcus' unmistakable bark.

"Goodness! Fancy being able to hear it as clearly as all that that distance away!" gasped Beryl.

But Hilda shook her head.

"He's not still in the mill," she said.

"He's in the house!"

"In the house!" gasped Judy.

"That dog's a magician!"

Hilda ran over the grass, hearing the barking more clearly as she did so, and now she knew for certain that Marcus was indeed back in the manor house, roaming at large.

When she reached the door, which they had purposely left unbolts, she found to her deep dismay that it had since been fastened. Hurrying along the house, she tried to find a window by which they could climb in—but none was open.

"Oh golly!" she gasped, rejoicing her friends. "This is something pretty thrilling. We're hot on the scent now. Marcus is back in the house—and came back as quickly as we did. Yet the doors and windows are closed. So you know what that means?"

"A tunnel?" murmured Judy, thrilled. "Of course, that's why we couldn't find a way into the mill. There's a tunnel leading in from the house."

"And Marcus found it. If he found it once, he can find it again—he can take us back, if we can only get in without awakening everyone," said Hilda excitedly.

"If—" said Judy doubtfully. But Hilda suddenly patted Beryl's shoulder.

"Well done, Beryl!" she said.

"Me?" asked Beryl. "Why—what? What have I done?"

"You broke a window," said Hilda. "And that's how we're getting in—and once we're in, we'll soon find that tunnel. Even if we don't get the woman we'll find out what she was up to in the mill. A hundred to one that's where the treasure is. Come on—"

And Hilda led the way back to where they had left the ladder, beneath the broken window!

ARE the chums really on the track of the treasure at last? On no account fail to read next Saturday's thrilling chapters.

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(Now read on.)

In the Castle Dungeons!

EVERY nerve on the alert, Pamela stole through the shadow-laden gardens of the palace.

Ten minutes to one in the morning! An hour when practically all in Leiconia were sleeping soundly, and when even the palace was in darkness and peace. And yet for Pamela there was a tremendous task to be tackled.

She had to release the young prisoner in the dungeons!

Her heart was beating a wild tattoo. Keenly she glanced about her. She must be careful. There were sentries posted at various spots. Over there, for instance; and Pamela, shrinking into the shadows, stole along by the side of a hedge, crouched low, the bundle containing a disguise for the prisoner hugged tightly under one arm.

The moonlight reflected the uniform of one of the Civic Guards, who stood, as motionless as a statue.

One step at a time, her eyes fixed upon the man, Pamela began to creep past.

Snap!
She stopped, cold with fright. Oh, what a fool! She'd trodden on a twig. Breath held, she watched the guard. Had he heard? But, no! The sound had not reached his ears.

Almost quivering with relief, Pamela stole on.

From then onwards, until she reached the spot where she would be able to intercept the gaoler's niece, everything

went according to plan. There were other sentries to negotiate, of course; but being the princess, Pamela naturally knew just where to expect them, and what pathways in the veritable maze that intersected the gardens to select in order to get past them.

At last she had reached the distant wing of the palace, opposite the dungeons. She took up her stand near a vine-covered wall, waiting, listening.

Seconds ticked by. Pam's pulses began to race. From the distance one o'clock was chimed by the clock of St. Benvenuto's Cathedral. Still no sign of the gaoler's niece.

Scrunch—scrunch—scrunch!
Sounds along the gravel path—sounds approaching this spot. Pamela pressed herself against the wall, peering into the darkness. Yes, here she was—the

"DOWN WITH THE PRINCESS!"

And Pamela, expecting to be recognised at any moment, was a prisoner in the hands of the crowd who shouted those furious words.

gaoler's niece. There was a shawl around her shoulders, and a basket.

Pamela waited until the girl had almost reached her, and then stepped out. This was the crucial part of her rescue attempt. Somehow she had got to impersonate this girl to the gaoler, and if there was no other way of doing so she would have to lock the girl in one of the outhouses some way off.

But Fate took a hand then. The girl, seeing Pamela, took fright. With a cry she tried to race past. Somehow they collided. Pamela's own shawl, carefully draped over her head and pulled close about her face to conceal her features, was knocked to one side, and the girl, her terror suddenly vanishing, stopped short, stared incredulously, and then dropped a swift curtsy.

"Oh, forgive me, your—your Highness!" she stammered.

"Oh, my goodness!" she was thinking frantically. "That's done it! She knows who I am. I can't do anything now!"

But wait! The girl had a frank, open face. There was immeasurable admiration, almost heroine-worship, in her wide blue eyes. Plainly she was thrilled at this encounter.

"I—I hope I did not startle your Highness," she said, plainly longing to say something.

"I'm afraid I startled you," said Pam, with a chuckle. She made up her mind all at once. She'd trust the girl; take her partly into her confidence.

"But I say," she went on chattily, "I wonder if you'd do something for me?"

"For you, your Highness, I would do anything," came the girl's quiet reply. "You don't know me, of course; there's no reason why you should. But my father—he was the gardener the grand duke discharged, and whom you reinstated. I'll never forget that, your Highness."

Pamela, qualms fading, almost hugged herself with delight. What a wonderful stroke of luck! The gardener's daughter. She could trust this girl implicitly.

So next moment Pamela began to chat just like one friend to another, explaining that she wanted to visit the dungeons. She hadn't seen them since she was a child, and now, as ruler of Leiconia, it was forbidden her. And finally she voiced her suggestion.

It left the other girl more awed than ever, completely enthralled.

"You—you want to take my place, your Highness?" she stammered. Then she gulped, eyes sparkling. "Why, of course I don't mind. It's little to do after what you did for father."

"Then," said Pam gaily, "let's hurry up and change, shall we?"

It was done in a few minutes in one of the outhouses. Pamela, dressed in the other's coarser clothes, put the basket on her arm and hugged her own bundle to her side; but before darting off on her mission she paused.

By

DORIS LESLIE

"I'll return your things to-morrow," she promised, "but don't bother about mine. You can keep them. You deserve them, anyway."

"Oh, thank you, your Highness—thank you!" cried the girl gratefully. Next moment, with a warm clasp of the hand and a friendly smile, Pamela was making her way to the entrance to the dungeons.

It was a large, iron-studded door set into the wall, and guarded by another resplendent figure in uniform. Pamela, head lowered and face obscured by the shawl, approached with fast-beating heart.

"Late," grinned the soldier. "You'll be for it if his supper's cold."

And, quite amused, he unlocked the door. Trembling in relief, Pamela passed through, to find herself in a short, stone passage, illuminated by a feeble gas-jet that flickered in a draught. At the end of the passage a flight of stone steps wound their way down to the cells.

Swiftly, Pamela descended. Lighting the way at intervals were other jets of gas, set above alcoves in the walls, natural sentry-boxes that housed more Civic Guards, all of whom, glad of a chance to break their monotonous and disinterested duty, had some bantering greeting to give her.

And so, down and down she went. The farther she descended, the more her pulses raced, the greater her anxiety became. But she fought it back. No, no. She mustn't be alarmed; mustn't think of failure. So much depended upon success. She'd got to be calm and have her wits about her, for here she was at the dungeons, and there, sprawling back in a chair, his legs resting on a table as he read a paper in the light of an oil-lamp, was the gaoler.

Her testing-time was at hand. To Pam's relief, there was plenty of gloom in the cellar. Shadows would aid her. She took care to walk among them as she approached the gaoler, a fat, red-faced man, who exuded geniality, and promptly struggled to his feet as he heard her.

"Ah, my little Mafalda," he greeted her jovially. "Late, but welcome. And what have we to-night?"

Turning her face away, Pamela put her basket on to the table. The gaoler, as eager as any schoolboy with a hamper, whisked off the serviette covering and began to pry inside. At once, spotting a basin, his eyes lit up.

"Oh, la, la!" he cried. "Spaghetti—spaghetti pudding. And ginger cordial!" He held up a bottle. "It is good. I will—but what is this?"

Excitedly, he snatched at something—a cluster of tiny onions.

"Good—good!" he cried. "Onions—my favourites! Bravo! I am happy."

And without more ado, he took a great bite from the entire bunch and scrunched away to his heart's content.

But Pamela had not been idle. She had quietly set to work. And now she tapped his arm and indicated the table.

"Splendid, Mafalda!" he cried, as he saw that she had set everything out. "I am as hungry as a hunter!"

Down he plumped himself in the chair. As he did so there came a metallic jingle which made Pamela's heart leap. The keys—the keys to the cells!

Stepping back, she looked at the gaoler's belt. There, secured to a ring, were those huge, multi-shaped pieces of steel!

And as the gaoler raised a glass of cordial the keys jingled again. It was Pamela's great chance!

Cautiously, fighting against her strung-up nerves, she put out a hand to the keys.

They were almost touching them, when something happened.

First, a shadow fell across the floor in front of her. Stricken like a statue, she checked herself, heart pounding, and slowly looked round. Then every vestige of colour drained from her cheeks.

Standing there, hands on hips, legs astraddle in the arrogant way that was so characteristic of him, was none other than the Grand Duke Bernard!

The Grand Duke's Treachery!

PAMELA, frantic and startled though she was, somehow kept her head.

With a flash of inspiration, she had made a low curtsy, pulling the shawl even closer about her face.

"What were you doing just then, girl?" the grand duke demanded, his dark eyes on her.

Pamela licked her lips. There was nothing else for it—she would have to speak. She'd been hoping to be able to avoid that risk, but it couldn't be helped now. Perhaps, by muffling her voice, she could disguise it enough to pass undetected.

"I—I—your Excellency—the keys," she began, speaking into the shawl. "They were loose. I thought—"

THRILLS and MYSTERY with your CLIFF HOUSE CHUMS in this magnifi- cent story—



It is one of the four magnificent NOVEMBER issues of The SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN LIBRARY, to be published on Thursday, November 3th. Don't miss it, whatever you do, and remember to ask for No. 656. The other three fine numbers are :

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At that moment the gaoler scrambled up and saluted.

"Excellency!" he exclaimed. "Your keys, man!" snapped the grand duke. "Let me see them!" He examined them as the gaoler, blinking in bewilderment, held them out from his waist. "H'm! Quite secure! I thought you said they were loose, my girl—"

And Pamela found his brooding, penetrating stare upon her again.

"They—they jingled," she said feebly, hoping against hope that he would not recognise her voice or discern her shadowed features. And supposing the gaoler became suspicious of her voice?

"Fool," barked the grand duke, "of course they jingled. Who are you, anyway?"

The gaoler explained. "Your niece?" exclaimed the grand duke. "Well, you'll be seeing less of her in future. The dungeons are no place for a girl. I will make arrangements for someone to depute for her during the next few weeks—one of the Civic Guards. You may leave, my girl," he added curtly.

Pamela backed away, still concealing under her shawl the bundle which contained a disguise for the prisoner. The grand duke strode towards the cells as she turned to the exit. Pamela was filled with despair. Her chance to rescue the prisoner was gone! Indeed, she was lucky not to have been recognised.

"Well, my friend," she heard the grand duke exclaim, as she reached the commencement of the steps and slipped out of sight, crouching back against one wall; "I am sorry to find you like this."

"Sorry!" replied a younger voice, filled with scorn and bitterness. "A queer sense of regret you have. Sorry! Ha, ha! As sorry as the princess, I imagine—"

Pamela clenched her hands. That was the prisoner, of course. Her heart ached with pity and self-reproach. How he must hate her! How he must be seething with anger and bitterness. Had all gone well with her plan, he might have been a free man within an hour. As it was—

And then she started violently. But what was that? The grand duke was speaking again. And what he said shocked Pamela, even though she knew how cunning and treacherous he was.

"The princess, my unfortunate young friend, is not sorry, I regret to say. The princess is, despite her years, cold and adamant. Too well do I know it; I, who tried to reason with her; I, who begged for your release, even as your mother did to-day. But alas!"

There was a pause. Pamela, filled with loathing and contempt at such base deception, could picture the grand duke's eloquent, affected shrug.

"My pleas were in vain. I can only hope the future may strengthen my hand. Be assured, young man, I am your friend—working for your release, as I shall work against all injustices to the people—"

There was quite a lot more in the same hypocritical strain, until the tramp of feet eventually told Pamela that the grand duke had left the young man.

She scuttled away up the stairs, but not before she had heard the traitor's final words to the gaoler.

"I am strengthening the guard down here from to-night onwards. It will be changed at eleven o'clock every night, and doubled."

"Yes, Excellency!" Pamela raced on. But she wasn't reckless. Whenever she reached one of the sentries she slowed down, went past him unhurriedly, then tore on again as soon as she was out of sight. At the

door, the sentry there bade her a cheery "Good-night."

"Good-night," Pamela mumbled, as she passed through into the moonlit grounds.

Twenty steps and she was around a corner. Instantly, she became electrified. A sprint that left her panting for breath got her to her balcony.

Five minutes later she was lying in bed, wide awake, staring up at the elaborate canopy that hung above her. She'd failed!

"And the peasants," ran her worried thoughts. "Oh, how furious they'll be! Paul said they were angry when he was arrested. I've got to rescue him—somehow!"

Not only to appease the peasants, but to see that justice was done.

"But how can I free him—how—how?"

She twisted and turned, racking her brains for inspiration. It did not come, until, like a bolt from the blue, she thought of someone.

"Paul!" she cried. "Goodness, Paul—he'd help! He'd do it like a shot. Why, that's the very idea—"

Of course it was. Paul was full of daring, was clever. He'd think up a plan! She felt sure of that.

"I'll see him to-morrow," Pamela decided. "The inn where he stays is on the phone. I'll ring up first thing in the morning."

Which was precisely what Pamela did, at the early hour of half-past six! But she did so then with a purpose. The grand duke would not be astir, and Paul was certain to be at the inn, even if not actually in bed.

"Wouldn't the grand duke be furious!" Pamela softly chuckled, as she picked up the phone in the grand duke's private study. "But a princess in my position has got to be careful!"

Certainly, the grand duke was artful enough to have one of his confederates listening-in to all the other telephone conversations that took place in the palace.

In growing excitement, Pamela waited after giving the number of the inn.

"Is that you, Paul?" she suddenly cried. "Why, yes—it is me. But listen, Paul. It's most frightfully urgent. And—has anything happened about the prisoner? What? Oh—"

Her face grew pale as it became her turn to listen. Apparently the prisoner's townspeople were furious, and making grim, if vague threats.

Trying to speak calmly, Pamela told Paul of her fruitless efforts of the previous night. To her delight, he offered assistance at once.

"We'd better have another chat—in complete safety," he declared. "Look here, can you slip away this morning? Right! Then I'll meet you at the hollow oak—you know, the one I told you about in Tolari forest. You can't miss it. It's right in the heart of the place. Twelve o'clock? Grand. Bye-bye, Pamela. Best of luck—"

Pamela hung up. How she prevented herself from betraying her feelings during breakfast, with Prince Alphonse at her side and the grand duke seated facing her, she simply didn't know.

And during the reception of ministers that took the form of that morning's duties, she had to force her mind on to what she was doing. Her thoughts were constantly flying to what she would be doing presently—what she, in her own way, and Paul, in his own way, would be doing to-night to thwart the grand duke, after all.

Eleven o'clock. The audiences just concluded. The grand duke, consulting his wrist-watch, intimating that he'd an



INCH by inch, Pamela reached out for the gaoler's keys. Then suddenly she tensed. A shadow had fallen at her side. She twisted round in alarm. Confronting her suspiciously was the grand duke!

appointment with the fencing master. Prince Alphonse glancing inquiringly at her.

Pamela lingered just long enough to whisper the prince that she'd something "terribly important—and terribly secret" to do, and then away she sped, up to her boudoir, where she changed into the clothes belonging to the gardener's daughter.

Ten minutes later, using a knife, she operated the sliding door in the palace wall. A torch she had brought revealed the left-hand tunnel, leading to the oak, and along its damp, musty length Pamela hurried, at first descending, then travelling a long, undulating stretch that was monotonously straight, and finally rising, until she saw a patch of daylight above her.

Steps, cut into the earth, enabled her to get inside the oak, and it was easy then to scramble out and drop to the ground.

Eagerly, she looked about her. No sign of Paul in the beautiful, sunlit glade. But quite near was a small crowd of peasants.

Pamela's eyes sparkled. What picturesque figures they were in their national costume. The men wore shirts, mostly white, and corduroy shorts or trousers, thick stockings and heavy shoes, and on their heads had either a colourful bandeau or a quaint little hat, perched at a favourite angle. The womenfolk, young and old alike, had long skirts, elaborately embroidered blouses and black bodices, tightly laced at the back.

They were talking excitedly. Pamela, drawing her shawl closer round her face, drifted nearer and began to catch fragments of what was being said.

"Princess?" jeered a rugged, bearded man. "Huh! Give me my own kind!"

"At least they are our friends."

"While she," snarled another, "what does she care so long as she has fine clothes to wear and a carriage to ride in? She'll throw us all into prison soon!"

"A pity she isn't here now," screeched a woman. "But she'll not be showing her face for some while after, this."

Stunned, appalled, Pamela heard those things—about herself. She stopped,

hesitated, then tried to conceal herself. Too late. She had been seen. The peasants gathered round, even as she desperately tugged the shawl closer about her face.

"What think you, pretty one?" shrilled a woman, a dark, gipsy type. "Wouldn't you put the princess behind bars if you had your way?"

Paul in Deadly Peril!

QUITE startled by the woman's vehemence, and by the suddenly menacing attitude of the others, Pamela backed away. Her mind was racing. She was in danger. At any moment she might be recognised, and then—

Disaster!
There was only one thing to do. Try to placate them.

"Yes, yes. I—I agree with you," Pamela said thickly, keeping her head averted. "The princess deserves no mercy—unless," she added, "unless we misjudge her!"

"Misjudge her?" came a roar. "I mean," Pamela desperately corrected herself, "she may not be as hard as we think. It may not be her fault about the prisoner. She—she—"

Too late. Pamela regretted that almost unconscious defence of herself. Angriely the peasants jostled about her. Fists were shaken.

"Traitor!" screeched the dark woman. "Friend of a tyrant. Teach her a lesson. Throw her in the lake. Down with the princess—down with her friends!"

Despite their rage, the others hesitated, then. But the hot-tempered woman, with cries of derision, taunts and gibes, egged them on.

"The lake—the lake!" suddenly arose a concerted cry, and Pamela found herself seized by a dozen hands and, frantically clinging to her shawl so that her face was still protected, borne, struggling and protesting, through the trees.

And then something happened. "Stop! Stop, you crazy fools!" rang out a furious, commanding voice.

As if by magic, the peasants halted. Pamela, released, reeled away. Dazedly

she looked round for the newcomer. Then a little cry escaped her.

"Paul!"

Eyes blazing, he shouldered his way through the peasants to her side.

"A defenceless girl—and a dozen of you!" he snapped at them. "Get back to your work!"

Abashed, the crowd shifted uneasily. "The girl defends the princess," said the woman surlily.

"Because she has her doubts, like many of us," Paul retorted. "We do not know all the facts. Until we do, we shall be fools to act rashly. I know this girl. She is my friend—one of us. Now go."

Muttering among themselves, the crowd drifted away. Pamela clasped Paul's hand.

"You again, Paul," she said simply. "Always saving me somehow. I—I'm afraid of God rather scared that time."

"Hothead," said Paul, his eyes glinting, as he watched the peasants disappear. "Thank goodness not all the peasants are like they, and thank goodness I have some influence over them. But come on, Pam. Let's go somewhere quiet. I know the very spot."

It was on a bank of the lake, grassy and flower-beset, that they halted. They sat down. Paul looked at her quizzically.

"Well," he said, grinning, "and so we go, hopping from T to T—with T standing for trouble. Out of one fix into another. But I have an idea, Pam—a good idea, I think. Listen.

"I appear under your balcony at a quarter-to-eleven to-night," he explained. "You, Pam, drop me a couple of Civic Guard uniforms. I put one of them on and sneak off to the dungeons. There I join the guards while they're changing over, and you create a diversion—if necessary—thus

enabling me to release the prisoner. He puts on a guard's uniform—and off we go."

Pamela drew a deep breath. "It—it's a wonderful plan," she said. "But terribly dangerous for you, Paul."

"No more dangerous than it was for you to-day," he answered quietly. "And here's something I've just thought of. A locksmith friend of mine will make me a skeleton key by to-night which will open the cell. Pamela," he cried, springing to his feet, "the prisoner is already free!"

Pamela, though not quite so optimistic as he appeared to be, nevertheless felt agog with excitement. Oh, how she hoped that Paul was right!

"YOU ARE very happy to-night, Sonia."

"And why not, Uncle Bernard?"

"Oh, no reason at all—no reason at all!" said the grand duke, with a shrug. "Only your memory must be extremely short. This morning you were heartbroken on our prisoner's behalf. To-night—"

"And to-night I am gay, carefree, enjoying myself to the full!" Pamela took him up quietly. "Perhaps I was foolish this morning, uncle. Pardon?" she added, as someone stopped before her, bowing.

It was a young man, one of the many who, with parents, sisters, and other relatives of the nobility, had come to the palace to-night for an informal party. His half-crooked arm, and his glance towards the band which played from a dais at the other end of the drawing-room, were eloquent enough.

"I'd love to!" Pamela said, dimpling. A moment later she was being whirled away to the strains of a waltz.

No doubting the princess' happiness. One had only to see her flushed, radiant

face; her sparkling eyes, her smile, to realise that. More even than her lovely white evening gown, those things made her look wonderfully pretty.

Oh, yes, Pamela was enjoying herself. But this informal party contributed only a part of her happiness and excitement.

There was something else. She stole a glance at her exquisite little watch while being whirled around by her partner. Half-past ten! Another quarter of an hour—then she must slip away to her boudoir—drop the precious bundle to Paul—and slip back to this scene to hold the fort while her loyal, courageous young friend carried out their plan.

The dance finished. Her partner, a quiet, unassuming fellow, thanked her, stepped back, bowed, and rejoined his parents.

The minutes slipped away. Five to eleven! Time to be darting away—at any moment Paul would arrive under the balcony.

First of all, a little trick to escape from the party.

"Would everyone care for a Paul Jones?" she asked, having commanded silent attention by the mere raising of her hand in the centre of the room. "It's something we haven't tried yet, and quite good fun."

Everyone did care, apparently. The guests began to sort themselves out into two circles, and in all the confusion Pamela found it quite simple to steal towards the door, unsuspected.

Heart thumping, she reached it. But that was as far as she got, for it burst open even as she was about to seize the handle. Just in time, she sprang out of the way. Then Rowena, her personal maid, burst in, her face the colour of paper as she scanned the room.

"Her Highness—her Highness—where is she?" she cried in terror-stricken tones.

The music died away. The revolving circles stopped. Everyone stared towards the distracted girl.

"Behind you!" snapped the grand duke. "Use your eyes!"

Rowena swung round. A great gasp of relief escaped her as she saw Pamela.

"Oh, your Highness, thank—thank goodness you're safe!" she sobbed. "I was terrified. I saw someone in the grounds. I thought the prisoner had escaped. I went to your boudoir. You were not there. And so—"

Pamela bit back a cry. Paul! It was he whom Rowena had seen. Oh, great goodness!

She turned, oblivious of everything else, meaning to rush to her room and warn him while there was still time. But the grand duke, with an exclamation, sprang forward and seized the trembling maid by the shoulders, blocking the doorway.

"Speak, girl!" he barked. "You saw someone? Whereabouts in the grounds?"

"Near her Highness' balcony," was the tremulous reply.

Came a murmur from the guests. The grand duke, eyes glinting, strode into the hall.

"Guards!" he cried, beckoning. "There is an intruder in the grounds. Search every inch of them! If you see the intruder and he will not stop—shoot!"

DISASTER seems to have overtaken Paul. His plan—what of that now? Next Saturday's chapters bring further thrilling adventures.

HILDA RICHARDS

Replies to Some of Her Correspondents.

"GLADYS" (Port Elizabeth, South Africa).—Thank you so much for a charming little letter, my dear. No, I am not related to Mr. Frank Richards, of "The Magnet." So Babs is your Cliff House favourite? Well, I'm not surprised, really, because she seems to be a favourite with everyone! The answer to your other question is "No."

MURIEL BALLS.—It was very sweet of you to send me a postcard, Muriel. I'm so glad to hear you've had such a lovely time at Lynmouth. I expect you are back at school by this time, though. Yes, I do know of the view on your card—one of the most beautiful in Devon. I always think.

ELSIE MARKHAM.—Thank you, too, Elsie, for your kind thoughts in sending me a card. I do hope you have had a lovely holiday at Eastbourne, which is, of course, an ideal holiday resort. Be sure to write and tell me all about it when you return home.

AUDREY AND MURIEL (Leeds, Yorks).—Here's the reply you both wanted so much, my dears: Audrey would be in the Tower Third if she went to C.H., and Muriel would be in the Upper Third. Yes, the Fourth Formers often take their pets for walks along the cliffs or seashore, and many of the dogs are excellent swimmers.

AN IRISH COLLEEN (Montreal, Canada).—So glad to hear from you, my dear; you must be a most enthusiastic reader. Leta's second name is Constance, but neither Jennina nor Diana have ever mentioned having other names. How very sad the loss of your pet was. I sympathise with you very much, for I can tell how fond of her you were.

MOIRA O'TOOLE (Blairgowrie, Scotland).—Many thanks for your nice letter, Moira. I'm so glad to know you've had a lovely time in Scotland. Yes, I think you are like your name-



sake, Bridget O'Toole of the Fourth. You would be in the Fourth with her if you went to Cliff House.

JILL (Grays, Essex).—What a very enthusiastic little letter, my dear! I think you are like Margot Lantham in appearance—and June Merrett in character! None of the girls you listed has ever mentioned having a second name, nor has Miss Primrose.

MAY (Lancs).—It was very nice to hear from you again, May. No one at Cliff House knows who is the richer—Diana or Rosa Rodworth—but both their fathers are millionaires! My dog Juno sends you a tail-wag in return for your good wishes.

ADMIREE OF THE CO. (Kettering).—Many thanks for writing, and for your praises, my dear. Yes, Sylvia Sirrett is now first in Form, Jennina being twelfth. You may be sure I'm never tired of hearing from school-girls everywhere.

CELIA MANNING (Glapham, S.W.).—So you are a Janet Jordan "fan." Celia? Here is the information you wanted regarding her: Her favourite colour is blue, her favourite flower the dahlia. Her favourite film stars are Johnny Weismuller and Jessie Matthews, and her favourite holiday resort is Falmouth, where she was born.