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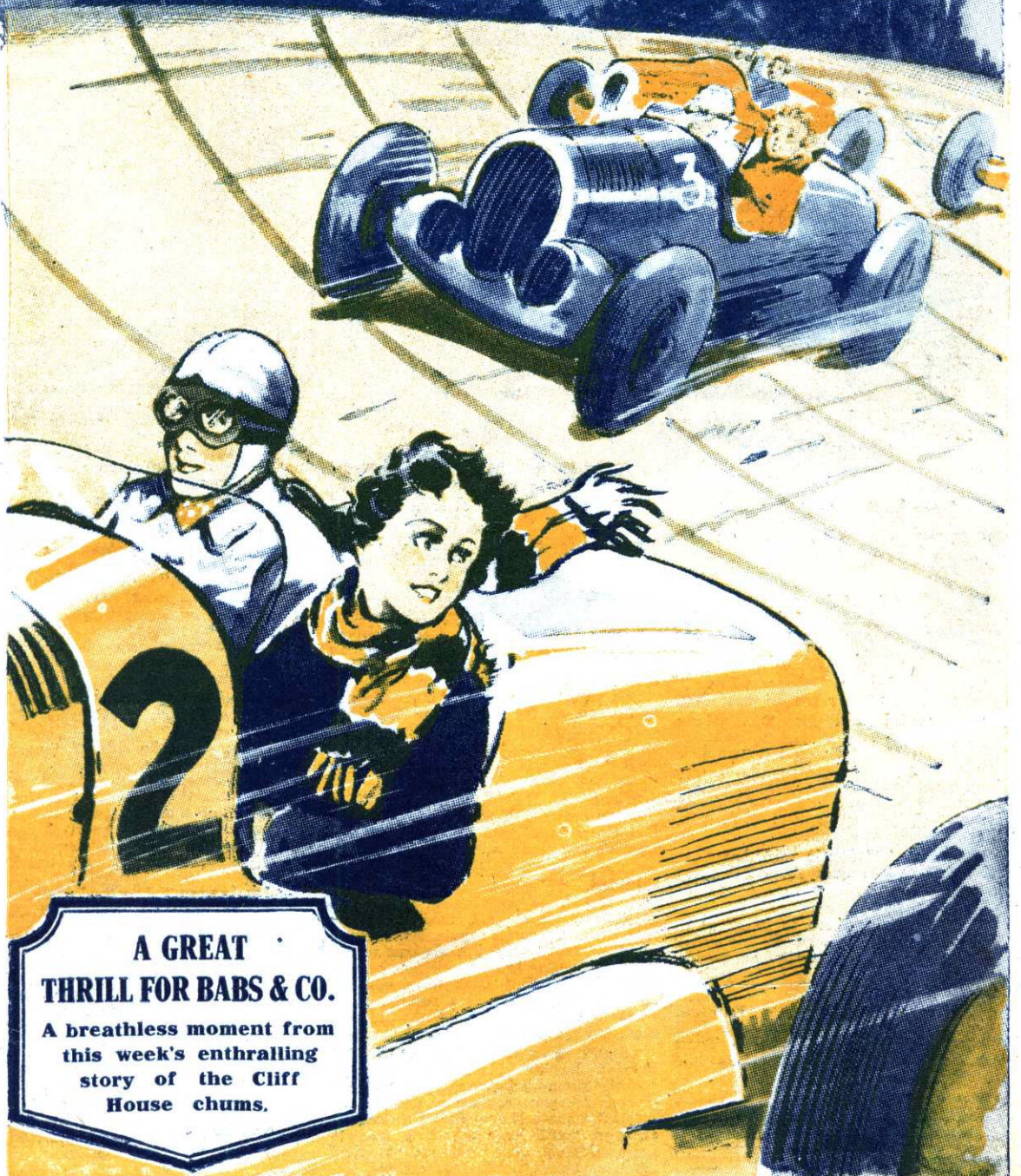
“WITH BABS & CO. TO HELP HIM!”

THE SCHOOLGIRL

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EVERY **2^D** SATURDAY

Incorporating
"SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN"



**A GREAT
THRILL FOR BABS & CO.**

A breathless moment from
this week's enthralling
story of the Cliff
House chums.

A Superb Long Complete story of the chums of Cliff House School, introducing many favourite characters.

WITH BABS & Co. to HELP HIM!



By

HILDA RICHARDS

Illustrated by T. LAIDLER.

Introduction to Mystery!



"ONE, two, three, four, five, six." And Barbara Redfern, captain of the Fourth Form at Cliff House School, happily counted the tickets in her hand. "One for you,

Mabs."

"And one for me, Babs, you know!" plump Bessie Bunter put in anxiously.

"Of course, old Bess!" Barbara laughed, handing a ticket each to Bessie and Mabel Lynn, her two best chums. "And one for you, Clara. One for Leila. One for Marjorie; the other for me. Oh, I say, it's jolly ripping, isn't it? Dulcia is a sport! And look, they're front seats, too!"

"In Row A!" Bessie said, beaming. "I sus-say, that's near the refreshment bar!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, what is there to laugh at in that?" Bessie glowered at the other girls through her thick spectacles. "Watching motor races is frightfully peckish work!"

The other five Fourth Formers, strolling along the lane towards Cliff House School, chuckled again. Trust old Bessie to think of something like that!

But wasn't it just ripping of Dulcia Fairbrother, head girl of the school, to get them these tickets!

Not, indeed, that they had cost Dulcia anything. They were of the variety usually known as "complimentary" and had been given to Dulcia by her brother, Dick Fairbrother, a keen young racing driver who, next Saturday, was taking part in the big South of England motor-racing event, the Two Thousand Guineas.

The race, as luck would have it, was to be run at the Aerodrome Stadium, only a few miles from Cliff House, and as Dick Fairbrother was a favourite with Babs & Co., they were all anxious to see him win.

"Good old Dulcia, what-ho!" Clara Trevlyn crowed. "And good old Dick! Did Dulcia tell you, Babs, that Dick's won his last three races in succession?"

"No need," Barbara Redfern chuckled. "I happen to read the news. Old Dulcia is absolutely mad with excitement about this, too. She says that Dick's invented a patent something or other, and he's doing his best to get it ready in time to fit in his new car for the race. And if Dick does win the race and the gadget is a success, guess what he's going to do with the two thousand guineas first prize?"

"Stand a whacking great feed!" Bessie Bunter suggested eagerly. "Well," she added glowingly, "what the dickens are you cackling at now?"

"Just come and see what I'm looking at, and you'll understand, I guess!" Leila Carroll chuckled, and laughed again as Bessie blinked round, not see-

ing that the American junior was staring directly at her.

"Well, what is he going to do, Babs?" gentle Marjorie Hazeldene asked.

"Start a company for the manufacture of this gadget, whatever it is," Babs said. "Dulcia says that it'll make him rich in no time. But, of course, he's got to win the race first."

The chums nodded. They all hoped most sincerely that Dick Fairbrother would succeed. And wouldn't it be grand fun watching him race!

The chums were in a happy mood as they tramped back to Cliff House. They had just come from the Aerodrome Stadium, where they had collected the complimentary tickets.

They were nearing the bend which wound into the straight road directly leading to the school, when there came a fierce blare of a klaxon behind them, the sudden thrumming roar of a high-powered motor car engine, and they all jumped round with a start.

"Whoops! Look out!" cried Clara Trevlyn.

She sprang to the side of the road, the chums with her. Down the road, with a thundering noise which made the air vibrate, came a glistening juggernaut of a car, the afternoon sunlight gleaming on its polished paint-work, the gravel from the loosely made-up surface flying from beneath its wheels.

"A racing-car!" breathed Babs.

"And at what a lick!" cried Clara Trevlyn admiringly.

A racing-car it was. And at a lick it was assuredly travelling, though it slowed down appreciably as it drew near. Even so, it passed them like the wind, its driver, goggled and helmeted, crouched over the wheel. With a roar it shot by. There came a screech as it rounded the corner; and then—

Babs looked startled.

"I say, it's stopped!" she cried.

Stopped, obviously, the car had. For in place of the vibrant tumult of a minute before, there was now dead silence.

"Come on!" Babs cried.

She hurried forward, a little anxious now. "Strange! Queer! If the car had met with an accident, surely they would have heard something of the crash? If it had stopped, surely they would have heard, at the speed at which it had been travelling, the squeak of its brakes? One moment the air had been pulsating with its noisy roar—the next, dead silence. Uncanny."

They reached the bend. Breathlessly they whirled round it. And then they stood in a group and blinked. For of the racing-car there was not a sign.

"Well, mum-my hat!" muttered Mabel Lynn.

"I sus-say, it's gig-gone, you know!" Bessie Bunter exclaimed, not very profoundly.

Babs looked round. Even allowing for its speed, the car could hardly have vanished from sight in so short a space of time. To the left of them towered a tall hedge; to the right of them a field of ordinary meadow grass, its flat surface unbroken except for the enormous haystack near the open gate a few yards farther away. For a moment they were all inclined to believe they had dreamt of the car. Then there came an excited cry from Clara.

"Look!"

She was pointing at the haystack. From behind that stack had suddenly appeared a figure.

It was the figure of a man, in racing kit, muffled, helmeted, goggled. Vaguely familiar to all of them he was, even in that guise, and that he knew them was obvious a second later, when cheerily he waved his hand.

"Who the dickens is it?" breathed Mabs.

"Come and see!" Babs suggested.

They hurried forward to meet him. The driver also advanced. As he came he undid his goggles, and suddenly they came away in his hand. Clara ripped out a shout of amazement:

"Jack!"

"Mum-my hat!" stuttered Bessie Bunter.

For Jack Trevlyn, Clara's own elder brother, it was.

"How goes?" Jack, his handsome face aglow, grinned.

"You!" gurgled Clara.

"Me! Like the rig-out?" Jack grinned again. "Pretty nifty bit of toggery, isn't it?" he added.

"But—but where's the car?" Clara stuttered.

"Oh, behind the haystack." And Jack nodded carelessly as though running motor cars behind haystacks was his ordinary mode of parking. "Pretty good hide-out from the road, isn't it?"

"But—but you haven't turned racing motorist?" Clara questioned.

"Not yet." Jack grinned, delighted at the mystification on her face. "Fact is, that's Dick Fairbrother's car," he added. "I've brought it along to the track to put it through its paces. But look here—"

"Well, where's Dick?" Clara asked.

"Oh, never mind Dick—now! Babs, hold these a moment, will you?"—and he handed Babs the goggles, while he wiped his eyes. "Questions can wait till afterwards," he added, and then looked up with a start as from the distance came the blare of a car horn. "That's they!" he exclaimed sharply. "Clara—Babs—all of you, quick! I've got to get away from here! I've got to hide out! And for goodness' sake get back to the road!" he added. "I don't want those johnnies to spot the car!"

"But what—" Clara asked dazedly.

"Listen, kid!" Jack's tone was urgent. "Ask the questions later, will you? Just do as I say now. Get me

out of here—hide me! Babs, go back to the road. If anybody asks you if you've seen a green racing-car—well, tell 'em what you like, but don't let them think you have! Now, Clara—"

Clara's face sharpened. She knew that tone of voice, that expression on Jack's face. Quickly her eyes went to the hedge which separated the school grounds from the field. She nodded.

"Come on; through the gates into the cloisters."

Jack nodded. With Clara at his side, he raced off. Apparently there was method in Jack's madness in parking behind a haystack, after all, and evidently, as usual, he was involved in some scrape.

Jack Trevlyn and trouble were old friends—in fact, it was rarely that Babs & Co. ever met him, unless he were engaged in some new adventure. But they liked him; they trusted him. To Clara's friends, Jack Trevlyn was something of an idol. Babs, Jack's goggles still in her hand, hurried her chums back to the road.

Now along the road they heard the swish of wheels, the throb of an engine.

"Walk towards the school," Babs counselled. "Take no notice. Hallo! Here they come!" she added.

There was a squeal of brakes on the corner. The chums, as if noticing nothing, moved mechanically to the side of the road. Then, round the

that the man with a moustache had taken a keen look at the unheeded goggles in her hand, and had given a quick, excited nod towards his companion. "You see," she blandly explained, "we saw them at the Stadium motor racing track. There were two green ones, and quite a lot of racing-cars of other colours, weren't there, girls?"

"Yes, rather!" Mabs supplemented.

"I see." The driver's eyes narrowed a little. "I suppose that's a joke?" he asked, a little angrily. "The car I meant was the car that must have passed here about three minutes ago."

"Oh, well—" Babs said owlishly.

"Did you see it?"

"Did we?" Babs asked her chums.

"Did we?" Mabs asked of Leila Carroll puzzledly.

"Sure I saw a car. But was it a green one?" Leila doubtfully shook her head.

"Thanks!" The man with the moustache looked somewhat tart. "You needn't put on an act," he said scornfully. "It's pretty obvious you did see it, and pretty obvious you met the driver. Those goggles rather give you away," he added dryly; and Babs jumped, stung into consciousness at last of the betraying thing in her hand. "Where's Dick Fairbrother?" he added bluntly.

"Dick who?"

Motor-racing thrills for Barbara Redfern & Co. ! Mystery and excitement, too, when they set out to help that young racing-car driver, Dick Fairbrother. Dick, brother of the school's adored Head Girl, is up against determined enemies. So Babs & Co. and very popular Jack Trevlyn come to his aid, with stirring results.

corner came a powerful-looking sports car.

Two men were in it—both youngish-looking men, and the driver, who wore a cap and had his face unprotected, sported a little black moustache. They looked sharply at the Cliff House girls as they went by.

"They didn't stop, after all," Babs said, with a breath of relief. "Oh dear! I wonder what it's all about?"

"But," Leila Carroll observed sharply, "they're stopping now, I guess. Look!"

The sports car was a hundred yards ahead then. Outside the gates of Cliff House it had come to a halt, and was in the act of reversing. Slowly, in bottom gear, it came back to meet them.

"Ahem! Excuse me," said the driver, raising his cap.

They stopped. Babs threw a warning look at the chums, which said: "Let me do the talking."

"Yes?" she invited.

"Have you seen a green racing-car?" "Green?" Babs frowned. "Oh, yes!" she said.

The two young men exchanged a significant look.

"Oh, good! How long ago?"

"Well, about half an hour ago, I should think," Babs said thoughtfully. "As a matter of fact, there were two green cars."

"Two!"

"Racing-cars," Babs added, with a nod.

"But two!" The man in the car frowned. "Only one, surely?"

"There were two, weren't there, girls?" And Babs turned to her chums, never noticing at the moment

"You know. He's the brother of your school captain, isn't he? Where's he gone?"

"I don't know," Babs said truthfully. "I haven't seen him."

The driver gave an impatient cluck, and, after a glare at Babs, he sent the sports car off with a roar and a jerk.

"Nice fellows," Leila grimaced. "Politeness is their strong suit, I'll say. But what," she added, "is the racket? Why should Jack Trevlyn hide out if they're hunting Dick Fairbrother?"

"Anyway, they didn't spot the car, you know," Bessie Bunter said. "Te-hee!"

"But who the dickens are they?" Babs wanted to know.

They shook their heads. That was a mystery—a mystery which only Jack Trevlyn, apparently, could clear up. Somewhat bewildered, they passed through the gates again.

Outside the tuckshop, however, Babs paused.

"All right, don't rush," she advised. "Clara and Jack will want to talk things over, perhaps, before we barge in. And Jack—with a little twinkle in her eyes—"might want a word with Dulcia." At which there was a grin, for everybody knew of the liking Jack Trevlyn had for Dulcia Fairbrother. "Wouldn't be a bad idea, just in case we're called upon to entertain the fugitive, to take in a few grubbins."

"Rather not; a jolly good idea!" Bessie enthusiastically supported. "I always have said, you know, that next to me, Babs has the best ideas in the Form. And we'll have a little snackings at the same time," she added. "Babs is in funds. 'Come on, girls!

* "With Babs & Co. to Help Him!"

I'll have half a dozen doughnuts just to start with, Babs."

And just in case the girls should change their minds, plump Bessie, beaming, led the way into the tuckshop.

The girls chuckled. But it was a good idea. There was every possibility that Jack Trevlyn, now in the school, would stay to tea, and supplies in study cupboards were not equal to the strain of a special entertainment. Apart from that, the walk from the Stadium had given them all an appetite.

After Bessie they tramped into the shop. Only one girl was there—a rather sulky-looking senior, whose close greeny-grey eyes flickered bad-temperedly as they entered. Babs laughed cheerily.

"Hallo, Helen! Like to have a ginger-pop, or something? I'm standing treat."

"Thanks!" Helen Hunter retorted tartly. "But I don't accept favours from Fourth Form kids. Anyway, I'm just going," she added.

And she went.

"Sure are some nice people about to-day," Leila Carroll dryly opined. "Helen looks sourer than usual—if that's possible. Eh? Oh, thanks, Babs! I guess I'll have an American cream soda."

Babs bought the drink, biscuits and cake, and ordered the supplies for tea. For ten minutes the five chums stood, drinking and talking.

"Well, there we are. Here, Babs, grab this bag," Babs said. "Bessie, you nip off, will you, and get the study fire-going. Marjie, carry that carton of milk, there's a dear. Well, we've got everything, I think. Let's march. I—Hallo!" she added quickly, and, approaching the door, suddenly stopped. "My hat, look!" she breathed.

And the chums, crowding to the door, looked. And the chums blinked. For across the lawns, near the woodshed, a girl was talking to two men. The girl was Helen Hunter, the unpopular prefect.

And the two men—

The same two men who had been on the trail of Jack Trevlyn's car!

Even as they watched they saw the man with a black moustache hand Helen a packet. They saw him whisper something to her. Helen looked rather white, rather uneasy, and the furtive glance she flung round before hastily tucking that packet away beneath her coat was somehow significant. Babs blinked.

"Now what," she asked softly, "is the connection between Helen and those two?"

Jack Trevlyn Explains!



"COO-EE! Clara! I say, Clara!"

Babs & Co. had just entered Big Hall, laden with their supplies from the tuckshop, when they met Tomboy Clara Trevlyn descending

the stairs. Clara looked a little worried, and was thoughtfully running her hand through her unruly hair, thereby making it more unruly than ever.

As it was nearly tea-time, Big Hall was deserted. Babs hurried forward to meet her.

"Clara, where's Jack?"

"In my study," Clara looked swiftly round. "He's there with Dulcia. But not a word!" she added. "Don't breathe his name. He asked me to tell

you, as soon as you came in, that he'd like to see you."

"But what's the giddy mystery?" Mabs inquired.

"I don't know—yet. But it's something to do with Dulcia's brother Dick. Poor Dulcia! She looks utterly cut up. But come along."

Babs nodded. Up the stairs they went, calling in at Study No. 4—which Babs, Mabs, and Bessie shared—to deposit their parcels. There Babs paused.

"Bessie, will you get the tea while we go along?"

"Yes, rather!" Bessie said—Bessie was much more interested in the preparation of food than in any mystery. "Shall we have toast, Babs?"

"Yes, please," And Babs smiled. "Come on," she said to the others.

They went along the passage to the study shared by Clara, Marjorie Hazeldene, and Janet Jordan. Outside the door Babs halted, raising her hand to knock. As she did so, they heard Dulcia's voice, rather broken, tremulously distressed.

"Oh, Jack, I can't let you do it—I can't! Dick—"

"Dulcia, old thing, listen—" and Jack Trevlyn's voice was serious. "I've got to do it. My must do it. Dick's my pal, isn't he? In any case, I'm already doing it, and I'm not backing out now. There's nothing to worry about—really."

"But, Jack, if—if they—"

"They won't!" Jack said confidently. "I'll handle them if it comes to a showdown. Now, Dulcia, no more worrying—promise?"

"Oh, Jack!"

Babs coughed. "Ahem! Dulcia!" she called.

There was a little pause, and then the head girl's voice, a little uneven, sounded.

"Barbara, is that you? Come in, please."

Babs pushed the door open. With her chums crowding on her heels, she went in. Dulcia was there, looking a little pink, but decidedly harassed. Jack, at the other side of the table, was self-consciously fingering the long motoring gauntlets he had deposited there.

"Come in, girls, please, and—close the door," Dulcia said apprehensively. "Barbara, did you see the two men?"

"Twice," Babs informed her.

"Twice?"

"Once in the road, and the second time talking to Helen Hunter," Babs saw the sudden look of startled consternation which passed from the head girl to Jack. "Dulcia, what has Helen to do with those two men?" she added.

Dulcia bit her lip. "Goodness knows! But—but—oh, Jack, this makes it even worse!" she cried. "Jack, won't you—"

"Please, Dulcia, leave this to me." Jack Trevlyn drew a deep breath. "Sit down, Babs—sit down, all of you," he said. "I'm going to spill the story. I think Clara and Babs and her friends might help somehow."

"Well, you know, whatever we can do—" Babs offered.

"I know. Thanks." Jack nodded. "You have helped a lot—already—by hiding me and putting those two rotters off the track. I'm sorry about this Helen Hunter complication. That means we've got to be careful of her—dashed careful. Well, this is the position," Jack went on, thrusting his hands into his pockets. "Those men aren't really after me—"

"We know! They're after Dick

Fairbrother," Marjorie Hazeldene said quietly.

"That's it." And Jack grinned. "They think I am Dick Fairbrother. That's what we've got to let them go on thinking—you see? While they're chasing me, they're off Dick's trail. And it is just absolutely necessary, at this moment, that they shouldn't get on Dick's trail. Because—shall I tell them, Dulcia?"

"Oh, yes! Please!"

"Because," Jack said, and his tone was rather grim then, "there's a warrant out for Dick Fairbrother's arrest!"

"But, girls, he isn't guilty!" Dulcia cried.

"They know that." Jack smiled. "Of course he's not guilty! The whole thing is a frame up on the part of these pals of Helen Hunter's. You see," he added, "if they can get Dick arrested before the Two Thousand Guineas, that means, of course, that Dick won't be able to drive in the race. And that means, in its turn, that one of the fellows—a chap named Mopant—will almost certainly win."

The chums stared at him. But there was excitement on all their faces now.

And Jack went on to tell the story in detail—some of those details they already knew. The gadget, which Babs had mentioned, was the new Fairbrother carburettor, capable, so its inventor claimed, of most tremendously increasing the speed of the car to which it was fitted.

Already it had been tested, and except for some minor adjustments, had been found to be—in Jack's words—the goods. Encouraged by its success, Dick had decided to fit it to his new racing machine, Magic Flash, and enter it in the Two Thousand Guineas race.

And from the moment of that entry, things had begun to happen. There had been spies; an attempt one night to wreck the car. Then one day Jack had been out with Dick in an ordinary saloon car—the saloon fitted with an early version of the new carburettor—when they had been pursued by a powerful car containing two men. Jack, fortunately, had been in the back of the saloon, and so could not have been seen by the pursuers.

"Well, we got away," Jack said at this part of the story. "It was pretty obvious now that somebody was after Dick. Naturally, with so much at stake, we couldn't afford to take any risks, so Dick just stepped on the pedal—and did that saloon shoot! Big and powerful as the other car was, we left it standing like a kid's scooter car!"

"It was the carburettor?" Babs asked.

"That's it. Then we reached Dick's flat. Naturally, we didn't want to leave the car parked outside, so I suggested to Dick that he gave me the key of his flat while he drove the car round to the garage. I let myself in the flat, and was waiting for old Dick to come back, when there was a knock at the door. I went to it. There were two detective chaps there."

The chums sat silent, intrigued. And Jack went on to explain. The two detectives had come with a warrant for Dick Fairbrother's arrest. Apparently Dick, who was secretary to Mailley Marvell, the great steel magnate, had been given a thousand pounds to deposit at the bank the day previously. Dick, however, had not been able to get to the bank in time, having been caught in a snowdrift. That night he had hidden the money in his flat, intending to bank it first thing the next morning. But when he had come to look for it—



BABS & CO. stared in amazement as a figure appeared from behind the haystack and beckoned to them. "Who the dickens is he?" breathed Mabs. "Come and see," Babs suggested.

"It had gone?" Babs questioned. Jack nodded.

"Vanished—clean as a whistle!" he confirmed. "And the beggar of it is, that there were no signs of anybody having been in the flat. Nothing else except the money had been touched. So you can see, from that moment, what a fix old Dick was in."

"Mailley Marvell is a real strict old martinet; he wouldn't have accepted the story of Dick's getting held up in the snowdrift, and as there was absolutely nothing to prove the burglary, he might not have accepted that either. Apart from that, Dick wasn't in his good books at the time. Mr. Marvell had an idea that Dick was paying far too much attention to his expensive motor-racing hobby, as he called it, than to his job."

"And—and so?" Clara questioned.

"And so—" Jack shrugged. "Well, there it was. Poor old Dick, thoroughly up a gum-tree, did the wrong thing, I suppose—but he did it, and so started the ball rolling. He was pretty certain about winning the two thousand guineas with his new gadget, you see, and as Mailley Marvell only checked his bank-balance at the end of every quarter, he could, if he got the two thousand, replace the stolen thousand, and so hush the matter up."

The chums nodded.

"And then—" Jack's lips compressed. "Somebody gave Dick away. Who, we don't know, but it's pretty easy to guess, isn't it?—one of the rotters who wants to get Dick out of the race. This crook, whoever he is, suggested to Mailley Marvell that Dick had pinched the money to further his own interest, and the fact that Dick had just paid a thousand pounds out of his own pocket for improvements to the Magic Flash gave colour to the idea, you see. The upshot was that Mr. Marvell obtained a warrant for Dick's arrest."

"Phew!" whistled Leila Carroll.

"And that," Jack said, "is the story—in the main. The money, of course, hasn't turned up, though fortunately Dick has the numbers of the notes. It's pretty clear what's happened, though. Those crafty rotters, knowing all about Dick, found out somehow

about that money. It was they who must have got hold of a key to his flat and pinched the cash while he was out. It was one of 'em who gave the information to Mailley Marvell and put him on the track, hoping that Dick would be arrested and held until the race was over."

Babs nodded. She saw that. But Jack, in his usual way, had strayed away from the main interest of the story.

"Yes," she said. "But what happened when the two detectives came to arrest him, and found you in the flat?"

"Oh, that!" Jack grinned. "Well, they made the mistake of thinking I was Dick. I let 'em think it, because I knew that if they pinched Dick, then the race—everything—would go to the wall. Apart from that, Dick still had some adjustments to make to his carburettor, and he couldn't very well have done that in gaol, could he? I invited them in; told 'em to take a seat and all that, then excused myself while I went into Dick's room to get my clothes."

Dulcia bit her lip.

"And there," Jack said, "was a telephone. I got on to the garage. I told Dick what had happened—told him to hide out and make arrangements for looking after the racing-car, which was garaged somewhere else. After that, I dressed in Dick's hat and coat. I went and joined the detectives, but as they were escorting me downstairs I gave them the slip and made a bolt for it."

"Oh, Jack!" cried Dulcia.

"Well, what else?" Jack asked cheerfully. "Anyway, they were already up the wrong tree. They had nothing against me as Jack Trevlyn, and, if you ask me, I did them a jolly good turn! Think what howling asses they'd have looked when they found 'they'd arrested the wrong man!"

"But it wasn't so easy," he added, "to give the enemy the slip. When I got to the garage where the Magic Flash was laid up, they must have had spies hanging around. Unluckily for them, however, they didn't know of my existence. They all thought that I was Dick, especially as I was rigged out in Dick's own clothes.

"They chased me, of course—intend-

ing, no doubt, to hand me over to the bobbies the moment they laid hands on me. And that's how," he added calmly, "I came to get here to-day. That's why the old Magic Flash is now behind a hayrick and I'm a fugitive."

There was a silence. The chums looked at each other.

No need now for Jack to stress the importance of his own identity remaining secret; clearly, for the sake of Dulcia and her wronged brother, that was vitally necessary. Simple enough their task, had they only to reckon with the two men outside, but how much more difficult with Helen Hunter, the spy of those two, in the school! Even as they all mentally digested that point, there came from Marjorie Hazeldenc, near the door, a sudden exclamation.

They all tensed, instinctively listening. But there could be no mistake about those quick, very short footsteps they all heard in the passage now. Only one girl in the whole school walked like that—Helen Hunter!

"Jack!" Dulcia cried.

She pushed back the screen. In a moment Jack Trevlyn had dodged behind it. Then came a rap on the door. It was followed, before anyone could even think of crying "come in," by the opening of the door itself. Helen Hunter, her greeny-grey eyes glistening with suspicion, looked in.

"Oh!" she said. "So you are in here, Dulcia. I—I—wanted to speak to you."

Dulcia stiffened.

"About what?" she asked.

"Well, on rather a personal matter. Want me to talk in front of the kids?" Helen asked sourly.

Dulcia's lips compressed.

"I am not aware," she returned, "that I have any personal matters to discuss with you, Helen. What do you want?"

"It's about your brother," Helen said.

"Well, what about him?"

"I suppose," she said, in a tone of contemptuous mockery, "you haven't seen him lately?"

"No," Dulcia replied.

"Sure?"

"Of course I'm sure."

"Then," Helen said, and suddenly she darted towards the table. Too late,

Dulcia moved forward as she caught up the pair of motoring gauntlets which the careless Jack had left there. "Then who," she crowed triumphantly, "do these belong to, Dulcia Fairbrother?"

Mabs' Way Out!



SURPRISINGLY enough, however—surprising because it was not often Clara Trevlyn took the initiative in a situation of this nature—the Tom boy jumped forward. Quick as

Helen had been to snatch up those gloves, she was even swifter in snatching them away.

"Thanks!" she snapped. "I'll take those!"

Helen glared.

"Why, you cheeky—"
"They're more mine than yours, anyway!" Clara stated firmly. "I'm looking after them for someone—"

"That's right!" Babs supported. "They're Dick Fairbrother's!" Helen cried.

"They are not!" Dulcia shook her head. She had regained possession of herself now, though studiously she kept her back to the screen. "Until a few moments ago," she added, "I'd never even seen those gloves in my life! And, in any case, supposing they were my brother's? What business is it of yours?"

Helen glared at her. There had never been any love lost between Cliff House's popular head girl and the sour-tempered prefect of the Sixth.

"And supposing," she flashed back, "you knew that a wanted criminal was being hunted by the police? Just supposing," she mocked, while Babs clenched her hands, "that that criminal was hiding in this school? Wouldn't you feel it your duty to track him down?"

Dulcia was very white, but very firm and upright as she replied.

"I see," she said quietly. "Well, supposing, as head girl, I tell you that no criminal is being sheltered in Cliff House? And supposing," she added, "I tell you that you've no right to come in here snatching up another girl's property and flinging half-veiled accusations around—"

"Does the cap fit?" Helen jeered.

"Helen, please get out!" Dulcia retorted.

"But I say—"

"I don't care what you say! I gave you an order!" Dulcia said sharply.

"Yes? Well, supposing I refuse to get out?" Helen cried. "Supposing I tell you—"

For answer, Dulcia swept towards her. She was really angry now as she gripped the other's arm.

"You can tell me what you like," she said, "but you will not tell me here! And if you refuse to obey my order, Helen, then we'll just go and see what the headmistress says about it. Are you going?"

Helen glared. The chums smiled grimly. But Dulcia, whatever she might suspect of her, had right on her side. Dulcia was her superior, and Dulcia's word was law. She scowled savagely as Dulcia very firmly propelled her towards the door, and Marjorie Hazeldene, standing near it, gladly opened it. Dulcia pushed her into the passage. Then she turned.

"I'll go, too, Barbara," she whispered hurriedly. "Just in case she should hang about."

Babs nodded. Knowing Helen's habit

of crafty spying, that was wise. Helen, obviously, was on Dulcia's trail. While Dulcia remained in this room, it was certain that Helen would not be far away.

Dulcia went out. The door closed behind her. From behind the screen came a soft chuckle.

"Is it safe?" Jack Trevlyn asked.

"Yes; come on out," Clara replied.

Pulling a face, Jack stepped from behind the screen.

"Pretty close, eh?" he said. "Phew, but that girl's a bit of a tartar! She suspects all right!"

"Well, what do you expect her to do," Clara sniffed, "when you leave your belongings all over the place?"

"Pax, pax!" Jack grinned at his sister. "Mistakes will happen," he said.

"Anyway, we're still O.K. Our dear Helen friend has got the idea that Dick Fairbrother is hiding out here somewhere, and as long as she sticks to that idea she's playing our game. But what now?" he added, for a moment serious. "It's pretty clear—I can't lie low here indefinitely."

"Well, why not?" Clara asked.

"We know a secret passage—"

"But, my dear old tousel-head, lying low in secret passages won't keep Dick's car up to scratch," Jack pointed out. "I've got to give it practice runs. Apart from which, I have a rather important thing to do to-night—no, never mind what; I'll tell you when I've done it. At the same time," he added thoughtfully, "those two beggars will be on the watch for Dick Fairbrother outside, and if they spot me in his place it's just possible they may begin to smell the mouse we don't want 'em to smell. Question now is—how am I to get out of the school without attracting attention?"

"Hum!" said Babs.

"Whoa! Wait a minute!" Mabs cried. "I've got an ideal Jack, supposing you become my grandfather!"

"Eh?"

Mabs laughed.

"Supposing," she explained, "I make you up to look like an old man? I've got make-up; we've got props. If those two men are waiting, they'll hardly expect to see you walk out in broad daylight. And, after all," Mabs added, "there's no reason why my grandfather shouldn't have paid me a visit at the school."

"Jove!" cried Jack. "You can do it?"

"You bet she can!" whooped Babs. "Mabs isn't the star of our dramatic society for nothing! Off you go, Mabs! I'll just make sure that Helen isn't hanging round!"

And while Mabs rushed off to get her props and make-up, she wandered off to the Sixth Form quarters. She had some vague idea of tricking Helen off to another part of the school, but that idea was immediately dispelled when, passing the prefects' room, she saw Helen engaged at the telephone.

Babs grinned. She paused, softly pulling the door to, and then, turning the key, drew it from the lock and placed it under the edge of the carpet. After that, she returned to Study No. 7.

Mabs, mistress of make-up that she was, had almost finished her task then.

The chums stood round while she combed out the false beard with which she had disguised Jack. Jack himself was unrecognisable in a long ulster overcoat, a bowler hat, and carrying a walking-stick. He grinned.

"Hallo, Babs! How do I look? Santa Clausish?"

"There," Mabs said, "that's it. Now

I'll get my hat and coat—remember, Jack, you're my grandfather! Walk with a stoop. O.K., now? That's all right. My hat! What's that?" she added, as a muffled tap came from somewhere, followed by a faint shout.

"That," Babs said casually, "is just Helen. Don't worry about her. She'll probably be carrying on like that for the next five minutes or so. I've locked her in, ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
And Mabs flew off, returning a minute later in her outdoor clothes. Jack touched his hat, called out a querulous "Good-night, my dear girls!" and, supported by Mabs' arm, tottered off along the corridor. Five minutes later two men, watching from the trees in Friar-dale Lane, saw an old man and a young girl emerge through the gates and position themselves at the bus stop. The bus came along.

"Bye-bye, grandfather!" Mabs said loudly.

"Bye-bye, my dear!" said Jack Trevlyn in a tremulous old voice. "Bye-bye! Look after yourself, and keep on being a good little girl! Ay, but that's a fine school you're in, and fine friends you have, my dear! Now just a kiss for poor old granddier. Here's the bus!"

Mabs kissed him. The bus came along. With Mabs' help, Jack boarded it, standing to wave his stick on the platform.

"Bye-bye, my dear!"
"Bye-bye, grandfather!" Mabs called. "Come again some time!"

And then the bus was away, and Mabs, with a smile, was returning to school. The watching men shrugged indifferently.

So far, thought Mabs gleefully, all was well.

Blunder by Babs!



SO far—yes. But vigilance could not be relaxed. Outside, the two spies watched.

In spite, Helen Hunter watched as well, their joint object, obviously, to find Dick Fairbrother and hand him over to the police.

"And Helen," Babs said, "has got more than a suspicion that we know all about it. Those friends of hers outside must have told her about the goggles they caught me with. The fact that Helen herself found us later with the gauntlets may have made her more or less certain. I should be surprised," she added, "if she doesn't jolly well think we're hiding Dick Fairbrother away in the school now!"

That was after tea—in Study No. 4—a sumptuous tea, which, unfortunately, had to be taken without Jack Trevlyn.

Helen Hunter, fuming and uneasy after the trick which the unknown japer had played upon her in the prefects' room, had looked in no less than three times while that meal was in progress, and Bessie Bunter, who had just returned from washing-up, had reported the prefect as hanging around near the Fifth Form end of the corridor.

Clara chuckled.

"Well, that's all right," she said. "While she thinks Dick's here, it's not likely her precious friends will look for him anywhere else. The great thing for us to do is to make her keep on thinking we're hiding him!"

"Sure! But how," Leila Carroll wanted to know, "are we going to do that?"

"Idea!" Babs cried.

"What!"
 "Shush! Wait a ticklet!" And Babs got up and went to the door, which she opened just a crack, peering out. "O.K.," she whispered. "Helen's strolling up the corridor now. Just play up to me." Then: "Of course," she said in a loudish voice, "we can't let poor old Dick starve."

"Oh, rather not!" Mabel Lynn agreed, with a grin.

"So we'll just have to make up a parcel of grub and stuff and take it to him," Babs went on clearly. "But we've got to be jolly careful with that spying cat Helen sneaking around"—and here winked, suspecting at that moment the "spying cat" herself was listening outside the door. "Beastly to have such an inquisitive nature as she has, isn't it?"

"Shocking!" Mabs agreed.

"Never can keep her long and ugly nose out of business which doesn't concern her, I guess!" Leila said seriously, and gurgled a little as the door shook. "All the same, I guess we've got to stop her from finding out where poor old Dick is. What's the plan, Babs?"

"The plan is—get the grub ready," Babs replied. "To-night, after lights-out, we'll smuggle it along to him. We'd better not all go, though—Clara, you and Mabs and I will see the job through. Meet in the lobby at eleven. Meantime"—and she rose with a great deal of noise—"let's get the grub ready."

There came a swift movement from the corridor. Babs chuckled as she approached the door and blinked through the crack.

"O.K.!" She's swallowed the bait whole!" she gurgled. "She's hurrying off down the corridor now. That means that Helen will be on the look-out at eleven o'clock. Helen, hoping to be led to Dick Fairbrother, will follow us—"

"Where?" asked Mabs.

"I'm not sure yet, but we'll give her a good run for her money. Mabs, don't forget to bring a basket; Helen will be expecting to see that as we're supposed to be taking grub. And I know where we'll lead her," added Babs gleefully. "The old clock tower!"

The chums chuckled. The scheme was a good one. To be sure, there was nothing to be gained by it, but it amused them to feel that Helen was going to have all her trouble for nothing—and at the end of that trouble be no better off than she was before. And punctually at eleven o'clock that night Babs, Clara, and Mabs met outside the lobby window, carrying a basket between them.

They felt rather than saw the eyes which watched them from the curtained alcove in Big Hall near the lobby.

In owlish pantomime the three conspirators acted. Cautiously Babs pushed open the window; cautiously the three of them levered themselves over the sill. Outside a very black night greeted them, with a fine drizzle of cold rain which swept into their faces.

"Ugh!" shivered Mabs.

"Shush!" hissed Babs dramatically.

"Come on!" Clara said.

They started out, squelching over the wet lawn. The clock tower—that ancient relic of medieval Cliff House, which stood at the far end of the school grounds, and which now did duty as a storage place for the produce of the school allotments—was a good ten minutes' walk away.

Onwards they squelched, now and again pausing to listen, and once being rewarded with a faint cry and a splash, which told them that the trailing Helen had stepped into some unseen puddle. They grinned

"My hat! If she only knew!" Clara said deliciously.

"She will—later!" Babs chuckled.

Now they had reached the little cluster of trees, dripping dismally in the darkness. Beyond, a vague, bulky shape, the old tower loomed. Now they were at the door. Babs pushed it open.

And just for Helen's benefit—Helen could not be far behind—she called:

"Hallo, Dick! You there?"

There came a movement from inside the place.

"Hallo!" Clara exclaimed. "What's that?"

"A rat—or something," Babs said.

"Hush! Don't give the game away. Dick!" she called again. "Dick, this is Babs and Clara and Mabs."

Then the whole three became rigid as from the darkness a voice spoke.

"By gum!" it said. "Then come in!

ward. "Dick, get back quickly!" she hissed. "Clara—Mabs—in here!"

With a thrust of her arm she sent Dick Fairbrother staggering back into the room. Acting simultaneously, Mabs and Clara jumped after her. Quickly Babs spun round, closing the door and dropping the heavy bar into place. Dick blinked.

"I say, what's this all about?" he asked.

"Dick, shush!" Babs entreated. "Clara, climb up to the window and see what's happening. Oh, my hat!

We—we thought we were putting Helen off the track," she said. "We didn't know you were here, Dick. Why did you come here?"

"I came," he said, "to see Dulcia. I've a packet here, with a message. I wanted to get it to Dulcia so that Dulcia could hand it on to Jack. Unluckily for



OFF went the disguised Jack Trevlyn, holding on to Mabs' arm, while the rest of the chums chuckled. There were spies outside the school, but it wasn't likely that they would suspect Mabs' "grandfather" of being Jack!

I'm jolly pleased to see you. But how," the voice asked, while they stared at each other in electrified astonishment, "did you know I was here?"

The light of an electric torch flashed out, and the chums' astonishment changed to sudden and alarmed consternation; for the light revealed the pale and handsome features of—

Dick Fairbrother himself!

It seemed, in hoodwinking Helen, they had innocently put her dead on the track of the quarry she was seeking.

me, two men spotted me getting into the school. They chased me. I gave them the slip and found a hideout here. I was just waiting till I could make sure they were off the track before making another move."

"What tough luck!" gasped Babs.

"Babs—quickly!" Clara, peering through the window, looked down. "Helen's flashing a torch. Wait a minute. There's an answer from near the school gates. Those two men—must be there."

"Oh, great goodness!" breathed Mabs.

"Then—"

"Half a ticklet!" Babs' face was alive now. "Clara, come down. Dick, give me the parcel. I'll see that Dulcia gets it. Now take off your hat and coat. Clara, you put them on."

"But what—"

"Don't you see, chump? You've got to escape. Helen will think you are Dick—a bit underized, perhaps, but they won't notice that in the darkness. As soon as I open the door—bolt! Now!"—and she gave a violent start as

Clara Plays Her Part!



"DICK!" cried Mabs.

"Dud - Dick!" stuttered Clara Trevlyn.

"Dick, you here?" And Babs looked hurriedly round, realising, with a pang of dismay, that the

trailing Helen must have seen! "We—" And then she stumbled for-

a terrific bang came at the door. "Buck up!" she hissed.

"Open this door!" cried Helen Hunter furiously.

"Don't answer," cautioned Babs; while Dick and Clara feverishly changed.

"Open this door!" Helen yelled. "If you don't open it I shall break it down. I know who you've got in there!"

"I'm ready!" breathed Clara. "Right! Then stand by!" hissed Babs. "Dick, hide behind those sacks of potatoes! As soon as Helen goes after Clara, out you nip! Right?"

"Go on!" Dick said grimly. "Will you open this door?" raved Helen from outside.

"All right!" Babs' voice was resigned. "It's all up, I suppose? Wait a minute, Helen!" And, with a glance in Clara's direction, she lifted the bar. "Now!" she hissed.

"Where is—" began Helen, and then gave a shriek.

For Clara, acting her part to the life, had leapt at the doorway the moment Helen's vague figure showed itself. Quickly she struck at the torch which was in the prefect's hand; with her other hand she thrust at Helen's chest. Back went Helen. Forward leapt Clara, sprinting out into the darkness. Helen regained her balance.

"Ron! Jim! He's getting away!" she yelled. "After him!"

Footsteps then. Clara blundered on. But Clara, expert runner as she was, wore Dick's heavy coat. Moreover, Dick's hat, several sizes too large for her, had fallen over her eyes. Blindly, madly she ran however, drawing them away now that Helen as well as the two men were plodding in her rear. Meantime, in the clock tower—

"Right!" Babs said triumphantly. "I've got the parcel, Dick! Scoot!"

"Hang it!" Dick Fairbrother mumbled. "I hardly like—"

"Oh, scoot," Babs hissed, in agony, "while the coast's clear!"

Dick nodded. He leapt out. Two hundred yards away, across the fields, two lights were winking. A girl's voice could be heard. That voice belonged to Helen, who, having spotted the fugitive, was running as hard as she could go, followed by her two henchmen. Clara, feeling as if she were running in an oiderdown, put on a last spurt.

Then—crash! Some unseen obstruction full in the Tomboy's path caught her foot, and, with a gasp, Clara measured her length.

In an instant Helen had piled on top of her.

"I've got him!" she shrieked victoriously.

"Wugg!" gurgled Clara. "Oh, my hat! Gug-gu—"

"Hold him!" a voice panted. "Hold him!" And Clara blinked in two torch-lights which came flashing into her face. She gasped as she was hauled to her feet. "Now, Mr. Dick Fairbrother!" said the grim voice of the young man with the moustache. Then: "Hey!" he roared, whipping off Clara's hat. "What's this? Helen, you fool, it's a girl!"

"Kik-kik-Clara Trevlyn!" stuttered Helen. "You!"

Clara grinned breathlessly.

"Little me!" she agreed. "Oh, aren't we surprised! What are you going to do about it?"

"You little cat—"

"Oh, tut! Such naughty words—and from a prefect!" Clara taunted. "Well, what are you and your precious pals going to do now—kidnap me?"

The two men muttered as they glared furiously towards their accomplice.

"Look here—" one said. "Wait a minute!" Helen's eyes gleamed. They were all amber now. "Clever, aren't you?" she said. "Jolly clever! Where did you get that hat and coat?"

"Well, where?" Clara asked. "Dick Fairbrother, of course!"

"So he was in there?"

"Sure, he was in there!" Clara answered cheerfully.

"You've been hiding him?"

"Aha!" Clara said. "Wouldn't you like to know?"

Helen ground her teeth. "Tricky!" she snarled again. "Oh, very tricky, aren't we? And now," she said, "I suppose he's got away?"

"That's it!" Clara said chirpily. "Is it?" Helen's eyes snapped. "It's not all of it!" she said. "You'll suffer for this, Clara Trevlyn—and your pals, Babs and Mabs! Smart—ch? I hope you'll be as smart when I take you before Miss Venn to-morrow morning! Perhaps when you get a week's detention you'll think twice before helping hunted criminals to escape!"

"Perhaps" Clara answered calmly, "we shall! And perhaps," she added thoughtfully "Miss Venn will think twice about allowing you to continue as a prefect! Because, you see, dear old Helen, I've got a fancy the Head will be awfully interested to know why you sneaked after us to the clock tower instead of stopping us or without first reporting we'd broken bounds!"

"And Miss Venn will love to know why you had these two friends of yours lying in wait in the school grounds to help you catch one of the girls who was breaking bounds! So it seems," Clara continued smoothly, "as if we'll all be in the soup!"

Helen glared at her. For a moment it appeared Helen would have smacked her face. For Clara was right, of course.

"My friends are here because—because they're hunting a fugitive from justice!" Helen mumbled. "And you're helping him to escape!"

"Nice, kind, law-abiding men, aren't they?" said Clara scornfully. "At the same time—well, you know how awkward Miss Venn can be over small points. Miss Venn might want to know why your friends don't leave the police to mind their own business. In fact," Clara said cheerfully, "I shouldn't be surprised, knowing Miss Venn, if she doesn't have them arrested for trespassing! Look here, tell you what," she added, apparently struck by a sudden flash of inspiration. "Why not save the whole business up till to-morrow morning? Let's go and report each other now, and take your two pals as witnesses?"

"Here come on! Let's get out of this!" said the man with the black moustache.

"Let her go!" urged the other un- easily.

Helen glared again. But she was helpless. Clara, for once, held all the cards. Disgusted, they let her go, and Clara, racing off cheerfully in Dick Fairbrother's hat and coat, made her way towards the school again. In the lobby she met Babs and Mabs. They chuckled when they heard the outcome of her adventure.

"And Dick?" Clara questioned. "He's all right?"

"Dick got away, O.K.," Babs said contentedly "But"—and she indicated a small package in her hand—"I've got this to deliver: Come on, now, though! Let's get back before Helen comes nosing around again. You can bet she'll have her knife into us after this, and we'd better be on our guard!"

Clever of Helen!



"BUT what can I do? What can I do?" And Dulcia Fairbrother, her eyes

betraying very clearly the sleepless night through which she had passed, gazed despairingly at Barbara Redfern as the captain of the Fourth stood in her study the following morning. "Dick says in this note that Jack must have this parcel this afternoon at all costs! Barbara, I can't go!"

"But why can't you go?" Babs asked. "Because I've special duties" with Miss Venn. And if I ask to be excused she'll want to know why. You know what she is."

Babs pursed her lips. She felt terribly sorry for Dulcia. Dulcia was taking this apparent disgrace of her brother to heart. Dulcia, obviously, feared the worst. How white her face had turned when Babs had recited the exploit of last night! How white when Dulcia had read that letter from Dick before destroying it!

"Well, there's one way out," she considered.

"And that, Barbara?"

"Let me and Clara and Mabs and Leila take it."

But Dulcia shook her head. "Barbara, no, I can't," she said. "Why not?"

"Well, supposing—" Dulcia shook her head. "Oh, I don't know!" she cried, and for a moment pressed a hand against her temples. "Barbara, you've seen enough to know that these men are desperate. This packet contains Dick's patent carburettor. If anything happened to that—"

"Well, what can happen to it?" Babs asked. "Dulcia, please!" she entreated. "After all, the men don't know we've anything to do with the carburettor, and goodness knows it's a small enough parcel to hide without being seen."

"And I don't think," Babs added seriously, "that the men are desperate in the sense they'd try and do us any harm. Dulcia, why not? All you've got to do is to give us the necessary passes."

Dulcia paused. But she saw Babs' line of reasoning clearly enough. Babs was right. Crooked as the intentions of Helen's friends might be, they had been extremely careful so far to keep themselves on the side of law and order.

"All right," she said. "And, Barbara—oh, Barbara, I shall never, never be able to thank you!"

"Oh, Dulcia, don't try," Babs said uncomfortably. "Let's get old Dick out of this mess first. Will you give me the passes now, please?"

Dulcia did. With the passes in her pocket and the parcel in her hand, Babs cheerfully marched off to Study No. 4 again. There, in the deep drawer of her desk, she hid the parcel, turning the key in the lock as an extra precaution.

And after breakfast that day—the afternoon being a half-holiday as it happened—Babs, Mabs, Leila and Clara met in the cloak-room Babs had retrieved the small parcel by that time, and had tucked it under her coat. They were on the point of departure when the door opened, and the sulky, scowling face of Helen Hunter peered in.

Helen, all the morning, had been drifting around in Babs & Co.'s wake, obviously still imagining that they were the secret hidiers of Dick Fairbrother, and that sooner or later they would attempt to get in touch with him again.

"And where," she demanded, "are you going?"

"Oh, out!" Babs answered carelessly.

"Where are you going?"

"Our business!" Clara retorted.

"Oh, it is, is it?" And Helen unpleasantly planted herself in front of them. "And I suppose," she added sneeringly, "you've forgotten that you're all detained this afternoon?"

The four stared at her.

"Detained!" cried Babs. "Since when?"

"Since yesterday," Helen said spitefully. "I gave you a detention for making a row in the passage. Don't you remember?" she added mockingly. "I gave you a hundred lines first, and then, when you checked me, I made it a detention. I think," she added, "before you go out you'd better ask Miss Venn to cancel that detention, don't you?"

The four stared at her, faces reddening with anger. They had received neither lines nor detention at Helen's hands, as Helen very well knew. Helen obviously supposed they were out on Ducia's business and meant to stop them.

"Well, going to take those clothes off?" Helen sneered.

"No, we're jolly well not!" Clara retorted hotly.

"And you're going out, in spite of your detention?"

"We never had detention!" Babs flashed.

"No!" Helen sneered. "What a very convenient memory you have!" she mocked. "I say I gave you detention, and what I say, as a prefect, goes. Take off those clothes and go into the classroom at once!"

In angry bewilderment the chums glared at her. What could they do now?

"Well," Helen roared, "are you going to do as I ask, or do I take you to Miss Venn?"

"Oh, chuck it! Don't be such a boastly schemer!" Clara Trevlyn said disgustedly.

"Clara, that's another hundred lines for you. Take those clothes off!"

Mutinously, but resignedly, the chums gazed at each other. As they hesitated there was a soft step in the corridor, and another figure appeared.

It was Ducia Fairbrother.

"Hallo, what's this?" she asked, with a quick, rather apprehensive look towards the chums.

"These girls were going out!" Helen sneered.

"Well, any reason why they shouldn't? They have passes."

"They're detained," Helen stated.

"Nonsense! Who's detained them?"

"I have."

"Where's your report?"

"Well," Helen said hurriedly, "you ought to know about that. I handed it to you this morning along with the others. Perhaps," she sneered, "you lost it. If you did, that's not my business. I gave these girls detention yesterday, and I'm here as a prefect to see my orders carried out."

"We never had detention," put in Babs. "On my honour, Ducia!"

"Oh, I think I see!" Ducia said slowly. A glimmer suddenly came into her eyes. "I really am rather surprised, Helen," she said stiffly. "A pretty mean and despicable trick that, isn't it? You want to prevent these girls going out. The only way you can think of doing it is to abuse your privileges as a prefect."

"I tell you—" blustered Helen.

"I'm telling you," Ducia added calmly. "Babs—Clara—all of you—you may go."

"You dare!" flashed Helen. "Ducia, be careful! I shall report this to Miss Venn—"

"Then report," Ducia said contemptuously. "Barbara, please go! I take full responsibility for this, Helen, and if you wish to report to Miss Venn you will find me in her study. Now, please, no further interference with these girls," she said sternly. "Barbara, go at once!"

And Babs & Co., with a grin at the glowering Helen, and a look of grateful adoration for Ducia, went. Helen clenched her teeth.

"You'll be sorry for this, Ducia!"

Ducia's answer was to toss her head a little higher and walk away.

Helen's face was furious as she stared after the graceful figure of Cliff House's head girl. Then suddenly, a crafty look in her eyes, she turned on her heel. Back she went into her own study, and there, grabbing four detention reports, wrote rapidly. After that she stamped yesterday's date on them, and, gathering them up, went to Ducia's study. The morning reports, not yet handed in to Miss Venn, were lying on the head girl's desk.

"Now, you sister of a crook!" she muttered.

She rustled away, a hard amber gleam in her eyes. At the door of Miss Venn's study she knocked, entering when the headmistress bade her come in. Miss Venn, sitting before her desk, on which lay a pile of index cards, was making a tick against the names of girls which Ducia was reading out from a similar pile of cards. She looked up rather impatiently.

"Yes, Helen, what is it? I am extremely busy."

"I am sorry to trouble you, Miss Venn," Helen said smoothly, "but much as I regret it, I have a rather serious matter to report. Yesterday I gave Barbara Redfern, Mabel Lynn, Clara Trevlyn, and Leila Carroll, of the Fourth Form, a hundred lines and a detention. This afternoon I found them preparing to ignore that detention—in the act of going out."

"Well?" Miss Venn glared a little. "You should have reported that to Ducia here."

"I did—in a way," Helen shook her head. "Ducia came along when I was telling the girls to take off their clothes and go into class for their detention. You can imagine my amazement when Ducia immediately countermanded my order, and, disobedient as these girls were, allowed them to go."

Miss Venn sat up.

"Ducia, did you do this?"

Ducia flashed a look of scorn at the sneaking prefect.

"I did," she said clearly. "Because, Miss Venn, the girls had been given no detention. That was a fabrication Helen made up on the spur of the moment to prevent them going out."

"Really!" Miss Venn looked quite shocked. "Helen, this is a serious charge."

"I am aware of that," Helen said steadily. "But I think you ought to know, Miss Venn, that Ducia, for some reason, shows distinct favouritism towards these girls. I will not go so far as to suggest that Ducia is fibbing when she tells you she knew nothing of the detention. If she does not, it is because she either overlooked or mislaid the reports which I sent in this morning."

Ducia eyed her keenly. What game was this?

"Ducia, did you receive such reports?" Miss Venn asked.

"No, Miss Venn!"

"Ahem!" Miss Venn frowned. She liked Ducia, but she liked discipline

even better. Such a complaint obviously demanded immediate investigation.

"Ducia, where are the reports? In your study?"

"Yes, Miss Venn."

"Very well," Miss Venn touched a bell. In a few moments Boker, the page-boy, appeared. "Go to Miss Fairbrother's study and bring me this morning's reports!" she ordered, and Boker, with a nod, hurried off. "Now," Miss Venn rumbled, "we shall see who is at fault!"

They waited, Ducia a little uneasy now, reading in the confidence of Helen's smile something she did not like. In a few moments Boker returned with the reports. There was a tense silence as the headmistress flicked through them. Then suddenly she stopped. She glanced up at Ducia.

"Ducia—the reports are here—in order!"

Ducia stared.

"But, Miss Venn, I—I am sure they weren't there this morning—"

"Thank you! Do you argue the point?" Miss Venn said angrily. "Either you overlooked them—a gross neglect of duty—or, as Helen says, you deliberately ignored them. In either case, I must take a serious view of the matter. Ducia, where have those girls gone?"

"To—to the Stadium, Miss Venn. But I wish to say—"

"You may say all you wish when I have said what I have to say," Miss Venn retorted freely. "I am sorry, Ducia. I hoped for something better from you. Helen—"

"Yes, Miss Venn?"

"You will go immediately to the Stadium and fetch those girls back."

"But, Miss Venn—" cried Ducia, white to the lips.

"And from you, Ducia, until I have finished speaking, silence!" Miss Venn majestically commanded.

Gay Times at the Track!



"JACK TREVLYN!

Yes, I can take you to Jack Trevlyn."

And the big, blonde-moustached man with the light blue eyes whom Babs & Co. had ac-

costed on their entry to the Aerodrome Stadium, smiled at the four Cliff House girls.

"I guess I like young Trevlyn's taste in girl friends!" he added, eyes twinkling. "Sure!"

"Geel! You're American!" Leila Carroll cried delightedly.

"That's it!" He nodded. "Elmer Couzlar. I guess you've heard of me, eh?"

Leila gasped.

"What! Not the racing driver with the world's record?"

"Sure! Why not?" He smiled lazily again, while the chums, exchanging excited glances, almost held their breath. For it was the very first time they had ever seen this man whose name was world famous, who had such staggering feats to his credit. The great Elmer Couzlar! Phew!

"I say," Leila whispered to Babs "I'm going to get a snap of this big-timer!"

"And I an autograph," Mabs said eagerly. "I wonder if he'd mind?"

"Mind?" he asked genially when, somewhat diffidently, they had made those suggestions to him. "Sure I don't mind. Ask Jack to bring you along to the club-room after you've seen him."

Deliciously the chums beamed. And what a marvellous place the interior of

this great stadium was now that they were privileged to peep at it at close quarters.

Down a long flight of stairs they were led, on, alongside a great swimming bath, through such a magnificently equipped restaurant that they might suddenly have been transported to some expensive West End hotel, and so on through another corridor, to emerge out through a courtyard where half a dozen great roaring racing-cars were throbbing under the eyes and ears of mechanics.

The guide then plunged them into a tunnel, at the end of which they found themselves on the great basin-like track itself.

There the American motorist nodded genially.

"Go along to number two pit," he said jovially. "I guess you'll find young Trevlyn there tuning up Fairbrother's bus. But say, don't forget you've got a date in the club-room after."

He nodded pleasantly, and, producing a long cigarette from his pocket, strolled away.

Rather hesitantly, the chums wandered along the bowl. The first pit was deserted, but outside the second stood Dick Fairbrother's magnificent Magic Flash, and somebody in oily overalls was tinkering with the engine. Clara let out a yell.

"Jack!"
"Hallo!" Jack, oilcan in hand, beamed round. "Howdy, girls!" he grinned. "Nice of you to look me up, what? Just putting the old sardine tin in order for a swoop round the track. Any developments?"

"Yes, rather!" Babs said, and told him. Jack pursed his lips.

"So old Dick's been round, eh?" he asked keenly. "And he's sent me a sample of the new carburettor? Thanks, Babs! I'll take it and fit it, but—"
He looked round. "Don't all look at once," he said, "but back there you'll see Helen Hunter's two pals. They've been here an hour now, and one of them is the racing driver named Jim Mopant. I rather fancy they wonder what I'm doing tinkering about with Dick's car."

"Perhaps," Clara suggested, "they think you're Dick's mechanic?"
"Maybe," Jack nodded. "Anyway, gather round and keep the carburettor concealed as you pass it over, Babs. I'll fit it now."

They gathered round while Jack, unwrapping a shining object of metal from the parcel, worked away. Presently he straightened up.

"That's it," he said. "Hope it's as good as Dick says it's going to be. Daren't try full out with those two fellows watching," he added. "But I'm going to take the car round the track about half-throttle. Anybody care for a jaunt?" he added. "One of you can time me."

Of course, they all cared for a jaunt. As the racing-car would only take one passenger, however, choice was restricted. Clara, naturally, was the first choice, though Jack promised them all rides in turn, and Babs, as the most reliable, was given the stopwatch.

"Right-ho. Jump in, Clara!" Jack grinned. "Babs, stand by the pits. I'll take the bus back to the starting point and give a yell when I'm ready. Raise your hand when you get to the full minute."

Babs flushed. With Mabs and Leila peering over her shoulder, she stood by. Clara, meantime, laughing all over her face, had climbed into the machine. Jack climbed in beside her, and with a roar the big racer reversed, halting finally at the starting point. Jack gave a shout.

"Right-ho, Babs!"

Babs watched. One, two, three—

"Go!" she cried, and raised her hand.

And off with a roar the big car went, and back with a breathless jerk went Clara as it shot along the great concrete track. Crash! went the gear, the monster shivering and snorting like some live thing. Clara laughed as she clung on.

"Go on!" she cried.

Click! and now Jack was in third. Before him the needle was mounting—sixty—sixty-five miles per hour—then click again, and they were in top gear, racing along at an effortless seventy. Jack grinned.

"Like it, kid?"

"Oh, lovely!" Clara yelled.

"Stand a bit more?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Then hold tight!"

And whiz went the car, causing Clara to grip the side. Seventy-five—eighty—eighty-five! Clara gasped breathlessly and thrilled deliciously—whoops, what a speed!

Exhilarating, thrilling, that ride. Everything seemed to whiz in a blur in the burst of speed which Jack put on. Neyer, never had Clara thrilled with more tingling delight when, rushing up the great banked bends, it seemed for a moment that she was looping the loop. And yet, despite the thrills, she had a feeling of utter confidence, of utter calm. Rippling!

It seemed to Clara impossible to go much faster, but Jack knew what he was about. When he had told his sister that he meant to use only half-throttle he meant only half the speed of which the car was capable—for Jack, with one eye on the two watching men, knew that they were probably timing the performance, and had no wish that they should know the new carburettor was in action.

Round and round again, and Babs, timing, jumped. Golly, the car was lapping at over eighty!

"Fourth lap," Jack grinned. "Going some, eh? Feel sick yet, kid?"

"Bosh! Sick yourself!" Clara yelled back.

Jack laughed, enjoying it as much as she. Four laps he completed before bringing the car to a standstill. Then it was Babs' turn to have a ride—taken a little more leisurely this time. After that, Mabs, and finally Leila. They were all flushed and glowing when the rides were finished.

"Gees! I guess that bus can hop some!" Leila breathed. "What was top speed, Jack?"

"Eighty-five," Jack said, and grinned. "But that is just a crawl to what it can do. Wait till you see Dick driving her in the Two Thou. You'll see speed then that'll make your hair flatten out straight!"

"Says you!" Leila sniffed. "My hair is straight."

"Well, then, it will make it curl," Jack grinned. "But gather round now while I take off the new gadget and re-fix the old one. Helen Hunter's friends might come spying round the car when my back is turned."

They gathered round. The job was finished at last, and with the new carburettor stored away in his overalls, Jack, calling one of the mechanics to look after the machine, signalled to them to follow him back into the stadium.

Glowing and thrilling they followed him—really, this was turning out to be one of the most wonderful afternoons they had ever spent. But approaching the entrance to the tunnel, they received a shock.

For there stood a girl—a sour-faced, bad-tempered girl, whose greeny-grey eyes were glittering with an amber flame of spite—Helen Hunter! They halted at the sight of her, and she, baring their way, glared.

"And now," she said, "you'll jolly well come back to school with me! Miss Venn has sent me for you, and Miss Venn is going to give it to you hot! Come back this minute!"

Babs Takes a Slim Chance!



MUTINIOUSLY the four chums stared back at Helen.

Just for a moment they were taken aback—but only for a moment. Then scornfully they rallied. They didn't believe it—they couldn't believe it. They had Dulcia's own authority to be here—Helen, as usual, was bluffing; Helen was just trying to trick them.

"Well!" Helen barked.

"Water!" retorted Leila Carroll.

"Eh?"

"Water—stuff you put in wells, I guess!" Leila said, and the chums chuckled. "We weren't born yesterday, Helen, and we know you too well to be bluffed by that yarn. We're stopping."

Helen's eyes flamed.

"You mean, you refuse to come back?"

"That's it," Babs said.

"I tell you, Miss Venn sent me for you."

"Bosh! We're stopping," Clara said determinedly.

Helen glared. Then she saw Jack Trevlyn. Jack was looking rather grim. Whatever Babs & Co. did was always all right with Jack, and distrusting Helen as he did, he trusted Babs & Co.'s interpretation of her action as Babs & Co. themselves interpreted it. Helen clenched her teeth.

"All right," she vowed. "But wait—oh, my hat, you'll be sorry for this! Just wait till I see Miss Venn! Just wait till I come back—and next time I'll come with a mistress. Perhaps you'll believe then."

"Perhaps," Mabs said, unconvinced. Helen treated them to a furious glower. Unperturbed, the chums watched her as she turned on her heel and founced off. Jack grinned.

"Well, I must say you seem to know how to handle 'em," he said. "But what about coming along to the club-room now?"

"Oh, please!" Babs beamed.

And off with Jack they went, eager and agog for new experiences and new thrills. They reached the great room known as the Rest, and there, waiting to meet them, was Elmer Couzlar himself. He beamed.

"Sure, here we are," he said affably. "I reckon I've got the boys all lined up for you. You're in luck, too, I'll say. Come on."

The chums went in, and then blinked. A great club-room, panelled and festooned in preparation for the great dance which was to follow the Two Thousand Guineas on Saturday, was crowded. Men in racing kit stood or lounged about; some reading, some talking, some playing games. But all turned at once as the girls entered.

And then—what an adventurous hour for Babs & Co. What breathless names were those that came to their ears, and how boyish, how jolly everyone was. How gladly they posed for Leila's photographs, and how heartily signed Mabs' autograph album!

Mabs laughed out of sheer excited pleasure as one by one her pages were filled up. Leila exposed every film she had, and glowed with happy jubilation at the result of her efforts. Then Elmer Couzlar challenged Clara to a game of darts, and Clara, to her own stupefaction, and amid the loud cheering of the "boys" won, to be immediately challenged again by her brother Jack—this game she did not win.

Lovely time. Glorious time. Big men, these—but how friendly, how eager to please. And wouldn't Bessie Bunter have loved to be there, with the drinks and the cakes and the other good things with which the Cliff House chums were plied. And then there was pin billiards—Clara was something of an expert at that, and really beat Jack all ends up. Finally Elmer Couzlar himself came along with a suggestion.

"Say, what about a wind-up?" he asked. "Trevlyn here, Melton Cabb"—referring to a famous driver whose name was a household word—"little me, and Tykor Tree—gather round, boys. See." And Elmer fished in his pocket and planked down two five-pound notes. "Say, what about a race between the four of us—on the track—with one of the girls each as passengers? Steady driving, of course."

"Oh, my hat!" cried Clara, her eyes shining.

Good-naturedly the challenge was taken up. Thrilled, delighted, the chums accompanied their genial hosts on to the track. The starter was pressed into service, and with Babs with Jack, Leila with Couzlar, Mabs with Melton Cabb, and Clara with Tykor Tree, the great race started. And then what thrills!

Three—four times the cars whizzed round the track; first one leading, then another, while beside the stands Helen's two friends still watched. And this time Jack, without any fear of displaying the new carburettor, went all out.

Whiz! Zoom! The music of racing engines filled the air. In a hurricane rush the four whizzed round. Now Jack was in the lead; now Couzlar; now Couzlar had given away to Cabb, and Cabb, in his turn, was giving way to Tree. Such a race, such a thrill!

The last lap came, Jack and Couzlar fighting every inch of the way. Like two mad things they rushed towards the finishing-post. The flag dropped. And—

"Couzlar's the winner!" the starter announced.

"Which means," Couzlar grinned, "I can keep my own cash, boys. Enjoyed it, girls?"

Had they? Flushed, sparkling-eyed and laughing, they turned towards the tunnel. At the entrance they were met by one of the stewards. He approached Babs.

"Miss Redfern, there is a woman and a girl outside. A woman named Miss Bullivant and a girl named Miss Hunter. Will you step out and see them, please?"

And Babs, gazing dismayed at her chums, knew then that Helen had not been bluffing. It seemed they were to pay the price for their very happy afternoon.

THEY DID.

Miss Bullivant was there, accompanied by Helen. And Miss Bullivant, very angry and indignant, ordered them back to school at once. They arrived to find a Miss Venn no less angry than Miss Bullivant. And the outset of it was:

"Two hundred lines, two black marks, and a special bad report home!" Clara groaned afterwards. "Oh, my hat!

Isn't that cat Helen laughing up her sleeve!"

Helen, for once, had certainly scored, but the chums were more concerned about Dulcia than themselves. For, of course, they had heard now what had happened. They knew that Dulcia was in disgrace.

"We ought to see old Dulcia," Babs said. "After all, it was through us that she got caught in Helen's trap. Let's go along and buck her up, shall we?"

"Good idea," voted Clara. And in a body they went along, to find Dulcia looking very gloomy and considerably worried. She brushed their sympathies aside, however.

"It's not that which is worrying me, girls," she said. "Fortunately, Miss Venn only gave me a severe reprimand. I—I've heard from Dick."



"NOW, Mr. Dick Fairbrother," said the man grimly, and whipped off the cap. Then they all gasped. "Kik-Clara Trevlyn!" stuttered Helen Hunter. Clara smiled coolly. "Little me!" she agreed. "What are you going to do about it?"

"Your brother?" cried Mabs.

"Yes. He—he phoned this afternoon—where from, I don't know. But—and Dulcia bit her lips. "Oh, goodness, he's a fool!" she exclaimed. "Barbara, how can he drive in the race?"

Babs started.

"He—he said that he was going to?"

"Yes. He told me to be sure to be there—and to bring you girls with me. He said he was going to win. But he can't win. They won't even allow him to drive, will they? As soon as ever they see him, he'll be arrested. And then—"

Dulcia paused and looked so worried all at once that Babs' heart felt a stab.

"Perhaps," she suggested hopefully, "he's got something up his sleeve? Perhaps he's able to prove his innocence?"

But Dulcia shook her head.

"No," she denied, "I—I asked him that. He said, as far as that was concerned, there was no change in the situation—and, Barbara, how can he prove his innocence if he hasn't got the money? The case looks blacker than ever against him now! The very fact that he's shut himself off from his employer for so long is all against him. If—if only"—Dulcia gulped—"there

was some way of proving his innocence and—"

If only—yes. But what way? Long after they had left Dulcia, Babs & Co. gave themselves up to consideration of that question, but for the life of them they could see no loophole. The only suggestion which seemed even faintly hopeful was that which Babs made—and to be sure, that inspired nobody. What Babs said was:

"It's pretty certain that this plot has been laid by those two men outside—Helen's pals. They must know all about it."

"Well?" grunted Clara. "And our only link with those two men is Helen," Babs went on. "Therefore, watch Helen!"

Leila pouted. "And what," she demanded, "do we get for doing that?"

"Well, it might lead to a clue," Babs said vaguely.

Such a remote possibility was it, however, that not one of them was inclined to accept it. Even Babs herself felt the feebleness of it, and did not press it.

But to Babs it seemed the only chance, and, because her chums were so unenthusiastic, she resolved to carry out her idea herself. From that moment she haunted the Sixth Form corridor.

Nothing happened.

Prep came. Still nothing had happened. Call-over came, and still Helen's conduct was above reproach. After call-over came supper, with Helen presiding over the meal. After that bedtime, with Helen putting out the lights. In bed, Babs lay and thought and thought, and presently another half-hope jumped within her mind. Supposing there was a clue in Helen's study—some note, some letter, perhaps?

Was it worth investigation?

On the surface, it seemed not. But, in desperate circumstances such as these, any tiny loophole seemed worthy of examination.

Silently she rose. In the darkness she slipped on her slippers and dressing-

OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS

As you all know, PATRICIA is your very own friend—young enough to understand all schoolgirl joys, yet old enough to be helpful and wise over schoolgirl problems. She writes for you week by week in these pages, telling you of her own doings, of things to do and things to talk about—all in that charming way so typical of her.



A HOT water bottle in the bed to take the chill off clean, fresh sheets, and toast for tea!

These, in your Patricia's opinion, are two of winter's greatest treats.

The thought of that hot water bottle, perhaps in a snug pink cover, lying upstairs makes going to bed not nearly such an unwilling business as it often is in the summer!

White toast for tea— In my opinion, nothing can beat it in the winter. Even strawberries and cream, or my favourite chocolate eclairs, seem a bit uninteresting on such occasions.

You must have noticed—like your Patricia—that there is no toast like that made in front of an open fire. I wonder why this is. Can you suggest a reason?

At our home we generally have toast for breakfast, but this is made under the grill on the gas-cooker—because there are no big fires going at that time of the morning.

Nice as it is, it is certainly never as delicious as that afternoon toast my small brother and I make for ourselves and for mother in front of our sitting-room fire!

Next time you have fireside toast, you just notice.

● A Delicious Snack

How this Patricia of yours will talk about food! For now, if you please, I have a jolly good sandwich filling to tell you about—one that may be new to you.

Cut some fairly thin slices of bread and butter, and then spread chocolate over. ("Chocolate spread" can be bought all ready in a little glass pot quite cheaply—or you can grate a bar of chocolate up, if you'd rather.)

Then slice a banana over this chocolate. Place a lid of bread-and-butter on top, wrap the sandwich up in greaseproof paper, and take to school to eat at "break"—or play-time, if you prefer it.

Yum! It is truly delicious—and so sustaining, too!

I must add that if you had a plate of these sandwiches at your next little tea-party, they'd all vanish before you could even say "what will you have next?"

● For Writers-To-Be

Here's a little test, for you who'd like to be writers when you grow up, to give yourself some time.

Take the word "song," for example, and see how many verbs you can think of to describe it. Verbs, mind you, not adjectives.

What word would you put next?

I think if I were put to the test I'd say "Just as I reached my seat the song swelled."

A song can also—break out, descend upon, dwindle, express, evolve, lament, emerge, moderate, quaver, pierce, pour, recapture, ripple, uplift, vibrate, or shatter.

For you who really like words, and appreciate the differences in their meanings, I think verb-discovering is quite fascinating, don't you?

And talking about words, have you ever heard of that wonderful spaniel dog, whose name is Exquisite Pride of Ware?

Just say it over to yourself out loud—isn't it charming?

Though I expect at home Exquisite Pride is called Hobo, or Rags, or something equally chummy. (The other is his stage name, so to speak.)

● A Smart Two-Piece

I know I've mentioned boleros to you a good many times during the year—I mean during last year—so I hope you won't shriek if I dare to do so again.

For, quite seriously, these snappy little jackets have come to stay for a long while yet. And they're still at the very height of fashion, both for schoolgirls and grown-ups.

I'm sure you're thinking that the little two-piece in the picture here is merely one of those garments you dream of possessing.

But actually, you know, it was made—from a very simple tweed dress.

If you're not terribly good at "making-over" things, you may hesitate about chopping up a dress! But I'm sure if you showed mother the picture here she'd approve—and help.

Naturally, I'm not going to suggest you start hacking at a perfectly good dress. You see, this idea is for a dress which has grown too tight for you across the bodice.

The bodice part is cut off from the skirt. Elastic is threaded through the top of the

skirt part, to make this fit your waist snugly. Then an opening is made right down the front of the bodice part, from neck to waist, and invisibly hemmed.

This makes a snappy little jacket—but with a raw edge at the bottom. So around this may be sewn the tweed belt from the dress—giving a smart "band" effect, that looks frightfully costly.

Now instead of a dress, you have a two-piece, and under the jacket, tucked into the skirt, you wear favourite blouses or jerseys.

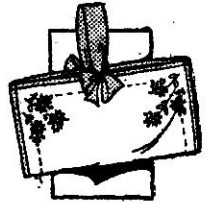
● A Hankie Case

Here's a charming little hankie case, like a basket, that you can make, very quickly, from one of the hankies you had at Christmas.

Choose any pretty hankie for this—but the bigger the better.

Fold it in half, and oversew the two side edges together. Then make a handle of ribbon in any colour to match the hankie. Tie a bow at each end and sew in place.

If you make this successfully, as I'm sure you will, it's an idea for a present for a chum's birthday, isn't it?



● A New Hem

Now here's something that's very useful to know.

How to shorten a macintosh that's just too long?

You can turn a hem up and machine it, I know, but often this isn't too good for the rubber.

The best plan is to glue the new hem in position. And if you do this by smoothing adhesive tape—the sort you use for cuts—along the edge of the hem, you'll find the hem will keep in position wonderfully.

Then, when you shoot up a bit more, and it is necessary for the mac to be lengthened again, off comes the adhesive tape, without leaving any marks to show through on the right side.

Did you realise that there is no risk of milk boiling over if you place an ordinary teaspoon in the saucepan with the milk?

Bye-bye now until next week, my pets!
Your friend,

Patricia



STAY-AT-HOME DAYS

—and here's a spot of knitting for you to while away the time when you feel you'd like to be busy.

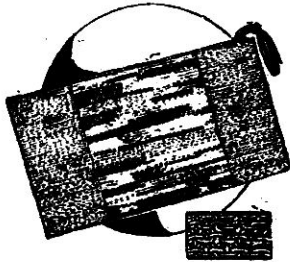
MUCH as we all like to get out into the fresh air, even on wintry days, there are many occasions when we just can't, aren't there?

When there is a piercing east wind blowing, for example, and we already have a suspicion of a cough.

When we have been in bed a day or two with a cold (or perhaps we could call it 'flu, to make it sound more important) and then come downstairs—we feel quite fit, yet the weather just isn't the sort that a "delicate invalid" should go out in so soon after leaving her warm bed!

It's then, isn't it, that we look around and wish we had a spot of knitting on hand.

Nothing difficult, mind you, for that might be a bore. Nothing that would take too long, for in that case we might never finish it, especially as we're going back to school on Monday. Something easy, then, but useful, of



course. And, if possible, something that won't cost much.

A GAY SCARF

So what about starting with a scarf?

That's certainly easy, and will assuredly be smart—on one condition. That is, if you make it dashing! gay. There's no such thing this year as colours being too bright. The only crime in fashion's world is to be dull. The louder the colour, the snappier the wearer. So there you are!

For the scarf I suggest you fish out all the oddments of wool left over from mother's orgy of winter knitting. I'm quite certain she's got tons—or at least pounds—of wool tucked away, even if some of it is a bit scrappy. But that's just what you want.

On No. 7 needles cast on about 40 stitches. Then knit in plain knitting, joining on the different wool to make stripes.

Knit for the required length and cast off. Add a knotted fringe at each end—made with pieces of wool in all colours.

Now you're ready to look all sportive—as if your brother is going to be one of the 'Varsity Rowing Eight this year at least!

A BAG, TOO!

That scarf having been such a success, I think we might have a shot at something else, don't you?

There is just one expense attached to the making of this useful pochette shown in the picture. That is the zipper you'll require to sew along the top. It costs a penny an inch of zipper, so wait till you've



finished the bag before going to buy just what you want.

The pochette is made in three pieces—so again you may use oddments of wool. For the smaller side strips, cast 10 stitches on to No. 7 needles and knit for 9 inches.

For the centre piece, cast on 20 stitches in a different colour and again knit for 9 inches.

Use different colours for each strip, if you like, or make the two side strips the same colour.

Now sew the three pieces together and fold over. Join along the sides, and then measure along the top.

WITH A ZIPPER

Buy your zipper to fit exactly, then sew it in position. You do this by over-sewing the tape attached on each side of the zipper to the knitting at each side of the opening.

Make a multi-coloured tassel of all the wools you have used, to thread through the loop at the end of the zipper—and your bag is complete.

If you'd like to line it, that would be a grand idea. But I leave it to you.

Carry this bag at week-ends when you are wearing your new hand-knit scarf, and you'll feel like a walking advertisement for the well-dressed schoolgirl.

JUST FOR FUN

How to tell your own—and your chums'—lucky numbers from your birth dates.

CAROL and Anne were walking along the road, as they often did together, for they were great chums and were in the same Form at school.

"I'm sick of this rain and I'm fed up with the pictures, too," said Anne. "So will you come round to my home to-night, Carol, after you've done your homework? I'll tell you your lucky number then!"

"Will you?" Carol was obviously impressed. "I didn't know you were a witch or fortune-teller or gipsy, or whatever it is you think you are—" she began.

Anne wiggled the umbrella she was sheltering them with.

"I won't hold it over you if you're going to be so smart," she said flatly. "I'll show you to-night."

(NOTE.—For you who remember, and are interested, Carol is still Form captain and surprisingly popular. But she says she's giving it up at the end of this term for she's never had to work so hard in all her life.)

HOW IT'S DONE

To find a chum's lucky number, you must ask for the day, month, and year of her birth.

Each of these sets of figures must be

reduced to a single figure, by adding together when necessary. These single figures are then added together, and this number is again added to make a number.

That is the lucky number.

But I'm quite sure two examples would be easier.

Let's take the 13th of May, 1926—perhaps you know someone born on that day?

The day of birth is the 13th. To make a single number you must add 1 and 3 together. That makes

The month is the fifth 4
 (already a single number) 5

The year, 1926. Add these figures together: 1+9+2+6 equals 18. But that's two figures, so we must now add 1 and 8 together, which makes 9

Add all these together and you have 18

That again is two figures, so these must be added: 1+8, which equals 9.

There you have it. The lucky number of the girl born on 13th May, 1926, is 9.

We'll just do one more, very quickly. The 18th September, 1920. Add 1 and 8.



That's 9. September is the 9th month. Add 1+9+2+0. That makes 1+2 which is 3. So we add 9, 9, and 3 together, which makes 21. Add 2 and 1 together.

That leaves us with a lucky number 9 of 3.

You can make use of your lucky number in all sorts of ways. Your lucky days in each month are those which are multiples of your lucky number.

Say it's 9, then your lucky days are the 18th and 27th of the month. If your lucky number is 3, your lucky days are the 6th, 9th, 12th, 15th, and so on.

I'm sure you have the idea now. So try it on your chums.

(Continued from page 11)

gown and softly padded downstairs. Then suddenly she looked up.

Across Big Hall a figure, fully dressed, was fitting. Helen Hunter herself!

Babs caught her breath. She watched as Helen disappeared. She heard the faint squeak as a window went up. No further did Babs pause. In a flash she was nipping down the stairs, and, careless of the fact that she was clad only in her dormitory attire, slipped over the window-sill after Helen. Outside bright moonlight filtered through the trees.

And towards a dark patch beneath those trees Helen was fitting. Babs fancied she saw a movement in the shadows as she stole in pursuit.

Helen had halted now. She heard her speaking in low accents. Now she had got close enough to see that she was talking to two men. She crouched low.

The man with the small moustache was speaking.

"And those papers—you remember them? We gave them to you here the day we chased Dick Fairbrother here."

Babs held her breath.

"Yes; but what—" Helen said.

"Well, listen to this."

The man's voice dropped still lower. Babs had to strain every nerve to hear what he said. For five minutes he spoke in a low voice, some of the words escaping the ears of the listener altogether. Then suddenly Babs rose.

Silently she fitted back among the trees to the lobby window. Breathlessly she let herself in. Once again she crossed Big Hall, but this time she did not turn her face towards the stairs which led to the Fourth Form dormitory. Instead, she kept straight on, bound for the Sixth Form quarters and Helen Hunter's study.

Such a Race!



"IS that the programme, Barbara?" Dulcia Fairbrother spoke shakily.

The scene was the great motor-racing track of the Aerodrome Stadium.

Crowded that stadium, the magnificent stand packed almost solidly. How many thousands of people were there to watch the famous Two Thousand Guineas race it was impossible to tell, but the crowd was something in the nature of a record. For word had already gone round that, in addition to one of the most exciting races in the stadium's history, there might be a dramatic development in connection with the absence of Dick Fairbrother.

In one of the places of honour Dulcia Fairbrother, Babs, Mabs, Clara, Leila, Marjorie Hazeldene, and Bessie Bunter sat. They were near the starting-point, with an unspoiled view of practically the whole of the circular concrete track. And excitement was already at fever pitch.

For the next great race was the plum of the programme—the Two Thousand Guineas.

Babs, with a sympathetic glance at Dulcia's white, strained face, had handed over the programme. Meantime, she took a look round.

On the track the cars were already arriving at the starting-post. She recognised the black-moustached man she now knew as Jim Mopant. She saw behind him the great, genial figure of Elmer Couzlar. Farther along, near the tunnel, she saw Mopant's accom-

plish, and with him two stiff-looking men who, although in plain clothes, simply shrieked detectives. Above them, in the stand, leaning over the rail, was Helen Hunter.

So the stage was set for the drama—*if* drama should come.

Dulcia, flicking through the programme, gave a little exclamation.

"He—he's here!" she said, and her finger quivered on her brother's name. "He's not cancelled it. But, Barbara, those detectives? Oh, surely he must know? Surely he must have been warned?"

"Dulcia, cheer up!" Babs said softly.

"Barbara, you—you saw Jack before we came in. What did he say?"

"Just nothing," Babs muttered. "But look!"

She pointed. More cars were arriving now. There was a great commotion at the starting-point as they drove into position. But there was still no sign of the Magic Flash—still no sign of Dick Fairbrother.

Babs looked at her watch. Two minutes before the flag dropped! Had Dick, at the last moment, scratched his entry, and with his entry the chance of proving to the world the sterling worth of his new carburettor and earning two thousand guineas?

She didn't believe it. Such an action was too utterly unlike the fearless Dick Fairbrother.

And yet—if he arrived! There were the police ready to arrest him! There was his rival ready to hand him over! And there, waiting in a crimson car, was his motor-racing enemy, Jim Morant, wearing a confident smile on his face.

One minute and a half!

Then suddenly Dulcia leaned forward.

Fiercely she grabbed at Babs' wrist.

"Barbara, look!"

Babs looked. Then she became silent. Strange, the silence which descended then in contrast to the cheers which had greeted the arrival of every other competitor in the race!

Along the track came the glistening Magic Flash, and in the driving-seat a helmeted and goggled figure whose features it was impossible to recognise. A mutter went round.

"Barbara, it—it is Dick!" Dulcia muttered.

"Barbara—"

"Dulcia!" Babs muttered huskily.

She herself tensed. The eyes of everyone were upon that green car as suddenly the two detectives stepped full in its path. The car stopped.

"They—they've got him!" Dulcia muttered, and looked ready to swoon.

"They—"

And then she jumped. They all jumped. For the driver, responding to an apparent order from one of the detectives, had removed his goggles. Clara shrieked.

"It's Jack—Jack! Oh, my hat! And they thought it was Dick! Jack is taking Dick's place in the race!"

She cheered. Everybody was cheering now. Mopant's accomplice, a black scowl on his face, had stepped back. The two police officers were looking red-faced and sheepish. With a cheery grin and a wave of his hand to the girls in the stand, Jack ran the car to the starting-point, waiting in line with the others.

Dulcia shook her head.

"But—but I don't understand," she said shakily. "Jack can't drive in this race. If he does, and wins, he will only be disqualified. The rules distinctly say that."

"Funny," frowned Clara, "he said nothing to us about taking Dick's place. But look! The flag!"

The chums held their breath. The

flag was going up now in the starter's hand. There came the roar of powerful exhausts. The crowd held its breath.

Now—

"They're off!"

The line of cars shot forward—all save one. That car was the car driven by Jack Trevlyn!

"Why, what—" cried Babs.

Then—

"Lul-look!" shrieked Bessie Bunter.

For suddenly Jack had turned. The other cars were half-way along the straight then. They saw him rise, they saw him leap out. They heard, even above the roar of thrumming engines and thundering exhausts, his electrifying cry of "Dick!" and they gasped as, rising from behind a pile of oil-drums in the pit beneath them, a lithe figure bounded to its feet, and even as Jack leapt out of the car raced towards it. There came a cry.

"Dick Fairbrother! Look, it's Fairbrother himself!"

"Dick!" gasped Dulcia.

Dick it was, helmetless and goggleless. Now, with one leap, he had jumped into the car. One swift touch of the hand he gave Jack, then he gripped the wheel. The two police officers came dashing forward.

"Stop! Stop!"

Dick did not stop. Click! went the clutch. Then, with nearly half a lap to make up, the big car was shooting away.

Thrilled and breathless, the Cliff House chums watched. The detectives waved their arms, while Jack, standing near the pits, waved cheerily and confidently.

But Dick was out of the detectives' reach then. That last-minute ruse of his and Jack's had foiled them. They could not stop the race—the only thing they could do was to wait.

Dulcia, white-faced, tense, sat still.

Now, with a roar, the cars were zooming round, completing the first lap. Ten laps was the distance to be covered, but at the end of the first Dick was still half a lap in the rear. Mopant on the other hand was pulling away, pursued hotly by the American ace, Couzlar.

Second lap—Dick still behind. Mopant and the American were fighting it out now, when suddenly flames enveloped Couzlar's exhaust, and he had to draw into the pits. Mopant seemed to have the race well in hand now—or so it seemed. Even Tykor Tree could not catch him. Third lap—fourth lap. Now—hey, what was this?

Look at the Magic Flash!

The Magic Flash had been moving steadily. Now suddenly it leapt into life. As though its first speed had been bottom gear and it had suddenly clicked into top, it leapt. Half a lap's lag was changed in a flash to a quarter of a lap. When the fourth lap was half through, he was already touching the tail of the nearest car.

"Dick! Dick!" cried Barbara.

"Oh, Dick!" gasped Dulcia.

"It's the new carburettor!" shrieked Mabs. "Go it, Dick!"

Below them Jack Trevlyn was whooping and dancing like some small boy on a sunny beach.

Fifth lap. Look at Dick! Zip! He was past the rearguard. Now on top of the next. A quarter way round he had caught him, was passing him—now streaking like light for the next car. The crowd held their breath.

They forgot the drama of Dick Fairbrother's private affairs in the utter and amazing performance of his car.

Sixth lap. Here he came again. Five hopelessly beaten opponents lay in his rear now, and Dick was all out for

those in front of him. With every nerve strained, with every car flat out, that looked still an impossible task. But look how he was going!

Fifth lap ended with Dick lying ninth.

But Mopant, in the red car, was nearly a lap ahead.

Whiz! Zoom! Dick roared past again. They had a glimpse of his face, dead white, grimly set. Oh, goodness! That wasn't a car he was driving—it was just a flash of lightning! Just look at him!

"Oh, kik-crumps! I sus-say, you know, I—I'll have to have a lemonade!" Bessie Bunter stuttered. "This excitement makes me feel quite faint!"

On, Dick! Look, here he was in the eighth place! Now seventh, now sixth! Sixth lap—and pulling up all the time. Fourth place—now third. Seventh lap. Whew! What a race! Dick had passed No. 3, was overhauling No. 2. No. 2 was passed, and with Mopant lying less than ten lengths ahead the

less silence. For as Dick's car stopped and Jack dashed out to meet him, out came the detectives, and out of his car, furious and beaten, climbed Mopant. From Dulcia came a piercing cry as the leading detective's hand fell upon Dick Fairbrother's shoulder.

His words came plainly to the ears of the ohuma.

"Richard Fairbrother, it is my duty to arrest you on a charge of appropriating one thousand pounds in notes belonging to Mr. Mailley Marvell!"

Surprise Packet!



AND then, in a moment—uproar, commotion, confusion. The crowd, electrified into hero worship by the valiant race Dick had won, were stamping, shouting.

Dulcia had slumped back in her seat; Babs & Co., all vibrant alarm and

charge! He took that money—not to steal it, but simply to get Dick arrested so that he should not take part in this race!

Helen Hunter glared.

"It's a lie!" she shouted.

"Yes, a lie!" Mopant came forward. "A lie!" he cried, "This girl is Fairbrother's sister. They're acting in partnership. Perhaps," he sneered, "you know where the money is? Perhaps Dick Fairbrother handed it over to you?"

"Why, you rotter!" Jack Trevlyn cried and clenched his fist. Just in the nick of time Clara grabbed his wrist.

The police officers, frankly puzzled, turned to Dulcia.

"Is that right?"

"Most certainly it is not right!"

"No?" Then it was Helen's turn.

"Wait a minute," she said. "I think I know something about this. Dulcia has got that money. If you want to know where it is, search her bureau in her study at Cliff House School!" She



THE race track steward jerked a thumb over his shoulder. "Miss Redfern, there is a woman and a girl outside," he said. "A woman named Miss Bullivant and a girl named Helen Hunter." Babs & Co. gasped in dismay. The mistress and prefect had come to fetch them. It seemed they were to pay the price for their happy afternoon on the track.

race was now between him and his rival. Ninth lap!

The crowd did not sit up. They shot up.

Like a thunderbolt the Magic Flash hurled forward. Round the banking it roared, and so fast did it travel along the straight that it seemed its wheels hardly touched the ground at all. The red car was all out now—doing terrific speed—but terrific as that speed was, Dick was even faster. The gap was closing. Tenth lap!

Tenth lap!

The spectators were hoarse.

What a race!

What a race, indeed! Still the Magic Flash was coming on. Half a lap to go, only ten yards between them. Now they were drawing level. Now they had drawn level, with Dick cutting down from the banking below Mopant. Now Dick was past, streaking for the winning line. Look, there went the checkered flag! It dropped.

Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah! Fairbrother had won!

The stand shook.

But—

Now—a gasp. Now a sudden breath-

indignation, were swarming down the steps on to the track just in time to meet Helen Hunter racing from the opposite direction.

Dick Fairbrother, pale, but very determined, stood by Jack Trevlyn's side, the hand of the detective still upon him.

"I tell you, you are wrong!" he cried. "And before you make fools of yourselves, listen to me. That money was taken from my flat—"

"Liar!" snarled Jim Mopant.

"Why you—"

"Stick to the point!" The two officers, looking up at the crowd, seemed rather nervous. "Our information is that you took that money, that you still have it."

"I haven't!" Dick Fairbrother cried.

"He's hidden it!" snapped Mopant.

"Has he?" And Babs looked round. It was Dulcia who had spoken; Dulcia who now came hurrying down the steps. "My brother is no thief!" she cried ringingly. "And if"—And suddenly her eyes blazed as she swung round, pointing at Mopant—"If you want the money, why not ask him where it is?" she cried. "He faked this

flushed a mocking look of triumph at the head girl. "I think," she said, "you'll find it in a long envelope bearing three red seals."

"Why—"

"Wait a minute!" The older of the two detectives fastened a sharp look on Helen. "How do you know this?"

"Because," Helen replied scornfully, "I watched her when she hid it! She didn't know all the time that I was looking through her study window. I didn't realise what it was then, but I can guess now."

There was a pause. The leading detective looked grim.

"Then in that case," he said, "I think we'd better go to the school."

"To search for the envelope with the three seals?" asked Babs.

"Yes."

"Then," and Babs, her eyes suddenly shining with suppressed excitement, plunged her hand into her pocket, "perhaps," she said, "I can save you the trouble." She looked with scorn at Helen, who glared back. "I think, before you do anything else you ought to listen to me."

"And what do you know about it?"

16. "With Babs & Co. to Help Him!"

"Everything, I think," Babs smiled, though she still kept her hand in her pocket. "For the last four or five days Helen here has been in contact with these men. When they arrived here they gave her an envelope with three seals—"

"Barbara, you fibber!" cried Helen. "The other night," Babs smoothly went on, "Helen met these men in the grounds of Cliff House School. They mentioned something about the envelope. They told Helen to hide it in Dulcia's study. I didn't know then what was in the envelope. I suspected some plot against Dulcia, however, and so I took the liberty, before Helen came back, of going to her study and searching for the packet. Well, I found it—"

Helen recoiled

"You—you—"

"But knowing that Helen would expect to find it, I faked a similar packet," Babs said. "That packet I filled with blank foolscap sheets. And that," she added, "is the packet you will find in Dulcia's study, if you search—the packet Helen herself hid."

Helen had turned quite pale. Jim Mopant was looking uneasy now.

"I suspected then a plot," Babs went on, "but, as I said, I didn't know what was in the packet. My one aim was to save Dulcia. I said nothing to Dulcia nor to anyone else about what I had done in case I should have done the wrong thing—in which case, of course, I should have taken the blame."

"I'm glad now that I didn't say anything," she added, staring at Helen's ashen face. "If I'd told Dulcia, these people would have tried to make out I'd been acting as an accomplice to her. If you want to prove my story, go and look in the bureau Helen has described. You'll find the envelope there full of plain paper."

"Oh, Babs!" breathed Dulcia.

"But—but where is the money, then?" the police officer asked.

"Here!" Babs said, and out of her

pocket came her hand, and in it was a sealed packet. And from Helen went a startled cry. From Mopant came a sudden, stupefied gasp, and turning, his own face ashen now, he darted away. But he did not get far. The constable on duty at the foot of the stairs barred his passage, gripping his arm.

And when the leading detective slit open the package and examined the contents within there came a murmur from the crowd which grew to a roar:

"Let him go! Let him go!"

The detectives looked at each other. "I think," one said, "we'd better. Fairbrother, I'm sorry! Naturally, we shall want you; but this time, I think, only as witness. Constable, hold that man—and hold this girl. The next scene in this little drama," he added grimly, "will be at Cliff House School. I don't doubt your story, young lady," he said to Babs, "but as an officer I must investigate it."

"And as a grateful chum I'm going to do something else," Dick Fairbrother laughed; and before Babs realised his intention he had stepped forward and caught her up. And what a cheer the crowd gave then, as the hero of the afternoon planted a kiss upon Babs' rosy, blushing cheek.

AND AFTER THAT—

The investigation at Cliff House was, of course, a mere formality, but it was a formality which satisfied the police, and proved Babs' story to the hilt.

Jim Mopant and his confederate, Ron Smith, spent that night in a prison cell, and that night Helen, passionately protesting that she never knew the contents of the packet, but had simply kept it because Jim Mopant—who turned out to be her cousin—had asked her to, was suspended from her prefectship for a period of one month.

And that night, too, there was a great celebration in the school when Dick and Jack, no longer under suspicion, came

to celebrate in the Fourth Form Common-room, escorted thither by a happy-faced Dulcia. If Dick was the hero of the hour, the heroine, most certainly, was Babs, and with Babs, her chums.

And so Dick, thanks to the chums, came into his own. And Helen, frightened out of her life by her lucky escape, was a much more subdued girl for many weeks afterwards. Whether she really told the truth about the contents of the envelope will never be known, and Dulcia, so grateful was she that the clouds had cleared away, never seriously pressed the point, especially as Helen's friends, when brought before the magistrate, confessed to their own share in the plot, and protested that Helen had only been an unconscious dupe. They, somewhat luckily, got off with a heavy fine.

"Which," Dick Fairbrother told Dulcia and the chums when he heard the news, "serves them jolly well right. But I'm glad, y'know, that they didn't get gaoled. Nobody, in the end, really pinched that money, and Mopant at least has had a lesson, because, in addition to the fine and the disgrace, he's been warned off every race track in England. But, kids, I've got something else to tell you," he added gleefully. "And this is something that'll interest you. This morning I launched the Fairbrother Carburettor Company, Ltd. I've got plenty of wealthy backers."

"Oh, Dick!" cried Babs, her eyes shining.

"And," Dick said, with a grin, "whether you like it or not, every one of you is a shareholder. Because, you see," he added softly, "I want all my chums to share my good luck, and so I've given you each ten shares free of charge."

"Which," gurgled Jack Trevlyn, "calls for a doughnut each, I think. Come to the tuckshop, girlies, and have one with me—also free of charge!"

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

JEMIMA CARSTAIRS, ALWAYS A STRANGE GIRL, BECOMES



The Most BAFFLING GIRL at CLIFF HOUSE!

For at the very moment when Babs & Co. are defending Babs' impish young sister, Doris, against the persecution of treacherous Connie Jackson, of the Sixth Form, Jemima chums up with Connie! No wonder the chums are astounded and indignant. Doris is swotting for a most important exam, and Connie Jackson is doing all she can to ruin the youngster's chances. And yet "dear old Jimmy," their friend, their supporter, joins forces with the enemy! Don't miss this dramatic Hilda Richards story. It is full of the most surprising and intriguing situations. Order next Saturday's SCHOOLGIRL well in advance.

Another fascinating COMPLETE story of the Middle Ages, featuring the young Lady Fayre—



Secret Helper to Robin Hood

Only Fayre Could Save Him!

THE Lady Fayre—
The young Lady Fayre's name was being called in Longley Castle, for she was sought by her uncle, the Baron le Feuvre, and when he called there had to be response.

As the Lady Fayre heard her name being called by a man-at-arms, she crouched on the battlements, taking cover behind the immense catapult that was used to hurl stones, boiling pitch, and other missiles at whatever enemy should dare to assault the castle.

It gave good cover, and Fayre, her heart thumping, squeezed herself into as small a space as possible, hardly heeding whethe she dirtied her lovely, rich, red velvet frock.

"'Tis passing strange!" said a soldier clad in shining chain-mail, whose task it was to patrol the battlements. "The Lady Fayre is either lost, or else hidden."

"Mayhap she does hide; she will be soundly whipped, perchance!" said his companion and then sang out anew: "The Lady Fayre!"

Fayre moved slightly farther into hiding, and then gave a horrified gasp as a mighty ball of stone, balanced insecurely on the catapult, toppled over.

Crash! Its thud could not be unnoticed, and the two men-at-arms, quickening their steps, reached the spot, to draw up and salute.

"M'lady," said one, "the baron calls you!"

"His lordship is mighty angered," said the other.

Fayre rose with what dignity was left to her, shook her frock, arranged her golden hair, which hung in two neat plaits over her shoulders and walked forward.

The men-at-arms walked beside her, lest she should try to escape.

"I can go alone, thank you!" said Fayre, edging away.

But the men-at-arms saluted, and, with faces expressionless, still escorted her.

As the young lady of this mighty castle. Fayre was a person of importance; but that did not prevent her being human enough to write things which should not have been written.

By IDA MELBOURNE

And they had infuriated her uncle, the baron, beyond measure. He had not read them himself—he was only able to read simple words, and that with difficulty—but he had got the venerable Brie, Fayre's tutor, to do the job for him.

Heart thumping, Fayre went down the stone staircase to where the baron fumed on a lower floor, his red face redder than ever, his voice more thunderous.

"Hah! You have her!" he cried, as he saw them. "Get you gone! I would have word with her alone!"

As the guards, saluting, moved away, Fayre stepped into the large room, through the long, glassless windows of which the sunshine streamed, and cast a

"Food—clothes—gold for the poor!" ordered the baron, Fayre's miserly uncle. What HAD come over him? Fayre knew, and so did her friend, Robin Hood. For it wasn't her uncle at all!

look of deep reproach at the long-bearded, venerable Brie, who stood in his black robes, hands clasped regretfully.

"Yes, uncle?" said Fayre, as boldly as she could. "Something ails?"

"Ails! What is this?" roared the baron, and flapped a sheet of paper at her.

"'Tis an exercise I wrote," said Fayre.

"An exercise! By my troth, read it!"

Fayre did not like her bullying uncle, who, so vague reports said, had robbed her of this castle, and whose harsh temper had left many bruises on soldiers, servants, and others, and even on Fayre herself.

Taking the paper, Fayre looked at it.

"Full many a true word is spoken in jest," she said.

The baron strode nearer. He wore his gorgeous purple and gold indoor robe, but even this did not conceal his bullying nature and tigerish temper.

"Old man, come herb and read again!" he commanded,

The venerable Brie took the paper and focused it with care and difficulty.

"Robin Hood," he read in piping tone, "'is kind and good; brave deeds he doth full many. His castle is the greenery wood; of gold he hath not any—"

Fayre quaked, for in the castle the mere mention of Robin Hood caused the baron to roar with rage.

"Ha! So," he thundered, "you write of Robin Hood? That knave! Brave deeds, indeed? A hero, is he? Ha! Who did command you to write that?"

"No one," said Fayre falteringly.

"I—I—'Tis but a jingle I have heard servants and others chant."

The baron crumpled the paper and hurled it to the ground.

"Robin Hood! Will no one rid me of this knave?" he roared. "He steals my gold, my cattle, and gives them to the poor! I'll teach them to sing of

Robin Hood and you to write of him! Sit down! Take a pen!"

The venerable Brie took a flask of ink, a quill pen, and a sheet of paper, placing them on a table under a window, and pulling forward a rough-hewn chair.

"Write!" commanded the baron.

"Robin Hood is a knave, a cowardly knave, a thief, a rascal!"

Fayre sot her lips. For, unbeknown to anyone at the castle, she met Robin Hood secretly, disguised as a poor maiden. The outlaw was her friend, and she admired his chivalrous deeds.

And so, knowing her uncle would have no patience to read it, even if he could, she wrote:

"Robin Hood is a hero, brave, honourable; a friend of the poor."

The baron, looking over her shoulder, nodded.

"Good!" he said, taking it for granted that Fayre had obeyed his instructions. "It shall be in your room to remind you! And now, for your offence, my lady, you shall be whipped!"

18 "Secret Helper to Robin Hood!"

Fayre jumped up, with a cry of alarm. "Whipped? Oh, no!"

"Oh, yes!" said the baron grimly. "It will teach you to remember that Robin Hood is a knave!—When you are whipped, blame then Robin Hood!"

Fayre clasped her hands, her eyes wide.

"But, my lord uncle—"

But the Baron le Feuvre stood granite-like before her.

"Enough!" he snapped. "The baroness returns this afternoon. Go to your bed-chamber; stay there! Then you shall be whipped!"

Fayre, folding the paper she had written, moved back to the archway, across which a velvet curtain hung. Rebellion shone in her eyes, and her head was up.

"And as to Robin Hood, to-day I'll end his tricks!" sneered the baron. "I'll play him with his own tricks! I shall go to the woods myself alone as a beggar, a friar!"

Fayre's eyes rounded.

"Uncle, he would know you. It would go ill with you."

"Know me? Huh! No one will recognise me. With false red beard cunningly made of wool, eyebrows stuck with gum, and a sword secretly hidden, I'll give him Robin Hood!"

Fayre swung aside the curtain, and,

doing so, almost bumped into a meek little man who was waiting for the moment to enter, a friar garment over his arm and red wool in his hands.

"Enter, tailor!" roared the baron. The tailor, bowing, walked in, and the baron, attaching the coarse sackcloth cloak, slipped it over his head.

Fayre peeped through at him as he pulled the hood forward, and then tried on the red wool whiskers.

"Hah! Good—eh? Good?" he said.

The venerable Brie nodded approval, even though the baron's disguise was not nearly so effective as he thought.

"Fayre—has she gone?" chuckled the baron. "Bring her back! Not a word! We will see if the child is fooled. She has quick eyes, and knows me full well."

Fayre hurried away from the curtain, so that when she was hailed by the tailor she was some yards off. But she ran back and re-entered the room.

"Why, 'tis a friar! How came he here?" she asked, hand to mouth in amazement. "I saw him not!"

"Ah, young lady, I am indeed a friar!" croaked the baron, bending his back to perfect the part he was playing.

"A poor, miserable friar!"

"Ah, good friar, I trust the baron will be kinder to you than to some others," said Fayre. "He likes not friars."

The baron guffawed.

"A trick indeed well worked!" he scoffed in his natural voice. "Little idiot! 'Tis I, your uncle!"

"Why—uncle!" gasped Fayre, and then hurriedly departed, leaving him to roar with laughter and make his companions wince under his hearty back-slapping.

She went straight to her room, closed the thick door, and stood with her back against it, eyes gleaming, hands tightly clenched.

"To be whipped; and the baroness has a strong arm," she murmured. "If Robin Hood should know of this—"

Then she thought of the baron, disguised as a friar, seeking to trap Robin Hood, and her lips compressed.

It was a poor disguise, yet, with the hood drawn forward, the baron might not be recognised, and, by drawing his sword when Robin Hood was alone, have the outlaw at his mercy.

Hearing a commotion in the courtyard, Fayre crossed to her window, and looked down. The baron was there, in his disguise, and he was addressing two young knights and some men-at-arms.

"Hear this horn!" he commanded. "When its summons sounds forth, charge to my aid, and cut the outlaws down like the weeds they are!"

He sounded the horn twice, and twice again, and a murmur came from his men.

"I have had word where he hides this morning. I go there now," added the baron. "Look well at me, my red beard, and the red-painted crosses on the sackcloth, so that you shall know me from any other!"

Then, taking a staff, he went to the gate, outwardly no longer a powerful Norman baron, but a poor, harmless friar.

Fayre took a deep breath, her scorn of his venture changing to alarm.

She was thinking not of the baron, but of Robin Hood.

"He will be trapped!" she gasped. "All uncle's men-at-arms—why, Robin's score of friends would be a poor match for them!"

Her mind made up, she almost jumped to the old chest in the corner of her bed-chamber, in the bottom of which were stored a shabby green frock and ragged, brown-hooded cloak.

In a minute she had whipped off her lovely red frock, and was dressed in humble rags; and with her change of clothes came change of person. From being the wealthy young Lady Fayre, she became Maid Marian—the mystery maid of the woods, as she was called by her brave friend, Robin Hood.

As the Lady Fayre, she could not leave the castle; but in this attire the sentries thought her a village girl who ran errands from the castle to the village.

Five minutes after the baron had left, trudging along the lane, Maid Marian crossed the drawbridge, basket on arm, hurrying for the woods to find and warn Robin Hood!

Not Artful Enough!

ROBIN HOOD was in merry mood. He and his band were practising archery, their target a tree stump a furlong away, dressed in a rich cloak taken from a bullying squire.

"One more for the rascal!" said Robin Hood, stretching his bow. "But not at his heart; for a Norman knight's heart is made of iron; at his head, which is only wood!"

With a plink the arrow left the bow, and the point embedded itself in the tree stump. Then, just as Robin Hood

Your Editor's address is:—
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Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.



MY DEAR READERS,—I often wish I were Aladdin! Of course, that may seem a most extraordinary thing for an Editor to say, especially an Editor who, by reason of his friendly and enthusiastic band of supporters, and his loyal and helpful contributors, ought to be perfectly happy with life.

But I do wish I were Aladdin—for this reason. If I were Aladdin I should have Aladdin's magic lamp. (I'd insist on that!) And with Aladdin's magic lamp I should be able to fulfill every wish; and that, naturally, would include the wish of every one of you.

I wish at the present moment, for instance, that I could do as so many readers desire, and publish THE SCHOOLGIRL more than once a week. Alas, it's impossible, I am afraid. There are all sorts of technical objections, otherwise you may be sure I should have done something about it by now.

Please believe me when I say it isn't my fault, won't you—all those who have written on this question. And please try not to be too disappointed.

After all, there is always the SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN LIBRARY, you know—though one or two of you seem to have overlooked this. You can have a wonderful book-length story of the Cliff House girls every month, for fourpence. A novel-length story featuring Babs & Co. in their early exploits! Had some of you forgotten?

I hope you had, because then this will be a thrilling surprise.

And now, having worked myself into a Cliff House mood, I don't think I could do better than tell you about next week's superb Hilda Richards' story in THE SCHOOLGIRL:

"THE MOST BAFFLING GIRL AT CLIFF HOUSE!"

It "stars" several fascinating characters.

Jemima Carstairs, that most puzzling and intriguing Fourth Former; Doris Redfern, Babs' impish young sister of the Third; Connie Jackson, the prefect, fascinating in an unpleasant sort of way, and, of course, the Famous Chums themselves.

Briefly, the story tells what happens when Doris Redfern, swotting for an important exam, makes an enemy of the unscrupulous Connie, and—a amazing, incredible event—Jemima chums up with the senior!

Worried by Doris' position, Babs & Co. are also astounded by Jemima's behaviour. That she, of all people, should become friendly with one of the meanest, craftiest, most unpopular girls in the whole school! And at a time when Connie is making things so heartrendingly difficult for little Doris!

Accustomed though they are to Jemima's inexplicable ways, Babs & Co. are just baffled and indignant.

And you will be, too, I know. But you will also be completely spell-bound by Hilda Richards' magnificent handling of one of the most brilliant stories I have ever read.

Next Saturday's programme will include further delightful chapters of "On Tour with Yin Su," by Elizabeth Chester; another fine COMPLETE Lady Fayre and Robin Hood story by Ida Melbourne; and more of Patricia's Bright and Useful Pages. A feast of good things, which you simply mustn't miss.

With best wishes,

Your sincere friend,
THE EDITOR.

was aligning a second arrow, Little John gave a shout.

"A girl—take care!" Running up from behind them came Fayre, in her ragged clothes, and Robin Hood, whipping off his pointed cap, gave a hail.

"The maid—welcome, welcome!" he cried.

Fayre, exhausted with running through the wood, paused a while to breathe steadily before speaking.

"What news?" asked Robin Hood. "Who suffers now, needing aid?"

Fayre breathed freely. "Robin Hood—there is danger!" she said.

"Danger!" said Robin Hood. "Help! Run, men!" he scoffed, with a laugh. "Is it the baron with his army?"

"Not with his army—alone, disguised as a friar," said Fayre. "His army follows, and at sound of his horn will attack and capture you—two hundred men, pikemen, swordsmen, archers!"

Robin Hood whistled. "So they think that one outlaw is worth ten men-at-arms in battle?" he asked, his eyes twinkling. "They flatter us!"

"Take care!" warned Fayre. "The baron is strong, and under his cloak he carries a sword!"

Robin Hood took her hands and spoke solemnly.

"Little mystery maid, you are my friend indeed," he said, "for although I fear not the baron, yet I would rather fight him each armed alike than he with sword and I with staff. If it is a fight he needs, why, he shall have it—with quarter-staves!"

Fayre smiled. "Twill do him good!" she said grimly.

"And now—a like service for you?" asked Robin Hood. "'Tis said one good turn deserves another. So should you wish some prize, some reward—some aid—"

Fayre remembered the whipping, and brightened suddenly as a daring idea came.

"For myself, no—for the Lady Fayre, yes!"

"The baron's niece—as bad as he!" For Robin Hood did not know that it was her he addressed.

"Ah, but the bad baron would whip her!" said Fayre sadly. "Have you no pity?"

Robin Hood drew up. "The baron shall not whip her!" he said. "For to-day he shall be at my mercy!"

Fayre smiled. "And—if it could happen that the Lady Fayre should rescue him, why, then—he might be so full of gratitude as not to whip her, after all, and—"

She broke off as another figure in green came bounding through the thicket.

"Robin Hood, a friar comes—a strange friar with red beard!" the man exclaimed.

"The baron!" breathed Fayre. And almost as she spoke, the disguised baron came through the thicket, plodding his way on sandalled feet with quarter-stick.

Hurriedly, she pulled her hood forward, and kept a handkerchief to her face lest her uncle should recognise her.

"How do, friar?" asked Robin Hood jovially. "Do you come seeking alms?"

"I do but beg food, Robin Hood, if such you are!" croaked the baron in disguised voice.

"Food you shall have," said Robin Hood. "Friar Tuck! Lead him to the food store!"



JUST AS Robin Hood was about to fire another arrow at the target, Fayre burst through into the glade. "Robin Hood, there is danger—an army comes to capture you!" she cried.

The baron, at a loss what to do then—for he wanted to speak to Robin Hood alone—turned with Friar Tuck; and Fayre plucked Robin's sleeve.

"Tis now you must disarm!" she said. "Tell him—tell him that friars seeking alms must walk to Robin Hood on all fours!"

Fayre nearly giggled as she said that, for nothing would please her more than seeing the lordly Baron le Feuvre grovelling about on all fours.

Robin Hood called the friar back and explained haughtily what was necessary—to walk on all fours to him in submission.

The baron, fearful to show defiance with so many about, grunted, but went on hands and knees, and with his sword dragging the grass, crept forward.

Fayre nudged Robin Hood. "Knight him in the outlaw manner," she said. "Twill flame his anger and draw his sword—"

"Little John," said Robin Hood solemnly. "Knight the friar in the manner of outlaws."

Little John, raising his quarter-staff in both hands, swung it, and then brought it down, not upon the friar's shoulder, but from behind.

"Yow!" roared the baron, as the well-aimed blow landed truly. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the outlaws.

His face purple with rage, his eyes blazing, the baron scrambled up, and just as Fayre had known he would, he forgot all caution and whipped out his sword.

But as he swung round to Little John, Robin Hood, whirling his quarter-stick, struck the baron's arm with numbing force. The sword, released by the baron's nerveless fingers, dropped to the ground, to be snatched by Friar Tuck.

But the baron's left hand had his hunting horn; and putting it to his lips, he sounded his call for help. Too late it was wrested from him, and the Lady Fayre, knowing the number of armed men waiting for that signal, felt her heart drop.

"Take him away—away—" she gasped, and then, snatching the hunting

horn, she ran as fast as she could away from the scene.

As she went she repeated the signal that had been arranged, hoping that by doing so she would lead the baron's small army in the wrong direction.

Already the sound of horses' hoofs could be heard, and the shouts of men-at-arms. The call for help was being answered!

Bad for the Baron!

FAYRE ran until she was out of breath and weak from exhaustion. Then she flopped down into hiding behind a bush, hiding the horn.

Not a hundred yards behind came soldiers, calling and shouting. When she was recovered she stood up, revealing herself, knowing that they could have no reason to suspect her.

"Hey—you, girl!" called a young squire, riding forward. "Hast seen a friar with red crosses—hast seen men in green, Robin Hood?"

Fayre nodded. "Have a care for the arrows of Robin Hood," she warned him, pointing in the wrong direction.

On went the soldiers, archers, bowmen, swordsmen, and Fayre watched them with a smile. She had put them off the scent easily enough.

But Fayre, the excitement over, suddenly realised in dismay that victory was not yet won. She had saved Robin Hood, and the baron, who was clearly a prisoner, would receive punishment; but what of herself?

She had not escaped the forthcoming whipping!

Hurrying back to the castle, Fayre busied her mind with plans. There were at the castle men who were braver in words than deeds, yet who did not refrain from making a pretence of courage. If she told them that the baron was a prisoner—but there was little danger to them—might they not follow her to his rescue? By some sign she could let Robin Hood know of this

plan and so arrange for the baron to be released without serious trouble.

It seemed to Fayre the only way, and presently, in her bed-chamber, at the castle, she changed into her rich red, gold-embroidered frock, and planned the small party that was to rescue him.

She had counted eight names of men of simple mind, great boasters who would fly at the first hiss of an arrow over their heads, and was considering a ninth when her door opened.

Looking up, Fayre next sprang to her feet in alarm.

In the doorway stood the baroness. "Ah! You are here," her aunt snapped. "I have returned sooner than I planned, but it is well. My lord has left word that you are to be soundly whipped."

Fayre licked her lips.

"Aunt—I—it is—"
"You wrote in praise of Robin Hood," said the hard-faced, glittering-eyed baroness. "Come down to my chamber. Put on the garb of humility, the sack-cloth you wore as penitence at Easter."

The baroness turned away, and Fayre sat down on her bed in despair. For five minutes she did not move, and then, hearing shouts from the courtyard, she sprang up and darted over to the window.

In the courtyard was a friar, with his red crosses and red wool beard, while soldiers and servants cheered.

"Robin Hood is no more!" he roared. "The army is even now chasing his band!"

"Hurrah!" went up a cheer. But it was not, as everyone thought, the baron, returned in triumph. It was Robin Hood, dressed in the baron's disguise. Fayre's heart leaped. There could be no mistake, for Robin Hood had given a signal with his hand which she recognised, but which would have no meaning to the others.

Light of heart and of foot, Fayre went down the stairway to her aunt's apartment, just in time to see the baroness hurry off to greet "her noble lord."

"Methinks my whipping shall yet be avoided," Fayre mused, eyes sparkling, and herself tripped out to the courtyard.

"A feast—a banquet!" came the hoarse voice through the red wool. "Let an ox be roasted, let there be chicken, venison—bring in the villagers—bring in the beggars!"

Fayre danced about. "Hurrah!" she cheered. "Brave, noble baron, my uncle—make way that I may greet him—"

And in this way she managed to press through the crowd to the hooded friar. Looking up at him so that she could meet his eyes, she half-closed one of her own in a wink.

In her rich garb she did not seem sufficiently like the mystery maid for Robin Hood to recognise her. But he knew she was the Lady Fayre.

"Ah, my niece!" he cried, tilting her chin jocularly. "Did I say then you should be whipped? Let us forget it—let us forgive—"

The baroness was near enough to hear, but came nearer as the men made an avenue, and Fayre's heart gave an unpleasant start at the fearful thought that her aunt might discover the trick.

So she decided to act. She ran to the baroness and clasped her in an ecstasy of delight.

"The baron says I am not to be whipped!" she cried happily. "Oh, isn't this wonderful? A feast—a banquet, all the poor people—"

Then, leaving her aunt puzzled and disappointed, she danced back to Robin

Hood, determined to make the most of this wonderful opportunity to do good to all the needy folk.

"Gold for the poor from your coffers, uncle?" she asked.

"Bagful of gold!" he cried. "Send the treasurer."

The soldiers, even if slightly surprised at this amazing order from a man they knew as a tyrant, did not hesitate to obey. They wanted a banquet, and this had all the makings of a bumper one.

With the drawbridge lowered, some ran to get villagers and beggars, and soon people were thronging into the courtyard, chattering excitedly.

Fayre, realising that the pretence could not be kept up long, ran to order a wagon to be brought out from the stables, and as the baron did not countermand that order, horses were harnessed.

"Food for the villagers!" she cried. "'Tis the baron now who is friend of the poor!"

Many goodly things were loaded into the wagon, and the treasurer came with a bagful of gold, which he handed to

"'Tis I, the baron!"

The guards took him for a crazy beggar and pelted him with oddments lying around, and presently a crowd gathered at the portcullis.

Hoarse by this time, the baron could not make his voice heard above their laughter and jeers. He shook the bars of the portcullis, danced and raged, brandished his fists, groaned and moaned; but all in vain.

Fayre, attracted by the confusion, left the roasting of the ox, which she was supervising, and went to see what was amiss.

"'Tis some madman says he is the baron, m'lady."

"A fat old fool! Here's an egg to throw," said another.

"Throw him in the moat!"

"Ay, ay! Drench the varlet!"

Fayre reached the portcullis, and staring, suddenly realised that it was indeed the baron who stood there.

"Stop—stop! It is my uncle!" she cried.

Astounded, the crowd parted as guards leaped to raise the portcullis. And when the baron came through, and they could get view of him at shorter range, they knew that Fayre was right, and shrank back, cowering.

"Uncle!" said Fayre, hurrying forward.

The baron did not speak, but brushed past her, to stand goggle-eyed in the courtyard. Then, his voice a mere croak as he mouthed strange words, he hurried inside to the baroness.

When the baroness realised who he was, she all but swooned; and then, in hysterical voice, she told him of the other red-bearded friar.

"Robin Hood!" snarled the baron. "'Twas he!"

"Ah!" said the baroness grimly. "Then 'twas not you said that Fayre should not be whipped."

Fayre, entering at that moment, felt her heart leap into her mouth.

"Come here!" said the baroness, in fury, and fetched the whip from the wall.

But the Baron le Feuvre snatched it from her.

"No!" he snapped. "She alone had brains. But for Fayre, I should now be in the moat, pelted, battered, bruised, perhaps drowned. Give me that whip; there are others have need of its message."

But the message of the whip was given to no one, for the baron, tripping over his long friar's robe, was pitched headlong down the first flight of stairs.

Painfully bruised, and aware of the shrill laughter of a page-boy, he returned in haste to his room, there to take things easy, ministered to by the baroness.

The Lady Fayre, pardoned from her punishment, went down to the courtyard and joined in with the merry-making.

News of the wagon-load of good things, and the bag of gold, had not yet reached the baron, so there was no one to stop the fun later that day in the village.

Then Fayre, dressing as the mystery maid, danced and sang in a feast that brought happiness to all the people.

None knew that it was her they must thank as well as the founder of the feast, gay Robin Hood; but Fayre's joy was none the less because of that.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

BE sure to meet charming, audacious Fayre, and her romantic friend of the woods, in next week's superb COMPLETE story.

THE GIRL WHO HAUNTED GREY GABLES

If you like mystery stories you will love this grand story by Renee Frazer. It is one of the six enthralling stories you will find in this week's issue of our Friday twopenny companion paper—

GIRLS' CRYSTAL

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the friar, who himself had now mounted the wagon.

"Up with the drawbridge after I leave," he commanded. "Let no one enter now till my return, lest they are robbers."

The drawbridge was lowered, the wagon rumbled off. Fayre's joy knew no bounds. Robin Hood was gone with gold and provisions for the needy, and now even her uncle would have difficulty in putting a stop to the merry-making inside the castle.

A throng hurried to the large outside kitchen; others set fire to wood in the courtyard, and erected irons to roast an ox there.

Never had there been such hubbub and confusion; not since Richard's coronation at any rate.

It so happened that the baron was returning now. Set free by Robin Hood's band, dressed in outlaw green, he had robbed a friar of his cloak. His face was caked with mud and dyed with moss, and no more miserable man than the baron existed.

Reaching his castle, and finding the portcullis lowered, he clung to it and roared:

Thrills and excitement galore await you—

ON TOUR with YIN SU



FOR NEW READERS.
MAY JOLIPHANT, a cheery English girl, and her less daring chum, **DAPHNE YARDLEY**, have the task of conducting around England a quaint, high-spirited but most likeable Chinese girl, **YIN SU**. Yin Su's governess is apparently too ill to accompany the girls. They visit an expensive hotel for a meal, not realising a certain woman wearing an emerald ring has followed them—until May discovers her bag has been stolen. It is returned mysteriously, with the money intact. But a cloakroom girl at the hotel, blamed for carelessness, is dismissed. May & Co. however, help her to get employment at a circus. They are shown to a box, Yin Su being mistaken for a princess. But suddenly the circus boss appears and accuses her of being a fraud. "You're just a juggler!" he snaps. "Come on with me!" May and Daphne tried to detain her.
(Now read on.)

As they left their seats, May took care not to be further behind Yin Su than a yard. They were her guides; in the absence of the governess, they were in charge of her—responsible for her safety, and although May's schoolmistress had said she was frivolous and irresponsible, she had her head screwed on the right way.

As soon as he was out of view of the audience, and not likely to be heard, the boss stopped.

"Now!" he said in grim, menacing tone.

May took charge.
 "I think you're making a lot of fuss about nothing," she said. "Yin Su did not claim to be a princess, although she is of high birth—"

"High birth!" scoffed the boss. "She's an ordinary circus juggler, and

"No," said Yin Su. "He who speaks the most loudly does not utter the greatest truth. Ignorant man easily fooled by Chinese juggler in circus."

Kun Fu, the circus juggler, came forward then. He was an old man, heavily wrinkled, dressed in Chinese fashion with short-sleeved, heavily embroidered tunic, trousers tight at the ankles, and thick, soft-soled slippers.

He bowed to the boss, and then spoke to Yin Su in Chinese.

"High-born young lady, I greatly regret bad error," he said anxiously, "but English woman offer this person sum of money to say what was not true, and he was tempted."

Also in Chinese, Yin Su answered him.

"Describe this unscrupulous and low-minded woman," she said.

"It is difficult, except indeed that upon one finger she wore emerald ring," said Kun Fu.

Yin Su's eyes gleamed for a moment. "Indeed so?" she asked. "Nevertheless, Kun Fu, this high-born person has a certain competence in the art of juggling, and would be amused to juggle with you in the circus."

Kun Fu bowed his head.
 "If happiness can thus be gained, it shall be so arranged," he purred.

May nudged Yin Su anxiously.
 "What does he say?" she asked.

"What's all this chat about?" asked the boss, frowning.

Yin Su looked solemn. There was an imp of mischief in the Chinese girl, and her sense of fun tempted her now.

High born, Yin Su had certainly never juggled in a circus, for in China she had been carefully watched, and allowed little freedom. But this was England, and with the governess out of the way, she was free. Being free, she wanted fun—such as juggling in a circus.

Not Such a Lark At All!

"STOP!" cried May in alarm, as Yin Su wriggled free from her chums' grasp.

"Don't let her get away," gasped Daphne, pale with fright.

But Yin Su turned to them.

"Those of clear conscience fear not the anger of evil sayers," she murmured. "Simple-minded Yin Su's conscience like wings of white dove."

"Fiddlesticks!" said the circus proprietor scornfully. "You come with me, you artful young chink! I don't want a scene here."

May and Daphne noticed then that they had become the centre of attention. Considering that, only a minute before, Yin Su had been played in by the band, with the boss obsequious and deferential, and that now she was being stormed at, she was naturally the cynosure of all eyes.

Short of renewing the struggle with Yin Su, May and Daphne had to let her go, for the Chinese girl did not share their alarm.

The fact that some old woman had warned them that great peril awaited her in the circus did not seem to worry Yin Su. But it worried Daphne a good deal, and May to a rather less extent.

IT WAS EASY FOR THE CHUMS TO JOIN THE CIRCUS, BUT WHEN THEY TRIED TO LEAVE IT THEY COULDN'T!

what's more, she ran away from the circus where she worked with Kun Fu. Fetch Kun Fu," he ordered a hand, who stood near by.

May and Daphne, having met Yin Su only to-day, knew little about her, except what they had been told—that she was the daughter of a very important Chinese nobleman, and on a visit to England to learn English customs and ways.

They could not believe, however, even though they had proof of her conjuring prowess, that she was a circus juggler.

"Yin Su—this isn't true?" said May.

Yin Su, hands clasped, looked grave.

"Illustrious father of Yin Su roar like tiger except such things be told him," she said solemnly. "Unhappy ancestors moan in misery."

"It isn't true?" asked May. She liked a plain answer.

BY

ELIZABETH CHESTER

ANOTHER SUPERB HILDA RICHARDS STORY

This is one of the early adventures of the famous chums of Cliff House School, and tells what happened when Babs & Co. were puzzled and dismayed by the strange behaviour of Marjorie Hazeldene's queer boy cousin, Ralph Lawrence.



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in the February issues of

SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN LIBRARY

The other three fascinating stories are:
 No. 669. "SHIELDED by MORCOVE," in which Marjorie Stanton describes part of the early schooldays of Betty Barton & Co.
 No. 670. "GUESTS of the SHAREEN," a magnificent Eastern adventure story by Elizabeth Chester.
 No. 671. "HER CHANCE of a LIFETIME," a dramatic, human-appeal story by Louise Carlton.

"Kun Fu, ingenious and highly skilled juggler, wish that Yin Su give him assistance, feeble in skill though she be," Yin Su announced.

May gasped.

"What—help in the circus?"

"Yes, pliss," said Kun Fu.

The boss grunted.

"Well, is she the girl who ran away from you or not?"

"Alas, no; yet she will help Kun Fu as ably as the other."

"All right; if you're satisfied with her, I am," said the boss. "But give her a trial before you go in the ring. There'll be no flops in my circus."

He strode away, and May and Daphne exchanged puzzled, worried looks, hardly knowing what all this meant.

"Yin Su, you don't mean you really are going to juggle?" asked May, surprised. "In the ring?"

Yin Su smiled.

"Considerable merriment, yea?" she asked. "See circus life, play with jovial lions. Highbrowed and learned governess not approve, but English girls ever ready for jollity."

"Oh!" said May, understanding at last. "You mean you're doing it just for fun, Yin Su?"

Yin Su nodded her head, and smiled. "You also," she said.

May took a breath. Her alarm vanished when she realised that Yin Su was looking on the thing as an adventure; and certainly it would be harmless enough juggling in a circus ring, or just assisting a juggler.

In fact, the idea thrilled May.

"My golly—what fun! Can we join in, too?" she asked. "It is just for this afternoon, isn't it?"

Yin Su assured them that it was.

"Then come on, eh, Daph?" asked May eagerly.

Daphne was more cautious, but Kun Fu's manner to Yin Su was so obviously polite and respectful that she lost her fears that the Chinese girl was in peril.

Besides, Daphne had always had a secret yearning to go on the stage, and

if this was not the stage, at least it was the same sort of thing.

"If we can go when the show's over, where's the harm?" she asked slowly. "It'll be rather fun, especially if we can wear Chinese clothes. All right. Yes; I'm game! But my word, what would Miss Vesey say if she knew?"

Ah, what indeed!

MAY MADE the whole thing clear to the Chinese juggler. They would take part in his juggling act for one performance only, and then they would have to go.

Kun Fu bowed his head, quite understanding, and led the way from the tent to a caravan, which they guessed was his by reason of the fact that it had painted on it a black dragon.

Adjoining it was another caravan, gaudily painted in red and gold and the door of it opened as Kun Fu approached.

A dark-haired, sallow-faced girl stepped out. She was wrapped in a yellow dressing-gown embroidered with dragons, and seeing Yin Su, stared at her with furrowed brow.

"The boss orders you shall lend three elegant girls' frocks," said Kun Fu.

With none too good grace the girl beckoned them into the caravan, a tiny place with a bed, folding table, cooking utensils, and a litter of clothes.

It was the first time May, Daphne or Yin Su had entered a circus caravan, and they looked about with great interest, without making their curiosity too obvious.

"Frocks," said the girl. "Chinese, I suppose? You're extra assistants?"

"That's the idea, I believe," smiled May. "Just for this performance, although, as we've never done this sort of thing before, we shan't do much more than stand around."

"Just the sort of crazy ideas the boss here does get," said the girl in unfriendly tone. "But he's boss, so what he says goes. Here are the frocks. You'd better start changing."

"Here?" asked May. There wasn't much room, she thought.

"No; you can use the next caravan. And here's some make-up. Better try to look Chinese."

The chums took the frocks and the box of make-up, and then, realising that they were not welcome there, left the caravan and went to one the girl indicated, the door of which was open, the interior bare save for bed, table and chair.

No sooner was the door of that caravan closed, than the other girl hurried to Kun Fu's caravan, rapping on the door until he opened it.

"I want a word with you," the girl snapped.

"Yis?" said Kun Fu.

"Is that Chinese girl going to take my place?" the girl demanded. "Answer me! There's something going on, and I don't know what."

"This afternoon, yiss," said Kun Fu.

"This afternoon, no need for you to juggle in circus."

The girl drew up, her eyes flashing in anger.

"Oh, so I'm chucked out, am I, for that Chinese? Well, don't you believe it. She's not taking my place. I know what it means. If she does well, then I'm out for good. That's it, isn't it?"

Kun Fu shrugged.

"It is possible," he said.

The girl put her hand on the door-knob.

"Oh, no, it isn't! I'm going to tell her to scram. I'm not going to be jumped out like that."

Moving swiftly, Kun Fu swung her away from the door, tugged it open and darted out of the caravan. Then, slamming the door, he locked it, leaving the girl, a prisoner, to hammer and shout in vain fury.

As he ran down the steps, a woman stepped into view, beckoning him, and he crossed to her, bowing deeply.

"Listen," she said in low tone, speaking Chinese. "Here is the money I promised. Ten pounds. You understand what is to be done?"

An emerald winked on the hand that held the money.

Kun Fu bowed his head, rustled the notes with pleasure, folded them, and tucked them inside his tunic.

"No serpent is more cunning than Kun Fu," he said. "The high-born Chinese girl, Yin Su, is my prisoner, and shall not escape!"

An Enemy!

"YIN SU, we look even more Chinese than you do!"

May Joliphant looked at her reflection in the caravan mirror and was delighted, for the box of make-up contained everything to make an English girl seem Chinese; their skins were no longer of the English milk and roses kind, and their eyes appeared to slant. With hair greased so that it looked dark, and pressed well flat, they could easily be taken for Chinese girls by the audience.

Yin Su, dressed in Oriental tunic, looked sweetly pretty, and quite at her best, and Daphne despaired of making herself half as attractive.

"Make elegant whoopee," said Yin, dancing up and down with joy. "Oh, most ingenious and kind Providence!"

"Most reckless us," smiled May. "What fancy! Acting in a circus show. What on earth would Miss Vesey say?"

They laughed. For Miss Vesey, a typical English governess, would probably have fainted at the idea; and most certainly she would not have considered May and Daphne fit to be in charge of

Yin Su had she known what was happening.

Nevertheless, as May argued—as much to ease her pricking conscience as anything else—where was the harm in it? Yin Su was seeing a side of English life that might otherwise have remained hidden, and they were gaining valuable and novel experience themselves.

True it was hardly a normal part of a girl's education to act in a circus ring, and many girls had struggled through life without it. But May had never been a girl to tread the beaten track.

"We've given that woman with the emerald ring the slip, anyway," she said. "I bet she won't be looking for us in the ring."

"My goodness, no!" Daphne agreed. Kun Fu tapped on the door then, so they stepped out, delighted by his ready, if somewhat fulsome, praise. He held some small coloured balls, and leading them to a spot a hundred yards or so away, suggested that Yin Su should practise.

Even at that distance, however, they could hear the girl thumping on the caravan door.

"What's that noise?" asked Daphne. "Hammering," said Kun Fu. "Men at work."

"Isn't that a girl shouting?" asked Daphne.

"No; squeal of young elephant," said Kun Fu, lying readily.

As May and Daphne had never heard a young elephant's squeal, and as the girl's voice was muffled, they accepted his explanation, and watched with interest as Yin Su juggled.

For all her protest that she was a feeble juggler, she held them spell-bound, and the Chinaman himself was obviously surprised and pleased.

Yin Su kept six balls in the air, throwing them over her shoulder, behind her back, and in all directions.

Next she balanced a coloured stick on her nose, a ball on top of it, and then another stick.

"I say, how jolly clever!" said May. "Oh, that looks easy!" Daphne declared.

She tried it, and was open-mouthed as she succeeded for a moment in balancing the stick on her nose. But she nearly swallowed it next moment when it slipped.

There was no time for further practice, however, for a circus-hand signalled them, and they hurried to the Big Top, watched from the window of the juggler's caravan by the angry, vengeful girl.

No sooner were they gone than, taking off her shoes, she shattered the window, and, yelling to a circus-hand to attract his attention, pretended that she was locked in by mistake, and so persuaded him to open the door.

It was some minutes yet before the juggling turn was due, and from a good vantage point the three girls watched another turn.

There were splendid horses, prancing round, weaving in and out, obeying orders, and when they had been applauded, May, Daphne, and Yin Su rewarded them with sugar.

Near by were the lions, in their wheeled cage, for their turn would come before long, and they were being prepared for the audience's roaring applause.

"Look, lions!" said Yin Su. "Ah, magnificent lords of the jungle! How sad that they are caged while we are free."

"A good thing, too, at the moment," said May, as she saw one mighty lion open his jaws.

"But they're let out for a romp in the evening, I believe," said Daphne, who believed a lot of funny things.

The lion-tamer, standing near, chuckled.

"Only the cub is," he said. "The cub! Oh, let me see the cub!" pleaded Daphne.

The cub was brought out, and Yin Su tripped forward and took him fearlessly, even though he bared his teeth.

"All right; he won't bite unless you tease him," said the tamer. "Dear little chap, eh?"

"Lordly noble little one," purred Yin Su. "In my most elegant and refined home in China I have three such on my bed."

"What? Three lion cubs on your bed!" gasped Daphne.

"Carved with infinite skill in wood," added Yin Su, her eyes glimmering.

She pressed her head against the cub, and he purred.

None of them noticed the juggler's girl assistant creeping close as Yin Su put the cub down.

There was a catapult in the girl's hand, and, making certain that she was unobserved, she fitted a small stone to the elastic, took careful aim, and let fly.

The stone, truly aimed, struck the lion cub as Yin Su stooped to pet him for prancing on his hind legs.

The stone hurt, and he yelped in pain; then, believing Yin Su to blame, he bared his teeth and sprang.

May saw his snarl, saw him crouch, and with a quick spring hurled herself forward. Just in time she gave him a push, and, missing his object, he turned in air and thudded to the ground.

Yin Su crouched back, her eyes wide with horror, as the cub wheeled upon her. Daphne, too petrified with fright to move, could not even scream.

For young though the cub was, his teeth could gash an arm, and his claws were not to be scorned, either.

But the keeper came to the rescue then. With a quick jump he barred the cub's way, then snatched it up and popped it back into its cage.

"Phew! Narrow escape!" gasped May, quite white now that it was over. "But what ever made it spring?"

"The gipsy's warning!" gasped Daphne.

But the tamer, turning to them, spoke angrily in rebuke, blaming them for the incident, knowing nothing of that catapulted stone.

"You must have teased it!" he snapped. "Get along, all of you!"

Chagrined, their explanations unheeded, the three girls turned away to where Kun Fu stood watching the turn that preceded his—the acrobats.

"Now!" he exclaimed.

At his signal they ran into the ring, while attendants from the other side took on the necessary apparatus.

Kun Fu waited not a minute. He tossed coloured balls to Yin Su, and himself juggled deftly.

Unnerved by that alarming experience, Yin Su dropped a ball, but cleverly she pretended it was part of the trick by letting the others drop in turn, and then juggling them up from the ground.

May and Daphne took their eyes from her to look at the audience, and exchanged smiling looks. The audience was packed, tier upon tier. It was the first time in their lives they had been watched by such a vast crowd, but their make-up prevented their feeling shy.

"Table!" hissed Kun Fu.

May moved the table forward, and stood there, holding a stick and a ball until he needed them. Yin Su, smiling blandly, then threw cartwheels, going over and over from hands to feet in tireless succession.

"I say, just look at her!" said May. "I'm not going to be out of this!"

Realising that the more things happening in the ring the merrier for the audience, she did four somersaults herself of the kind she had practised at school.

But now the juggler was doing something really difficult, with half a dozen articles balanced on his chin, while he juggled knives from hand to hand.

Daphne, less confident than May and Yin Su, stood still, surveying the audience, and thus it was that she presently saw the juggler's former assistant.

The girl was in a high back seat, sitting alone, and, as Daphne looked, she pulled back the elastic of the catapult.

"Oh, look!" cried Daphne, and started forward.

The juggler, startled by that sharp



"OH, that's easy," said Daphne, as she saw the skilful way Yin Su was juggling. But when she tried it—clatter, bonk! Something went wrong! May hid a smile.

cry, quivered, and then dodged to and fro to keep poised. A still sharper cry came from Daphne as something hard struck her cheek with stinging force.

Stepping into the line of fire, she had stopped the pellet meant for the juggler. Hand to cheek, she stood there, momentarily dazed, but clear-headed enough to know just what had happened and who had fired that shot.

The juggler had upset the topmost objects; but Yin Su, darting in, caught them deftly, and handed them back to him, so that he was able to pass them to the top again.

May moved nearer to Daphne.

"What's wrong?" she whispered.

"That girl—the one who was in the caravan—she fired a pellet at me with the catapult!"

May was too late to see the girl, who had slipped away, but she realised that Daphne had not been the mark.

"My goodness, we've made an enemy!" she muttered. "We've taken her place!"

"Fire—Help—Fire!"

HERE was no chance to say more, as the chums had to help the juggler again. He became a conjurer now, doing all manner of quaint tricks with jugs and water, playing cards, and matchboxes.

When he took a small bird from Daphne's hair she brought the laugh as much as he did by groping for another.

Next he tossed some powder under her nose, and Daphne sneezed, and then coughed. As she coughed he patted her back, and, so far as the audience could see, a bird flew out of her mouth.

"Gig-good gracious!" gasped Daphne.

"Again?" asked the conjurer; and this time whisked an egg into view.

He gave the egg to Yin Su, who shook it against her ear, and, having a bird artfully hidden in her sleeve, worked a neat trick of her own.

Throwing the egg down, she palmed it, and let the bird free. It was all completely bewildering to Daphne, who gulped and swallowed and gave little anxious coughs, sure that she could feel fluttering inside.

Amid great applause, the conjurer went off, followed by May and Yin Su. Daphne came last of all just as a performing horse, with a gaily dressed rider, thundered on.

The act was over, but to the three girls every minute had been a thrill and a delight.

"I say, what fun!" murmured May, and, seeing the boss, laughed. "Were we good?"

"Fine—fine, especially the comic!" he said to Daphne.

Then he produced three printed sheets of paper.

"Just a formality," he said smoothly.

"Sign your names at the bottom. It's to say you won't reveal any of the conjurer's tricks."

Yin Su bowed.

"Honour of Chinese girl forbid it!" she said quite sternly, and signed in Chinese characters.

"Honour of English girl, too," nodded Daphne, adding her name to the second paper.

And May, without bothering to read the many closely printed paragraphs, appended her signature to one as well. Then, the bruise made by the catapult pellet paining her, Daphne asked for some ointment.

"How did it happen?" the boss asked.

"Someone with a catapult!" said May grimly.

"Catapult!" the boss exclaimed sharply. "So that's it! Someone trying to wreck the show! Who was it?"

"I—" murmured Daphne. "Well, I—"

"My goodness! Was that what happened to the lion cub, too?" cried May. "That girl needs a lesson!"

"If I didn't feel that we had taken her place and she had a grievance, I'd give her away," said Daphne. "But I am not a sneak, I hope."

The boss laughed grimly. "As there's only one girl whose place you've taken, I know the one! By gosh, she'll go this minute!"

Off he strode; but the angry scene was hidden from the girls, who were taken to tea in a large tent where there were other artistes—the girl who rode standing on horseback, the seal-tamer, some clowns, a party of dancing girls, trick cyclists, and others.

"Well, this is a new side of England for all of us!" said May happily. "Scrumptious, isn't it?"

"Pity we have to go," nodded Daphne. "Suggest to estimable Miss Vesey we stay?" asked Yin Su.

May laughed. "No fear! Don't forget we've got to find out our next instructions. This has been fun, but we can't stay here."

The boss appeared at that moment, and said that the caravan they had used to change in was theirs, to use again when they pleased.

"If you want anything to eat you'll find plenty there, and there's always the canteen," he reminded them.

The chums discovered that their caravan, very cosy and spick and span, was certainly well stocked with food and crockery, with a large oil-stove on which simple cooking could be done.

"Bread, butter, jam, eggs—golly, and some cakes, too!" cried May, rummaging through the tiny larder. "Well, girls, what's it to be? I vote for eggs!"

"So do I!" said Daphne seriously. "They're awfully good for you, you know. And I'll have a cake if they're not too rich—"

"I'm going" to have one because they jolly well are rich!" May returned, with a chuckle. "What about you, Yin Su?"

The Chinese girl, clasping her hands, watched while May and Daphne arranged the various items of food on a table.

"This lowly and easily satisfied Chinese maiden would be content with four or five of the succulent eggs, and as many slices of bread-and-butter as there are fingers on her hands," she remarked solemnly.

"Gug-gug-goodness! Really?" gasped Daphne.

She looked in astonishment at Yin Su; and then, a growing expression of dismay on her face, looked at the table, for there were only five eggs altogether, and scarcely sufficient bread for ten slices.

But May noticed a sparkle in the Chinese girl's usually inscrutable eyes.

"Don't be a stupid, Daph!" she said. "Yin Su's only pulling your leg. Eggs for all of us, then?"

Wasting no time, the chums bustled about, and very soon were seated around the tiny table enjoying a plain but appetising meal. And Yin Su, far from requiring anything like the large helping she had suggested, daintily toyed

with her egg, while May and Daphne, passing that stage, went on to delicious strawberry jam and then cakes.

But all were satisfied; all content. And at the finish, having washed up, May suddenly remembered they were still wearing their circus clothes and make-up.

It was while they were changing that someone knocked at the door. Opening it, May saw the boss' wife, a plump, pink-cheeked woman.

"Here you are, dears," she said. "Better read them carefully."

May, puzzled, took the three sheets of paper; but before she could study them she wheeled round, certain she had heard a key click.

She had! When she tried the door it refused to open.

"My golly, we're locked in!" she gasped. "Is this a joke?"

She hammered on the door, and turned to Daphne and Yin Su, who stood silent, as puzzled as she was. Then Daphne, looking at the papers in May's hand, gave a squeal.

"May, they're contracts! There's mine! It—it says I am employed at the circus here!"

May stared at one of the other sheets. "Why, this is the paper I signed!" she said aghast. "You don't mean—"

"We haven't— Golly!" she ended. "We've been tricked! We've signed contracts! We've signed on as members of the circus, and that's why we're locked in!"

Yin Su clasped her hands. "Dishonourable and scorned boss play trick!" she murmured, in surprise.

"Simple girls sign document, not knowing true nature!"

That was precisely what they had done; and one of the first paragraphs of the contract stated that if any of them should break it within a month, there would be a penalty of ten pounds in each case.

"A month! Held here for a month!" cried May indignantly. "My goodness, we're not! It's not legal! It can't be! They're bluffing us!"

She hammered on the door again, assisted by Daphne, while Yin Su sat on the bed with Oriental calm, quoting now and then a Chinese proverb that seemed to fit the occasion.

No one answered their hammering, and it became evident that, although their shouts and knocking were heard, there was no intention of freeing them.

May was in determined mood.

"So they won't let us out—eh? I suppose they'd let us burn to death rather than release us?"

"B-burn" to death, dear?" said Daphne. "But we're not burning, y'know!"

"Wait!" said May; and, taking up one of the Chinese frocks, she rent it into strips.

Then she put it into the hand-bowl, took the matches from the candlesticks, and started a smouldering fire.

Thick, acrid fumes rose from the rags, which would not burst into flame. There was no danger, but there was smoke enough to suggest that the whole caravan was alight.

"All together! Fire!" yelled May.

"Fire! Help, help! Fire!"

WILL May's ingenious ruse enable the chums to escape? On no account miss the continuation of this fascinating story, which is simply packed with fun and excitement.