

Dramatic times for Barbara Redfern  
& Co. when Jemima Carstairs becomes

"THE MOST BAFFLING GIRL AT CLIFF HOUSE!"

# THE SCHOOLGIRL

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Incorporating  
"SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN"



## STRANGE BEHAVIOUR OF A "GHOST"!

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summon a mistress?

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# The Most BAFFLING GIRL at CLIFF HOUSE!

Rallying Round Doris!



**“WORKED** it out, Doris?”  
Doris Redfern, her forehead wrinkled, looked up.  
“Y-yes, I think so. Will you check the answer, Babs?”

Barbara Redfern, captain of the Fourth Form at Cliff House School, took the sheet which her younger sister from the Upper Third handed to her. Quickly she ran her pencil up and down the lines of figures the sheet contained, while her lips voicelessly murmured the numbers. Then she nodded.

“Jolly good! All correct, and worked out toppling,” she said. “Now, Jimmy, you give her a sum—not too hard, of course, and not too easy.”

“Quite. In-betweenish sort of thing, what?” Jemima Carstairs murmured, and vigorously polished her eyeglass. “Stand to your stations, troops! Hero goes. Now, give me two square acres and two-thirds in square yards,” she instructed Doris. “Howzat, Barbara beloved?”

“Very good,” Babs agreed. “Manage it, Doris?”

“Y-yes, I think so,” Doris said uncertainly. “Mabs, pass me another sheet of paper, will you?”

Mabel Lynn, with a sympathetic smile, passed the sheet of paper. Plump Bessie Bunter—who shared this study, No. 4, with Babs and Mabs—cuddling a little Pekingese dog, blinked up from her seat by the fire, and for several minutes there was silence, broken only

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Jemima Carstairs, ever a puzzle to the Fourth Form, had always been a staunch supporter of Babs & Co. So when Babs’ younger sister, Doris, becomes the victim of a prefect’s spite, the chums were amazed to discover that Jemima was backing up the prefect!

by an occasional sigh from Doris Redfern and the scratch of her pen upon the paper.

Babs bit her lip a little as she gazed at Doris. That strange Fourth Former, Jemima Carstairs, keenly watching the figures that grew beneath the hand of the younger child, nodded approvingly from time to time.

Bessie, whose every attention was concentrated on her beloved pet dog, Ting-a-Ling, sighed forlornly.

It was an unusual scene to be found in Study No. 4—unusual because Doris’ normal visits to that study were usually associated with study feeds and cheery, cheeky good times. Rarely, indeed, was it that she was found working so industriously, so painstakingly, so apprehensively.

But there had arrived in Doris’ young life a crisis—a crisis which was alarming. Good as she was at games, popular as she was in the school, Doris’ recent class-room work had left a great deal to be desired.

Her worst subject was mathematics, and Miss Venn, Cliff House’s temporary headmistress, had decided that unless Doris passed a special examination in that subject, she must go down into the Lower Third.

So Doris was working hard—desperately hard.

Babs and Mabs, because they did not

want to see her suffer the humiliation of going down, were helping her. And Jemima Carstairs, the strange, puzzling girl of the sleek Eton crop and the inevitable monocle, had been called in to lend a hand, because Jemima was far and away the most expert mathematician in the Junior School.

“There!” Doris said, and rather hesitantly handed the results of her laborious effort to Jemima. “Is—is that all right, Jimmy?”

“What-ho! Go up one!” Jemima beamed. “Heroic effort, what? Bit long-winded in the working, perhaps, but as long as the answer is right, who cares, as Drake said when he did the Lambeth Walk before the battle of Trafalgar. But better,” Jemima said, with a keen glance at Doris’ tired and weary face, “clamp the old brake on it now. What about a stroll down to ye old tuckshop, and an exhilarating ginger-pop before call-over?”

“But—will I get through?” Doris asked nervously. “If I don’t pass the exam—”

“Worry not, fair child,” Jemima soothed. “Worry not. The exam is days and days away yet. Sufficient for the hour is the swotting thereof. Bessie, wiltst join us?”

Plump Bessie, on any other occasion, would have jumped up with alacrity;

but she turned a worried, woeful face towards Jemima now.

"Oh dud-dear! How can I leave poor Ting?"

"Well, by just hoofing it through the door, what?" Jemima answered.

"But he's ill, you know!"

Jemima frowned. Babs and Mabs grinned a little. They all knew how ill artful Ting was—Ting, with his uncanny knowledge of his too-fond mistress' character, was a past-master in the art of pulling Bessie's leg. Ting had only to give Bessie his famous soulful look, and Bessie at once was as frantic as a hen with ten chicks.

"He—he's got a cold," Bessie said worriedly. "He—he's breathing like—like anything, you know!"

"Well, if you will give the little beggar about a pound of cold steak and kidney after his ordinary dinner, what do you expect?" Mabs asked. "He's not ill; he's just stuffed. Take him back to the Pets' House."

Bessie blinked indignantly behind her thick spectacles. She was quite convinced that there was something wrong with Ting.

"Well, are you coming?" Babs asked impatiently.

"I dud-don't think so." Bessie took an anxious look at her pet. "I'll stop here. You can bring me back a bottle of ginger-beer, you know, and a few doughnuts to eat with it."

The chums smiled. They left Bessie behind. Accompanied by Doris, they went down to the tuckshop, and there, with Jemima standing treat, passed a very pleasant ten minutes until call-over bell sounded. A scamper then, arriving in Big Hall just in time to answer to their names.

In the passage afterwards, Bessie joined Babs.

"I sus-say, Babs—"

"Yes, old thing?"

"Oh crumbs! It's about Ting," Bessie said worriedly. "Dud-do you mind if I leave him in the study all night? The poor little chap lul-looks all in, you know."

Babs shook her head.

"You know, Bessie, it's against the rules."

"Well, y-yes."

"And you know, if you're caught, you'll probably get a detention? Supposing he starts yelping?"

"But he won't, you know—not Ting," Bessie said earnestly. "Ting never yelps unless there's something to make him yelp, does he? Oh, Babs, go on—let him stop!" she pleaded.

Babs smiled fondly at the plump duffer. She was no more convinced than any of the others that there was anything seriously wrong with Bessie's pet; but if it was going to make Bessie happy—well, why not? Nobody was likely to visit Study No. 4 until morning.

"Well, I don't mind, Bess. But just be careful, that's all. And don't forget," she added, knowing the fat girl's forgetfulness in spite of her admiration for her pet, "to leave him some water handy. Hallo, Doris!" she added, as her sister strolled up, and then glanced at her keenly. "I say, you're not off colour?" she added, with a touch of alarm in her voice.

For Doris, unused to the long hours and the terrific concentration which she had given her brain that afternoon and evening, certainly did look rather white. But she shook her head.

"No," she said. "Just—just tired. Oh, I—I just wanted to thank you, Babs, for all the trouble you and Mabs and Jimmy are taking."

"Oh stuff!" Babs said. "Anyway,

thank us, if you must, when you've passed the exam."

"And—and you'll help me again tomorrow?" Doris asked hesitantly.

"Of course, goose! All afternoon, as we arranged."

"Oh, Babs, it's jolly decent of you to give your holiday up."

"Jolly stuff!" Babs scorned. "Just get through, that's all. And just one word," she added, with a frown of sisterly warning. "Give up ragging about. You can't afford to risk detentions and lines and so on while you're swotting for this exam, can you?"

Doris looked at her. At any other time that advice would have brought some cheeky little retort. Very full of fun and high spirits was Doris, as a rule. It was those traits, likeable enough, which had helped to put her in her present unenviable position. But she did not check now. For once she recognised the wisdom behind the advice.

"No," she said, almost humbly. "Don't worry, Babs. I'm going to do nothing but swot, swot, until the exam is over. Good-night, old thing."

"Good-night," Babs said softly, and kissed her. "Sleep well."

And Doris went off. First bell was ringing then, so Babs turned towards the Fourth Form dormitory. She was joined by Mabel Lynn as she entered the room, and just as second bell was going, by Bessie herself. Bessie was looking considerably relieved.

"It—it's all right," she hoarsely confided to Babs. "I've tucked him up, you know—and given him water. He's sleeping like a—a—"

By

HILDA RICHARDS

Illustrated by T. LAIDLER

"Piglet!" Mabs suggested, as she ran a brush over her glistening, golden hair.

"Oh, really, Mabs! Like a spinning-wheel—I mum-mean a humming-top!" Bessie announced indignantly. "But don't tell anyone he's in the study, you know."

"Hey! Who's in the study?" Lydia Crossendale, three beds away, wanted to know.

"Oh, really, Lydia, I didn't say anybody was in the study! If you think I mean Ting-a-Ling, then you're jolly well mistaken!" Bessie answered indignantly. "I—oh dud-dear!" she added, and bolted hurriedly for her own bed as the door opened and the scowling, bad-tempered face of unpopular Connie Jackson, the prefect, peered into the room. "Hallo, Connie, I—I'm, nun-nearly undressed, you know!"

"Are you?" Connie glared. "Take twenty lines for not having made a start!" she rapped. "Hurry up into bed, and if you're not there when the last bell goes, I'll double it. Buck up, all of you!" she added snappily.

"Sweet-tempered child," Jemima Carstairs murmured.

But as Connie was duty prefect for the day, they all made haste. Several seconds before last bell sounded they were beneath the sheets. Connie scowled sourly again as she turned out the lights.

"Good-night," she growled, "and no noise, otherwise there'll be trouble."

She went out. The door closed, and the usual whispered conversation began.

But to-night Babs had no part in that

conversation. Hardly realising how tired she was, she was off to sleep almost as soon as her head touched the pillow. She awoke, however, with a start, to find the dormitory wrapped in silence, the silver moonbeams shining through the window above her head, and the echo of some unusual sound in her ears.

What was it?

She sat up, listening. At the same moment, Jemima's voice reached her ears.

"Whoa, Babs! That you, beloved? Hear that noise?"

"What was it, Jimmy?" Babs asked. "Listen!" Jemima bade.

And then suddenly it came again—a frantic yelp, which could only mean one thing.

"Oh, my hat! That's Ting-a-Ling!" Babs cried.

"What's disturbed him?"

"Goodness knows!" And Babs, in that moment, did not care. Suddenly apprehensive for Bessie's sake, she scrambled out of bed. If Ting continued to make that row there could only be one possible upshot—somebody would hear, somebody would discover him—and then, woe betide Bessie Bunter! She shook the fat junior by the shoulder.

"Oh crumbs! Whassermatter?" Bessie gurgled, suddenly starting out of her sleep. "Help! Burglars!" she cried.

"Bessie, you idiot, shush!" Babs hissed. "Listen! Ting-a-Ling's barking!"

Yap, yap, yap! came from below. Bessie sat up then. Mabs, disturbed, sat up, too.

"Oh crumbs!" Bessie gasped. "What can we do?"

"Get up; go and quieten him," Babs said. "If a mistress or a prefect hears that row there'll be detention for you as sure as eggs are eggs! Best thing," Babs added grimly, "is to take him back to the Pets' House."

"What! In the dark!" Bessie shivered.

"Yes."

"Oh crumbs! I sus-say, will you come with me?"

"Yes, chump. Come on. Quickly!" Babs said frantically.

Bessie got up. Babs flung on a dressing-gown. Just for company's sake, Jemima and Mabs rose with them, and in another moment they were all creeping towards the door.

Bessie shivered. The fat junior did not like the decidedly cold nip in the atmosphere, and Bessie, despite her often-repeated boast that she was as brave as a lion, liked the darkness still less. She blinked fearfully in the corridor.

"Oh dud-dear! I sus-say, Babs, suppose it's a burglar?"

"Rats!" Babs retorted.

"Sus-suppose it's a ghost?" Bessie shivered more intensely.

"More rats! Come on. Here, give me your arm, you old duffer."

Jemima chuckled. Mabs, in the darkness, grinned. There came a fresh yelp from Ting as they reached the Fourth Form corridor, and then a growl as Babs pushed open the door. Quickly she switched on the light. Ting, showing unmistakable excitement, jumped friskily to greet them, and then ran towards the door and back again.

"Something's disturbed him," Mabs observed.

"What-ho!" Jemima nodded.

"Rather odd."

"But jolly lucky," Babs said, "he wasn't heard before this. Pick him up, Bess. We'll take him back to the kennels."

## 4 "The Most Baffling Girl at Cliff House!"

"But he's ill—" Bessie objected. "Stuff! He was just pulling your leg. If he was, he's all right now. Come on, let's go."

Bessie blinked. But the undoubted excitement and friskiness of Ting-a-Ling convinced even her that nothing could be wrong with her pet now. She gathered him up.

"I sus-say, you'll come, too, won't you?" she asked pathetically. "It's not that I'm afraid, of course—we Bunters are renowned for our courage! But—but I might fall over something in the dark, you know!"

"Or walk through a merry old spook, what?" Jemima asked cheerfully. "Fear not, fair, fat one. Thy trusty henchmen are at your side. Forward the Light Brigade."

And the "Light Brigade," forming round Bessie with the snuggled peke in her arms, "forwarded," which is to say, they tiptoed down the stairs towards the lobby in Big Hall. There Babs soundlessly pushed open the window, and they clambered outside.

Bessie shivered again. Bessie had a lively imagination. She could never forget the many legends which surrounded Cliff House School, and in moonlit darkness such as this those legends were apt to take vivid shape and life in her imagination. She stopped suddenly with a quiver.

"Wuw-what was that?" she asked.

"Just the merry old gale howling through the trees," Jemima answered, though the "merry old gale" was the merest breath of wind which was rustling the leaves of the evergreens in the shrubbery. "Fear not, Bessie. Stagger on!"

On they went, Bessie really anxious to get the job finished now. Within ten minutes the Pets' House was reached, Ting, despite his plaintive whine, placed in his own warm bed of straw, and the chums returning. Without accident the window was negotiated once again, and, while they all stood in the lobby, Babs pulled down the window. Then suddenly from Bessie came a strangled, terrified whisper.

"Wuw-what's that?"

"Oh crumbs! What's what?" Mabs asked, and then stared in the direction in which Bessie's round eyes were fixed. "Mum-my hat!" she gasped.

And for a moment they all became transfixed.

For stealthily stealing across Big Hall was a figure—a figure dressed all in white.

Just for a moment they saw it as, its back towards them, it passed through a beam of moonlight, its arms held out rigidly in front of it. No sound it made—indeed, by some trick of the darkness, it seemed to be floating above the floor. For one moment they all had a sensation as of cold water being poured down their spines. Then—

"Help!" roared Bessie Bunter lustily.

"Bessie—" gasped Babs.

"Help!" Bessie yelled. "Sus-save me! It's a ghost! Wow! Babs—" And frenziedly she grabbed Babs. "Oh dud-dear!"

"Bessie, you idiot! Shush!" hissed Mabs, in agony. "Oh, my hat! Cave!"

But it was too late then. From the other side of the Hall a door came open. A stream of light from Miss Bullivant's room illuminated the Hall. Of the ghost there was now no sign.

"What—what—Who is there?" she cried.

"Oh, dud-do be careful, Miss Bullivant!" Bessie wailed, her terror for the moment making her forget her own and her chums' situation. "It—it—Oh crumbs!" she added, in astonishment. "It's gone!"

"And so," Jemima murmured resignedly, "are we! Chins up, comrades! Here cometh the enemy!"

"The Bull," ferocious-looking in night-dress and hair-curlers, was bearing wrathfully down upon them. She switched on the light.

"And what," she said, with a glare, "are you girls doing out of bed?"

"Ahem! We—" commenced Jemima.

"We—" started Babs feebly.

"We—we—we thought that—that—" Mabs said flustered.

"And what?"—Miss Bullivant frowned—"were you making that awful noise about, Bessie Bunter?"

"Oh crumbs! We saw a ghost, you know!"

"Nonsense!"

"But we did!" And Bessie blinked nervously round, though certainly in the illuminated Hall there was no sign of a ghost now. "A gug-gloaming-eyed monster, Miss Bullivant—just like Frankenstein!"

"Bessie, do not be foolish; child! Barbara, did you see anything?"

"Well, we did—yes," Babs said. "Somebody dressed in white going towards the stairs. We only had a glimpse of it."

Miss Bullivant stared at her hard. "And that is the reason, I presume, you were out of bed—ghost-hunting?"

Babs gulped.

"Well—" she began.

"You will go to bed!" Miss Bullivant's eyes glimmered. "I do not approve of this larking about in the middle of the night! You will each take two hundred lines! I trust, Barbara, you are not making up this story about the ghost?"

"No, Miss Bullivant."

"Very well. You may go. I myself will make an investigation," Miss Bullivant said grandly. "No doubt it was some other girl dressed up just to frighten you. Go!"

And the chums, with sickly glances of dismay at each other, went. Not a word they spoke until they reached the dormitory.

Then Jemima sighed.

"Too tough!" she said regretfully. "Too rhinocery-hidey tough! Superbly and with magnificent abandon we carry out our own programme, only to get it in the merry old neck because of some strange and wandering spook! Didst notice anything familiar about the spook, by the way?"

"No. What?" Babs asked, with a stare.

"Ah!" said Jemima.

"Well, what?"

"Oh, nothing!" Jemima smiled inscrutably. "I thought I recognised—But, no; never shall it be said," she added vaguely. "Sweet robe she was dressed in. wasn't it? Well, good-night, my merry old spook-hunters!"

And Jemima, with that bland, irritatingly puzzling smile which was always her hall-mark of mystery, trotted casually towards her own bed.

But Babs wondered. What had Jemima noticed about the ghost which none of the others had noticed?

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## The Finger of Suspicion!



of the air and suddenly changed into Ting-a-Ling!

STRANGE the dreams which haunted Babs' slumber for the rest of that night—dreams of Doris; dreams of Jemima; dreams of a ghostly white figure which came clutching at her out

But all through those dreams she saw the face of Doris—Doris looking white and worried.

And it was with the image of Doris' haggard face in her mind's eye that she woke with a sudden start, to find Madge Stevens, Doris' own particular friend in the Upper Third, shaking her by the shoulder.

"Why, Madge," she cried, in surprise, "what's the matter?"

"It's Doris!" Madge said. Her long-lashed eyes were wide and apprehensive. "She won't wake up! Rising-bell went five minutes ago, and Connie Jackson will be round any minute! Three times we've tried to waken her, and three times she's fallen asleep! Come and see what you can do!" she added.

In a moment Babs was very much awake. Anxiously she jumped out of bed. Jemima Carstairs, gazing curiously at the unusual spectacle of a Third Former in the Fourth Form dormitory at rising-bell, strolled over.

"What-cheer, stranger!" she said. "And what bright tidings do you bring on this glad and blithesome morn?"

"Nothing wrong, Babs, old Spartan?"

"Doris," Babs said, hurriedly slipping on her clothes—"they can't get her up!"

"Aha!" Jemima said, but she did not seem surprised. "Merry old Mother Nature taking her toll, and all that sort of awful old rot—what?"

Babs looked at her sharply.

"And what do you mean by that?"

"Oh, nothing!" Jemima murmured vaguely. "Like me to come along and give old Rip Van Doris a helping hand? Anything to oblige—what? Trust Uncle Jimmy to be helpful."

Babs gazed hard at her immaculate chum. When Jemima looked blank, as she was doing now, when she smiled with such innocent blandness, it was a pretty safe indication that something out of the ordinary was going on in that keen, alert brain which functioned beneath the sleek Eton crop. What was Jemima hinting at?

However, no time for that now. She must fly!

And fly she did, hurrying along the corridor to the Third Form dormitory with Madge at her elbow and Jemima trotting behind. She reached the dormitory, went in. Quite a little crowd was gathered around Doris' bed, and Doris, looking very sleepy indeed, was sitting up, gouging her knuckles into her eyes.

Babs drew a breath of relief. "Hallo, Doris—awake, then, after all?" she asked. "But what's the matter? It's not like you to oversleep."

Doris yawned.

"I don't know. I—I—oh dear! Oh goodness! Oh crumbs! What's the matter with me?"

In some consternation Babs eyed her. Well might Doris ask that question—Doris who, normally, was the early morning pest of the Third—who, by this time, had usually finished her half-mile trot round the cinder track. But before Babs could reply, a harsh voice broke in.

"The matter with you is that you've got a hundred lines for being in bed five minutes, after rising-bell!" Connie Jackson snapped, striding into the dormitory. "And perhaps, Doris," she added, with a sneer, "that'll teach you not to go playing ghost again!"

Babs jumped.

"Ghost! Connie, what do you mean?" Jemima coughed gently.

Connie sneered.

"She knows all right," she said, "and she can consider herself jolly lucky I didn't report her to Miss Bullivant. Thought you weren't spotted, I suppose?" she gibed at Doris.

"Doris, it was you then?" Babs cried.



"No, it wasn't." Doris was wide-eyed and red-facedly awake now. "She's making it up."

"What? Why, you little—"  
"I never left the dormitory!" Doris declared indignantly.

"No?" Connie's eyes narrowed. "You weren't in Big Hall at twelve o'clock?" she asked.

"No, I wasn't," Doris retorted.

"All right." Connie glanced at her queerly. "Have it your own way. But I know you were, and just for telling lies about it you can consider yourself detained this afternoon. Now get dressed."

"But, Connie—" cried Babs. "No, no, wait a minute! Connie, you know Doris has got to study—"

"I know," Connie said grimly, "she's got to do a hundred lines and a detention. I shall be back in three minutes," she added. "If you're not dressed then, Doris Redfern, I'll report you to Miss Venn."

Doris clenched her hands. For a moment her eyes burned. Babs shook her head despairingly. A hundred lines, a whole afternoon's detention—when there was so much leeway for Doris to make up in her mathematical studies. Scarcely less dismaying than that realisation, however, was the shock of Connie's statement. She stared hard at her sister.

"Doris, you weren't playing ghost last night?"

"Of course I wasn't," Doris retorted indignantly.

"Well—" Babs bit her lip. She was thinking suddenly that a broken night's rest might account for Doris' lateness this morning. "On your word of honour, kid?" she asked.

"On my word of honour," Doris replied. "Blessed if I know what she's talking about."

Babs nodded. She was satisfied then. Doris might be a reckless young scapegrace on occasions, but Doris never gave her word of honour to a lie. All the same, it was puzzling. Why should Connie make such an assertion?

She left Doris then, returning to the Fourth Form dormitory to wash. Jemima, trailing along behind her, coughed gently.

"Strange," she murmured, and looked at Babs shrewdly. "Methinks I smell

a mystery. If Connie knew that Doris was playing ghost, why didn't she report her at the time? Not like our Connie to be so dashed charitable, what?"

Babs frowned.  
"Charitable!" she sniffed. "Jolly charitable, isn't it, for her to give Doris a hundred lines and a gating? All the same, if she thought she saw Doris, why didn't she report it?"

"There may be a reason," Jemima murmured.

"Such as?"

"Well, just supposing," Jemima observed, polishing her monocle, "that Connie herself was doing things she ought not to be doing? After all, even prefects have no business to be strolling around at midnight. Naturally, in those circles, Connie would be reluctant to report the old ghost, because Connie would have to report her own movements. Simple enough, if you think of it like that."

"But Doris!" Babs cried. "Doris denied that she was out of her dormitory! You mean it couldn't have been Doris she saw; it must have been some other girl?"

"Aha!" Jemima said—which might have meant anything. "Anyway, old Spartan, what about splashing the old face and neck? If Connie comes hither she won't be too pleased at finding you not ready."

The reminder was timely. Hurriedly Babs washed and went out with Jemima to take a turn in the quad before breakfast. It was a bright, clear morning, with no sun as yet, but with a sprinkling of frost on the trees and the ground underfoot frozen so solid on the surface that it was like walking on concrete.

"Nippy, what?" Jemima murmured. "Pretty hard ground, Babs. Tough on Doris—Connie interfering with the swotting."

Babs stared.  
"Well, yes; but what's that got to do with—"

"Oh, nothing," Jemima said lightly, though her grey eyes were glimmering. "Pretty useful at times—hard ground, you know," she burbled on in that baffling way of hers. "You say Connie said she saw the ghost in Big Hall, Babs?"

"Yes," Babs said. "But what—"  
"Then," Jemima decided, "she must have been thereabouts the same time as us—or was she?" she added thoughtfully. "Queer she said nothing about seeing us."

Again Babs gazed at her—mystified, a little exasperated.

"Jimmy, what are you getting at?"  
"Shall we," Jemima murmured, with a gentle cough, "trickle off to Big Hall now, old Spartan? I hear Assembly bell a-chiming."

And Babs, with a baffled look, went off, reaching Big Hall to find most of the Fourth already lined up. There, between Mabel Lynn and Tomboy Clara Trevlyn, she slipped into her place.

"Going to be nice for us—I don't think," Clara Trevlyn grumbled.  
"Heard the news?"  
"No; what?"

"The Charmer's gone off to see Miss Primrose. Primmey, apparently, has arrived at Eastbourne and is having a few days' rest there before coming back to take over from Miss Venn. While the Charmer is away, dear Connie is to deputise for her in the Fourth."

Babs grimaced. Glad as she was to hear the news of Miss Primrose's imminent return—the school had sadly missed their headmistress—she was by no means bucked to hear that the Form was to be given over to bad-tempered Connie's tender mercies. Connie after Miss Charmant was not a pleasant change. At the same moment there came from behind her a murmur.

"Wobbly, what?"  
"Eh?" Babs spun round. "What the dickens are you talking about now, Jimmy?"

"Just making the bright old observation, what?" Jemima said cheerfully. "I said wobbly. The word," Jemima added, "refers to a certain old engraving on the wall. Spot it, Babs?"

Babs looked round. Jemima nodded brightly in the direction of an engraving. It hung on the wall among a miscellaneous collection of others, a costly work of art depicting Cliff House in its monasterial days, which was supposed to be worth a large sum of money.

Babs frowned a little as she noticed it now—trust Jemima to pick out some trifling, piffing thing like that. The



"A HUNDRED lines for being in bed five minutes after rising-bell!" Connie Jackson snapped. "And perhaps, Doris," she added with a sneer, "that'll teach you not to go playing ghost again!" Babs jumped. "Ghost! Connie, what do you mean?" she cried.

engraving certainly was "wobbly"—meaning that it had been hung rather carelessly and was no longer in alignment with the rest of the row of engravings among which it had been given pride of place. She wasn't interested.

"Careless old somebody, letting our priceless picture hang as if it were a penny postcard," Jemima murmured. "Oh! Er! Hem!"

"Jemima!" rapped Connie Jackson from the Sixth Form ranks. "You were talking!"

"Alas!" Jemima sighed. "What were you talking about?" "Just a detail," Jemima said, with a sigh of resignation. "I was referring to the old picture on the wall. Pretty careless, what, for somebody to have hung it up all wonky like that?"

Connie looked at Jemima. Then she looked at the picture on the wall. And then, for some reason, she gave quite a violent start and hurriedly moved forward and straightened the engraving.

Jemima smiled cheerfully. "Thanks," she said. "So much better now, isn't it? Jolly nice of you to do the servants' work for them, Connie!"

"Stop chattering!" Connie snapped, and opened the register. Babs blinked, wondering why the prefect had turned such a confused crimson. But from Jemima came only a smile, a very contented smile.

### What is Jemima's Game?



"**B**UT, Babs, how can I get through?" Doris Redfern's voice was laden with despair. "You know that this afternoon is the only clear half-holiday we have before the exam. If

I don't swot—"

Babs squeezed her worried sister's arm. It was after Assembly, and just to try to cheer up Doris she had taken her down to the tuckshop to buy her a slab of her favourite chocolate. They were returning now for lessons.

"We'll manage somehow," said Babs. "Come along to the study as soon as you've finished detention and we'll have some tea and get down to it. Done your lines yet?"

"Yes, Babs. I—I missed breakfast to do them."

"Good kid! But for goodness' sake don't go starving yourself in order to work," Babs said anxiously. "I'll have a talk to Jimmy during the afternoon and we'll get a test lesson out for you. Now—" And then she started. "Great gollywogs!" she breathed, in a startled voice. "What the dickens is Jimmy up to now?"

Her curiosity was excusable. For in spite of the hard and chilly nature of the ground, an immaculate and monocular girl knelt, doing something with a sheet of paper.

It was Jemima Carstairs. "Jimmy?" cried Babs. "What on earth—"

Jemima twisted round. Quite a jump she gave as she saw Babs and her sister. Then swiftly she had scooped up the paper, rather breathlessly she rose to her feet. She smiled lazily as the two sauntered towards her.

"What cheer! Top of the morning, Doris!"

"But, Jimmy, what were you doing?" Babs asked in mystified wonder as she gazed at the roll of paper beneath Jemima's arm.

"Doing?" Jemima murmured vaguely.

"What were you kneeling on the ground for?"

"Oh, that!" And Jemima laughed. "That," she said, as though she had answered some frightfully difficult question. "Just a new little game of mine, what?"

"Gig-game?" stuttered Babs. "What sort of game?"

"Oh, frightfully deep old game! Frightfully!" Jemima nodded ponderously. "You see, you take a sheet of paper and a pair of scissors"—she plunged her hand into her pocket, and Babs blinked again as she produced the pair of scissors in question—"then you take two words—now let me see. Ah! Ghosts! Good one, that! Then—pictures—frightfully good one that, too! You sort of shuffle them together—use scissors and paper—and there you are!"

Babs stared. "And is that the game?"

"Not quite—not all, no." Jemima shook her head. "There are a few more rules and so forth to be added," she replied confidentially. "I haven't quite worked them out yet. Still, it's an astonishing old game—or will be when it's finished. Tell you all about it later."

"It sounds potty to me," Doris Redfern sniffed.

"That, dear old infant, is because you have not yet reached the same years of wise discretion as your Uncle Jimmy," Jemima returned imperturbably. "Still, toodle-oo, now! See you in class, Babs."

And Jemima, with a bright and beaming smile, ambled off. Babs heaved a deep, bewildered breath.

"If I didn't know Jemima," she told her sister, "I should think she was just babbling nonsense. As it is—"

She shook her head. As it was—what? Jemima did not play mysterious games for nothing. And what did Jemima mean by those two cryptic words—ghosts and pictures? Why the paper—and the scissors?

Babs gave it up. How was it possible to know what was going on at the back of Jemima's mind?

She wandered into the school. Saying good-bye to her sister outside the door of the Upper Third Common-room, she went along to her own study to collect her lesson-books. While she was there Clara Trevlyn came in.

The Tomboy looked rather bewildered—and a trifle ruffled.

"Babs, what's the matter with Jimmy?" she demanded.

"Jimmy?"

"I thought she didn't like Connie Jackson?"

"Well, she doesn't," Babs retorted.

"No?" Clara snorted. "Sounds like it. I've just been along to Connie's study to take in some lines," she said.

"And who do you think was there? Why, Jimmy—Jimmy talking and laughing with Connie as though they'd been pals for terms and terms. Jimmy was actually inviting Connie to go down to the village one afternoon with her and have tea."

"My hat!" cried Babs. She knew Connie, who was not well supplied with money, was not above accepting a younger girl's hospitality, but that Jemima, of all people—

"And they were saying something as I went in about—about—" Clara looked keenly at her chum. "About Doris. I heard Jimmy say: 'Oh, you mustn't blame Doris too much, Connie, old thing: after all, she's only a kid.' Then Connie said something about Doris being the worst little scatterbrain in the Upper Third, and Jemima seemed to agree with her."

"Oh, stuff!" cried Babs.

"But it's true!" Clara cried impatiently tossing back her unruly hair. "Dash it, you don't think I'd make it up, do you?"

Uneasily Babs gazed at her. No, Clara above all was the last girl to make up a story of that nature. Still, it did seem fantastic.

"I can tell you I could hardly believe my ears," Clara went on. "When I went in I gave Jimmy a glare, but—well, you know what she is! She never even turned a hair."

"Perhaps," the always-charitable Babs suggested, "she was trying to get Doris off her detention!"

But Clara sniffed. Obviously Clara had seen enough to make her discount that opinion. In any case, there was no time for further discussion then, because first lesson bell was already ringing and with Connie in charge of the Form it behoved everybody to be in their places before second bell rang out.

Off went the chums to the class-room. Neither Jemima nor Connie was there, however, when they entered.

They came in two minutes later—at a time ordinarily which would have meant at least a hundred lines for Jemima Carstairs. To Babs and the Form's astonishment, however, Connie and Jemima seemed to be on the most excellent of terms. Connie merely nodded to Jemima.

"Right-ho, Jemima, take your seat. And now, everybody—with her well-known scowl—"pay attention to me. Bessie Bunter, take twenty lines for not looking at me when I'm speaking!"

The class settled down. But many an astonished look was thrown at Jemima.

"And now," Connie went on, "we'll do Latin verbs. No, no books. We'll take 'lunch' first—"

"Oh crumbs, what a ripping idea!" Bessie Bunter beamed. "You know, Connie, I always did say that we ought to have meals before lessons, you know."

"Did you? Well you can have another twenty lines before lessons!" Connie snapped. "And no leg-pulling! Seeing you're so jolly clever, Bessie Bunter, give me the present."

"Eh? What present?" Bessie asked. "I haven't got a present!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" tittered the class.

"The present of 'lunch'!" Connie roared.

The plump duffer looked flummoxed and flustered.

"But how can I give you a present of lunch when we aren't going to have any lunch?" she argued warmly. "In any case, you know it's forbidden to bring food into the class-room!"

Connie breathed hard.

"Stop giggling!" she stormed at the class. "Bessie Bunter, look at me! What are we doing?"

"Oh crumbs! Oh, really, I—I dud-don't know!" Bessie unhappily stuttered.

"First you said we were going to have lunch. Then you asked me for a present, you know! Then you said you wanted me to give you a present of lunch, when you know we haven't got a bit of grub in the place—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Fourth.

"Shut up!" Connie glared. "Bessie Bunter, you are an idiot!" she raved. "Come out here and stand in the corner! Now, Barbara Redfern, perhaps you'll tell me what we're doing?"

"Certainly, Connie!" Babs said.

"We're doing Latin verbs, and you want the present tense of the verb 'to lunch.'"

"But lul-look here, you know, you never told me that!" Bessie exclaimed warmly.

"Take another twenty lines! And



what is the present of the verb, Barbara?"

"Prandeo," Babs said promptly.

Connie sniffed.

"Now the infinitive. Clara Trevlyn!"

"Oh crumbs!" muttered Clara, thinking hard.

"Crumbs have nothing to do with it! Take ten lines for not knowing. Bridget, perhaps you will tell her?"

"Arrah, and I would if I could!" Bridget O'Toole said ruefully. "But I've forgotten."

"Take ten lines, too! Now you, Diana Royston-Clarke!"

"Ahem! Would it be prandere?" Diana asked cautiously.

"It is. Now give me the perfect. You—" and Connie's eyes roved the class for a victim, while the Fourth all sat up, trying to look extremely keen and intelligent. "You—no, not you, Jemima," she added, in such a kind tone that the Fourth stared. "Mabel Lynn."

"Prandi," Mabs said.

"Right," Connie said. "Now the supino. Priscilla Terraine!"

"Yes, Connie. The supino of the Latin verb prandeo is pransum," the owlish twin answered exactly. "It also means dine."

"Thanks! When I want a lecture on Latin, I'll ask for it," Connie said sourly. "Jemima, will you please get me some chalk?"

"Certainly, old Spartan!" Jemima answered willingly.

The class blinked. One or two of them scowled. A few of them, like Lydia Crossendale and Frances Frost and Freda Ferriers, openly sneered—for if this wasn't favouritism, what was? But Jemima seemed in no wise disturbed.

And from that moment it became apparent, as Lydia afterwards put it, that Jemima and Connie were hand-in-glove. The Form wondered; the Form frowned.

Not one difficult question did Connie ask Jemima, and all the particular little tasks which helped to break the boredom of lessons were given to Jemima. It was Jemima, for instance, who was sent out to wet Connie's black-board sponge. It was Jemima who was given the job of collecting essay papers; Jemima who was told off in the middle of lessons to take a report to Miss Venn.

And, amazingly, Jemima accepted all those commissions with cheerful calmness—seemed, indeed, pleased to be helping Connie.

Break came at last—to the Fourth Form's infinite relief. With the rest of the class, Jemima was dismissed, only to be surrounded by an indignant crowd once she was outside. A dozen juniors immediately pounced upon her.

"And now," Clara Trevlyn said grimly, "perhaps you'll explain."

"Explain?" Jemima asked, wide-eyed.

"What are you toadying to Connie for?"

"Toadying? Oh, my dear old Spartan, what a crude and shocking expression!"

"Well, answer!"

"Have I done anything wrong?" Jemima asked, in anguish. "Tut-tut and tish-tish! Did not my dear Aunt Anastia always impress upon me that I must be kind to prefects and obey my elders? How come, and what wouldst?"

"Look here—" hooted Rosa Rod-worth.

"Alas, spare my monocle!" Jemima moaned. "Wouldst have it shiver to pieces?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Jimmy, you idiot, for goodness' sake explain!" pleaded Babs.

"But what," Jemima asked, with a sad shake of her head, "is there to explain? Is it my fault that my wistful charm and delicate beauty have made the dear old Constance my slave? Emphatically and most sadly do I regret, dear old comrades, there is nothing to explain. Alas, that I should be so misunderstood! Now, excuse me, please," she added gently, "I have promised to sample Connie's new box of chocolates. May I go?"

But Jemima did not wait for the Fourth's answer. She turned swiftly and, leaving them all gaping and fuming, flew.

Surely Jemima's game was one of the deepest and most peculiar she had ever played!

Jemima might have her own way of doing things; but buttering up to ill-natured Connie was a bit thick.

"Anyway, let's forge Jimmy," said Babs. She glanced approvingly over the tea-table. "Looks good!" she murmured. "And Doris is about due. Whoops! Here she is!" she cried; and as a knock came at the door flew to open it.

But it was not Doris. It was a girl with a gleaming monocle in her eye and a beaming smile upon her face.

"What cheer! Room for a little one?" Jemima Carstairs asked cheerfully.

"You, Jimmy! Where have you been?"

"Oh, places!" Jemima said vaguely. "Gathering moss like the old rolling stone—what? Nifty little spread—



"YOU take two words—now let me see. Ah! 'Ghosts.' Good one that," said Jemima gravely, waving the scissors. "Then—'pictures'—good one that, too! You sort of shuffle them together—use scissors and paper—and there you are!" Babs and Doris stared blankly. It suited Jemima to be baffling, but they knew she was up to some mysterious game.

### Jemima Walks Out!



"SCONES?" murmured Barbara Redfern thoughtfully.

"Yes, here they are, you know! I'm just going to toast them!" Bessie Bunter answered delightedly.

"Jelly and cream—Doris is awfully fond of jelly and cream," Mabel Lynn said.

"I've got them here," Clara Trevlyn announced.

"And sausages? Bessie, keep them on the turn, will you? That's all, I think," Barbara Redfern said. "And I hope to goodness that will buck her up and put her in a good frame of mind for her swotting. Wonder where Jimmy's got to?"

"Probably"—Clara sniffed scornfully—"scrubbing dear Connie's study floor while Connie takes poor old Doris in detention!"

Clara was somewhat huffy as far as Jemima was concerned. Truth to tell, neither Babs nor Mabs was feeling altogether too well disposed towards their mysterious chum.

what?" she added appreciatively. "So nice of you to invite me! Well, well, here we are again, all in snug friendship's circle, and all that sort of merry old blather—what? Got a toothache, Clara?" she added sympathetically.

Clara sniffed.

"No, I haven't! Why should I have a toothache?"

"Appearances," Jemima remarked, "are obviously deceptive! A scowl, apparently, is not toothache. Perhaps, old Clara, it's a blister on your big toe?"

"Or perhaps," Clara answered bitingly, "I'm just scowling at a toad on Connie Jackson's table!"

"Oh, Clara!" Babs cried anxiously. "Ahem! Quite!" Jemima beamed. "Let me applaud! Shrewd old comeback—what? I must—Whoa! Look who cometh! Our one and only Doris!"

Doris it was. She looked white and harassed.

"Doris—" Babs muttered.

Doris shook her head.

"It—it's all right!" she said unsteadily. "Oh goodness! Can—can I sit down for a few minutes? I—I—" And she looked so weary, so utterly used-up that for one alarmed moment

Babs thought she was going to burst into tears. "It—it's that cat Connie!"

Jemima threw a hasty look towards the door.

"Dear old Connie!" she murmured.

"Dear old—" Clara glared. "What's Connie been doing, Doris?"

"What hasn't she been doing!" Doris looked bitter. "Just picking on me! Twenty lines for blowing my nose! Fifty for making a blot on my paper, and"—her face glowered—"a special essay on clumsiness because I accidentally dropped my pencil! And all that, if you please, to be done by to-morrow morning!"

"Oh, my hat! You mean, you've got to do them to-night?"

"Well, Connie says so!" Doris replied savagely.

"But—but what about your studies?"

"That's it! What about them?" Doris glowered. "Connie jolly well knows I'm swotting! It just looks," she added bitterly, "as if she wants to stop it! Perhaps she'd like me to go down into the Lower Third—"

"Oh, tut, tut! Not dear old Connie," Jemima demurred. "Be fair, old thing—"

"Fair?" Babs flashed round. "Jimmy, don't be an idiot!"

"Well, I was only saying—" Jemima murmured.

"Then don't!" snapped Clara angrily.

"But Connie—"

"Rats to Connie! Connie," Clara flamed, "ought to be jolly well reported herself! And if you want to know what I think, Jimmy Carstairs," she added bluntly, "I think you're being just more than a bit of a cat! I always thought you were Doris' friend?"

"Well, so I am."

"It doesn't look like it, does it?" put in Mabel Lynn quietly; and even Bessie Bunter indignantly blinked. "Do you think it's fair for a great, loutish prefect to pile on a kid like this?"

Jemima sighed.

"Loutish," she said severely, "is a naughty, naughty word, old Mabsie! Our dear old Connie wouldn't be very pleased to hear you—"

"Well, blow Connie! Who cares what she'd be pleased to hear?" Mabs said indignantly. "It's pretty obvious she's making a dead set at Doris now, isn't it? Last night she accused her of going out of the dormitory when she was in bed fast asleep all the time. This afternoon she goes out of her way to make her life a misery to her. If that's your idea of fairness, Jimmy, the sooner you take it elsewhere the better!"

Jemima shook her head.

"Alas," she sighed, "that I should bring such a storm upon my innocent head! After all, you know, there are two sides to every question."

Babs' eyes glistened.

"Well—" Jemima demurred. "Oh! 'Hoin!" she added, as a knock came on the partly opened door.

And then, before anyone could say another word, that door opened. Connie herself, looking flushed and irritable, appeared in the doorway. One angry glance she darted around.

"Thanks!" she said bitterly. "I heard all that! And next time you want to discuss me behind my back," she added witheringly, "please see that you shut the door first! Mabel, you will take fifty lines for your insults: and that goes for you, too, Barbara and Clara! Jemima, it seems to me you aren't welcome here!"

Jemima regretfully shook her head.

"Alas!" she said.

"You're surely not going to stay on to tea after that?"

"Am I?" Jemima appealed to Babs.

Babs remained angrily silent.

"Clara beloved—" Jemima appealed.

"Clara beloved" glared.

"It seems," Jemima murmured sadly, "that my merry old room is preferred to my company, Connie!"

Connie paused.

"Then what about having tea with me?" she asked.

Jemima brightened.

"Oh, Connie, old comrade in distress, dost mean it?"

"Of course I mean it!"

"Then," Jemima said, and beamed round at the chums, "the invitation is accepted! Let us tetter, shall we? Good-bye, old Spartans! See you at bed-time!"

But the "old Spartans" merely goggled. Jemima—off with Connie to tea! If they wanted any further proof of Jemima's feelings on recent events they surely had it now! From that moment Jemima was on the enemy's side!

Fairy Godmother—Who?



"DORIS, don't you think you ought to go and do your lines?"

"No!" Doris Redfern said flatly.

"But if Connie comes

after you—"

"Let her come!" Doris said recklessly.

"Let her come! What's the use, anyway? If she doesn't get me through not having done her beastly lines she'll get at me some other way! I'm jolly well going to do my swotting whatever happens! Mabs, will you give me another sum, please?"

Babs and Mabs looked at each other. Tea was over in Study No. 4. Clara, as games captain, had departed to draft out the hockey team for Saturday's match. Bessie had drifted off to Big Hall to be present at the arrival of Granger, the postman.

Doris had been getting on quite well, despite Jemima's absence.

Babs and Mabs admired Doris' spirit. They were angry with Jemima and disgusted with Connie, who, they had no doubt now, had deliberately launched this amazing vendetta against the young Third Former.

They were pleased with the progress Doris was making, but they were uneasy at the same time. For if Connie reported Doris to Miss Venn, then the odds were that Miss Venn would chip in with a detention herself, or might, to teach Doris a sharp lesson, refuse to let her sit for the exam at all.

Much as they disliked giving in to Connie, there was no sense in banging one's head against a brick wall.

"But, Doris, old kid—" Babs said anxiously.

"Rats! Let's get on," said Doris stubbornly.

"No, Doris, wait a minute!" Babs shook her head. "Just think it out. Connie's got the upper hand. Like it or not, you've got to make an effort. It's pretty obvious now that she's out to smash your chance of studying for the exam. The more you defy her, the more you're playing into her hands. Look here, I'll tell you what," Babs added. "Go and get on with the lines now, and get up an hour earlier to-morrow morning and swot then. You'll be game, won't you, Mabs?"

"Game as anything!" Mabs said cheerfully.

Doris paused, a rather sulky pout on her lips. It went against her grain to give in to Connie. But a few moments' reflection proved to her the wisdom of Babs' urging.

"All right, then. Perhaps you're right, Babs."

"Sure of it," Babs said, and smiled at Mabs. "Do your best, old kiddie," she urged.

Doris nodded. Without enthusiasm she went off. Babs breathed a sigh of relief. Mabs shook her head. Their own prep was waiting to be done, but their minds were on other matters. Why was Connie so suddenly bitter and antagonistic against Doris? Why should Connie have gone out of her way this morning to accuse her of playing ghost last night, and then jump on her so heavily this afternoon? And—minor mystery—what was behind Jemima's sudden affection for Connie Jackson?

"Jimmy—" began Babs.

"Oh, blow Jimmy!" Mabs said huffily. "Anyway, what's the matter with her?"

"I—I was just going to say that—that she hasn't looked in," Babs said. "I was wondering if— My hat!" she cried.

Actually Babs' thoughts were far from her hat. The sudden exclamation was caused by the bursting open of the door.

And through that door came Doris—her face red and excited, waving a sheaf of papers in her hand.

"Babs, look!"

"What—"

"My lines! My essay!"

"What?"

"Somebody's done them for me! Look!" And Doris, with trembling fingers, spread the sheets on the table. "Somebody must have done them while I've been in here swotting with you—and they're all in order!" Doris exclaimed delightedly. "Babs, who is it?"

Babs blinked. Mabs' face expressed utter stupefaction. Together they stared at the written sheets, executed very neatly and in a hand very much like Doris' own.

"Clara?" suggested Mabs.

But it wasn't Clara. Clara's writing was far too big and bold. It wasn't gentle Marjorie Hazeldene's writing. Certainly it wasn't Bessie Bunter's—nor Babs' or Mabs'. Then who?

"Somebody in the Third!" ventured Babs.

"But nobody in the Third knew I had lines," Doris said. "I came straight from the class-room to this study. When I went back there were the lines—and the essay—already written out on my desk. Don't you know who could have done them?"

But Babs and Mabs confessed themselves completely bewildered. Anyway, inquiries could come later. The great and joyful fact was that the lines were here.

"Well, goodie!" Babs chuckled. "Needn't get up early now, old thing, we'll carry on with the swotting right away. Mabs, will you help Doris? I'll just rush these lines off to Connie."

Mabs nodded. In great satisfaction, looking almost happy again now, Doris sat down. Babs thoughtfully went off to Connie's study, wondering if she would find Jemima there.

But the study, when she reached it, was empty. Placing the sheets on Connie's study table, Babs returned to the Fourth Form corridor.

For the next hour, in Study No. 4, the silence was unbroken, save for the scratching of three pens while Doris worked at her task and Mabs and Babs, in the interval of helping her, did their prep.

Bed-time came—with the knowledge of good work well accomplished. Bidding Doris good-night, the two



chums went up to the dormitory. Instantly Babs' eyes sought out Jemima, but Jemima was already in bed and apparently fast asleep.

Feeling a little happier herself, Babs slipped into bed.

For an hour silence, unbroken save by the deep snore of Bessie Bunter, remained in the Fourth Form dormitory.

Then suddenly there was a rustle. A girl sat up, adjusted her monocle, and looked keenly round the dormitory.

"Aha! All is well!" Jemima Carstairs muttered.

Softly she rose, donning her thick, warm slippers. She threw on her camelhair dressing-gown, felt in the pocket, and withdrew from it a small electric torch.

With a satisfied nod of her sleek head, Jemima tiptoed towards the door.

"Now careful, Jimmy, old scout!" she told herself.

Cautiously she pulled the door open. Passing through, she hesitated, looking along the corridor which led down the stairs to Big Hall, and then, with a faint shrug, turned in the opposite direction, which led past the Upper Third dormitory. Swiftly she padded along, making hardly a sound in the silence of the night.

Until—

Just as she was nearing the door of the Upper Third dormitory she pulled back with a hissing intake of breath. Silent, motionless, she stood in the corridor. And then, despite her usual coolness, Jemima almost cried out as that door opened.

"Great goodness! What was this she saw?"

"HALLO!" MUTTERED Barbara Redfern. "Who called?"

"Babs, it was me!" And Mabel Lynn, her face shining in the moonlight that filtered through the windows of the Fourth Form dormitory, looked at her chum. "It's Jimmy!"

"Jimmy?"

"She's out!" Mabs whispered.

With a start, Babs sat up in bed. She blinked across the room towards Jemima Carstairs' bed. The glow of the moonbeams showed a disavowed pillow, and hastily tossed back bed-clothes.

"Well, I don't see it's any business of ours," she said. "But where on earth could she have got to? We—" And then she jumped. "My hat! What's that?"

For from downstairs, in the direction of Big Hall, had come a sudden thunderous crash.

One startled look Babs threw at her chum. Then, almost instinctively, the pair of them had leapt out of bed. One or two other girls, awakened by the sudden noise, were muttering as the two chums raced into dressing-gowns and slippers, and hardly knowing what to expect, darted towards the door. There, Babs paused.

Along the corridor came the sounds of commotion and two voices—the voices of Connie Jackson and Miss Bullivant, the sharp-tempered mathematics mistress—could be heard farther away.

"It's in Big Hall," Babs muttered. "Burglars, perhaps. Come on; let's have a peep."

Mabs nodded. Together the two of them groped their way towards the head of the stairs. Very dark was it in the corridor—so dark, indeed, that they could hardly see each other, and most certainly never saw, until it was on them, the silent-footed figure which came breathlessly rushing in their direction.

Not until that figure was upon Babs did Babs realise its existence. More by instinct than purpose she flattened herself against the wall; but even so the figure, in passing, caught her arm, spinning her round and sending her crashing against Mabs. Mabs let out a shout of anguish as Babs inadvertently stepped on her toe.

"Oh, my hat! Sorry, old thing! But who was that?" Babs asked, staring.

"Oh, my foot!" moaned Mabs.

"Didn't you see her?"

"No."

The figure had vanished then. But apparently Babs and Mabs had been heard. At the bottom of the stairs, the head of which they had nearly reached, a light flashed out. They heard Miss Bullivant's voice:

"Who is that up there?"

"Quick!" Mabs gasped. "She's coming up!"

Miss Bullivant was. They heard her foot upon the stairs in the same moment, accompanied by the voice of Connie Jackson.

"The noise came from the Fourth Form dormitory, Miss Bullivant."

The obvious cue then was to get back, and get back as quickly as possible. In blind panic Babs and Mabs turned. In a dozen great strides had reached the dormitory, just as Connie Jackson, sprinting on ahead of the maths mistress, reached the head of the stairs and switched on the light. She was just in time to see the end of Mabs' dressing-gown disappearing into the Fourth Form dormitory.

"Miss Bullivant, this way!" she called excitedly. "Somebody has just gone into the Fourth Form dormitory!"

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Babs. "Mabs, quickly! Never mind your clothes—get into bed!"

She herself, clad as she was in dressing-gown and slippers, made a dive for her bed. One thrust of her feet into the sheets, and she had flung the sheets over her. Not a moment too soon. The next instant—snick!—on went the light, and into the room strode Miss Bullivant and Connie Jackson.

"And what girl," Miss Bullivant snapped, "has been out of this dormitory?"

Half the Form was awake; half the Form could have answered that question. But the whole Form kept its eyes closed and slept on—apparently.

"Come on, answer Miss Bullivant!" Connie cried. "Which of you has just returned to the dormitory?"

The deep, heavy breathing of the Fourth Form indicated that their slumbers had become deeper than ever.

Miss Bullivant pursed her lips. Connie's eye glittered. They were not deceived, and being the sort of people they were, were not likely to leave that dormitory until their demand had been satisfied. Connie's gaze roved round—and halted.

"Barbara Redfern!" she cried.

Babs breathed heavily.

"Connie, you do not suggest—" Miss Bullivant began; and then herself started as Connie pointed.

For Babs—alas!—in her desperate rush to get to bed, was unaware that one foot was poking out beneath the sheet at the bottom. And on that foot was a soft, leather bed-room slipper.

Miss Bullivant's lips compressed. She took a step forward and caught the clothes that covered Babs. With a wrench she pulled those clothes back. Babs, dismayed, sat up.

"And so, Barbara," Miss Bullivant said grimly, "it was you!"

Babs gulped.

"What were you doing out of your dormitory?"

Babs cast an agonised look towards Mabs' bed. Then, even in that dismaying moment, she gave a start as her gaze fell upon Jemima's bed. For Jemima's bed, formerly empty, was now occupied again. Jemima was there!

"Barbara, answer!" Miss Bullivant said sharply. "Were you in Big Hall just now?"

"No," Babs said truthfully.

"Then who was?"

"I don't know. Was anyone in Big Hall?"

"Somebody," Miss Bullivant rapped, "was in Big Hall—somebody dressed in white—and that somebody," she added grimly, "knocked over the pedestal which bears the bust of Socrates, smashing it to atoms."

"Oh!" Babs said, and she gave a start then. So the ghost had been abroad again! "No, Miss Bullivant, it wasn't me!" she added hastily.

"Then what," Miss Bullivant asked, "were you doing out of bed?"

"Well, I—I heard the crash. I—I didn't know that you were there at the time, and—I was going to see what had happened."

Miss Bullivant pursed her lips.

"Connie, you do not identify Barbara as the figure in white whom you saw?"

"No. But I don't believe that yarn," Connie said vindictively. "If Barbara was out of bed, she had something to do with the girl who was playing ghost. And if you ask me who that girl was, Miss Bullivant, it was Barbara's own sister, Doris Redfern! Which, of course," Connie went on, with a sneer, "would account for Barbara being out of bed."

"It's not true!" cried Babs.

"Barbara—"

"It's not!" Babs cried again. She was pale with anger now. "If anybody was playing ghost, it wasn't Doris."

"Indeed! How do you know, Barbara?"

"Because Doris wouldn't do such a thing."

"And," Mabs said sitting up, "Babs wasn't in league with her, anyway, because I was with Babs when the crash came, and I went out with Babs. Look!" And she threw back the bed-clothes, revealing her own dressing-gown. "Babs had no more to do with that than I had."

"Very well," Miss Bullivant nodded. "I will deal with you two girls tomorrow," she said. "Meantime, this business has to be investigated. Whoever played ghost smashed the pedestal, and that girl must be held responsible for the damage. I think, Connie, we will go and see Doris."

"But Doris—" cried Barbara. "Barbara, hold your peace, please! And no noise here," Miss Bullivant frowned. "Good-night, girls!"

She whisked out, switching off the light and closing the door behind her. With Connie savagely scowling in her rear, she made her way to the Upper Third dormitory. There, once again, she switched on the light, surprising half a dozen sleepy girls into wakefulness. Then she strode towards Doris Redfern's bed.

"Doris!" she cried. Doris, sleeping soundly, did not answer.

"Doris!" Miss Bullivant thundered, and shook her by the shoulder. "Doris, waken, child!"

Doris did blink up this time, and there could be no doubt that she had emerged from the deepest of slumbers. She rubbed her eyes.

"Miss Bullivant!" she cried, in surprise

"Doris, have you been out of this dormitory to-night?"

"No," Doris said, at once.

"Think carefully, girl, before you answer. Less than five minutes ago Connie saw someone in Big Hall. She says it was you."

Doris' eyes fastened upon Connie. Then her face flushed.

"She would!" she cried bitterly.

"Doris, how dare—"

"She would!" Doris repeated, and her eyes blazed. "If anything goes wrong anywhere, Connie blames it on to me. I haven't been out of the dormitory, and I should jolly well like to know what proof she has that it was me she saw."

Miss Bullivant paused.

"Yes, Connie, that is a point. What makes you think the girl was Doris?"

"Well, the girl was in white, wasn't she? Look at this." And Connie held up Doris' white dressing-gown—an extremely pretty new style dressing-gown, with a hood, which had been one of her mother's Christmas presents. "The girl was in this gown."

Miss Bullivant frowned.

"Is that definite proof, Connie? Surely more than one girl in the school has a white dressing-gown like this?"

"Yes, I have," Pansy Carter put in. "It wasn't you?"

"No, Miss Bullivant."

"Doris, think carefully. Have you been out of bed at all this evening?"

"No, Miss Bullivant. On my word of honour," Doris said.

Miss Bullivant paused. That seemed to clinch it. Miss Bullivant knew Doris. She knew, like Babs, that Doris' word of honour was a sacred thing. Connie glared.

"But I tell you, Miss Bullivant—"

"I think," Miss Bullivant said, with a trace of frost in her tones, "that you have made a mistake, Connie. For the moment, at least, we had better suspend investigations. Miss Venn shall be acquainted with the whole story, and Miss Venn may take whatever further steps she feels necessary. I am sorry, Doris, you have been disturbed. Good-night, girls."

And Miss Bullivant turned, and Connie, with a savage glower at Doris, went after her. Pansy Carter chuckled. "Poor old Connie! What a smack in the eye for her," she said.

"Serve her jolly well right!" growled Madge Stevens. "Simply trying to get Doris into trouble. But I wonder," she added thoughtfully, "who is playing ghost?"

A few other people were wondering that, not the least among them Barbara Redfern. And Babs was thinking, too, of the girl who had fled from the direction of Big Hall up the Fourth Form dormitory corridor, and the fact that the bed of Jemima, empty when she and Mabs had left the dormitory, had been re-occupied when they had returned to the dormitory. What did Jemima know about those strange happenings of the night?

### Doris Promises Jemima!



**B**UT Jemima Carstairs, tackled on those points the following morning, merely looked blank and bland and, in the irritating way of hers, returned such

frothy answers to every question Babs asked that Babs, in the end, gave her up in disgust.

In the meantime, Babs had seen Doris

and had learned from her what had happened when Miss Bullivant and Connie had entered the dormitory last night.

She was relieved, naturally, to find that Doris had not been blamed, but she was no less indignantly angry with Connie, who had, with such slender evidence, tried to make out a case against Doris.

The prefect was obviously carrying out a harsh and vindictive vendetta against Doris. But why?

Anyway, for the time being, Connie had been checked, though to be sure that was not the last the school heard of the mysterious ghost which had prowled in Big Hall in the middle of the night. At Assembly a somewhat angry Miss Venn addressed the whole school.

"I will not," she said sternly, "tolerate these pranks in the middle of the night. Still less will I tolerate the damage which was done to school property. I give the guilty girl twenty-four hours in which to own up. If she has not owned up by the end of that time, I shall punish the whole school."

The school, hearing that, fumed. Like Miss Venn—that Miss Venn never punished half-heartedly. But they saw the method in her harshness. Quite obviously, Miss Venn was stinging themselves into trying to find the guilty girl—or perhaps Miss Venn might have had some idea that the culprit, in order to save her school-fellows, would come forward. If that was in her mind, however, she was destined to be disappointed.

Though the school glowered, though the school breathed threats against the unknown girl, nobody stopped forward!

Morning lessons came—and with it an announcement which threw Doris Redfern into a perfect panic. That announcement said that, as Miss Primrose, their headmistress, would be returning on Saturday, the maths exam had been put forward by a day—which meant that Doris would have to sit on Friday—a whole day's less swotting.

"But never mind," Babs told her, when Doris brought that despairing news to her in the quad at break, "never mind. We'll get through, old kid—we'll get through. Every half an hour, every minute now that we can put in, we'll put in. And we'll start," Babs added, "at once. Come along to the study."

"Now?" Doris asked.

"Now—yes. We've got half an hour before dinner."

"Oh, Babs!" Doris said softly. "It's topping of you!"

"And," Babs said, "we can put in another half an hour after dinner. Mabs, you don't mind, do you?"

"Mind?" Mabs laughed. "Jolly pleased," she said. "Come on; let's get at it."

But they were not to get at it so soon. For hardly had they stepped back into Big Hall than Connie Jackson approached them.

"Doris, I've got something for you to do!" she announced.

"But Doris is going to swot," Babs said quickly.

"Can't help that," Connie smiled sourly. "Doris' job is to carry out orders. See this letter?" she asked.

"Well?"

"Take this to the post for me in Courtfield. I want it to catch the one o'clock collection. You're excused dinner."

"But can't it wait till the collection at one o'clock here?" Doris cried.

"It can't. If it could, do you think I'd make you make a special journey?" Connie said. "Take it."

"But, Connie—" Babs protested,

just as Jemima Carstairs, shining monocle in her eye, came along. "Can't you find someone else? It's really desperately necessary for Doris—"

"Are you giving me orders?" Connie barked. "I said Doris is to take it."

"And what about my swotting?"

Doris cried bitterly.

"Bother your swotting!"

"Yes, bother my swotting!" Doris faced up passionately. "That's what you are doing—all along the line, isn't it?" she cried. "You want to see me pushed down into the Lower Third. You're not satisfied with tramping up ghost-walking stories against me—"

"How dare you, Doris!"

"Well, leave her alone!" Babs put in angrily. "Dash it, there are plenty of other girls who can carry your letter—"

"Barbara, take fifty lines!" Connie cried. "You, Doris, will take this letter at once!"

"I won't!" Doris flamed.

"What?"

"Tut-tut!" Jemima Carstairs shook her head reproachfully. "Such a naughty, naughty thing to say, Doris, sweet one—"

"And you keep your nose out of it!" Doris flared.

"But my dear old kidlet—"

"I'm not your dear old kidlet! I— I never want to speak to you again!"

Doris declared passionately. "A fat lot you're doing to help me, aren't you? You used to be my friend, when all the time you're just toadying to her. If you want to know what I think—"

"Doris, please!" Babs begged. "All the same, you might keep out of it," she said, with rather a bitter look at Jemima. "You might be Connie's new pal, but this—"

"Thanks; that will do, Barbara," Connie said curtly; but she flashed a grateful smile at Jemima. "Doris, have I to report you to Miss Venn for refusing to obey a prefect's order?"

"Take it," Jemima advised.

Doris glowered. She threw a bitter look at Jemima. For a moment a fierce refusal trembled again upon her lips; but Babs, seeing the hopelessness of the situation, nudged her arm. Slowly Doris took the letter as Connie held it out.

"And move yourself!" snapped the prefect.

Still glowering in angry mutiny, the Third Former went away. Jemima flashed a sympathetic smile at Babs and Mabs, which those two returned with a glare, and, taking her monocle out of her eye, she drifted after Doris. Softly she entered the cloak-room just as Doris, quivering with the mingled despair and fury which was on her, was reaching for her coat. She nodded brightly.

"Shouldn't put those on if I were you, old kid."

Doris stared.

"Eh?"

"Because," Jemima said and smiled, "there's no need for you to take that letter, you know."

"Has your pal Connie told you to tell me that?" Doris asked bitterly.

"Connie," Jemima said definitely, "has not." She stared at Doris, frowning a little. "Alas," she said, "that you had been born with more brain!"

"What do you mean?" Doris asked.

"I mean," Jemima said, "that I'll take the message. Whoa! Don't stare! Meantime, you can go off and do your swotting—and while you're doing it just work out this little lot." And, to Doris' bewilderment, she handed over a sheet of sums. "I've got those for you, you see," she added, with a bland smile, "just to save you any worry."



Doris still looked suspicious. "It's the first time I've noticed that," she said. "Is it?" Jemima looked at her. "Can I trust you with a secret?" she asked. "What?" "Well, can I? Will you give me your solemn word of honour, if I tell you something, that you won't pass it on to anyone else? Not even Babs?" Doris was interested, in spite of herself. "Well, yes, go on. What?" "Remember," Jemima gently smiled—remember the lines and the essay last night?" Doris' eyes opened wide. "You—you don't mean to say that you—" "Alas!" Jemima sighed. "Alone and unaided, braving all the tortures of

Not until just before lessons did Babs see Jemima again, and that, surprisingly enough, was in the Fourth Form passage, talking to her younger sister, Doris. She heard a few words. "And you promise, Doris?" "Yes," Doris replied. "O.K., then!" Jemima smiled, and then she looked round. "Ahem! Good-afternoon, old Spartan!" she said to Babs, and then coughed as Babs froze her with a look. "I think," Jemima said, "I will totter. Such an awful lot of things to do. Bye, bye!" And Jemima waved. But Babs stared long at her sister. "Doris, what were you promising Jemima?" "Oh, nothing!" Doris said uncomfortably. And she refused to be budged from that.

And for what reason was that girl playing ghost? Above all—and this part of the mystery seemed to be growing to major proportions now—what was Jemima's part in it all? "Well, whatever Connie's game is, we've got to nip it in the bud," Babs went on with sudden fierceness. "It's pretty obvious that Connie is out to get Doris into some big row. It's pretty obvious that Jemima has a hand in things; and it's pretty obvious that this ghost business comes into it somewhere. Find what Jemima is up to, and there might be the clue to the mystery. Track down the ghost; that might lead to something. And it seems to me," Babs went on a trifle grimly, "that tracking down the ghost is easier than tracking down Jimmy." "So what?" Clara Trevlyn asked. "So," Babs said, "we keep watch for



"TAKE this to the post for me in Courtfield," ordered Connie Jackson. "But what about my swotting?" Doris cried bitterly. "Bother your swotting!" snapped the prefect. Babs' eyes gleamed. Connie was once again trying to spoil her young sister's chances in the exam.

writer's cramp, I did them! I did them, old Doris, as I've done those sums—to save you from worry. I'm taking this letter for the same reason. But mum's the word—word of jolly old honour and all that, you know. Did you really," she asked gently, "think old Uncle Jimmy would let you down?" Doris turned crimson. "But, Jimmy, you've been such a mystery—" "Well, well and tut!" Jemima murmured vaguely. "Maybe," she added, "I shall seek your assistance at a later date—again under the jolly old word of honour not to split until Uncle Jimmy gives the 'off.' Meantime, fair friend, hand over yon missive and on with the earnest studies. I think," Jemima added thoughtfully, "I'd find some secret place in which to pursue them, old bean—just in case Babs and Mabs ask awkward questions, or dear old Connie hoofs along on to the studious scene." And Jemima took the letter. Doris, with a bewildered stare, but with great relief on her features, surrendered it. Thereafter, Jemima might have been seen making her way out of the school, while Doris sneaked off to the attics, there to work out Jemima's sums in secret. At dinner-time Jemima's absence was remarked upon; and Babs wondered—what new plot was Jemima preparing?

Unmasked, But—



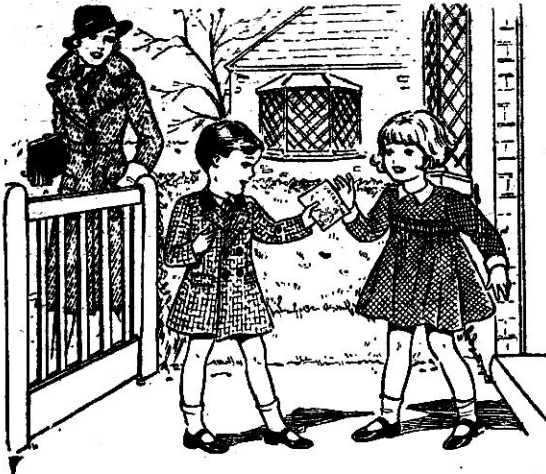
"JEMIMA was mixed up in it all right," Barbara Redfern said that evening. "Pretty sure," Mabel Lynn agreed.

"And if Jemima isn't working hand-in-glove with Connie, it jolly well looks like it!" Clara Trevlyn glowered. "The question is—what is Connie's game as far as Doris is concerned? And what has Jemima got to do with it?" Something like a council of war was being held in Study No. 4. "And where," Babs wanted to know, "does the ghost come in? Twice during the last two nights that ghost has been seen. And doesn't it strike you as pretty fishy that Connie was on the spot both times?" "And Jimmy last night," Mabs considered. "I suppose the girl who almost biffed into us in the corridor was Jimmy, Babs?" Babs nodded. There wasn't much doubt about that. But she was worried and perplexed. The thing was the hardest puzzle she had ever attempted to solve, possessing as it did so many ends which seemed to lead nowhere. What was behind Connie's campaign against Doris? Who was the ghost?

the ghost to-night. It's not unreasonable to suppose that as it has been seen in Big Hall on two occasions, it will be seen a third time. What about keeping watch from behind the curtains on the Head's platform? All game?" They all were game—though, to be sure, the whole thing was such a puzzle that they were not hopeful. "And if nothing comes of that?" Mabs asked. "Then," said Babs, and her lips pursed a little, "we keep watch on Jemima. But the ghost first." And so that was agreed upon—and agreed upon, carried out. An hour after lights were out that same night the three of them got up, dressed, and creeping from the dormitory, made their way to the rendezvous in Big Hall. There, behind the curtains which commanded a view of the whole Hall, they took up their position. Five, ten minutes went by. The clock in the tower chimed the quarter. Clara shifted a little. "We're on a giddy wild goose chase," she whispered. "I don't believe, after all—" "Shush!" hissed Babs, with sudden fierceness. "Why, what—" "Look!" Clara looked, and then jumped.

(Continued on page 14)

# 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.

SO it's very nearly St. Valentine's Day again!

Don't you think it's a pity that the custom of sending cards to your best-beloved on this day should so nearly have died out? Or—doesn't it worry you, anyway?

Mind you, 'tis said, that in America this custom is being revived—though I'm afraid it will never have the popularity it enjoyed during the Victorian era.

I suppose it was so fashionable then because young girls and fellows just hadn't the opportunity of meeting each other as chummily and easily as we have to-day. So they sent Valentine cards instead—often anonymous.

I have an idea your Patricia won't receive any Valentines. All my admirers—vain me!—are decidedly un-shy. They sometimes send me flowers—which I adore, of course. But I've an idea that Valentine Day will just pass them by!

## ● For Priscilla

I've told you before, haven't I, that my small brother with the long name, Heatherington—or Heath for short—is really quite good at sketching, considering his very tender years.

So, after I had told him all about Valentine Day, he said he'd like to "draw one." I'm afraid his idea of a picture for a Valentine card would make our Victorian ancestors shriek and hoot with laughter. (See sketch on other page for their idea of such a card—except for the date!)

Heath's picture was of a model yacht, with more portholes than I'm sure even the Queen Mary has. The sea it steamed on was incredibly blue, and the sunset above breath-takingly red.

But it pleased young Heath, so I did my chuckling silently.

Round the edge of the card I sewed very narrow lace—just to give it a feminine look, to please small Priscilla for whom—I suppose—it is intended.

This, I imagine, will be solemnly presented to Priscilla on Tuesday morning.

So I hope she will deign to accept it—for she can be a haughty young miss when she likes, even though she is only four, or thereabouts!

## ● In Highland Mood

How very Scottish we have all gone lately!

Oh, and by the way, you do know, don't you, that you must never refer to a person from "over the Tweed" as Scotch. They are always to be called Scots. (For Scotch is the whisky!)

Though, mind you, this has only been insisted on during the last few years. When my mother was small it was quite

correct to refer to a person as being Scotch, and my mother knows, for she is decidedly Scottish herself—and proud of it.

But to get back to what we were saying—about being Scottish.

You must have seen lots of tartan skirts, dresses, jumpers, and even umbrellas around during the past few months.

(While all the best Scottish terriers wouldn't dream of walking out in a coat and collar, and lead that didn't make them look frightfully clannish.)

This tartan material can be bought by the yard, very inexpensively, and even if you're as English as Father Thames himself, you really should have a trimming of this on a plain wintry frock.

It can cheer it up amazingly to see it over the dull days that must still come, I suppose, before spring.

A collar so colourful can be made from two triangles of this material, and a narrow bow at the neck, too. A present belt can be covered, and cuffs can also be made to match.

Any schoolgirl who's clever with her needle could make these little etceteras to a dress very quickly, and without worrying mother at all.

## ● Of Many Uses

Now I want to give you a small lecture, please—about "tissues."

No, don't drop the paper as if it had suddenly become electrified, for I assure you that the "tissues" I mean are nothing whatever to do with biology, or skeletons.

Nothing school-y at all, in fact.

You see, I'm referring to "paper tissues." You can buy them in packets for threepence a hundred, or the super-soft and silkier ones for sixpence. They're white, or they're pink, or they're peach colour as a rule. And oh, the uses they have!

The paper tissues are the ideal things for you to use as handkerchiefs when you have a bad cold. They're so wonderfully soft and caressing to tender noses, and best of all, can be burned after use. This,

naturally, saves much laundry, and many germs from floating around.

Most healthy!

Grown-ups and nearly-grown-ups, too, like your Patricia—use them every night after cold-creaming faces. These tissues remove the grubby cream and make-up so beautifully, and do save the towels!

I also use one or two when I am "doing my nails"—so that none of the nail preparations fall on to my dress or on to the arm of mother's precious chairs.

But in America—where you must admit, there are many very smart people—they are much more tissue-conscious than we are.

Instead of "bibs," mothers tuck a "tissue" into the neck of small baby's dress when she is going to eat, or looks likely to blow some very sweet bubbles.

Tissues are kept handy in sitting-rooms at party times, then if anyone should spill some liquid, or drop some cream off a cake, a tissue is always on the spot to do the cleaning up. And, of course, it not only does the job well, but quite attractively, too.

There, that's the end of my lecture on the uses of these very sensible and hygienic "tissues."

## ● Neat and Dainty

How do you like the idea of having your very own linen-bag?

It can hang on the back of your bedroom door, and into it can go all your soiled undies—to wait for "wash-day."

If you think you'd like to make one, here's how you do it.

You'll require a strip of material measuring 24 inches by 8 inches. Hem

right round the edge of this. Then fold and blanket stitch the edges together as shown, using a brightly coloured cotton

for this. You can hang the bag up, either with two loops or one, as shown in the picture.

It can be decorated in two ways, also—by writing the Ready for Monday words on it in plain running stitch, or else, by stitching some pieces of gay material on the front, to represent a wash-line.

If both ideas appeal to you, then perhaps you'd like to make two bags—one for yourself, and one for someone who deserves a little present from you.

Bye-bye now until next week, my pets.

Your friend,

*Patricia*







# VERONICA IS SO WELL-GROOMED AT SCHOOL

SHE turns back the cuffs of her "regulation" blouse each time she washes her hands. That's why it always has that fresh-from-the-laundry look. SHE irons it herself, and never makes a crease right down the sleeve. SHE takes the trouble to match up buttons if they should happen to fall off. SHE presses her girdle every fortnight or so, under a damp cloth, and snips the fringe.

SHE removes spots from her tunic with a teaspoonful of ammonia in a saucer of water.

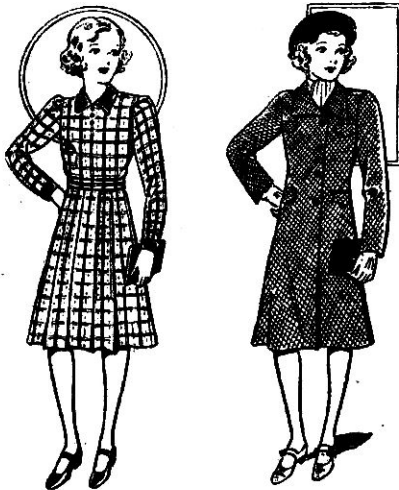
SHE presses the pleats in, after first tacking them in position—not forgetting that damp cloth again.

SHE wouldn't dream of wearing jewellery in school—except, perhaps, a watch.

SHE wears her school hat brim, and the collar of her school coat, turned down. These are "tailored" articles and meant to be worn that way. (You may be a bit more casual in a blazer.)

SHE always wears her gloves with her winter coat, and never carries a handbag when in school uniform.

SHE wears lace-up shoes, sturdy and low-heeled—which she changes on going indoors.



## AT HOME

SHE chooses a simple dress—yet with style—one that can go anywhere. The collars and cuffs can be changed for variety—and so can the belt.

SHE will wear a necklace, and sometimes a bracelet as well, with this. It is a dress that can also be worn out of doors without a coat.

SHE likes light-coloured stockings with her at-home clothes; they make her feel more "dressy."

SHE adores her week-end hat. The brim turns back—such a change from her school one.

SHE always wears her coat fastened, and with it she wears different-coloured scarves tucked into the neck.

SHE likes vivid gloves, and these match her scarves. (She knits them herself, by the way.)

SHE carries a handbag with this coat. It matches her hat.

SHE likes strap shoes for "best wear," but though smart, she still insists on sporty-looking heels, not "stilts."

SHE'S always on the look-out for loose-hanging buttons, for coming-undone linings, for these, she knows, ruin the most expensive clothes.

SHE always places her tunic, dresses, and coats on hangers in the wardrobe after she has worn them. This helps them to keep their shape and lose any creases.

SHE treats her shoes with equal care, placing shoe-trees in them when they are "resting."

# A VALENTINE PARTY

If you have some of your chums to tea on February 14th, remember it's VALENTINE DAY, won't you?

IF round about now mother should say "Wouldn't you like a few friends to come to tea, dear?" why not ask her if you could make it a little Valentine party.

It needn't cost any more than other tea-parties, yet it will be one that's just a bit "different," the sort your chums will remember.

### IN PINK AND BLUE

First, decide that the colour scheme of your tea-table is going to be pink and blue—real Victorian colours.

If mother is going to make a special cake for you, or some little cakes, and ice them, ask if you may help.

After the white icing has set, decorate them in pink and blue. You can put the date, February 14, 1939, in blue, and around this draw some true-lovers' knots in pink icing.

### A PRETTY TABLE

The table itself should carry out your colour scheme, too. Lay a white or pink cloth, then cut up some strips of

blue "Cellophane" paper. Arrange these strips under each girl's plate, and make some bows to go at the corners. It will look so pretty.

Each girl could have a little place-card on her plate—just a piece of postcard with her name on it, but with a lover's knot in one corner and a little circle of lace. These would certainly be treasured long afterwards, I'm sure.

After tea you could go all Victorian, just for a change. If you play the piano or sing, select Victorian melodies and try singing them with Victorian eloquence. They'll be a grand success, I assure you.

Here is another game you could play. Give each guest a pencil and paper and tell her to write down the names of as many famous people of the last century that she can remember.

There are hundreds, believe me! So it should not be difficult. Give a tiny prize to the girl with the longest list.

### VALENTINE RHYMES

Then, if you're feeling very clever, you might like to try your hand at composing



"Valentines." They can be short or long as serious or as silly as you wish.

Something like:

"Your hair is just like new-mown hay,  
Your cheeks like summer's dawn.  
And now you've left me—gone away—  
While I'm here all forlorn!"

Or a bit more snappy:

"As it's nineteen-thirty-nine,  
I choose you for my valentine!"

(Continued from page 11)

Babs was pointing towards the stairs which led to the Fourth Form corridor, and on those stairs was a dimly seen figure, slowly descending. They held their breath.

"The—ghost!" breathed Mabs. They watched it. Down the stairs it came, arms held in front of it.

Clara made a restless movement.

"Wait!" said Babs tensely.

The ghost had reached the bottom of the stairs. It paused. Then, very slowly, it turned towards the lobby, and began to move forward again. At the same moment Babs nodded.

"Now!" she cried.

With one accord the three sprang. The ghost, hearing the movement, turned swiftly, its hands dropped to its sides. For a moment it seemed that it was contemplating flight, and then it turned. But in that moment Clara was upon it.

"Now, you rotten japer!" she said, and tore back the hood which covered the ghost's head. Then she gave a cry.

"Oh, my hat—"

"Doris!" almost shrieked Babs.

For Doris, her face pale in the moonlight, it was.

"Oh crumbs!" she gasped.

"You!" Babs choked. For a moment she stared. Then—"So you were the ghost! You've been the ghost all the time! And you vowed on your word of honour!"

"Babs—Babs—I—I—"

"Pretty rotten thing—telling such lies about it!" Clara Trexlyn said scornfully.

Doris crimsoned.

"But—but I—"

"Well, I really should have thought better of you!" Mabel Lynn put in.

"But—but you don't understand!" Doris was almost panting now. "Babs, I—I didn't! I didn't play ghost the first time. Nor last night."

"No?" Babs eyed her sternly. "You'll be telling us next we can't trust our own eyes. We saw you the first time."

"But, Babs, I tell you I didn't! Jemima said—" Doris cried, and there was almost a sob in her voice now. "Babs, you must believe me—you must!"

"And Babs," said a voice, "might!" And the three suddenly wheeled with a jump as a furious figure came striding from the darkness of the lobby—the figure of Connie Jackson. "But I don't! And I think it's pretty clear now, isn't it, Doris Redfern," Connie went on, with a sneer, "who the ghost is—and who knocked over the pedestal last night! Thank you for bowling her out," she added, with a grin at the dismayed chums. "Doris, you can come with me to see Miss Bullivant. And if this doesn't get you sent home tomorrow," Connie added with exultant satisfaction, "I don't know what will!"

And planting her hand on the almost sobbing Third Former's shoulder, she tugged her away.

### The Ghost Walks Again!



BARBARA, Mabel, and Clara climbed wearily back up the stairs. Babs was almost haggard. To think that Doris could have vowed she had not played ghost on her word of honour—to think, after that, they should have caught her in the act.

And yet—was it like Doris to tell a

lie unashamedly? Was there some other explanation?

Just before they reached the Fourth Form dormitory Babs had a sudden thought. So suddenly that thought shot into her head that she halted.

"Jemima!" she said.

"Eh? What's Jemima got to do with it—now?" Mabel Lynn asked.

"I don't know. But you heard Doris. She blurted out something about Jemima. Don't you remember—just before Connie came along she said: 'Jemima said.' And that reminds me," Babs added, her brow darkening. "I heard Doris promising Jimmy something this afternoon, and when I asked her Doris wouldn't let on. Come on; I'm going to wake Jemima and see her about this."

But as it happened there was no need to wake Jemima. She was already sitting up in bed when they entered the dormitory.

"What cheer?" she greeted cheerfully. "Enter the merry old warriors from the shadowy vales of night! What's been going on, Babs beloved?" Babs faced her seriously.

"You can guess, perhaps," she said.

"We saw Doris—dressed as a ghost."

Jemima started a little.

"Gadzooks! You saw her?" she asked.

"We did."

Jemima sighed.

"Tut, tut! Well, well, they say the best old nifty schemes of jolly old mouses go wrong, don't they? Did Connie see her, sweetheart?"

Babs stared.

"Why, you speak as though you already knew all about it!"

"Do I? So sorry," Jemima smiled.

"Just my unfortunate old manner. What did Connie say?"

"You can jolly well guess what she said!" Clara replied bluntly. "Doris, of course, has got it in the neck! But what we want to know," she added, "is where you come in all this?"

"I," murmured Jemima.

"Jimmy, don't beat about the bush!"

Babs said hotly. "You've got something to do with it. Doris mentioned your name. And you know jolly well I heard you asking her to promise something this afternoon. What is it?"

Jemima gazed at her queerly.

"Well, supposing," she considered carefully, "that I kidded Doris to play ghost? Supposing, old Spartan, I knew that she'd be caught by old Conwon? Would you believe that?"

"Jimmy, you wouldn't!"

"Well, if not, what else should I have to do with it?" Jemima shook her head. "You've all made up your feeble old minds that I'm a bad old lad, haven't you, because of my affectionate friendship with lovable Connie, and I expect you to go on thinking things about me. Ah, me! But hist!" she whispered suddenly. "I hear footsteps."

And the chums, baffled once again, bolted into bed, just as Miss Bullivant, frowning furiously, came into the dormitory.

"Barbara, Mabel, Clara, you have been reported to me by Connie for being out of bed to-night! I shall expect to see you all in my study before breakfast to-morrow—together with your sister Doris, Barbara. Good-night."

The door closed. Out went Miss Bullivant. Babs sat up in bed.

"Jemima—"

Snore!—from Jemima's bed.

"Jemima—"

Snore! again.

Babs set her lips. Obviously Jemima did not mean to answer questions—and, as usual, they had got nothing out of

her. Very well, she vowed grimly, she would settle with Jemima to-morrow.

She lay back, pulling the sheets over her. What a mess everything was! Babs tried hard to sleep, but failed, and then suddenly she sat up in bed. What was that?

A creak, followed by the rustle of clothes, and a breathed voice—Jemima's voice:

"Any old Spartan awake?"

No "old Spartan" was, apparently, though Babs, Mabs, and Clara—the latter two had also lain awake, worrying—were gazing towards the bed. Instinct warned them somehow to be silent, and with intense interest they watched Jemima's shadowy figure as, throwing on a dressing-gown, it disappeared through the doorway.

Then quickly Babs sat up.

"Come on!" she hissed.

No need for the invitation. Clara and Mabs were already out of bed.

And so, for the second time within an hour, the three of them stole out into the darkened corridor. Near the stairs which led down into Big Hall they heard the patter of feet. With a grim frown Babs led the way. They reached the stairs, peering into Big Hall. Then Clara jumped.

"Mum-my hat! Lul-look!" she stuttered. "The—the gig-ghost again!"

For a moment the three chums stood still. Clara was right. Of Jemima there was no sign, but there, in the act of crossing the Hall, was a white-robed, hooded figure.

Even as they started excitedly down the stairs the ghostly figure halted by Miss Bullivant's door, and Babs made certain that it swiftly rapped on the panels. Next second it was speeding towards the lobby.

"Come on!" Babs gasped.

Downstairs they bolted, careless now of noise. But hardly had they reached the bottom of the steps than the door of Miss Bullivant's door flew open, and Miss Bullivant herself, for the second time that night, appeared on the threshold. She glared.

"Barbara, up again—and Clara—and Mabel! Really—"

"Miss Bullivant, the—the ghost!"

Babs stuttered.

"What?"

"The—the ghost! Look!"

And Babs, in her excitement, so far forgot herself as to catch at the startled mistress' wrist at the same moment as she pointed towards the lobby. It was Miss Bullivant's turn to jump then. For there she saw the white-robed figure—in the act of climbing over the window-sill!

"Why, bless my soul!" she cried.

"Girl—"

The ghost vanished.

"Really!" Miss Bullivant said.

"Really, Barbara! Wait a moment." And flusteredly she disappeared into her room, to return a second later attired in a dressing-gown. "The—the impertinence! The—the effrontery of it!" she gasped. "Follow me, girls!"

The chums threw each other a grim look. Now, it seemed, they were coming to grips with something. Nothing loath, they followed Miss Bullivant, and, reaching the lobby window, shouted afresh. For speeding across the lawns towards the cloisters was the ghost.

"Girl, come back!" Miss Bullivant roared.

The girl did not come back. She increased her speed.

Miss Bullivant's lips set. Perhaps the excitement of the ghost hunt overwhelmed her then. Certain it is that had Miss Bullivant stopped to think she would never have attempted to scramble over that sill. But the mistress did not stop to think, and almost before she



realised it she was on the ground outside. Babs, Mabs, and Clara excitedly scrambling in her wake. The ghost was still faintly visible—in the cloisters now.

"Girl!" roared Miss Bullivant.

"After her!" cried Babs. Off they went, Miss Bullivant raging furiously at their heels. Just for a moment it struck Babs as rather strange that the ghost had allowed them to keep her in sight all this time—just as if it were deliberately inviting them to trail her. But here she was. Now she had reached the entrance to the crypt; now she had disappeared.

"Got her!" crowed Clara. "In the crypt! Come on!"

Together they reached the crypt. Down the dark steps which led underground they saw a light. Together they pushed forward. The light, wielded by the figure in white, turned, flashing up at them.

"Stop!" cried Miss Bullivant. The figure went on.

Miss Bullivant muttered something. Clara was leading now. Now the ghost had reached the bottom of the steps; now, turning, she appeared to slip. With a cry, Clara had leapt the last half a dozen stairs. While the figure was straightening up she had pounced upon it. There came a victorious cry as she seized its cloaked shoulders.

"Hold her!" cried Babs.

"Wait a minute!" the ghost panted. "Wait a minute! Before you grab me, grab them!" She pointed. And the chums and Miss Bullivant started and stared in the direction of her finger. Miss Bullivant gave a cry:

"Connie!"

Connie Jackson it was. She stood with her back towards the stairs, bending over a table. Seated at that table was a young man, working by the light of four candles, and on the table, propped up in front of him, was a certain picture, which on the instant they all recognised as the extremely valuable engraving which normally occupied a position on the wall of Big Hall.

It was obvious, even in that first moment of startled consternation, what was happening. The young man was copying that picture.

But at Miss Bullivant's shout the young man and Connie spun round. Connie's jaw dropped. Too late the young man tried to grab up the picture. In a moment Miss Bullivant strode forward.

"Connie!" she cried, and, with Clara still keeping a grip on the ghost's arm—the ghost, incidentally, making no attempts to escape—she gazed at the prefect. "What is this—and— Bless my soul!" she cried, staring at the white-faced young man. "This is your brother Ralph, is it not? Connie, what are you doing here? And who gave you permission to borrow that picture?"

"I—I—" Connie stammered. "I—we—that is, Ralph—was copying it!"

"Indeed!" Miss Bullivant frowned. "I demand to know, Connie, why he is copying it! You know it is against every rule of the school—"

Connie was white to the lips.

"I—I—" But it was Ralph Jackson who came to the rescue. He shrugged.

"Don't go for Connie," he said, "go for me! All right, we're caught; I'll own up. If you want to know, Miss Bullivant, it was my suggestion that I should copy that engraving."

"Indeed! And why, sir?"

"Because," Ralph Jackson said, with a queer, twisted smile, "I was hard up. An American collector had heard of this engraving. He promised me fifty

pounds if I could get him a copy of it. Well, I know it wasn't possible to borrow it in the ordinary way, so I concocted this little plot with Connie—never guessing, of course, that anyone would tumble to it. Well, there you are; the game's up, I guess, though I would have finished to-night. But I would like to know how you tumbled to it?" he added.

For the first time Miss Bullivant remembered the ghost. She wheeled. "You, girl? You led us here! Who are you?"

The "ghost's" hand went up. Slowly it caught the hood which concealed its features. One swift movement of that hand, and the hood came back. And from the chums went up a simultaneous yell.

"Jemima!" For Jemima, smiling urbanely, it was.

"Yes." "Remember, dear old comrades, that I said there was something familiar about that ghost?"

"Yes." "The familiar thing," Jemima said, "was the watch it wore on its wrist—a little wrist-watch with two imitation rubies. In the excitement of the moment you didn't notice that, did you, old Spartans?"

"But—that watch was Doris'?" Babs stammered.

"Exactly. And Doris," Jemima nodded, "was the ghost! The only unfortunate thing about it was that Doris didn't know she was. Because, you see—and Jemima shook her head—"what with the worry of the sweating and so forth, poor old Doris was walking in her sleep!"

Babs started.



"NOW, you rotten japer!" cried Clara, and tore back the hood which covered the "ghost's" head. Then she gave a cry. "Oh, my hat!" Babs reeled. "Doris!" she almost shrieked.

"I BELIEVE it was a fib for Ralph Jackson to say he was making a copy of the picture to sell to an American," Jemima said gravely. "His real, and very naughty intention, I fear, was to copy the engraving, insert the copy, and sell the original."

Babs, Mabs, Clara, and Doris, in Study No. 4 the following morning, stared at her.

"Did Connie know that?" Babs asked.

"Not easy to be sure," Jemima shrugged. "But I saw a letter from Ralph in Connie's study which more or less suggested that was his game. But still, let us be generous in this hour of triumph and mercy. Connie hasn't got away with it—let the dead old past bury its dead. The one distressing stain left upon the bright and beaming old horizon, is not Connie's naughty trickery, but your disbelief in your Uncle Jimmy."

The chums coloured.

"Well, we're sorry about that. But how the dickens were we to know, you mysterious idiot?" Babs said. "In any case, you haven't explained yet. How did you get on to this thing?"

"Remember," Jemima asked, "the night we saw the ghost—the first time?"

"My goodness, Doris, you haven't done that since you were a kid! But, Jimmy, how did you know?"

And Jemima went on to explain. She explained in some detail. Suspecting from that moment that Doris was the ghost, she had said nothing to Babs, although, to be sure, at that moment, she had not known Doris was sleep-walking. Then, next morning, had come Connie's accusation, causing Jemima to think furiously. For, as she had commented at the time, if Connie had known all along that Doris was the ghost, why had she not denounced her when she had first seen her?

"Which led me to the conclusion that Connie herself had some guilty old secret," Jemima went on, "and which led me to think—well, if old Connie had seen the ghost, Connie herself must have been out, too. Just by accident, the same morning at Assembly, I spotted a wobbly engraving on the wall—remember, I made some remark about it?—and remember that Connie looked quite startled, and went and put that picture to rights with her own fair and lily-white hands? That gave me clue number two."

And Jemima went on to tell how, from that moment, she had connected

the ghost and the engraving, and how, suspecting that engraving had something to do with Connie's mysterious activities, she had set herself to the task of tracing Connie's movements the previous night.

On the ground outside she had found some footprints leading to the crypt.

"My hat! Then you were making a copy of the size of those footprints the morning Doris and I spotted you grovelling on the ground?" Babs cried.

"Not grovelling, sweetheart—shall we say investigating?" Jemima murmured.

"Even so. And, having cut out patterns of the footprints, my next move was to go to Connie's study and compare my patterns with her shoes. I went. Unfortunately Connie herself came in, and I had to indulge in some bright back-chat to mask my ulterior old motives. Fortunately, the old grey matter was working at top pressure that morning. I had several things to do, you see. First, I wanted to get into Connie's good books to try to find out what she was up to; next, I wanted to find out why Doris, apparently, had been telling whoppers. Well, I'm not going to repeat every word of the conversation, but as you observed, I led Connie to believe that I was her sympathetic friend—"

"By slating Doris?" Clara said.

"Not so, fair beloved, not so," Jemima answered mildly. "Never, never have I in any word slated our dear old Doris. All I did was to stick up for Connie."

"Well, go on," invited Mabe.

Jemima went on. Having got herself in Connie's good graces, she had continued her investigations. Friendship with Connie had enabled her to enter Connie's study without suspicion, and during one of her visits, she had read that letter from Connie's brother in which Ralph Jackson had explained his scheme for copying the engraving.

Certain that the crypt was Connie's nightly destination, Jemima, next night, had set out to visit the same spot, and in passing the Third Form dormitory, had been astonished to see Doris emerging, dressed in white.

"And then it was that I knew she was sleep-walking," Jemima said. "I led her back. Dear old Doris, you didn't guess, did you, that I was the guiding angel who took your arm and piloted you to bed—and you didn't guess, did you, that I borrowed the old white dressing-gown and in that visited the crypt? I saw Connie meet her brother, but before I could see anything else I was spotted. Connie cried out: 'Look, that's the girl who saw me in Big Hall last night! She chased me!'"

"That was when you broke the bust of Socrates?" Babs asked.

"Alas, poor old Socrates! Far be it from your Uncle Jimmy to commit such an act! Connie did that. Connie believed, you see, that I was Doris. Failing to catch me, she smashed up old Socrates herself—just to pin something on poor old Doris; but, as you know, it didn't quite work out that way. Connie was scared of Doris. That was why she made her life such a misery. Connie was trying all the time to get Doris hooped out of the school."

"Why?"

"That first night Doris sleep-walked," explained Jemima. "Doris had seen Connie doing something with that picture in Big Hall. Connie, of course, didn't know that she was sleep-walking, and that Doris, therefore, was unconscious of what she had seen. So there we are. No doubt dear Connie feared that Doris might mention the picture business at any moment. Need I say more on that point, Spartans?"

"No," said Babs.

"And then—well, you know most of the rest," Jemima smiled. "You went for me because I still chummed with Conwons. But now I knew Connie was watching out for the ghost. I knew last night that until she had seen the ghost, she wouldn't embark upon her usual adventure, and because," Jemima went on, "I wanted Connie to be sure she had laid the ghost, and so carry on with her merry old maraudings with an unworried mind, I got Doris to walk in her dressing-gown in Big Hall."

Mabs' eyes widened.

"So that was it?"

"That was it," Jemima nodded cheerfully. "Brainy wheeze, wasn't it? Well, there you are. Connie was waiting for the ghost—she found it and unmasked it. The only fly in the merry old ointment was that you three butted in at the same time. I hadn't bargained for that. Still, as it happened, even that turned into a smile of fortune, because, suspicious of me, you followed me when I dressed up later and kidded you and the Bull in following me to the scene of action. Questions, please?"

But there were no questions. The chums gazed at her.

"And you did all that just to help Doris?" Babs asked.

"That was the idea."

"But why didn't you tell us? Why didn't you let us help?" Mabs cried.

"Because," Jemima said, "in my usual, old, wonderful way, I preferred to work off my own hockey-stick. Remember, I was in the dark for a time as to why Doris should have fibbed about playing ghost. I wanted to arrange things so that Connie would be caught red-handed in whatever it was she was doing, and helpers—be they ever such dear old helpers—might have cramped my style. Still, there it is. The tale is told—except for one little item."

"And that?" Babs asked.

Jemima smiled.

"This morning," she added, "I went to see Connie—frightfully cut up, our Connie. Tush! To hear the things that girl called me! I broke to her the good news that I had seen her letter. I also told her that unless she went and confessed that she had broken that old bust to Miss Venn, I was going to tell Miss Venn all I knew. Well, the charm worked. Connie has been and gone and done it, and—"

"And," put in Doris, with a laugh, "Miss Venn has suspended Connie! Oh, Jimmy what a wonderful friend you are!"

Jemima coughed.

"And do you other Spartans think so?" she asked.

"We do!" Babs said sincerely. "Jimmy, I'm sorry—we're all sorry. If you like, you can kick us!"

"Tish, no need!" Jemima frowned. "Far be it from the gentle Jimmy to administer the boot. Instead of kicking you, you shall all come down to the tuck-shop and treat me to a ginger-pop. And in that ginger-pop," Jemima continued, "old friendships shall be cemented and misunderstandings swallowed for ever. Forward, the light brigade!"

And forward, with a laugh, the "light brigade" went!

Just a postscript:

It appeared on the notice-board in Big Hall on Saturday, in the form of an announcement. That announcement read:

#### "SPECIAL MATHEMATICS EXAMINATION.

"Passed with Honour: Doris Redfern, Upper Third."

THE END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.



### A DUFFER WITH A HEART OF GOLD

That's Bessie Bunter, fat, stupid, but so very lovable. For Bessie always means well. Never was that fact more strikingly shown than when Bessie, wrongly 'umping to the conclusion that Mabel Lynn is in desperate need of money, sets out to put Mabel's troubles to rights—and incidentally bring world-wide fame to herself. How? Why, by becoming a mimic on the stage! Not so very impossible in view of Bessie's amazing skill as a ventriloquist, but, alas, a mistaken hope in this case. For things turn out vastly different from what Bessie imagines. You'll see what does happen next week, when you read one of the funniest yet most appealing Cliff House stories Hilda Richards has ever written.



More fun and excitement for 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, and themselves become a juggler's assistants for the day. But the boss tricks them into signing a contract, and locks them in their caravan. To escape, the chums pretend the van is on fire.  
(Now read on.)

formers. Let them think we like the idea. They won't watch us then."

Yin Su sighed.  
"Ingenious and highly intelligent May, most satisfying companion for dull Chinese girl," she said.

"Get ready," answered May.  
One of the men, having found a crowbar that was used to undo packing-cases, set to work on the door. He was a strong man, and the door put up but a faint-hearted resistance.

With a report like a pistol-shot the hasp gave, and the door flew open.

"Now!" breathed May.  
Yin Su began to cough and sag at the knees, rocking her head. May and Daphne, supporting her by the arm-pits, helped her down the steps.

would have been captured in a very short while.

"We'd better take her to a doctor," said May, rising, and looking anxiously at the manager. "Is there a car, or taxi—"

The Chinese magician came forward then and looked at Yin Su for a moment without speaking.

"Come on, someone!" said May briskly. "We can't leave the poor girl lying here. A taxi—quickly! Get a taxi—someone!"

Once in a taxi, they could go where they pleased.

But the Chinese magician was as artful as May.

"No need taxi," he purred. "Get bucket of water. Plenty water cure her quick!"

May knew that he had guessed Yin Su was bluffing; but before she could do anything Yin Su, hearing the clank of a bucket, opened her eyes in alarm.

Hemmed in by the crowd, there was now no chance of escape, and, as men were investigating the "fire," it would soon be known that it was just a fake.

Help came from a quite unexpected quarter. The girl whose place they were taking was every bit as anxious for them to escape as they were themselves, and, realising their scheme, she started a cry to create panic.

In such a crowd as was now gathered, no one would be likely to know who had raised the cry first, but it would soon be uttered by a score.

"Look! A lion's escaped!" she shrilled.

The manager swung round, pushing through the crowd. The Chinese magician, clever though he was at juggling and conjuring, was terrified of lions, and far more concerned for the safety of his skin than to keep the girls in the circus.

The whole crowd surged; people moved this way and that, and May

## THEIR LUGGAGE TAKEN TO A HOUSE OF MYSTERY, SO MAY AND HER CHUMS BECOME SERVANTS — TO FIND IT!

By this time the manager had been warned, and he came running to the scene, deeply concerned, followed by the girl, whose place as assistants to the conjurer the girls were supposed to be filling.

"A fire! How did it happen? Is the Chinese girl all right?" said the manager anxiously.

May made Daphne understand that they had better lower Yin Su to the ground. And, playing her part well, the Chinese girl groaned and coughed and rolled her head. May, pretending to be deeply concerned, fanned her, and moved her arms as though using artificial respiration, while Daphne looked quite as frightened.

Truth to tell, Daphne was frightened. She hardly dared think where all this would end; for although they were out of their temporary prison, they could not run for freedom. With so many people gathered about, they

## A Bolt For It—In Vain!

"FIRE!" yelled May, and smashed the caravan window, to let the smoke be seen more clearly; and so that her voice should carry with the best effect.

Daphne and Yin Su added their cries, too, and presently, seeing the smoke, some men came rushing to the caravan.

"Break the door down!" called May. "Don't bother about the key."

Then she turned back to Yin Su and Daphne, whispering orders so that the whole thing should seem quite realistic.

"Yin Su, pretend to faint. Cough and totter."

"Totter?" asked Yin Su, puzzled.

"Stagger," said Daphne. "Be weak at the knees."

Yin Su nodded her head solemnly. "Feeble Chinese girl overcome by intense poisonous fumes," she murmured. "Grief-stricken and deploring comrades, uttering doleful cries and beating chests."

"Something like that," agreed May, with a faint smile. "But don't overdo it. And, Daphne—"

"Yes, dear?" asked Daphne excitedly.

"Not a word about our not wanting to stay on at the circus here as per-

—BY—  
**ELIZABETH CHESTER**

realised that here was a wonderful chance.

No one was heeding them at the moment, for all eyes were searching for some sign of the lion. In a matter of three or four minutes the panic would die; but while it lasted, May meant to make use of the momentary confusion.

"Dodge, run!" she breathed.

But at that moment she felt a hand on her arm, and, turning, saw the conjurer's assistant.

"Not to the exit," said that girl. "Go to the fair; mix with the crowd! Quick—behind the caravans, along the ditch!"

May needed only that hint. Leading the way, she dodged behind caravans, pushed through the hedge, and, making sure that Daphne and Yin Su were following, ran beside the ditch to where, only a hundred yards away, were the roundabouts, swings, coconut-shies, and other joys of the fair attached to the circus.

There was a crowd of merry-makers at the fair, and the chums were mingling with them a full minute before

the manager became convinced that the "lion at large" was a false alarm.

Then, supposing that the girls would make for the exit from the field, he sent men scattering over the ground.

"Safe—for a bit," breathed May, as she halted with Daphne and Yin Su in front of the swings.

"What now?" asked Daphne.

"The swings. We can get a view of the other field, and see what they're doing," decided May. "If we stay here for an hour or so we'll be safe."

"Most delectable and charming place of merriment," agreed Yin Su, her eyes sparkling. "Please to demonstrate swings."

There was room for only two in a swing, so May partnered Yin Su, and Daphne went up alone. It was the Chinese girl's first experience of a swing, and she was thrilled.

Pulling the coloured ropes in turn, they swung high, and Yin Su's philosophic calm forsook her as they went sweeping up, and then swishing down like a preying eagle.

Long since had she forgotten the affairs of the circus. But not May.

May watched the adjoining field keenly, noting with relief that the men were confining their search to the cars and the lane.

"All right; breathe again, children," she said. "We're out of that mess."

Now that that adventure was over, peace settled on the trio; for once again they were free, with no one to over-see them, no bossy governess, no grown-up at all to correct or advise them.

May sang in happiness, and Daphne's cheeks beamed rosy again.

"Good fun, eh, Yin Su?" asked May, smiling.

"Most excellent!" said Yin Su happily. "Honourable father shall buy same for humble Chinese home. Much merriment make good hearts."

They swung until they tired of it, and then decided to try the roundabout. By the time Yin Su had made a dozen trips on that, she had decided that the "humble" home in China—officially a palace—should be equipped with a roundabout as well as swings.

From the roundabout they went to the coconut-shy, where a cheery man urged them to roll, bowl or pitch, three a penny.

May had a shy, and with her third shot knocked down a coconut. Daphne, never very good at throwing things, lit nothing but the back screen, although she missed the man picking up fallen coconuts by a matter of inches.

Then Yin Su tried, and, being of Eastern origin, was allowed to throw half-way. But not even when she spent a shilling could she knock down a nut.

"Never mind, one's enough," said May. "We'd better try the hoop-la stall now."

But as she turned to find that stall she gave a start of dismay, and snatched at Yin Su.

"Stand back!" she said sharply.

Not a dozen yards away was the magician from the circus, surveying the crowd, searching for them!

There was every reason for the magician's determination not to let them escape. Not only were they valuable members of his act, but he had been bribed to detain them by the mysterious woman, who, ever since the chums had met Yin Su, had so strangely been "dogging their footsteps!"

### Determined May!

MAY unaware of that second reason for the man's tenacity, was none the less resolved on escape.

"Come on—down this side of the stall!" she cried, recovering her composure.

The three girls simply flew, and a minute later were in the lane, where taxis stood in a row, waiting for the end of the circus performance.

Not being quite sure whether men were watching the taxis still, May led her friends by a cautious route, and opened the door of the front cab so unexpectedly that the driver jerked up with a gasp.

"The Junction, please!" said May.

And, still armed with the coconut, she climbed in, followed by Daphne and Yin Su.

"At last—nothing to worry about!" said May, in relief. "And now we're just going to have fun. To-morrow we have to get our instructions, but we can do just what we like this evening, and we've money enough to go to the pictures, I should say."

She referred to the unexpected letter from Yin Su's absent governess, one of a series they were due to receive from time to time, enclosing money and

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

## BETWEEN OURSELVES



MY DEAR READERS.—I always think anniversaries are terribly exciting, don't you? That's why I'm excited at the moment, as well as just a tiny bit proud, for our very own paper will next week celebrate its 500th Number.

But a 500th Number, you say—while being rather surprised, perhaps, and equally proud—isn't really an anniversary! Well, I know; strictly speaking it isn't. An anniversary is the yearly birthday of someone or something—generally something, an event, you know. But I think that the 500th Number of a paper, especially OUR paper, is just as important as a lot of anniversaries one reads about, don't you?

And I don't see why we shouldn't, just this once, for our own special benefit, call next week our anniversary. At any rate, it's a very thrilling event, as you'll agree, and I want to thank every single girl who has read the SCHOOLGIRL since No. 1 for her support, even though one of two of them may have grown almost beyond the SCHOOLGIRL stage.

During the history of Cliff House stories scores of outstanding characters have been featured. Some of them have been the favourite of one section of you; some of them the particular favourites of another. But I don't think any character can have captivated so many readers, and have achieved such world-wide fame as that dear, lovable old Fourth Form duffer, Bessie Bunter.

Bessie is unique. Bessie means well whatever she does. She has her faults, like everyone, but they are faults that endear her to you rather than turn you against her.

She's vain, but you love her for it; she's fond of tuck, and you feel:

"Well, why shouldn't she be?"; she's convinced there isn't another girl in the world exactly like her, and you, meaning quite different from what Bessie does, agree with her.

And when it comes to sincerity, Bessie can hold her own with anyone. Babs & Co. could not have a more staunch, golden-hearted chum. Bessie would give her one and only doughnut to Mabs or Babs or Clara if she thought it would save them from unhappiness. And you know what a sacrifice that would be for Bessie!

Well, next week's superb Cliff House story features Bessie, and is one of the finest portrayals of character Hilda Richards has ever done.

Thanks to her dullness in some things, Bessie gets the idea that Mabel Lynn is desperately in need of money. And that is where Bessie the golden-hearted steps in. Very well, she'll get Mabel some money. How? By answering an advertisement for a girl mimic! Easy, Bessie thinks.

For, as most of you know, Bessie is a rather wonderful ventriloquist, and also being certain of her ability to do anything, she fully believes she will not only earn enough money to save her chum, but also bring herself everlasting fame.

Bessie answers the advertisement; Bessie is offered the job; and Bessie feels she is on the threshold of stardom. But, alas, Bessie is actually on the threshold of something very different, as she discovers too late.

There's fun and excitement galore in this grand story, and quite a deal of wonderment so far as Babs & Co., especially Mabel, are concerned, and you'll revel in every word of it.

Our 500th Number will also contain further chapters of "On Tour With Yin Su," another sparkling COMPLETE story of Fayre and Robin Hood, more of Patricia's Fascinating Pages, and a special message from Hilda Richards, so do make sure you don't miss it, won't you?

With best wishes,

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.



instructions where to take their Chinese ward.

"Yes, yes," said Daphne; "that'd be lovely! But where shall we sleep?"

"A bed," suggested Yin Su placidly

"Suggest magnificent hotel where excellent lunch pleased so much."

"You would!" laughed May. "But we daren't run to it. We can't be sure we'll be sent more money to-morrow."

"Quite right, dear," said Daphne.

"So we'll find a nice cheap place—"

The taxicab pulled into the station, and May paid it off, resolving that it was the last taxi they would take.

Entering the booking-hall, she searched her bag for the luggage ticket, looked in the various pockets, turned it inside out, and then bit her lip.

"The ticket's gone," she said, in dismay.

"Oh dear!" gasped Daphne. "But—but they'll let us have the luggage, won't they? We must have it. All my clothes are there—everything but what I've got on."

May did not see why they should be refused their luggage, so she applied to the cloak-room attendant, explaining matters, and describing the luggage in detail.

"Just a minute, miss," he said, frowning. "That has been collected."

"Has been collected?" jerked out May. "Impossible!"

"It certainly has, and the ticket was handed in."

The three girls stood silent, perplexed and with growing alarm, for if their luggage had been collected it had surely been stolen.

"I think there must be a mistake," said May. "Who collected it?"

"A lady in black, well dressed, rather smart looking," said the clerk.

"I didn't notice much in particular about her, except that she had an emerald ring."

None of the girls spoke, but all three exchanged startled looks.

Once again the woman with the emerald ring had crossed their path. In the restaurant she had stolen May's handbag, and now she had stolen their luggage! She had also got them into the scrape at the circus, but so far none of them realised that.

"May, what does it mean?" said Daphne, alarmed. "How did she get the ticket, for goodness' sake?"

But that was easily answered: it solved a mystery that had puzzled May until this moment.

"How? Why, when she stole my handbag. No money was missing: just the letters and something I forgot—the ticket for the luggage. That was why she stole the handbag—to get that ticket. And now—"

They were completely flummoxed, not knowing what on earth to do next, for they had no idea where to find the woman, or who she was.

"Most precious luggage of Yin Su gone like snow in sunshine," said Yin Su sadly.

"Never see again. Simple-minded Chinese girl gravely wrong not to keep luggage always at side. Old Chinese custom. The valuables round neck."

"Yes, but I had a trunk," said Daphne dismally. "I couldn't tie that round my neck, could I?"

May turned to the cloak-room attendant again, and asked if the woman had left any clue to her whereabouts; if he knew in which direction she had gone.

"I'll get the porter who took out the luggage," he said.

Three minutes later he returned with a porter, who remembered the woman and the luggage



"YOUR luggage has not come here!" the strange woman declared. But Yin Su picked up from the floor a label bearing a Chinese character, and May and Daphne started. It had come from Yin Su's trunk. This woman was deceiving them!

"You're in luck, miss," he said. "The lady asked about a green case which she said ought to have been with the rest; but it weren't. So she said to send it on if it turned up"

"Send it on to where?" exclaimed May excitedly.

The porter took a slip of paper from his pocket.

"I wrote it down. Ah, Holyburn House, Lindsey Lane, Rimcorn. That's about ten miles off."

Grin-faced May wrote down the address. There was only one thing for it now—they had to go to that house!

"And at last we shall see that woman face to face!" she exclaimed. "The cheek, collecting our luggage, and taking it off there!"

Daphne demurred, wondering if it was safe to go. The woman had proved herself their enemy, and might this not be some kind of trap?

"She could have trapped us before if she'd wanted to," said May. "Anyway, that's where our luggage is, and that's where I'm going. I only hope we meet her that's all."

She led the way to a taxicab, despite her vow that they had ridden in the last; for there was no other way of getting to Rimcorn, which was nowhere near a station, and not accessible by bus without a number of changes.

The quickest way was the best way, so the three girls once more got into a taxi.

"Despicable but ingenious thief of valuable luggage hear unpleasant but pointed comments," said Yin Su.

That ten miles journey took them rather more than twenty minutes, and as darkness was falling, they saw none of the countryside. But Daphne remembered having driven this way by car before.

"There's a lovely hill to the right," she declared. "If only you could see it, Yin Su. And just ahead there's a pretty little lake. Only it's too dark to see it now, I expect."

May chuckled.

"On the left there's an enormous palace, and an aeroplane in the courtyard," said May, pointing.

"Where?" cried Daphne, peering out

"Too dark to see it," said May solemnly.

But Daphne continued to stare.

"Magnificent harbour with steamers of many thousand tonnes," purred Yin Su. "To right-hand side. And ships with red sails."

"I can't see them," frowned Daphne.

"Too dark to see without light," murmured Yin Su.

And only then did Daphne realise that her leg was being pulled. But the taxi's sudden stopping ended their laughter.

"Holyburn House?" asked the taximan, moving back the glass slide of the partition. "Well, here it is."

May, Daphne and Yin Su peered out of the window, and very warily May opened the door, stepping down.

They saw a large house, which lay back from high, wrought-iron gates. One light burned in an upper room, but otherwise the place was in darkness.

"Shall I wait?" asked the taximan.

"Yes, please," said May, and thought of adding that if he heard a shout for help, he was to go to their aid.

May was impulsive by nature, and only now did she realise that Daphne's alarm had not been ill-founded. Everything they knew about the woman with the emerald ring tended to show that she was their enemy. She had stolen the handbag, she had stolen the luggage. Was it wise, then, to tackle her like this?

Then she set her lips. Bother the wisdom of it. She wasn't going to give in at the last minute.

"You stay here. I'll go on ahead," she said quietly. "You've got a watch, Daph. Give me five minutes. If I'm not back then—"

"Well?" asked Daphne, as May paced.

"Bring the taximan with you and investigate," added May.

Daphne shivered a little; but Yin Su was as calm as ever.

"Benevolent and happy-go-merry Providence guard well girls of good conscience," she said gently. "Magnificent, stern-faced taxi-driver person of mighty muscle, and teeth like British bulldog. All enemies wilt at his approach."

"Lumme," said the taxi-driver, who had heard that pretty speech, and scratching his ear, he tried to decide

whether it was an insult or a compliment.

But May, putting her finger to her lips, walked up the drive to the dark house—dark save for the one light in an upper room—and suddenly, as May's feet scrunched on the drive, that went out as well.

### The Red Door!

**D**APHNE looked at her watch. Two minutes had passed since they had heard May knock, and Yin Su had declared that someone had spoken.

But there had been no sight of May—not even a sound.

"I don't like it," fretted Daphne.

But at that moment running steps sounded in the drive, and May appeared.

"It's all right," she said. "At least, it isn't a trap. There's only an elderly woman there, and she's asked me in. I tried to make her understand about the luggage, but she's a bit deaf."

"You are sure it's all right?" asked Daphne.

"Yes, quite all right," May assured her. "But we'll ask the taximan to come and help carry the luggage out."

The taximan, wondering what it was all about, quite readily agreed to go with them, and all four marched up to the house, the front door of which was ajar.

The elderly woman stood there, peering out.

"Come in," she said.

May moved forward, Yin Su followed, and after a pause Daphne decided she had better go, too. But as soon as she crossed the threshold, she regretted it, for the woman closed the door.

There was no supposing that she was the woman with the emerald ring, her hands were obviously too old. But Daphne did not feel at all comfortable.

"Now then," said the old woman, drawing up. "which agency are you from?"

The three girls were puzzled.

"Agency?" asked May.

"Never mind. Which one of you can cook? You seem very young," went on the woman, frowning. "I suppose the Chinese girl is the cook. I don't know that I like the idea, but my sister had a Chinese cook in Malay, and said he was good."

Daphne blinked at May, quite unable to grasp what this strange woman was driving at.

"Explain, May," she whispered.

May smiled as the truth dawned on her.

"We aren't servants applying for jobs," she said, quite amused. "We have come here to collect our luggage. It was delivered here by mistake."

The woman's frowning face suggested that she was genuinely puzzled, and she shook her head.

"Luggage? No luggage has been sent here," she said sharply. "I have not left the house all the afternoon."

May, Daphne, and Yin Su had no reason to suspect her of trying to deceive them; but if she spoke the truth, they were completely at a loss; their newly risen hopes dashed to the ground.

The porter had said that this was the address where the luggage had been taken; and yet—

"Then—then where is our luggage?" gasped Daphne, in growing horror.

All her nice frocks, her toilet set, undies, suits, hats, shoes—all she possessed in the way of clothes were with the luggage!

May and Yin Su were in just as bad a plight.

"But there must be a mistake," said May sharply. "We were told that the luggage was sent to this address. Has a woman dressed in black been here? She wears a noticeable emerald ring."

The elderly woman shook her head. She seemed to be growing rather angry.

"I have already told you that no luggage has been delivered here. I don't know the woman you mention, and I don't want to know her. And if you haven't come here applying for situations, then you had better go at once!"

And to make it clear that she meant them to go, she walked to the door and opened it.

"Too offensive welcome embarrasses guests," said Yin Su gently. "Great misunderstanding has arisen not through fault of very sad girls who have no luggage. Evil person has taken same."

Daphne nudged May.

"We'd better go," she said uneasily. She did not like to stay where she was not wanted.

But May knew that once they were outside the house they would not find it easy to get in again. She did not want to leave without making absolutely sure that the luggage was not in the house somewhere. But, of course, they could not stay on against the woman's wishes.

The woman held the door wide, but as she did so, Yin Su, stooping suddenly, picked a scrap of paper from the floor.

"Congratulate noble lady on having travelled over globe," she said. "This humble Chinese would be happy to know if she liked her native land?"

And so saying, Yin Su held out a luggage label on which was a Chinese symbol.

The woman's brows knit; she stared at it hard.

"What rubbish are you talking?" she asked, "and where did that come from? There's nothing Chinese in my house. And that is a Chinese letter—or character, as they call them."

There was no need to tell Yin Su that! For this label had once been on her own trunk! It must have been brushed off when the luggage was dragged into the house!

Here was proof that their luggage was, or had been, in the house. The woman was either lying, or things were happening in the house beyond her knowledge.

May sized the matter up swiftly and made a quick decision without consulting her friends.

"If the luggage isn't here, then it's lost," she said. "We've no clothes—and we're short of money. If—if you want three useful maids, madam, here we are!"

Daphne nearly collapsed; Yin Su gave just the faintest flutter of eyelashes; and the woman, taken off her guard, could not reply.

"May!" murmured Daphne, in shocked protest.

"It's the only way," said May meaningly.

She meant that it was the only way they would be able to search the house to find the luggage. If the woman had been bluffing them when she said she thought they were servants, her bluff was being called now!

May watched her face as well as she could in the half-light, but it told her nothing.

"I see," said the woman. "Well, that being so, you can pay off the taxi and set to work right away."

She turned from the door, leaving them to settle things, and Daphne was

very glad of the chance to have a few words with May.

"May—you're not serious?" she asked anxiously.

"Very serious, Daph."

"But—but a servant! I've never done housework!" gasped Daphne. "I can't cook. And—and what ever would mother say?"

"She'd say it would be jolly good training," said May cheerfully, as she paid the driver and wished him good-night.

Yin Su clasped her pretty, graceful hands.

"There is no honour greater than toil, the poet says," she pointed out, "unless it be a life of luxury and refinement, with the attention of many servants to the accompaniment of soft music. Let us toil," she said, her eyes twinkling.

"Let us hunt for the luggage," said May, in impressive tone. "That's why I'm taking on the job, for that and no other reason. And if you've got any sense, Daph, you won't argue. Our stuff has obviously been in that house. The chances are it's still there. Do you want to look your peach-coloured frock in the frills again or not?"

When the argument was put like that, Daphne saw that May was right.

"We've got to find the luggage," she agreed.

"Since disloyal and secretive luggage makes no effort to find us," sighed Yin Su, "diligent and resourceful girls must seek luggage."

The philosophy of the Orient could rise to all occasions at any hour of the day or night, it seemed.

The three girls turned back into the house, where the woman awaited them, switching on the light as they closed the door.

"Now, quickly!" she said. "Go to the second landing. There are two rooms, and you can share them as you please. There are clean uniforms in the cupboard, which you had better put on at once."

"Yes, madam," said May politely.

"Deeply honoured to serve so kind and gentle a person," said Yin Su.

And Daphne, dropping a half-hearted curtsy, felt that she rounded off the occasion.

They mounted the stairs, feeling not that they had been baffled, but that they were triumphant. As they reached the landing, however, the woman called sharply.

"There is one door which you are forbidden to open," she called. "It leads to the new wing and is painted red. You cannot mistake it. You will keep away from that door on pain of instant dismissal!"

"Yes, ma'am," said May.

Then, as they reached the first landing, all three looked at the red door, mysterious, forbidding, tantalising.

May whispered softly as they turned to the next flight of stairs.

"Go on up—clatter—make noise enough for three," she urged.

"Why?" whispered Daphne, half-guessing the answer.

"Because our baggage may be behind that forbidden door," said May.

"Now!"

And avoiding Daphne's restraining hand, she tiptoed across to the door, while Yin Su, with bright intelligence, mounted the stairs with enough noise for three girls.

**IS the luggage behind the red door, or is there another reason for the woman's strange orders? Don't miss next week's really gripping instalment.**



COMPLETE  
THIS WEEK

Another fascinating story of Merry England in the Middle Ages.

# SECRET HELPER

## to ROBIN HOOD

By IDA MELBOURNE



### Her Uncle's Dishonesty!

**T**HE young Lady Fayre, running through the woods near her home, Longley Castle, eased up until her speed was hardly more than a fast walk.

Breathing hard, she peered into the wood, seeking a glimpse of Robin Hood, the outlaw. Very excited was Fayre, for Robin had promised that this morning he would teach her how to shoot a hand-catapult.

It would have shocked her uncle, the Baron le Feuvre, and made her aunt, the baroness, swoon, had they seen her now, for she no longer wore her rich red robe with its gold embroidery, nor was her long gold hair to be seen, hanging over her shoulders in two neat plaits. In fact, Fayre, dressed in a ragged frock of dark green, her head wrapped in a shabby brown shawl, would have been taken for a poor peasant girl.

And that was just what Fayre wanted, for she had taken French leave from her tutor, the Venerable Brio, to meet Robin Hood.

She hurried on, eager for fun, delighting in this wonderful freedom, and did not stop until she became aware of the heavy thud of a horse's hoofs behind her.

Thinking that the rider might be one of the baron's men, sent to search for her, Fayre stepped at once into hiding. It would never do for her to be recognised in this shabby garb.

But it was not a man at all riding the powerful horse which presently came into view, but a girl of about her own age.

As she rode, the girl sang in a sweet voice, and Fayre, quite unafraid now, stepped out from her hiding-place.

"Aho!" called the girl on horseback. "If you are tired from running, this horse of mine can carry two."

There was always a ready sympathy between the poor in the days of Richard Lionheart, and the girl's mistake was a tribute to Fayre's disguise.

"How kind you are!" smiled Fayre.

"Your horse looks strong enough to carry ten!"

And Fayre patted the muzzle of the fine creature—every bit as powerful as one of her uncle's chargers.

"Indeed, yes," said the other girl, with pride. "He was at the Crusade. For a service my father did Sir Giles Leroy, he was given this wonderful horse as a present. Cedric, I call him. And there shall be no more war and arrow wounds for Cedric. See the gash a cruel arrow made?" she added, pointing to the scar on the horse's left flank.

"Poor thing!" said Fayre softly. "I'll warrant he's glad to be riding through a quiet wood."

"Yes, even to work for us, grand fellow that he is," said the girl. "My father is a farmer, and this horse is our best friend."

For a moment or two, Fayre admired the splendid animal, so powerful, proud, and sleek: then, with the other girl's aid, she mounted behind. At an easy jog-trot, which was, nevertheless, faster than her own foot speed, Fayre was taken on through the wood.

But she did not mention Robin Hood to the girl. Although he was a friend of the poor, it was best that there should

Fayre laughed as fat Friar Tuck swept leaves from a patch of grass to make a seat for her on the ground.

"The chair of honour!" he boomed, in his deep, jolly voice.

"A hunk of bread," offered Robin Hood, "and some honey from the baron's own bees."

There was a general laugh, in which Fayre joined—and she laughed even more heartily than the others, because they did not know that the baron was her uncle. To them she was but a ragged mystery maid.

Eating bread-and-honey, Fayre felt happier than at any banquet at the castle, and presently Robin Hood brought out the catapult, a cunningly

**"I'LL SAVE YOUR HORSE!" FAYRE PROMISED  
THE FARMER'S DAUGHTER. AND SHE DID,  
THANKS TO ROBIN HOOD, HER BULLYING  
UNCLE'S CONCEIT—AND A CATAPULT!**

not be too much gossip about his hiding-places. So when the time came for her to take a narrow side path from the main route, she said that her journey's end was reached, and that they must part ways.

Alighting, Fayre thanked her friend, learned that her name was Maud Athlayne, gave her own as Marian, and bade her au-revoir.

Five minutes later, pressing through the thick undergrowth, alert for the sound of wolves, she heard merry voices.

"Robin Hood!" she called gaily.

Robin Hood's voice responded, and Fayre, running on, came to a glade where men in green sat in a circle eating their simple meal, laughing and talking.

Gay Robin Hood, handsome, tall, doffed his feathered cap and bowed as he saw her.

"Ah, the mystery maid!" he cried. "Welcome! Pray a seat for the girl friend of the poor!"

contrived miniature bow, no longer than six inches, with a hand-grip and leather sling.

Fayre's eyes glistened excitedly; her lesson was to start.

"If a wolf should not fear the whistle I have given you, then a stone from this on his snout should send him packing," Robin Hood said.

With a bladder that had belonged to a bishop's jester as a target, Fayre practised her aim. There was no better tutor than Robin Hood, king of the archers, and she made splendid progress.

An hour passed almost before she realised that ten minutes had gone. Then the tolling of a bell from the distant castle made her jump violently.

"I must go gone!" she cried, in dismay, for it was dinner time at the castle, and her absence would be noted.

"What, when the castle bell tolls?" asked Robin Hood, in surprise.

"I—I have work to do near by," faltered Fayre, very anxious lest her

## ANOTHER SUPERB HILDA RICHARDS STORY

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true identity be known, since Robin Hood and the baron were sworn enemies.

And secreting the catapult in her clothes, Fayre was about to hurry, when the sound of swift footsteps came.

"Robin Hood! Robin Hood!" cried a girlish voice. "Robin Hood!"

Next moment, her cheeks tear-stained, her breath coming in gasps, a young girl rushed into the glade.

It was Maud Athlayne, who had given Fayre a lift on her horse!

"What's amiss?" cried Fayre, anxiously running forward.

"Why, how come you found me here?" jerked out Robin Hood, with a side-glance at Fayre.

"I—I heard this girl Marian call your name when she dismounted and left me," said Maud through her gasps. "Oh, please be not angry, Robin Hood! I seek your aid. That rascal robber the Baron le Feuvre has stolen my horse!"

### A Plan Misfires!

FAYRE'S heart went out to the girl at once. As the baron's niece, she knew only too well his bullying, high-handed manner.

"He has stolen your horse!" she cried. "Oh, shame on him!"

"Yes, yes! Because it is a finer horse than any of his he says it must be his!" cried Maud, in deep distress. "He does not believe it was a gift from Sir Giles. And Sir Giles, alas, is at the Crusade!"

Robin Hood snapped his fingers, a grim look on his face.

"Fear not! Before he reaches the castle we will have back your horse," he cried.

"Oh, hurry then, please!" urged the girl. "For soon he will be there, and never again then shall I see Cedric, my horse. For I do believe the baron himself will go again to the Crusade."

Fayre knew otherwise, for the baron, for all his bullying ways, was a coward at heart.

"I think not," said Fayre soothingly. "I have heard that to-morrow he will go to the great tourney, where he will meet other warriors in combat. He wants your horse to ride in the lists; his own have sickness."

"To ride in the tourney?" cried Maud, in horror. "When last he rode there his horse was killed."

And she went quite white, for she loved the horse and had made a pet of him. Moreover, Cedric was the means by which her father lived.

Robin Hood wasted not a moment. "My men, this is not to be suffered!" he cried. "There is the short way we know to the castle. It took the baron but five minutes to steal the horse; it shall take us less to get it back."

Almost before Fayre or Maud had realised it Robin Hood and his men had gone, Robin at their head, sounding his horn to rally others of his band who were farther off in the wood, hunting.

"Is he not splendid?" sighed Fayre, her eyes sparkling with admiration. "Always Robin Hood is the friend of those in need. Fear not, Maud, your horse will be returned."

"If he is but set free from the baron he will canter home alone," said Maud happily. "He is happy with us and knows his way there even in the dark."

"Then he will be back even before you," said Fayre confidently. And, slipping her arm about Maud's shoulders, gave her a consoling, encouraging hug.

Leaving Maud to go home and there await her horse, Fayre ran back through the woods to the lane, not daring to follow Robin Hood and his men into the depths, where wolves and wild boars were lurking.

But a shock awaited Fayre. She was only a hundred yards from the castle when ahead of her in the lane she saw a desperate battle in progress.

Men-at-arms with swords and javelins were fighting with men in green. But there was no sign of the baron, nor of any horses.

Robin Hood was too late; the horse-

men were in the castle, and he had fallen in with the rearguard.

"Hold on, men!" shouted a soldier. "Help will come soon from the castle, and then these rascals will be ours."

Robin Hood, doing lusty work with a quarter-staff, crashed in a soldier's helmet, and the man fell to the ground, where already two others nursed aching heads.

Snatching the fallen man's sword, Robin went into action, and such was his power and dauntless courage that he engaged two soldiers alone.

But the outlaws were doomed to defeat if they fought on, for help would soon come from the castle. So while Robin, Friar Tuck, Little John, and two others engaged the soldiers, others took them in the rear, tripping them with staves.

As the soldiers fell, Robin Hood gave the signal, and before even the victims had time to rise again the outlaw band was gone, and all that could be heard of them now was the faint shrilling of Robin's horn.

Fayre, clapping her hands in joy, hurried on to the castle, crossing the drawbridge just before a hundred soldiers marched out to their comrades' aid.

No one barred Fayre's way, for in her ragged frock she had been quite often seen, and was thought to be a village girl who ran errands for the baroness and the young Lady Fayre.

In the courtyard stood the baron and some knights, grouped around the stolen horse, which, with ears back, looked none too happy in his new home.

"Ah, a fine charger!" boomed the red-faced baron. "On such a one I may well be champion of the tourney."

"A war-horse. See the scar!" said Sir Geoffrey.

There was no sympathy in their voices as they noted the scar, for they were soldiers and thought it something more worthy of pride than of sorrow.

But Fayre's hands clenched, and she wished that she dare speak with the indignation she felt. As a beggar-maid, however, she was a nobody, and, passing by the baron, had to drop a curtsy of respect.

"Poor Cedric!" she breathed. "If I could but set you free!"

To her delight, a daring idea came to her as she entered the castle keep. As the Lady Fayre she would be allowed to visit the stables and see the war-horse. Might she not be able to set the horse free by some ruse?

With that thought in mind, Fayre went quietly to the school-room, where the Venerable Brie, in sound slumber, nodded gently, his white beard between his knees.

Slipping to her bed-chamber, Fayre wasted no time in donning her lovely red velvet robe. She returned to the school-room, where presently a servant would seek her to announce that dinner was ready, and, wondering how she should rouse the Venerable Brie, decided to tickle his nose with the end of his long beard.

As he roused himself, shuddering and sneezing, Fayre seated herself at her writing-table and feigned sleep.

Fully awakened now, the Venerable Brie gazed reproachfully at his young charge, and gently roused her by shaking her shoulder. But as he had himself been guilty of the same lapse, his rebukes carried little weight.

When Fayre, tripping lightly behind her tutor, reached the mighty hall, she found it crowded, but not until the baron arrived could the company start on the feast provided. Young knights, squires and pages sat at the baron's table, with the baroness and her ladies,



while others of less rank sat farther away.

"Ah, hah!" roared the baron, rubbing his hands as he entered, and gazing with satisfaction at the loaded table. "To-morrow at the tourney, I'll show that knave De Fourcet if my skill with the lance is lost, for I have a new charger!"

"Oh, uncle, a colt?" asked Fayre, with pretended innocence.

There were roars of laughter, for only a full-grown horse could carry the heavy baron in full armour.

"My child, no! A charger!" scoffed the baron.

"Oh, uncle, can I see it, please?" begged Fayre.

"You may do so," said the baron, sipping wine from a golden goblet. "Has the armourer brought my new suit?" he asked the baroness. "He has, eh? For his life's sake it has need to be a better fit at the elbow. At the trying-on it caught my arm."

Fayre was deeply concerned with making plans, and took but little interest in the meal, sumptuous though it was.

If she could but have a chance to set the horse free, then apparently it would gallop back home, provided the draw-bridge wasn't raised. Somehow she would contrive its escape.

The meal over, the baron summoned the armourer, and a crowd gathered in the courtyard to see him in his tourney regalia.

Unknown to Fayre, Maud had come to the castle, and was pleading with the guards outside to let her cross the draw-bridge, so that she could plead again with the baron. Her father was with her, looking very distressed.

Fayre, standing with the baroness and some ladies-in-waiting, and relations, watched the charger being brought from the stables, newly groomed.

"A splendid horse," said the baroness. "The rascals who had it should be punished. How could such poor people own so splendid a horse?"

"It was given them, I heard, by a knight, Sir Giles," put in Fayre.

"From whom did you hear such nonsense?" demanded the baroness.

But Fayre could not tell her without giving away the fact that she had been out of the castle! So she looked as foolish as she could, and suffered being rebuked for listening to servants' gossip.

Nevertheless, she was able to see Cedric, and the groom even let her hold the reins.

Now was her chance. Leading the horse forward, she whispered a command.

"Gee up! Gee up!"

As the horse started to trot, an excited roar came from the soldiers; and that, coupled with the sight of javelins and archers, whom he had had good reason to dislike on the field of battle, set the horse going.

At that moment Maud and her father had just crossed the drawbridge after much argument. Seeing the horse, Maud ran forward evading a soldier who put out his arm to stop her.

With a glad whinny of recognition, the horse cantered towards her, pursued by fifty or more soldiers, running from all directions.

The drawbridge was down—the way out was clear.

But the baron, fitting his armour, had seen and heard, and, pushing up his vizor, bellowed:

"Lower the portcullis!"

Men rushed to action; and Maud was caught, even as she took the horse's bridle.

Fayre ran to the scene, followed by

the baron, whose face was almost purple with rage.

"So you come here to steal the horse again?" he thundered, shaking his fist at Maud. "Who let them through?" he demanded.

"Oh, my lord!" pleaded Maud, clasping her hands. "Please have mercy! Here is my good father, who comes to plead with you!"

"My lord," said her father, baring his head in humility. "The horse was given me by Sir Giles for a service I rendered him. The horse means my living. Without him, we should be hard put to find our keep."

While the baron, glaring, took a breath, Fayre spoke.

"My uncle is not harsh and unkind," she said. "Fear not. He would never deprive a poor man of his livelihood."

"Ah! I knew that when he understood he would relent," said the man, in relief.

But the baron burst out in rage;

"Fayre, go to your chamber! How dare you speak before me? This horse was stolen! If these two ever dare set foot across my drawbridge again, I'll have them flung into the dungeons! Get you gone!"

"But, my lord—" stammered Maud's father.

"Oh, lord baron—" begged Maud, clinging to the bridle.

"If by the time I have counted three you are not out of this castle, then by my halidom, you shall go to the dungeons!" roared the baron.

For in the days before Magna Carta, there were few who could countermand a baron's orders; and there was none to whom the poor could go for aid.

The farmer, knowing well that the baron would keep his threat, took Maud by the arm; and, despite her pleading, pulled her away so that she had to release Cedric. A soldier, taking charge of the horse, wheeled him away, and his whinnied protest sent a pang to Maud's heart.

Fayre, ordered to her room, went without a word. But no sooner was she there than she changed with haste into her simple Maid Marian clothes.

With so much confusion in the courtyard, she was almost unnoticed; and but a minute after the dejected father and daughter crossed the drawbridge,

Fayre was in the lane, too. Running hard, she caught them up.

"Wait—wait!" she murmured. "I have a plan. Heed what I say, and with the help of Robin Hood—and the Lady Fayre, whom I know—even yet you shall have back your horse!"

In soft voice then, Fayre unfolded her daring plan, and the farmer, although at first demurring, presently agreed.

"Ah, if only it can go as you plan!" he said.

"But there will be grave danger for you," protested Maud anxiously. "And why should you brave such peril for us, who are nothing to you?"

Fayre's eyes gleamed.

"Because I am one at heart with Robin Hood. We are the friends of the poor, and the enemies of bullying barons. That is why. Please hurry—and be prepared when the hour is ripe."

Then Fayre herself went hurrying off to find Robin Hood.

### An Unintended Performance!

"HOW now?" asked the baron, greatly pleased, for his new armour fitted him perfectly.

He looked magnificent. The armour shone and glistened in the sunlight, beautifully chased, and his coat of arms, by which he could be known when his face was hidden by the vizor, gleamed in bright enamel and steel and gold.

The charger on which the baron proudly sat was decked in gorgeous cloth, silk with gold fringe, his head covered by a velvet hood, through which stared his alarmed eyes.

Fayre, now having had permission to leave her room by the baroness, clapped her hands.

"Oh, uncle—a very parfait knight!" she cried. "How well you would look with your lance!"

"My lance, ah yes!" said the baron in a muffled tone through the vizor.

"It is surely too heavy for one man to hold. You hold it with both hands?" asked Fayre innocently.

"What! Ho, ho, ho!" roared the baron, vastly amused. "Ho, ho, ho! I'll show you."

He took his lance, poisoning it in a



To a roar of cheers, Fayre's uncle charged out of the castle. Everyone thought he was giving an exhibition—everyone except Fayre. And she knew it was all part of her own clever plan!



businesslike manner, and the soldiers fell back. But Fayre stepped even farther back, Robin Hood's catapult in her hands.

Carefully making sure that she was not watched, Fayre took aim. She was sorry for any slight pain that might be inflicted on Cedric, and for the shock he would suffer, but it was all for the best.

Sure of her aim, she let fly.

Pihg!

The pellet hit Cedric smartly on the hindquarter, and away he shot like a greyhound.

"Hurrah!" cheered the crowd, thinking that the baron was giving a demonstration.

Cedric snorted and cantered, increasing his speed to a gallop, and seeing men running from all directions, made for the drawbridge, where the portcullis was lowered.

"Raise the portcullis!" shouted Fayre.

"Portcullis!" went up a yell.

It was so evident that the baron was going to show off by galloping through the archway, which led to the drawbridge that the portcullis was instantly whisked up.

But the baron had no wish to do anything but bring Cedric to a halt. His lance fixed, he could not release it; and as for stopping Cedric by hauling at the reins that was quite impossible. Cedric had the bit in his teeth, and but one object, to rid himself of this terrible weight on his back—on the way to his stables at the farm!

Through the archway went the baron, everyone expecting him to rein up his charge in a cloud of dust, wheel and charge back again. But, instead of that, he swerved to the left; and the amazed men at the gates saw him go down the road, bouncing up and down on the saddle, lance waving wildly in air, and altogether looking exceedingly comical.

But Cedric was soon stopped. A

dozen men in green jumped in his path and, already a little tired, he was an easy victim.

The baron's lance availed him nothing, and within a minute he was sent toppling over with a mighty clang of metal.

"Down!" came the voice of Robin Hood. "And he cannot get up."

That was only too true, for the baron's armour was so heavy that to rise from the ground was an impossibility. He was a dead weight.

"See if he will float in the moat!" cried fat Friar Tuck. "Ah, what a comely face he has," he added, lifting the baron's vizor.

The baron was deathly pale. On the field of battle it was the custom if a man in full armour fell to offer him his life for a sum of ransom, and in order that his rank should be known he wore the coat of arms.

He was completely at the mercy of these men, unable to rise unaided—and therefore, their prisoner, or their victim.

"At last we have the baron at our mercy!" cried Robin Hood, winking at Friar Tuck.

"To the moat," said the friar.

"Nay, let us demand a thousand gold pieces in ransom," said Little John.

The baron stared at them in horror. His horse was gone; his men-at-arms were half a mile away. These men could do as they pleased. If they put him in the moat, he would sink like a stone!

"Have mercy—a hundred gold pieces ransom!" he quavered.

But before Robin Hood could answer there came a surprise attack. Armed with a mighty sword, the farmer rushed to the rescue, followed by his daughter, his wife, and another man.

"Spare the baron, rascals!" shouted the farmer.

Robin Hood winked at him, fended a blow from the sword and then collapsed. Friar Tuck went down even though the sword missed him by a foot, and Little John, clasping his head, groaned and fell flat, legs in air.

It was all very good play-acting, and the baron had not the faintest suspicion that the whole thing had been arranged between Robin Hood, the farmer, and his own niece in order to put him in the farmer's debt.

From side to side the farmer sprang, backwards and forwards, wielding his sword in ferocious manner.

As soon as he had dealt with one of the outlaw band—who always simulated grave injury—he made at another. Step by step, he fought his way towards the prostrate baron, who, by straining his neck, was just able to see what was taking place.

At last, the farmer reached the outlaws' victim. Fiercely, he drove them back, his voice ringing out in scorn and defiance.

"Rogues—the baron is our lord!" And he stood across the fallen baron, legs astride. The clash of weapons could be heard, grunts and groans, and when the baron, lifting his head as much as he could, peered about him, he saw Robin-Hood's men in retreat, one half of their number dragging the others away, seemingly sorely wounded.

"Saved!" gasped the baron.

It was but two minutes later that men on horse-back arrived, Fayre riding behind Sir Geoffrey.

"Oh, uncle—are you hurt?" asked Fayre.

Six men helped up the baron, and propped him on his feet.

"But for this warrior," puffed the baron, indicating the farmer, "I should have been killed. That rascal Robin Hood had fallen, wounded. I did battle with twenty. Then this stout churl came to my aid."

"And the horse, uncle?" said Fayre. Her uncle scowled.

"Horse? A mad untamed thing, unfit for a nobleman. It should be slain."

"Slain—oh, my lord—no!" said the farmer. "'Tis more used to pulling a plough than carrying a noble lord."

The Baron le Feuvre made a magnificent gesture.

"Find the horse, and he is yours," he said. "Give me but the silk trappings. A gold piece each for those who saved me," he added. "Tell the treasurer. By my orders—a gold piece each."

And the baron, unwilling to plod home in the armour, had it unfastened then and there.

Fayre looked at the farmer and Maud, but as they did not realise that she was the mystery maid, no understanding look could pass between them. Yet their happiness was reward enough, for they knew that Cedric would be awaiting them in his stable, and every care was lifted from their minds.

Light of heart, breathing thanks to Robin Hood, Fayre rode back behind Sir Geoffrey to the castle, her catapult tucked out of sight under her cloak.

Welcoming her lord, the baroness shook her head in gentle reproof.

"My lord, 'twas a grave risk you took in galloping thus armed through the archway. We did not know it was your plan."

The baron scoffed.

"I did but show Fayre how I could charge," he said loftily. "A touch of my spurs, and away went the charger."

"It was magnificent," said Fayre's aunt, her eyes filled with admiration at the memory.

But to Fay the thought of her uncle's grotesque figure as he went charging over the drawbridge caused her to turn away, lest he should see her smile.

"I have never seen so fine a display of horsemanship, uncle," she said. "A similar performance should win you great honours at the tourney!"

Out of the corner of her eyes, she watched her uncle. He did not seem to find much satisfaction in that remark—which was rather natural, considering he could not rely upon another accidental runaway to help him. But he shrugged, pursing his lips.

"Methinks I stand as goodly a chance as anyone, my girl," he said pompously.

"Had not my generosity to the farmer been so great there is no doubt who would have emerged in triumph from the tourney, but even without his horse there will be few to match the skill of the Baron le Feuvre."

"If there are any at all, uncle," Fayre said innocently.

But her giggle was as well hidden as the catapult!

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