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“NOT WANTED AT CLIFF HOUSE!”

# THE SCHOOLGIRL

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**“STOP THAT!”**

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A Very Appealing Long Complete story of the chums of Cliff House School, featuring lovable Dolores Essendon, and introducing a quaint little new girl.



# NOT WANTED at CLIFF HOUSE!

## The Amazing Letty Green!



"LISTEN!" said Mabel Lynn. "Eh?" asked Bessie Bunter. "Listen!" Mabs cried again, and suddenly stood still, holding up a finger.

Her four companions—Barbara Redfern, plump Bessie Bunter, Marjorie Hazeldene, of the Fourth Form at Cliff House School, and little blue-eyed Dolores Essendon, the youngest member of the Second Form, looked at her wonderingly.

For certainly there was nothing to support Mabs' undue excitement, and, as far as their own ears were concerned, no unusual sound to evoke that sudden thrilled command.

Overhead the afternoon sun shone warmly. In the branches of the trees of Friardale Wood, birds, as though in tune with the mood of the sun, trilled and sang with gay abandon. Somewhere on the arterial road near by came the blaring hoot of some noisy motorist. Nothing at all unusual in those sounds, however, at three o'clock on a bright, warm spring day.

"But listen to what?" asked puzzled Barbara Redfern, the Junior School captain.

"Shush! That bird!" Babs blinked; Marjorie smiled. Little Dolores, her pretty, doll-like face aglow with the happiness she found from being in the company of her Fourth Form friends, but perhaps even more happy because those Fourth Form friends had just bought her a new pair of silver-and-scarlet dancing-shoes, looked inquiring. In a group they stopped.

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"Hear?" Mabs asked, and her eyes shone. "The nightingale!"

Babs stared. She listened more intently. A nightingale—at three o'clock on a sunny afternoon! But Mabs was right. Babs could recognise those strong, throaty notes. And a most exquisitely singing nightingale it was. "Oh gorgeous!" she breathed.

Clear, high, the notes shrilled out. Then a moment's silence, during which Mabs, a lover of music, drew a deep breath of utter rapture. And then, most astonishingly, most surprisingly, another whistle broke out, so entirely different, but coming from precisely the same

expertly whistled, but a song each one of them knew by heart. There was no mistake about it. It was the "Lambeth Walk."

Dolores, who never could resist dance music, excitedly started to trip about. "Well, I'm going to see that bird," Mabs announced. "Come on!"

She darted forward. Shrill, clear, even purer the bird-like notes arose, guiding them to the spot.

Curiously eager, Babs and Marjorie followed their chum as she pressed forward, while Dolores excitedly hopped, skipped, and jumped in a series of delighted steps behind them. Bessie puffed along well in the rear. And then, suddenly bursting into the lane, they paused.

They had tracked down the origin of the canary all right. It was a girl. It was a girl of about Dolores' age, dressed in full Cliff House uniform, and she was sitting on a suitcase.

A rather pale-faced girl it was. Her cheeks at this moment were inflated, and it was from her pursed lips that the canary's "Lambeth Walk" was sounding.

She did not see them at first, having her back half-turned towards them.

"A Cliff House girl!" murmured gentle Marjorie Hazeldene, in wonder.

"But what Cliff House girl?" Babs asked. "I've never seen her before. Looks," she added, "as if she might be in the Second Form. You've had no newcomers to your Form lately, have you, Dolores?"

"Oh, no!" Dolores said. "I do not know her at all. But she's nice, isn't she?" she added. "And she does whistle so beautifully. I'd love to dance to that whistle."

"My hat!" cried Mabs.

By

HILDA RICHARDS

Illustrated by T. LAIDLER

spot. This time it was the chaffinch's gay chirp.

"I say, hear that!" blue-eyed Babs breathed.

Melodiously trilling, as though bursting itself with its song of happiness and joy, the bird lustily piped.

Somewhere a sparrow chirped an appreciation. Then:

"Oh, my hat! Just listen!" Mabs gasped.

For once again the song had changed, and this time—miracle of miracles—it was no English bird which sang. Rather was it a ripping, clear, chirp-chirp—the chirp of a canary.

The chums stared.

"My hat, that's some bird!" Babs breathed. "And—whoops!"

She laughed, for the piping and the chirping were forming a song—a song

"Oh, really, you've got your hat on, you know!" Bessie protested.

"No, I don't mean that. I mean"—and Mabs' face suffused with sudden excitement—"that's given me an idea!" she cried. "A great—a glorious idea! Dolores dancing. This kid, dressed up as a bird, sitting on the bough of a tree, whistling the tunes she dances to. What a stunt for the end-of-term concert!"

"Phew!" whistled Babs, and nodded in quick appreciation. "Jolly good! Only thing," she said, "is to find out first if she is really and truly a Cliff House girl. I say!" she called.

The whistle ceased. The pale little face betrayed alarm as its owner swung round.

"Oh!" said the girl, and looked so confused all at once that Babs had a fleeting impression she was going to run away. Then she saw Dolores, and recognising in her a girl of her own age, paused. "Oh, 'ello!" she said hesitantly.

"Hallo!" Plump Bessie Bunter beamed good-naturedly. "I say, you don't belong to Cliff House, do you?"

"But I do," the girl said. "Least-ways, I'm going there. Mr. Tunbridge said I was to go in the second standard, you see—I mean, the Second Form. Are you from Cliff 'Ouse?" she added, gazing at their uniforms. "Cos if you are, perhaps one of you's Miss 'Elen 'Unter."

The chums looked at each other, and then rather curiously regarded the little girl, so rough, so uneducated, despite her pretty face. Obviously she was a new girl, and obviously something rather unusual for Cliff House.

Babs smiled. "I'm not Helen Hunter," she said. "Helen Hunter is a prefect in the Sixth Form." She did not add the thought that flashed across her mind—that Helen Hunter was a particularly unpleasant type of prefect into the bargain. "Was Helen supposed to meet you?"

"Well, Mr. Tunbridge said she would, you see," the little girl said. "Mr. Tunbridge is the man what sent me here."

"And what is your name?" Babs asked gently.

"Letty Green."

"Hallo, Letty," Dolores dimpled shyly.

"Allo," Letty replied, and blinked at her; and then, seeing the friendly smile upon Dolores' face, grinned. "Allo," she said more heartily.

"I heard you whistling," Dolores announced.

"Did you?" Letty smiled, relieved, obviously, to have someone of her own age to talk to. "I like whistling. I'm always whistling," she said. "My dad—'e's dead now, you see—my dad always said that if I went on whistling like I do, I should go on the stage some day. It's because my dad's dead, you see, that Mr. Tunbridge is looking after me," she informed the amazed Babs & Co. "My dad was Mr. Tunbridge's gardener, and Mr. Tunbridge said I should have a chance, and that's why 'e's sending me to Cliff 'Ouse."

"Oh!" said Babs, and smiled, despite her bewilderment.

For Babs, if she knew Helen Hunter, did not know Mr. Tunbridge—had never heard of him, indeed. But what a little oddity this girl was.

"Well, I hope," she said, "you have a jolly good time. You'll be in Dolores' form—this is Dolores—and Dolores will look after you, won't you, Dolores?"

"Oh, yes!" Dolores said eagerly. "I like you," she added frankly. "But please whistle again so that I can dance. I love dancing."

"And I love whistling, you see,"

Letty said, and looked inquiringly at Babs. "Shall I?"

"Go on!" cried Mabs eagerly.

And Letty, blowing out her cheeks, whistled. Whatever she might lack in other directions, her talent in that was little short of astonishing. Each note was pure, each perfect. And while she whistled, Dolores breathlessly and excitedly danced.

What a picture that was!

Mabs glowed. She was full of enthusiasm for her new-found idea now. What a stunt it would be, what a glorious triumph for the Fourth. Shutting her eyes, she could see and hear it all in, fancy now—Dolores, dressed as a little woodland nymph, with Letty, prettily seated on the branch of a "prop" tree, dressed in a colourful feathered costume.

From that moment Mabs, always looking for new theatrical excitements, was completely preoccupied. But Babs, torn between her curiosity and the compassion which the little stranger aroused within her, looked rather thoughtful. Letty, obviously, was a poor girl. Letty, obviously, was unused to the life now before her.

Babs felt a sudden surge of indignation against Helen Hunter. She could guess that snobbish Helen would not be too keen to claim acquaintance with such a rough little diamond, but to leave the child so completely stranded was acting both cattishly and caddishly.

know!" plump Bessie beamed. "Good line that, isn't it? This is the tuck-shop," she added, as they passed that building on their left. "Aunt Jones keeps it, and she makes ripping cream buns, though she's too measly mean to let you have credit! Those are the playing fields," she added, with a wave of one podgy hand.

"Oh!" Letty muttered again. She drew a deep, awe-filled breath.

"Crumbs, it looks like one of the places you see on the pictures, don't it?" she asked.

Babs smiled and nodded. Dolores gripped Letty's arm with greater warmth, and Letty, perhaps assured by that pressure, looked just a little less apprehensive. While she stared about her with great grey eyes, Babs led the way into the quad.

"Now," she said kindly, "wait here, Letty. Dolores, you'll wait with her, won't you? I'll go and tell Helen."

"And I," Bessie chirped in, "will go off and prepare tea, you know. Is Letty coming to tea, Mabs?"

"She is," Mabs said, "and Dolores. Come on, Marjie, we'll help Bessie. Look after Letty, Dolores."

Dolores needed no telling to do that. She had taken little Letty Green, uncouth or not, to her heart.

Babs marched into the school. Her compassion for the little waif who had just arrived was equal only to her indignation against the callously neglectful

**A very unusual new girl was little Letty Green. The daughter of a gardener, her upbringing had been vastly different from that of the average Cliff House girl. The big school almost frightened her; and thanks to the snobbish dislike of two girls in particular, Letty saw little but unhappiness ahead. But Barbara Redfern & Co. and little Dolores Essendon, the youngest girl in the school, rallied round Letty wonderfully, until . . .**

The whistle ended. Dolores, with a gay and breathless twirl, came to a standstill. Mabs clapped her hands.

"Oh, topping, topping!" she said. "Lovely! Whoops, I'm just bursting with ideas! Bess, I can even see something in this for you! Here, let's get back to school. I'll carry your case, Letty."

Letty smiled hesitantly. "And—and will you take me to see Miss 'Unter?" she asked.

"Helen," Babs corrected. "At Cliff House no girl is 'miss' anything to another girl. You just call her Helen. Yes, we'll take you to see her all right," she added, with just a hint of grimness, and mentally promised herself that Helen should know what she was thinking about her. "Come on."

"Please walk with me, Letty," Dolores said shyly.

Letty grinned again. She looked a little more sure now.

With Mabs gripping the case—not at all a light article—they set off along the lane. Presently they reached the carved gates of Cliff House School, with its wide drive sweeping up to the majestic old building. Letty gave it an almost terrified blink.

"Oh crumbs, what a place!" she gasped. "Who does this belong to?"

"This," Dolores told her, "is the school. It's ever such a nice school, too."

"Oh!" Letty said, and looked almost scared. "And—and 'ave I got to live 'ere?"

"Live here and learn here, you

Helen Hunter. Surely Helen could not have forgotten such an important task as meeting the little stranger?

Helen hadn't. Helen had never had the slightest intention of meeting Letty Green. Helen, unseen by Babs, was at that moment staring between the curtains of her study window. That window overlooked the quad, and Helen's haughty face was bitter as she glowered at Dolores and Letty. A younger, unprepossessing, rather podgy-faced girl by her side, scowled.

"So that's her!" Eunice Hunter said scornfully. "That's Letty Green, is it?"

Helen scowled. Eunice, her younger sister, self-appointed leader of the Second Form, grinned ill-naturedly, as though scenting fun ahead.

"Awful kid!" Helen said bitterly. "Fancy foisting her on Cliff House. Uncle Noah must have been out of his mind, I should think. And that's the kid"—scornfully—"we've got to suffer for! That's the kid we've got to keep here—so that she can have her chance!" She clenched her hands. Then, with a curious smouldering in her eyes, she gazed at her sister significantly. "Eunice, you know what you've got to do?" she added.

"Don't I!" Eunice grinned again. "Just leave it to me, sis! I'll put her through the hoop!"

"It's not just a matter of putting her through the hoop," Helen said vindictively. "It's a matter of making her life a misery to her! You've got to make her so fed-up with Cliff House



that she'll run away—or if she doesn't jolly well run away, then we've got to get her pitched out. While she's here the money Uncle Noah Tunbridge should be spending on us will go to keep her. While he thinks that awful kid's making a success of things our noses will be all out of joint! She's in your Form, Eunice; for once you can do more than I—"

"Leave it to me," Eunice said again. "You back me up, though!" she added warningly.

"Don't be a fool! Of course I'll back you up!"

"All right, then! We'll have her out in a week!" Eunice grinned, and looked so ill-naturedly delighted at the prospect that for a moment even Helen frowned. "Just watch!" she gurgled. "But I say," she added, "Barbara Redfern & Co. were with her. Supposing they interfere? You know what Barbara is!"

"I'll deal with Barbara Redfern!" Helen said grimly.

And her face took on a harsh look. Helen knew Letty's story, but it awakened no kindness in her heart—only a sense of exasperation.

Uncle Noah had written yesterday explaining the state of affairs.

John Green, suddenly and tragically stricken down five weeks ago, had been her uncle's gardener. John Green, frightfully proud of his daughter's whistling accomplishments, had always had in mind the view that some day that accomplishment would bring Letty Green both fame and fortune. It had been his idea that she should be educated to fit her for the life her musical accomplishments would win for her, and, with that end in view, had scraped and saved.

And then—  
Then had come John Green's sudden tragic death. Uncle Noah, as John's only friend, found that his gardener had left all his money to him, beseeching him to use it to give his little girl the education he so earnestly desired her to have. The savings, of course, had been utterly inadequate; but generously, nobly, Mr. Tunbridge, by no means a rich man himself, had taken the burden on his own shoulders.

"Fool, fool, fool!" Helen savagely told herself. "Silly, sentimental, idiotic fool!"

And now the fool had sent the gardener's girl to Cliff House! Now, ignoring the difference it would make to his two nieces already at the school, he was going to spend money on her!

And she and Eunice—

Helen's eyes flamed bitterly. She and Eunice—they could go to pot, of course! Until now Uncle Noah had been most frightfully indulgent towards them. Frequent had been his remittances; lavish his presents; expensively generous his treats when they were on holiday together. As a bachelor with no responsibilities, Uncle Noah could afford all that, of course. But now—

Now! Helen gritted her teeth as tempestuously she thought on. Her eyes glowed. Now Uncle Noah, in writing to say he was carrying out his gardener friend's wishes, had already hinted that his resources would be taxed thereby; had more than hinted that she and Eunice could expect fewer favours from him in future.

"Fool!" Helen thought at this juncture, utterly ignoring all Uncle Noah had done for her in the past. "Oh, well, come in!" she cried irritably, as a knock sounded at the door; and she turned to glare as that door opened and Babs came in. "Well, what is it?" she snapped.

"A young friend of yours—Letty

Green—has arrived," Babs announced, steadily regarding her.

"Anything to do with you?" Helen sneered.

"I think so—yes! Because," Babs said levelly, "I helped to bring her here. She'd been trying to find her way from the station on her own, with a heavy suitcase. She said you were supposed to meet her. You forgot, I suppose?"

Helen's eyes glimmered.

"Are you trying to be cheeky?" she rapped.

"No. But, all the same," Babs said, with a touch of contempt, "I think it's pretty mean to promise to meet a new kid, and then leave her stranded, especially such a new kid as she is—a stranger to the school, and a stranger, by the looks of it, to the very class of girl she's going to mix with! It's not exactly an example for a prefect to set, is it?"

Helen's eyes blazed. Eunice looked indignant.

"Here, I say, are you going to stand that, Helen?" she cried shrilly.

"Eunice, cut!" Helen said briefly, and looked at her meaningly. And as Eunice, with a grin, moved towards the door, insolently pushing against Babs as she passed her, Helen turned upon the captain of the Fourth. "So that," she said in measured accents, "is what you think of it, Barbara Redfern? You think I should have rushed my head off to meet some slum kid just because she happens to be my uncle's gardener's daughter?"

Babs turned red.

"Well, I think—"

"Shut up! Who cares what you think? Get out of here—get out! And you can get out with a hundred lines!" she raged. "Write a hundred times 'I must not dictate to my superiors'! Well, do you hear?" she glared. "Get out!"

Babs looked at her contemptuously, and then turned.

Poor, poor little Letty Green, she was thinking. What a life she was going to lead with this ill-natured prefect to sponsor her efforts at Cliff House!

### So Cruel of Them!



"HALLO! I suppose you're Letty Green?"

Eunice, who had just darted out of her prefect sister's study, greeted the two diminutive

girls at the end of the corridor with that remark.

Dolores and Letty, talking eagerly and earnestly together, turned to face her.

Dolores blinked. Dolores had not a single enemy in the world, but Eunice could never have been said to be a friend of hers. Dolores, like the rest of the Second Form, held big Eunice in something of awe, and Eunice, hating Dolores for her sweetness, her winsomeness, her unbounded popularity with the older girls of the school, had made Dolores the chief target of her rather cruel wit and her most ill-natured jokes. She smiled, however, now.

"Yes, this is Letty," she said. "Letty, this is Eunice, the sister of Helen Hunter."

"Oh, are you? 'Ow do you do?" Letty said shyly.

"'Ow what?" Eunice asked, staring.

"'Ow do you do?"

"My hat!"

Letty blinked.

"What's the matter?"

"Haven't you dropped something?"

Eunice asked, with an ill-natured grin.

Letty, puzzled, looked at the floor.

"No; not that I know of," she said.

"Not an 'h, for instance?" Eunice

sniggered. "My hat, I must say you're

going to be a credit to the Second!

What slum were you brought up in?"

Letty's wide eyes regarded the newcomer in shrinking dismay. Her pale little face turned pink. But Dolores, recognising the insult in the question, first bit her lip, then flamed up in angry indignation. Her little hands clenched.

"That's nasty! That's horrid!" she said quiveringly. "And I don't see that it matters where Letty was brought up. Letty's my friend. Letty's a nice girl!" she cried defiantly.

"Yah! You shut up, cry-baby!" Eunice retorted. "I'm doing the talking here!"

And contemptuously she swung an arm at Dolores, and Dolores, unprepared for the blow, staggered back and slipped.

"Ere, you 'it her!" Letty cried, and swiftly stooped. "Dolores, you ain't hurt, are you?" she added, as she gave her a hand to rise.

"Rats! Of course she isn't hurt!" Eunice jeered. "Go on, baby, cry!" she taunted at Dolores.

"You leave 'er alone!" Letty cried, flushing indignantly.

"What!" The word came almost as a yelp from Eunice. "Are you cheeking me, slum kid?" she shrilled.

"No; I ain't cheeking nobody," Letty said. "But I don't think it's fair to 'it a girl like Dolores, when she's so much littler than you!"

"I'll pull your nose, you little cat!"

"No, you won't!" Dolores cried

valiantly. "Won't I?" And Eunice made a step forward, while Letty quiveringly stood still, wondering what she should do now.

But perhaps fortunately, at that moment, Babs came along.

"Hallo!" she said quickly. "I say, what's this? Eunice, what do you think you're going to do?"

"I'm going," Eunice breathed, "to pull that slum kid's nose! She sauced me!"

"Well, I expect you deserved it," Babs said grimly. "Anyway, we're having no scenes here! Buzz off!"

"But I tell you—"

"Buzz off!" Babs repeated sharply.

Eunice scowled. With a glare at the new girl which seemed to promise reprisals, she slouched away. A moment later Helen came up.

"Oh!" She stared at Letty, and Babs saw the spasm of hate which flitted across her face. "I suppose you're Letty Green?" she said roughly. "I'm Helen Hunter."

"Yes," Letty said, and paused hesitantly. "Mr. Tunbridge told me—"

"Well, never mind Mr. Tunbridge!" Helen said bad temperedly. "You'll talk about him afterwards. Now I suppose you've got to see Miss Primrose, the headmistress. Barbara, you can go!"

"Yes; but—" Babs said.

"Go!" rasped Helen.

And Babs, biting her lip, signed to Dolores, and, with a little smile for the once again nervous Letty, moved away.

"Now come on, you!" Helen said roughly. "And remember, try to behave yourself. A nice thing," she added sourly, "having you foisted on the school, isn't it?"

"But I—I didn't ask to come," Letty blurted.

"No?" Helen looked bitter. "Well, who cares about you, anyway? Have



you met my sister Eunice?" she added abruptly.

"Yes."

"Well, remember this—she's the leader of the Form you're going into. And don't forget, when she tells you to do a thing, you do it. If you don't," Helen added grimly, "you'll jolly well have me to reckon with! And don't forget I'm a prefect! A prefect in this school can make your life a joy, or make it a misery!"

Letty, with a gulp, nodded. She felt afraid of Helen, scared of Eunice. Funny, that both these sisters were so horrid; funny that Helen should be this sort of girl. Mr. Tunbridge had told her, of course, that Helen was a frightfully important girl at Cliff House, but she had never expected such a reception as this. He had told her, indeed, that Helen would help her.

But she blinked when she saw the headmistress.

For Miss Primrose was far from being an ogre. There was something reassuring about her. She looked so austere, so regal, so—so wise, somehow, standing there. But her face had the most lovely smile, and there was a very kindly light in her grey eyes.

She came forward, led Letty to a chair, and said quietly:

"My dear child, do sit down."

Letty sat, her fears felt reassured at once. A hot, warm glow of pleasure suffused her pale cheeks.

"Well, Letty," Miss Primrose said, "I hope you'll be very, very happy here. Now let me see—what was your last school?"

"Leafordsleigh Council, miss. I—I was in standard two," Letty gulped.

"Oh, yes!" Miss Primrose smiled gently. "In this school, Letty, you

"This is a c'nary." And she started again.

"Oh golly!" gurgled Helen.

"Letty, my dear! Yes, thank you very much!" Miss Primrose said hastily. "Hem! Delightful, I am sure. But I would prefer you not to whistle inside the school. Helen, my dear, will you take Letty to the Play-room, and introduce her to her Form-mates?"

"But—but—" Letty stuttered.

"But what, my dear?"

"Oh, nothing!" Letty said, crimsoning in confusion.

For Letty had suddenly remembered that Barbara Redfern—now she was a nice girl, if you like—had said something about tea. But perhaps they hadn't really meant her to come, and, in any case, she had no more idea than the man in the moon where the tea was to be held.



QUITE unaware that the mathematics mistress was nicknamed "The Bull," Letty finished writing on the blackboard. Spiteful Eunice Hunter had told her to write those words, and now—here was Miss Bullivant herself arriving on the scene!

call them Forms, you know. And what did you learn there?"

"Well, reading, and— and writing, and 'rithmetic."

"Yes, Letty. A n d

Miss Primrose's gaze was touched with compassion.

"Well, games, you see. We 'ad a lot of games. And—and," Letty stuttered, "we 'ad a teacher what tried to learn us play-acting."

Miss Primrose winced ever so slightly.

"What did you do best, my dear?" Letty flushed hotly.

"Well, I weren't much good at anything in class," she confessed forlornly.

Helen, near the door, hid a spiteful grin.

"But surely, my dear, there is something you can do better than anything else?"

"Oh dear, do I 'ave to?" Letty asked, in deep dismay. "No, I'm not good at nothing, you know. But, yes, I am!" she added, blinking up in sudden excitement. "I can whistle."

"Whistle?"

"Yes!" Letty cried proudly. "Like this!" And she inflated her cheeks, and from her lips burst a full-throated warble. "That's a jay," she said.

Out she went, Helen holding the door open, and smiling in tolerant sympathy as she met Miss Primrose's slightly troubled glance. She stepped into the corridor. But when the door was closed—

"And so," she mocked, "your great big accomplishment is whistling. I must say that's a nice sort of fish-and-chips hobby to have. I suppose you were the champion warbler of Slum Alley?"

Letty gazed at her, her grey eyes full of wounded hurt. But she said nothing. Helen Hunter terrified her somehow.

Everything about this great school vaguely terrified her.

Silently she followed Helen downstairs, looking round anxiously, and almost hungrily for little Dolores Essendon. The door of the Second Form Common-room—more generally known as the Play-room—was pushed open, and Letty blinked at the crowd of small girls gathered there. There was no sign of Dolores, but she saw Eunice Hunter instantly.

"Hurrah! Here she is!" Eunice gibed. "Come in, slum kid!"

"Go on!" Helen said, and gave the little one a push.

Letty had no chance then. She tottered into the room. Perhaps Helen did not mean to push so hard, but

Silently, dismally, she padded along the corridor after the bad-tempered senior.

Was this Helen's idea of helping? she wondered. Rich girls had such different ideas of doing things from poor girls.

"Miss—Miss— Oh, Helen!" she faltered.

"Shut up; we're nearly there!" snapped Helen. "Wretched little pauper's brat!" she was thinking bitterly. "Awful little slum kid! Well, here we are!" she snarled at Letty, as they halted outside the headmistress's door. "Now fluff that hair of yours up, you untidy little brat!"

Letty quivered. She felt scared suddenly. The closed mahogany door, its surface broken only by a small ivory panel which, in black letters, bore the announcement, "Penelope Primrose, Headmistress," was frightening, somehow. As Helen knocked she had a sensation of being lost. As Helen tugged her in, she had a sensation of walking into the den of some ogre.



Letty, staggering forward, collided with Eunice. Eunice, immediately springing back, pushed her on to Priscilla Pacey. Priscilla passed her to Christine Wadhurst, and Christine pushed her back to Eunice.

Letty nearly flared up at that. "Ere," she cried, "who're you pushing?"

"Hee, hee! Listen to the posh talk!" Eunice cried. "Ugh! Go away, slum kid!"

She pushed again. But this time Letty did not intend to be caught. She twisted as Eunice's spiteful arm came out, and Eunice, with a yell, went staggering past her, to bang her head against the blackboard. Fiercely she spun round.

"Why, you—you pushed me!" she howled.

"Well," Letty said, with breathless defiance, "you pushed me!"

Eunice glared. The glare was fierce, threatening. She was far bigger than the next biggest girl there. She was the heaviest, and by far the oldest member of the Second Form. Had it not been for her dullness in class, indeed, Eunice would have found herself in the Third Form.

"Cheeky, eh?" she shrilled. "Say you're sorry, slum kid!"

"No, I won't!"

"Well, supposing I pull your hair?" "You try to touch my hair, and I'll pull your nose!" Letty retorted, desperately realising that the one and only means of defence was to stick up for herself, and she clenched her small fist and for a moment looked so defiant that Eunice, coward and bully as she was, paused.

"Well, perhaps I won't pull your hair," Eunice conceded. "We're ladies, I hope. Know what a lady is, slum kid?"

"Yes, I do. Miss Primrose is a lady."

"Really! Aren't you getting clever?" Eunice sneered. "Can you spell, professor?"

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

"I bet," Letty retorted, "I c'n spell as good as you!"

"So?" Eunice sneered. "Well, let's see," she said. "Priscilla, clean that blackboard. Here, slum kid, here's a piece of chalk. Get up on that chair. Now, let's see how you can spell. Write the word 'the.'"

Letty hesitated. But, anyway, "the" was easy enough. She wrote:

THE.

Eunice giggled.

"Well, all right. Now write underneath it 'Bull.'"

Letty paused, racking her brain. One "p" or two? Then she remembered.

The Second gazed at Eunice questioningly. For the word Bull had only one significance in the minds of the Second, and that significance was by no means connected with the animal of that name. It was connected with Miss Bullivant, the sour-tempered mathematical mistress of the school, who to-day was duty mistress.

And there was a glimmer of mischief in Eunice's crafty eyes, and there was a grin on her lips as she looked at the clock. For "the Bull," otherwise Miss Bullivant, was due on her afternoon round of inspection now.

Haltingly Letty wrote the word Bull.

"Now 'is.'" Eunice gibed; and when that was accomplished: "Now 'an'—just two letters, nimny! Now 'old'—now 'cat.' Now read it," she gibed. "Bet you can't!"

"Yes, I can," Letty said heatedly,

pausing before finishing the word cat.

"The Bull is an old cat."

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

"Well, I don't see that there's anything to laugh about!" Letty argued. "It sounds silly to me! 'Ow c'n a bull be a cat, I'd like to know? Bulls 'ave nothing to do with cats—anybody knows that!"

She bent to finish the word "cat," and at that moment there was a sudden, deathlike silence in the Play-room. The door had opened and Miss Bullivant herself had entered!

"Aha!" Miss Bullivant said, and gazed round suspiciously. "Oh, you are the new girl!" she said, seeing Letty.

"I am glad—" Her eyes fell upon the blackboard and Miss Bullivant stiffened and froze, the smile she had summoned for little Letty Green's benefit abruptly vanishing. She was well aware of her nickname. "Letty!"

You wrote this?" she rapped.

"Oh dear!" Letty stammered. "I 'ope I 'aven't wrote it wrong!"

Miss Bullivant started.

"Dear me, what a child!" she murmured. "But you—you wrote this?"

And why, may I ask?"

Letty looked amazed and failed altogether to interpret the dagger-like glare which Eunice threw at her.

"Well, Eunice told me to!" she blurted.

"Oh, you—you sneak!" gasped Eunice.

"Eunice!" And Miss Bullivant glared as from all parts of the room went up a cry of "Sneak, sneak!" "Girls, silence, please!" she cried. "Eunice, step forward!"

Eunice, quivering and furious, did so.

"I presume," Miss Bullivant said, "this is a joke—a very ill-natured joke, Eunice, and one for which you will be punished. Take up the duster, miss; wipe out that offensive scrawl. Thank you. And now, Eunice, you may spend your evening in writing fifty lines: 'I must not play jokes on new girls. Apart from that,' Miss Bullivant rapped, "you will place a black mark in your conduct book!"

And Miss Bullivant went out.

And for a moment there was a deathly silence.

Letty stared. She knew then, for the very first time, she had done something wrong. Everybody was glaring at her. Her face whitened.

"You awful, rotten little sneak!" cried Eunice.

Letty's lips quivered.

"But what 'ave I done?"

"You sneaked! You sneaked to Miss Bullivant! You told her!" Eunice said furiously. "You said that I'd told you to write that on the blackboard!"

"But you did tell me to!"

"I did—yes," Eunice looked round for support, and for once she had it. "But don't you know, slum kid, that at this school sneaking isn't done? If somebody bullied you like anything you're not supposed to say who did it. If somebody half kills you, you've just got to shut up about it. When you tell tales—that's sneaking; and you've told tales about me, so that's sneaking, too. Now do you understand, Telltale?"

Letty's grey eyes widened.

"But—but 'ow was I to know?" she blurted.

"Well, you know now," Eunice shrilled. "And just so that you won't forget, you're going to be punished. Every girl who sneaks has to be punished, so that she won't sneak any more, and you're not going to get out of it. You're going to run the gauntlet," she declared. "We're going to show you that we don't want your sort at Cliff House."

## Was There a Conspiracy?



"WONDER where the kid's got to?" Barbara Redfern asked. "Mabs, old thing, would you mind scouting round?"

"Oh, yes, please, Mabel!" Dolores Essendon pleaded. "And can I come with you?"

"Tea in Study No. 4 was ready. It had been ready, in fact, for the last five minutes, and Bessie, especially, was becoming anxious for the fate of her crumpets, which, nicely browned and buttered, were lying in an appetising pile on a plate on the hearth.

"Perhaps," Mabs said, "she didn't properly understand that we'd invited her. Anyway, she can't still be with Primmy. Or perhaps—with a little frown—" Helen still has her in tow. Anyway, we'll go and see Miss Primrose first. Come along, Dolores."

Very eagerly and very willingly little Dolores went along. Dolores, perhaps, was most anxious of them all. She had taken an instant liking to the newcomer from Leafordsleigh Council School.

To Miss Primrose they went. That kindly lady they found talking to Miss Bullivant, both of them looking just a little troubled about something. When Mabs made her inquiry:

"Letty, I believe, is still in the Second Form Room," the Head replied.

"Oh, thank you, Miss Primrose!" Mabs said.

She smiled. With Dolores in her wake she hurried off towards the Play-room. But long before she reached that room it was apparent that something unusual was going on. Excited yells and shrill cries were coming from behind its closed door, and once Mabs thought she heard a cry. She flung the door open.

Then she stood stock-still.

Something was "on" in the Play-room—and something not particularly nice. The excited Second were lined up in two rows, facing each other, and staggering down the aisle formed by those two rows was little Letty Green, who was receiving a slap on the back from each girl as she passed, and being pushed from one to the other. Letty's little face was white, her eyes gleaming with unshed tears. Mabs gave a cry.

"Stop that! You—you wicked little things!"

The Second wheeled. One or two of them, abashed at the advent of an older girl, fell out of the ranks. But Eunice Hunter glared.

"You get out!" she cried.

"My hat! This is a nice way to treat a new girl!" Mabs cried. "Who's responsible?"

Eunice scowled.

"You mind your own business!" she cried. "You haven't got any right to interfere! You're only a Fourth Former, not a prefect, like my sister Helen, and we don't take orders from you! She's running the gauntlet!" she said defiantly. "And she's running the gauntlet because she's sneaked. Now clear off!"

But Mabs, striding forward, was shielding the quivering little Letty with a protecting arm. Her eyes flashed.

"Your work, I suppose," she said scornfully to Eunice, while Dolores glowed in indignation.

"Well, she sneaked!" shrilled Eunice.

"What did she sneak about?"

"She sneaked to Miss Bullivant 'cos I made her write a notice on the board. Miss Bullivant gave me fifty lines and a black conduct mark!"

"I'm sorry! But—but 'ow was I to know?" defended Letty.



"Bosh! Everybody knows about sneaking!" Eunice retorted.

But Mabs was nodding understandingly.

"And you're sorry now that you did sneak?" she asked Letty gently.

"Well, I'm sorry I told the mistress," Letty conceded. "I wouldn't 'ave done it if I'd known."

"My hat! The grammar!" tittered Chrissie Wadhurst.

"But look here—" cried Eunice.

"Eunice, you can shut up!" Mabs said. "Letty has apologised. Letty, you'll never sneak again, will you?"

"No," Letty said, and she fiercely meant that.

"Well, then," Mabs said, "that's all right. Letty's apologised. Letty's promised never to sneak again, so that puts things right. Now give her a chance."

"That's all very well," shrilled Eunice. "But she's got to be taught a lesson, and you haven't any right—"

"And you," little Dolores flared indignantly, "haven't any right to be so nasty and cruel!"

"Dolores, please!" Mabs said. "Letty, come on! Tea is ready in Study No. 4, and we've been looking for you."

"Tea!" Eunice flared. "You mean you're taking that slum kid to tea?"

But Mabs silenced her with a look. With one arm still round the slight shoulders of the gardener's daughter, she went out. Letty looked up at her.

"Th-thank you!" she muttered huskily. "I'm sorry! You see, I never meant to sneak, and I didn't know that they'd all be so wild. I won't never do it again—honest!"

"Well, then, forget it, shall we?" Mabs lightly laughed. "Now—tea!"

"A scrummy tea, Letty!" Dolores enthused. "Cream buns, you know, and ever such nice hot crumpets. I love nice hot crumpets, don't you?"

Letty smiled uncertainly. But there was love in her eyes as the fairy-like Dolores took her arm. Then, at last, they were in Study No. 4, with Bessie beaming round the fire, Babs welcoming the little one, and Marjorie bustling around putting the chairs in their places. Letty looked at the table, and her eyes lighted up.

"Oh, isn't it good!" she breathed. "And we eat what we like?"

"Just whatever you like," Babs smiled.

Letty's eyes shone, though, to be sure, some of her shyness and embarrassment returned when, at little Dolores' side, she found herself seated at the table. Babs placed a cup of tea in front of her.

"Sugar, Letty?"

"Can—can I have three lumps?"

Letty gulped.

"Rather!"

Letty helped herself. She stirred her tea. Rather noisily she stirred, but Babs & Co. affected not to notice. Letty smiled again, nervously, hesitantly, while Dolores helped her to a hot crumpet, which Letty at first folded over and picked up whole, and then, seeing that Dolores was using a knife and fork for hers, crimson-facedly dropped it, and in such terrific embarrassment started work with the knife and fork that she shot the crumpet, plate and all, on to the floor.

"Oh dear! I—I'm sorry!" she stammered.

"That's all right," laughed Babs. "There we are," she said brightly, and, having retrieved the plate, she put a new crumpet on it.

But Letty's little face was still crimson. She felt conscious with every mouthful she ate that she was committing some fresh mistake. But Letty was quick to observe and quick to learn. She noticed, for instance, when Babs and her friends stopped stirring their tea they removed the spoon. She noticed, too, that not one of them thought of pouring the hot tea in the saucer like she and that dear old dad of hers had often done.

The meal went on. Babs & Co. chatted away brightly, and wisely let Letty find her feet. And by-and-by Letty became to feel more reassured. When it came to the cake-eating stage she was happy, and actually asked for some more tea. She liked these girls. They were fine. They didn't ask her a lot of silly and nosey-parker questions.

There was a sudden step in the passage. A sharp knock at the door, and then it flew open. Helen Hunter,

her eyes glittering, and followed by her podgy little sister, came in.

The chums turned.

"All right, keep your seats," Helen said grimly. "I haven't come to see you Fourth Formers. Letty—"

Letty's face had turned a little white. "Y-yes?"

"What have you done with Chrissie Wadhurst's sweets?"

"Sw-sweets?" Letty stammered.

"Don't repeat things! You know what I mean! Who stole Chrissie's sweets in the Play-room?"

Babs & Co. looked at each other.

"Well, I didn't. I never saw nobody's sweets!" Letty blurted.

"You fibber!" shrilled Eunice. "I saw you take them!"

"Oo, you didn't!" Letty's eyes were wide and horrified.

"I did!"

"Perhaps," Babs suggested quietly, "there's some mistake?"

"There's no mistake—and please be quiet!" Helen Hunter snapped. "I'm dealing with this. The value of the sweets may be small, but the fact that they were taken without permission constitutes a theft, and thieving is a thing that's got to be nipped in the bud at once. This kid may have thought nothing of—"

"But I never took the sweets!" Letty was almost frantic. "I never even saw no sweets! Dolores, you know I wouldn't steal!" she said desperately, looking at her new chum, whose little face was growing red. "Dolores, you tell them!"

"She didn't, Helen," Dolores said fiercely.

"Yah, baby-face!" mocked Eunice.

"How do you know?"

"Well, I know she didn't!" Dolores insisted stubbornly. "And it's not stealing if she did. You're always taking my sweets, Eunice!"

"Why, you—"

"Shut up!" roared Helen. "I haven't come here for a kids' row! Letty, get up," she said. "I'm going to take you to your Form-mistress, Miss Gilbey."

"Oh, but you can't, Helen—" murmured gentle Marjorie Hazeldene.

"Take fifty lines!"

"Give the kid a chance," Babs said contemptuously.



"WHAT have you done with Chrissie Wadhurst's sweets?" snapped Helen Hunter. "Sw-sweets?" stammered little Letty. "You know what I mean," accused the prefect spitefully. "Who stole Chrissie's sweets?" In the doorway Eunice Hunter sneered triumphantly.



"Take fifty lines yourself, too! Now! Well, are you coming?" As Letty shot a frightened look at the chums she reached forward, catching her hand. "Come on!"

And with a most vicious tug she yanked the scared youngster out of the study.

"Rotten cat!" cried Babs.

"Beastly bully!" glowered Bessie.

"But she didn't do it, you know!"

Dolores cried. "I know she didn't do it! How could she have stolen Chrissie's sweets when Eunice was making her run the gauntlet? Eunice has made it all up!"

The four Fourth Formers looked at each other. Not yet had they quite decided what to make of Letty Green. Letty might have been guilty of taking those sweets. Even so, it was the sort of thing that was done by plenty of Cliff House girls. No great crime in it.

But Dolores' argument seemed to shatter even that tolerant view.

"You mean," Marjorie asked, "that Eunice made a false charge?"

"Eunice and Helen have made it up between them, you know!" Dolores answered earnestly. "They don't like Letty."

Babs pursed her lips. She was wondering. Was Dolores right? If so, what was the motive behind the conspiracy of the two Hunter sisters—those sisters who, above all others at Cliff House, should have been the most hearty in their welcome to the new girl who had never had the same chances as the others?

### Goaded Once Too Often!



IT was ten minutes before Letty Green returned. Tears were in the youngster's eyes. Dolores was the first to go forward to meet her.

"Oh, Letty, how—how did you get on?" she asked hesitantly.

Letty gulped.

"All right," she mumbled.

"But what did Miss Gilbey say?" Dolores asked.

"She—she was all right," Letty gulped again. "But she didn't really believe me, you see," she added. "I could see she didn't. She—she sort of gave me a talking to and then let me go. But I never stole the sweets!" she declared.

"No, of course you didn't," Dolores said loyally. "We all know you didn't. Horrid Eunice! She just made that up to get you into a row. But never mind Eunice! Letty, don't worry," she added soothingly, and the sight of the one little girl comforting the other went straight to the hearts of Mabs, Babs, Bessie, and Marjorie. "But look here," she added, with bright eagerness, "we're going to have a rehearsal now—"

"Rehearsal?"

Letty looked blank.

"Just practice, you know. You whistle, and I'm going to dance." Dolores laughed. "Mabel has a lovely idea for the school concert, and we're going to do it now, you know, aren't we, Mabel? So come on," she added entreatingly. "Don't worry about nasty Eunice and Helen."

Letty nodded, though she did not look very eager. Truth to tell, she was feeling disturbed, a little alarmed. How could she be happy when she had a prefect against her, and a girl like Eunice Hunter?

Still, Dolores was nice. She really loved Dolores. And these big girls, Barbara Redfern & Co., they didn't

look down on her just because she hadn't been brought up like themselves. If Cliff House were only full of Barbara Redferns and Dolores Essendons, she thought, she really would enjoy it.

So Letty allowed herself to be led along the corridor, and Mabs, with a laugh, threw open the door of the music-room. Then she gurgled.

"Oh, goodie, it's empty! Come in, Letty!"

Letty went in, again catching her breath as she gazed round. What big rooms there were in this school, and how marvellous everything was kept! Again she felt shy, nervous, almost afraid. But Marjorie, as if sensing those emotions, caught her arm.

"Here we are, Letty—music-room," she said. "This is where we do most of our rehearsing, you know. Nice room, isn't it?"

"I—I think it's lovely!" Letty breathed fervently.

"Well, now you get on the platform, Letty," Mabs said. "Dolores, you here. Now what shall we do? Oh, the 'Lambeth Walk.' We'll try it first without a piano accompaniment."

Letty nodded. She climbed up on the platform. Dolores, excitedly clambering up after her, smoothed down her dress and waited Mabs' signal to begin. Mabs, with a nod, gave the signal, and Letty, forgetting all nervousness then, pursed her lips. Shrill and clear the whistle broke out.

"Oh, fine!" breathed Babs, and her eyes shone. "Now, Dolores."

But Dolores, eager to start, was already swaying. Now she broke into the dance—such a fairy-like little creature that it was impossible, watching her, not to be moved. Mabs' eyes glowed.

"Oh, my hat! When they're dressed for the part!" she murmured.

Enthralled the chums watched. The whistle changed. Now it was the swift, chirping notes of a robin; now, again, it shrilled to the clear, bell-like tones of the nightingale. No doubt that the girl had the most astonishing, wonderful gift in that bird mimicry of hers. No doubt, either, that her father had not been mistaken when he had seen in that gift fame and fortune for his daughter. It was wonderful.

Then, crash! The door was flung open. Helen Hunter, her face flushed and bad-tempered, glared into the room.

"Here, what's all this awful din?" she cried. "Letty Green, how dare you!"

The whistle stopped. Letty stared with frightened eyes.

"But look here—"

"Did you put her up to this?" Helen stormed.

"Yes, I did!" Mabs said heatedly.

"Then take fifty lines for making a noise."

"But, Helen—"

"Shut up! You take fifty lines, too, Dolores and Letty, get off that platform!"

Letty, with a dismayed glance, got off it.

"I—I didn't think I was doing no harm," she faltered.

"No?" Helen sneered. "Well, you can leave the thinking to your betters. Now get back to your Common-room."

"But, Helen," Babs said indignantly, "it was our fault—"

"That's enough from you!" Helen snapped. "Any more, and I'll give you all detention. Letty, go! No, you needn't go with her, Dolores; I've got a job for you to do in my study."

Dolores' eyes filled with tears, while forlornly, with a hesitant glance to-

wards her Fourth Form chums, Letty drifted out of the room.

At the end of the corridor she paused uncertainly. Letty, unfamiliar as yet with the geography of the school, had only the vaguest idea as to which passage led back to the Second Form quarters—though, to be sure, she hated the thought of returning there. After a moment's hesitation she took the turning to her left.

That corridor, had she only known it, was the one which led back to Miss Primrose's study.

Letty went on. Then suddenly she stopped as she heard a sudden titter in front of her, as she saw Eunice Hunter, her face alive with malicious mischief, walking towards her.

"Hallo, sneak-thief!" she gibed.

Letty gulped. She did not speak, but made as if to pass.

"Here, where are you going?" Eunice demanded.

"Leave me alone!" Letty muttered thickly.

"Oh, so so!" Eunice laughed. "Run away, would you, little cat? Let's hear you whistle," she jeered.

But Letty stood her ground.

"No, I ain't going to!"

"Oh, ain't you?" sneered Eunice.

"Not if I twist your arm?"

"Let me alone!" Letty cried.

"All right, funky cat!" Eunice cried scornfully. "I'm not—I mean I ain't—going to hurt you. Anyway, you ain't the only one who can whistle," she said.

"Just listen to this!" And while Letty stared she whipped a metal whistle from her pocket and blew a series of shrill blasts. "Like that?"

Letty stared at her in wonder.

"Or this?" Eunice asked, with a grin, and blew once again, looking back along the corridor towards the door of Miss Primrose's study.

The door of Miss Primrose's study opened. In a flash Eunice had concealed the whistle. Miss Primrose, very annoyed, looked out.

"Really—dear me!" she cried. "Ah, Letty Green! Letty, I thought you understood that you were not to whistle in the school?"

"Go on, sneak if you dare!" hissed Eunice.

"I—I—I—" stuttered Letty confusedly.

"Letty, did you not understand?"

"Y-yes," stuttered Letty, going hot and cold by turns.

"Then why did you disobey?"

"Oh dear!" gasped Letty, and glanced appealingly at Eunice. But Eunice merely looked meek. "I—I'm sorry!" she stuttered.

"Very well. Then please remember in future," Miss Primrose said.

The door closed. Eunice grinned.

"He, he, he!" she tittered.

Letty glared at her. She was trembling then.

"I—I think you're horrid!" she said.

"He, he, he!" tittered Eunice again.

"Still, you didn't sneak that time, did you, thief? Why didn't you sneak, thief?"

Letty threw her a bitter look. She strode off. But Eunice, grinning, kept up with her.

"Well, thief, why didn't you sneak?" she gibed.

"Go away!" Letty gasped.

Eunice was out for mischief. Passing out of the corridor, she whipped out the whistle and blew on it again. It was a whistle almost instantly answered by the opening of a door, and this time Miss Bullivant, her eyes gleaming, came on the scene. Just in time Eunice dropped the whistle into her pocket.

"Why, goodness gracious me,



who—" began the mistress, and then she saw Letty. "Oh!" she said, understanding coming into her face. "Letty, you know you are not supposed to whistle in school."

Letty, crimson-faced, halted. Eunice hissed:

"Go on, sneak!"  
But Letty stood still. She had learned her lesson—a lesson that had sunk in deeply. She could say nothing.

"When orders are given in this school," Miss Bullivant said severely, "they must be obeyed. The next time I catch you making such a noise in the corridor I shall punish you."

Eunice giggled beneath her breath. Letty stood, crimson and quivering now. It wasn't fair! It wasn't fair! And suddenly the sense of her wrongs, the injustices she had met with boiled within her.

In that moment she forgot her fear of Eunice, her nervousness, and as Miss Bullivant retired she suddenly whirled.

Her hand came up and flashed out, and Eunice staggered back, holding her cheek as the flat of the enraged girl's palm smacked against it. Then Letty had fled.

But as she fled she was sobbing as if her heart would break.

Loyal Even to Her Enemies!



"HALLO, Dolores! Come in. We were just talking about you."

Thus Barbara Redfern the following morning.

It was after breakfast at Cliff House, and Babs, Mabs, and Bessie had retired to their study to read the letters which had come for them by that morning's post.

They were in high spirits, for both Mabs and Babs had received remittances by that post, and Mabs, anxious to be getting on with rehearsals, had suggested that the chums should take a picnic in the woods that afternoon, inviting little Dolores and Letty to go with them.

And in the midst of that discussion Dolores entered.

Rather worried, rather anxious, Dolores looked, and it was obvious at once that she had lost her usual bright spirits. Babs looked at her quickly.

"Dolores, what is it?"  
"It—it's Letty, Barbara."

"Letty? What—?"  
"And—and Eunice, and the others." Dolores' lips quivered a little. "They're being so horrid to her."

"Oh!" Babs said. "Well, what—?"  
"Last night—last night," Dolores said, "Eunice said that Letty smacked her face. Eunice was going to rag her, but Miss Gilbey came along and took Letty off to talk to her, and so Eunice had a Form trial in the dormitory. In the middle of the trial, Letty ran out of the dormitory and ran into Miss Bullivant, you know, and Miss Bullivant came back and gave all the Form twenty lines, and Eunice said Letty had sneaked."

Babs' brows came together.  
"Go on, Dolores," she said quietly.  
"And after that, when Miss Bullivant had gone they all started throwing things at Letty in bed," Dolores went on chokingly. "I tried to stop them, but somebody threw a shoe at me and hit me—here." And she pointed to her temple, where the skin was discoloured. "Then Letty cried and said she wished she'd never come

to Cliff House, and—and Eunice told her that she could jolly well run away, and this morning Letty says she's going to run away. Oh dear! She—she's having a horrid time!" Dolores said, trembling. "Barbara, can't you do anything?"

Babs looked grimly at Mabs. Poor Letty!

"Where is she now, Dolores?"  
"Please, Barbara, she's in the dining-room. She won't come out. Oh, please, won't you go and speak to her?"

"Let me go," plump Bessie said, "and I'll jolly well go and pinch that little cat Eunice's ear at the same time!" she added, her eyes gleaming indignantly behind her thick spectacles.

"Bessie—no!" Babs said, as Bessie made a move towards the door. "Perhaps, in this case, one of us can do more good than a crowd. Mabs, you tell Dolores about the picnic."

She nodded to her chums. Rather grimly she walked out. Poor, poor Letty! she thought. What a life she was having!

Reaching the door of the dining-hall, she opened it and peered in. And then she caught her breath.

Little Letty Green was there, standing by the window. She had a handkerchief in her hand and was twisting it and untwisting it as, with red eyes, she stared across the playing fields. Such a small, forlorn figure she looked in that great room, that Babs' tender heart was at once smitten. She coughed.

Letty spun round as if she had been shot. Her white face swiftly crimsoned as she saw her big friend from the Fourth.

"Letty," Babs said softly, and closed the door and went into the room. "Letty, what has been happening?" she asked.

"Nun-nothing," Letty said, averting her face.

"Letty, there has. I know. Tell me, dear."

But stubbornly Letty shook her head. "I—I can't tell you," she said. "If I told, that would be sneaking, wouldn't it? I ain't never going to get anybody into a row any more through sneaking."

Babs felt a sudden quiver about the curves of her own lips.

"That's right, in a way, Letty—but telling your troubles to another girl is not exactly sneaking, you know. I don't like to see you looking so miserable. Cliff House isn't a bad place when you get to know it, and there are other girls than Eunice Hunter. You do like Cliff House, don't you, Letty?"

Letty hesitated. Then she bit her lip fiercely.

"Letty?"  
"Well, I do and I don't." The child paused. "I likes it now, talking to you, and I likes it when I'm with Dolores; but—but— Oh, I don't know! I always thought rich girls better than poor girls 'cos they ave what they want. But they aren't, are they?"

Babs gulped a little.  
"But rich girls can be nice—and will be nice," she said. "If you were in another Form, you'd probably find out so. But look here," she added eagerly, "we've made some plans for this afternoon. You and Dolores and Mabel and Bessie and me—we're all going for a picnic in the woods and to do a little more rehearsing. How would you like that?"

Letty visibly brightened.  
"Oh, yes!" she agreed eagerly. "You

mean you're going to make tea, and all that?"

"That's the idea," Babs smiled.  
"Oo!" Letty sighed. "That will be lovely," she said, her big grey eyes fastened worshippingly on Babs. "Can I help, too?"

"Yes, of course. But—" And Babs laughed. "Let's go and talk it over," she suggested.

With Letty in tow, she went back to Study No. 4, to find Dolores all a-beam once again and dancing with delight at the prospect of the treat of the afternoon. Dear Dolores. What a loyal little chum she was, and how pleasedly she rushed at Letty, banishing any nervousness the new girl might feel at once more intruding upon her older friends. And for once Letty really did seem to forget her miseries and her worries.

Presently came the bell for assembly, and after assembly the bell for lessons. Rather in dread was Letty looking forward to those lessons, and rather apprehensively fell into line with the rest of the Second Form when they were marshalled into the Second Form classroom. From Eunice Hunter came a titter.

"Now," she said, "we'll see how much sneak-thief knows! Feeling funky, sneak-thief?"

Letty made no reply.

With the others she went into the Form-room, to be greeted by bright-faced Miss Gilbey. Nothing terrifying about Miss Gilbey, at all events; she was as nice as anyone could wish a mistress to be. Very gently she took little Letty's arm and led her to her desk. And Letty, sitting down in confusion, felt her ears burning as she heard a titter behind her.

"Silence, please," Miss Gilbey said. "Letty, my dear, you will find new books in your desk."

Letty gulped. Again she heard that hateful titter from Eunice; but Dolores next to her, gave her an encouraging smile, and from that smile Letty seemed to draw comfort. With a furtive eye upon Dolores, she opened her desk as Dolores did, and took out the brand-new exercise book which lay on the top of other books. She opened it.

And then she sat perfectly still. And suddenly a hot, crimson flame stained her cheeks.

For there, written on the very first nice clean page of her exercise book, was a message. The message, in a sprawling hand, ran as follows:

"WE DON'T WANT SNEAK-THIEFS AT CLIFF HOUSE. GET OUT."

"He, he he!" sniggered Eunice behind her.

Dolores turned. In turning she saw the insult written on the flyleaf of the exercise book, and at once her little face turned an indignant red. Immediately she spun round.

"Eunice, you awful thing! You wrote that!"

"Shut up, Baby-face!" Eunice hissed scornfully.

"I think you're nasty and horrid!" Dolores went on.

"Dolores!" Miss Gilbey's tone was sharp. "What are you talking about? Dolores, look this way! Eunice—" And then she paused, realising very well from the excitement in that particular corner of the class-room that something was afoot. "Letty, my dear, why are you staring at your exercise book like that?"

"Oh, nun-nothing!" Letty stammered hastily.

But Miss Gilbey frowned. A year's experience of the Second Form had

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## 10 "Not Wanted at Cliff House!"

taught her to read signs and portents fairly accurately. That dismayed stare of Letty, the indignation on the face of Dolores, the sneering grin on the features of Eunice told her a little story of its own. Without warning she stepped forward and took the book from Letty. Her frown was fierce as it fastened upon Eunice, whose grin now changed to a look of alarm.

"Eunice—"  
"I—I didn't do it, Miss Gilbey!" Eunice squeaked.  
"I fancy," Miss Gilbey said angrily, "I know the writing! What an unkind girl you are! Eunice, you will at once apologise to Letty."

Eunice went red.  
"But—but—"  
"At once!"  
Eunice gulped. Like most bullies, her nerve completely crumbled when threatened by higher authority. She mumbled:

"I—I'm sorry."  
"Oh, that's all right," Letty said, relieved.

"Thank you," Miss Gilbey looked severe. "I hope, Eunice, that you mean it. Letty is a new girl. Letty deserves considerate treatment. Please try to cultivate a little kindness and good nature."

And leaving Eunice red-eared, she took up Letty's exercise book, tore out the offending page, and then rustled back in front of the class.

The morning went on. As it went on, Letty's dread vanished. Kindly Miss Gilbey, understanding very well her position, asked no questions of Letty, leaving her to pick up what knowledge she could from the rest of the Form. The order came presently to dismiss, and Dolores, clasping Letty's arm, rushed her off at once in order to avoid any reprisals the fuming Eunice might have contemplated.

Letty was almost happy then. After the ordeal of her first morning in class, she felt relieved. Class had lost many of its visualised terrors for her, and a comforting instinct told her that Miss Gilbey would be tolerant and lenient until she had found her feet.

Dinner came, and after dinner Dolores excitedly marched her off to the cycle shed the arrangement between her and Babs being that they would all meet in the woods at half-past two just in case the spiteful Helen Hunter saw them going off together and invented some excuse to break up the party. Helen was full of little tricks like that.

"Here we are!" Dolores cried buoyantly. "We are going to meet them near the place where we met you yesterday. Letty. Where's your bicycle?"

Letty crimsoned.  
"I—I haven't got one."  
"Oh!" Dolores blinked. Until that moment it hadn't occurred to her that Letty might not be so favourably equipped for travel as herself. "Well, I'll lend you mine," she volunteered nobly.

But Letty, flushing, shook her head.  
"No; let's both walk," she suggested.  
"But we can't, you know," Dolores said. "I promised Mabel ever so faithfully that we'd be there by half-past two. If we walk we can't be there by half-past two, can we? And they'll be dreadfully worried, you know. You go on and tell them."

But again Letty fiercely shook her head. Truth to tell, Letty could not ride a bicycle, though she had often longed for one.

"No, you," she urged. "I can find my way. Please, Dolores!" she pleaded.

Dolores glanced at her doubtfully. She didn't like leaving her new chum. At the same time, it was just so impos-

sible to let down Babs & Co. after promising to be on time that she had to agree.

"See you soon, then, Letty," she said. And off she went. Letty gulped a little as enviously she turned her head back towards the cycle-shed. What a lot of lucky girls they were at Cliff House! And what a really enormous number of those cycles! If only she could ride! If only she had a bicycle like that!

"Hallo!" a voice said behind her. And Letty, turning, flushed as she found herself staring at her chief persecutor in the Second Form—Eunice Hunter.

"Hallo!" Eunice repeated, and actually smiled pleasantly. "Nice day for a cycle ride, isn't it?" she asked cordially. "You know, Letty, I've been thinking."

"Ave you?" Letty asked wonderingly.

"Yes. You and I—we ought to be friends, you know. I told you I was sorry about your exercise-book. I am. Have you got a bicycle?"

"No," Letty confessed.  
"Oh, that's a shame!" Eunice pouted. Really for a girl of her age, Eunice was acting remarkably well. "But you can ride," she said. "Of course you can ride. I can."

Letty gulped. She felt that she was being offered some sort of a challenge. In her secret heart Letty despised Eunice, and a challenge from Eunice was not a thing to be lightly refused. She couldn't ride. She had never been on a bicycle, in fact; but it looked easy, and she was jolly sure that what Eunice could do she could do. In any case, there was no danger of riding now, because she hadn't got a machine to ride on. Bluffing, she said:

"Of course I can ride!"  
"Well, that's jolly!" was Eunice's comment; and she grinned. "In that case, you know, I can lend you a bicycle." She looked up and down and round, and then, wheeling out a rather new machine, she indicated it. "You can borrow this," she offered. "Go on."

Letty hesitated doubtfully. She was sorry all at once for having taken that foolish challenge.

"Well, go on! Get on it!" Eunice said impatiently.

There could be no turning back now. Impossible to go back on her boast. Rather hesitantly, and feeling much less confident in her powers, Letty approached the machine, and, while Eunice held the thing upright, took her seat. The pedals felt rather far away, and the thing wobbled alarmingly. But—

"Ready?" cried Eunice. "Go!"  
And with all her force she gave the bike a shove. Forward it shot, wobbling badly. Desperately Letty clung to the handlebars. The handlebars turned as the machine wobbled on. She felt it heel over. Desperately she tried to right it.

And then—  
Crash! The machine was on its side, and Letty sprawled off; in a moment was upright again. And from Eunice came a shriek of mirth.

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
Letty, crimson, turned.  
"Thought you could ride!" Eunice jeered.

Letty gulped.  
"A fine biker you are, I must say!" Eunice jeered. "He, he, he! 'Oh, of course I can ride! I'm ever so clever!' And look at that bike!" she cried. "Look at that pedal! That's Ida Jackson's bike, you know, and won't Ida be just mad when she sees it!"

Letty's hands clenched. Too late, she

realised the trick that had been played on her.

She looked at the machine. Rather apprehensively she picked it up. The wheels were all right, but the pedal on which the machine had fallen, and which had taken the full force of the fall, was twisted. She gazed at it in dismay.

"Oh crumbs!" she mumbled.  
And then suddenly there fluttered on to the scene a new figure—the bad-tempered Ida Jackson of the Upper Third. Her eyes flamed as she saw her machine.

"My bike!" she gasped. "Who told you to use this?"

"I—I—I—" stuttered Letty, and, remembering the code against sneaking, gulped. "I didn't know it was yours."

"Didn't you?" Ida furiously glared at her. "Well, you jolly well know now! And look what you've done to it! Look at that pedal!"

"I—I'm sorry!"  
"He, he, he!" tittered Eunice.  
"You'll jolly well be more than sorry!" Ida said angrily. "Sorrow isn't enough! That's my bike you've damaged, and you'll jolly well pay for the damage! If you don't"—her eyes glittered—"I'll report you to Miss Primrose!"

Letty gazed at her, her lips quivering. She looked at Eunice, shrieking her head off now, and, with a feeling of sick anger in her heart, she turned away. What a school this was! How awful and mean, these rich girls!

## "Thief!"



FOR a long time after that incident Letty Green could not be cheered.

She was still downcast and rather dismal when she met Babs & Co. and Dolores, thinking now of the damage to Ida's machine and Ida's threat to report her if she did not pay for the damage. But because of that almost fierce decision not to sneak, Letty would not tell the chums what had happened.

During tea, however—a really lovely tea, prepared by Bessie's plump, expert hands—she cheered up again, and after tea, when she and Dolores rehearsed, she had almost forgotten her latest setback.

But she was reminded of it when they returned to school and went off, arm-in-arm, to the Play-room with Dolores; for in the corridor she met Ida Jackson.

"Hi, you!" said Ida roughly. "I want to talk to you! I've taken my bike to the cycle shop, and they say it'll cost a shilling! You did the damage! Give me that shilling!"

"I—I ain't got a shilling!" Letty faltered.

"Well, then, jolly well get one—quickly!" Ida scowled. "I'm going to fetch my bike to-morrow, and if you haven't got the shilling I shall go and tell Miss Primrose!"

"Eh? What's that?" Eunice Hunter asked, coming up.

"She owes me a shilling for the damage she did to my bike!" Ida announced, with a glare. "I've just been telling her, if I don't get it I'm going to tell Primmy about it, that's all!"

"And hasn't she got it?" Eunice asked.

"No."  
Eunice gazed at Letty. Her face was thoughtful. Strangely enough, she asked no more questions then, and neither did she attempt to jeer.



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Instead, rather quickly she turned away.

Casually she strolled to the end of the corridor, but once she had got round the corner she broke into a breathless run, which did not end until she had reached her sister's study in the Sixth Form corridor. Irritably Helen glanced round as she breathlessly burst in.

"Helen!" Eunice cried.  
Helen scowled. She had a letter in her hand, and on the table was a folded ten-shilling note.

"Oh, you," she said. "Have you heard from Uncle Noah?"

"No; but—"  
"Well, I have!" Helen's face was bitter. "This is his letter. And there"—with a glare at the ten-shilling note—"is his remittance. Ten shillings!" she choked. "Ten shillings—when he's never, never failed to send a pound at least. This is because of that awful pauper brat! This is his idea of making us help to bear the expense of keeping her here!" she cried, while Eunice scowled. "At this rate we shall soon find ourselves with no pocket-money at all!"

"Unless," Eunice suggested, "we jolly well get rid of her!"  
"Unless that—yes." Helen nodded moodily. "But how are we to get rid of her? She doesn't show signs of going yet. And Babs & Co.—"

Eunice broke into a snigger.  
"I don't think," she said spitefully, "even Babs & Co. could help her if she was found out to be a thief, could they? And she's already suspected, you know. Remember that I boned Christine's sweets and blamed it on to her? And there's something else," Eunice went on. "Now she's funky because Ida Jackson says that if she doesn't pay for her damaged bicycle she'll report her to the Head. Well," Eunice went on eagerly, "Letty hasn't got the money."

Helen's eyes gleamed suddenly.  
"I see," she said slowly. "Eunice"—an unpleasant smile twisted her lips—"I think we've got something here. Leave it to me!"

"ONE HUNDRED and forty. One forty-two, one forty-three," Barbara Redfern sighed. "Thank goodness I'm nearly finished!"  
"And me," Mabs said ungrammatically.

"And me," Bessie said.  
The three chums in Study No. 4 were busy writing off the accumulation of lines received from Helen Hunter.

They were anxious to get them finished that evening. Mabs, dead keen on her new stunt for the school concert, had asked Dolores and Letty to another rehearsal in the gym. Mabs was enthusiastic about the new turn, and particularly was she joyous about the whistling ability of Letty. What a find that girl was!

But suddenly there came an interruption. A knock sounded on the door, and Dolores, her face pale and frightened, looked in.

"Oh, Barbara!"  
"Hallo, Dolores, come in! What is it?"  
"It—it's Letty again!" Dolores' lips quivered. "They're going for her in the Play-room, you know, and they're calling her a thief!"  
"Oh!" Babs' eyes glimmered. "And what is she supposed to have stolen this time?"  
"Priscilla Pacey's bead bracelet." Dolores shook her head. "But she didn't, you know. I saw Eunice take the bracelet, and she put it in the pocket of Letty's blazer which Letty had thrown on a desk when she came in.

Eunice is just making it up," Dolores asserted, her face red with indignation. "and when I told the other girls what she'd done, Eunice just went for me, too, and bundled me out of the room. Oh dear, I—I wish you could do something!" she unhappily blurted.

Babs nodded. She rose. Significant the look she flashed at Mabs and Bessie.

"Come on!" Babs said.  
"Little cats!" Bessie cried indignantly.

She rose. Mabs rose, too. Rather grim-lipped, they went out of the study, making their way to the Play-room with Dolores apprehensively following in their wake. Sounds of commotion told them, before they opened the door, that a row was in progress, and that presentment was more than justified when Babs burst in.

"She's a thief!" cried Eunice; and there was a mutter from the Second.

"I'm not!" panted Letty.  
"Yes, you are—you shut up!" Eunice violently cried. "She stole Priscilla's bracelet, and I found it in her pocket!"

"After you jolly well put it there, you mean!" Bessie glowered.

"Ooh, listen to her!" shrieked Eunice indignantly. "I didn't put it there, so there, you—you big lard barrel!"

Bessie's face turned red.  
"What dud-did you call me?" she stammered furiously.

"Lard barrel, yah! You are a lard barrel!" Eunice jeered, and glanced round triumphantly at her followers, as much as to say: "You see, I'm not afraid of cheeking a big girl! You keep your silly nose out of it, lard

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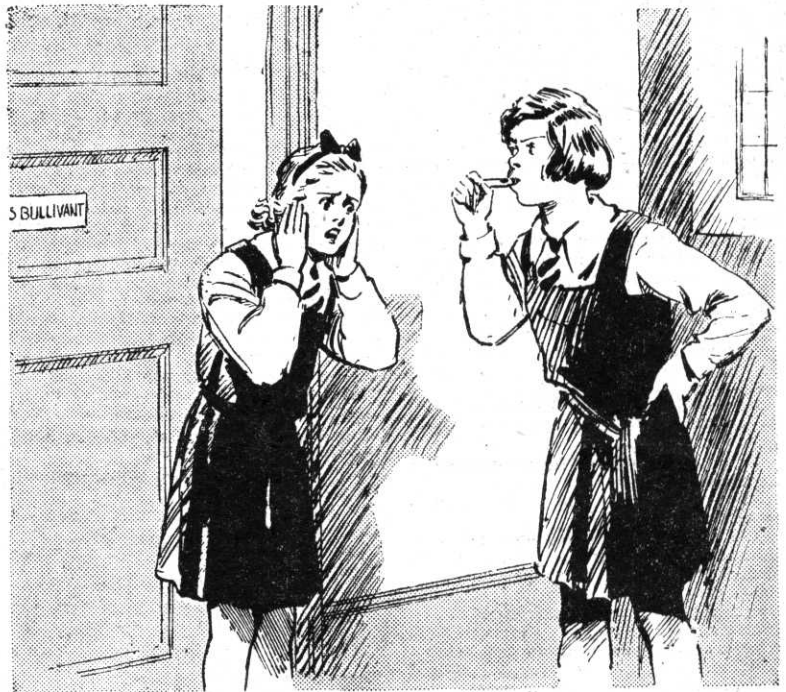
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LOUD and shrill rang out the whistle. This was one of Eunice's most spiteful little schemes, for she knew that Miss Bullivant would come out of her study; she knew that Letty would get the blame.

Letty, white-faced, was in one corner, desperately facing a crowd of angry Second Formers. In the front of them was the podgy form of Eunice, and Eunice was just in the act of forcing a crudely made dunce's cap on Letty's head. The cap bore the word "THIEF."

"Thief—that's what you are!" Eunice jeered. "You ought to be sent to prison!"

"I tell you I didn't take it!" Letty panted, almost sobbing. "I never even sawed it!"

"Fibber!" cried Eunice.  
"I tell you—"

"All right, close the door!" Babs said grimly; and at the sound of her voice Eunice flamed round. "What's all this?"  
Eunice's eyes gleamed.

"Mind your own business, Fourth Form!"

"It is our business!" snapped Babs, snatching the dunce's cap from Letty's head and angrily crumpling it up. "It's any girl's business to prevent a smaller girl being bullied by a crowd! What's Letty supposed to have done?"

barrel!" she cried offensively. "You jolly well go back to Bunter Alley and learn to spell coke! Yah! I—ow, ow, ow!" Eunice broke off with a yell. "You hit me!"

Bessie had. Not usually was Bessie a girl of action. Bessie had a slow temper, not easy to rouse, but the insufferable offensiveness of Eunice had fanned it into quick flame. Almost without thinking, Bessie had lunged out, and though she did not hit Eunice hard, her plump hand caught her a resounding box on the ear.

"Well, jolly well serve you right!" she glowered. "Perhaps that will teach you to treat your elders with respect. Here—I say, don't cry!" she added in consternation, as Eunice, seeing the door opening, suddenly burst into tears. "I—I didn't mean to hurt you!"

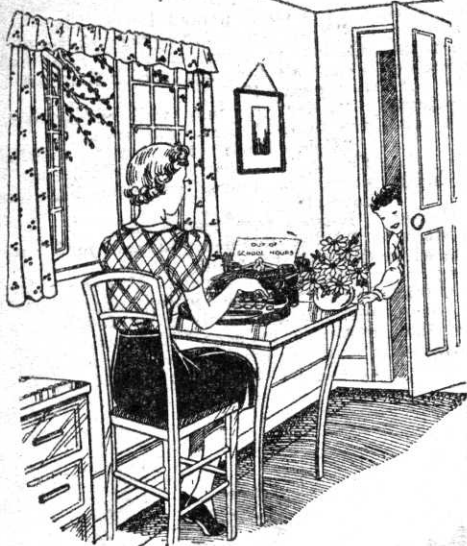
"Boo, hoo-hoo!" howled Eunice.  
"Look here—"

"Hallo!" said a voice. "Oh, hal-lo! What's this? Barbara, Mabel, Bessie! Eunice, what are you blubbing for?"  
There was a silence. The newcomer was Helen Hunter

(Continued on page 14)



# OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS



*PATRICIA is your very own friend, who writes to you each week. She tells you of her own doings; of things to do, things to talk about and things to make—all in that light-hearted and chummy way so typical of her.*

**V**ERY soon now you'll be breaking-up for the Easter holidays. And some of you, I expect will be breaking-up for good.

I always remember my last week at school. (It was at the end of the summer term.) Never in my life had I felt so miserable.

The thought that I'd never be wearing my oh-so-short gym-tunic again depressed me terribly. I hated the idea of leaving my well-worn desk for someone else to work at.

I hated leaving all the mistresses, and I hated being parted from my school friends.

Even the thought of homework, which I certainly hadn't been keen on before, seemed rather glamorous, now that I wouldn't have to do any more.

We weren't expected to do much work that last week at school—which was strange. I spent most of my time persuading people to write something nice and friendly in my autograph album.

I collected tons of addresses and telephone numbers, from all and sundry, and I also bought quite a number of little "leaving presents" for my friends.

Altogether a very strange time. And a little bit frightening, too, if you are going "out to work" for the first time.

But you so soon forget all the unhappiness of parting with friends, you make new ones, and you keep old ones. You can still wear your school blazer for tennis, and for hiking at week-ends, and a small sister will soon wear out your gym-tunic and shoes.

So, best of luck, you who are leaving school—and don't forget to join the "Old Girls' Association," if you want to keep in touch with all the friends you made there.

## ● Where the Money Goes

That, I think, is quite enough serious talks for one week, don't you?

Now, what about Easter? Next week, by the way, I'll give you one or two suggestions for tiny Easter gifts that you can make for the family and your chums. They won't cost more than a few pennies, so mind you save up.

Talking about saving, isn't it positively amazing how the pocket-money vanishes.

There's three ha'pence for a stamp here. Twopence for the Guides. Threepence on bus fares. Sixpence for the pictures; twopence on sweets (or perhaps several twopences!); twopence for the

a few weeks, so that you can see exactly what you do spend. Then, if you want to cut down on something in order to save, you just turn up your book and decide what you can do without.

(Mind you, even if you don't decide to economise, it's still interesting to see just how you spend your money.)

To make this account book, you'll want two pieces of card—postcards will do—for the cover. Cut some sheets of exercise paper to the same size as the covers, and place these between them.

Now you can paste coloured paper over the covers, if you like, or you can leave them plain if you prefer to.

Decorate the front with coins—pennies, sixpences, and so on. (Quite the easiest way of doing this, is to borrow some coins from the family, place a piece of thinish paper over each coin, and then scribble over it. A wonderfully clear drawing will be the result. Then you can cut around this, and stick it on to the cover, so that the coins are life-size!)

Write "Money I Have Spent," or "Pocket-money Record" on the front, in your best lettering.

Punch two holes in the side of the book and thread ribbon or cord through.

In keeping your record, don't forget to write "money received" on each left-hand page, and "money spent" on each right-hand one. You'll soon become quite an expert accountant then.

## ● A Good Idea

One of the habits I have—and it's a bad one!—is always to bite the end of cotton before attempting to thread a needle.

Do you do this? I know I shouldn't, but I find I simply can't thread a needle without.

Whether it's my fault, or whether it's that the eye of the needle is always too small, I don't know.

But now I've learned a new trick—which won't stop my biting the cotton, I'm afraid, but which will make my needles easier to thread.

You hold up the needle and then breathe on it.

This makes the shiny part of the needle

dull, and so makes the "eye" show up more clearly.

It really does work, so you try it next time you're in difficulties with this needle-threading business.

## ● It's Lucky

Does your hair grow to a point in the front, on your forehead?

If so, you're very lucky, for these "peaks" are very much envied by those who haven't one.

All our family have them, including your Patricia. My mother always calls them "cow's licks," for some extraordinary reason. Though I have heard them called "widow's peaks," haven't you?

If you have a "widow's peak" (or "cow's lick") you should comb your hair backwards from it, in order to show it.

For in Hollywood, apparently, it is not at all unusual for film stars to have the front of their hair shaved to make one!

## ● Funny Flowers

Now that tulips are so plentiful and so cheap, I must tell you again—as I told you last year—that these are very exceptional flowers. They don't like being "arranged" in their bowl. They like to arrange themselves.

They don't like having their water changed—as all other flowers do.

And they do like money!

If you pop a farthing or a ha'penny into the water in which they're standing, they'll keep fresh much longer. But don't forget to rescue the cash when you do throw the water away, will you?

## ● In Holiday Mood

Are you going to take your school hat-band off your hat during the Easter holidays? It's quite a good idea to do so, you know, for then you can give it a rest for a fortnight or so, and then clean it up and press it to go back again—or on to your summer "straw," for the new term.

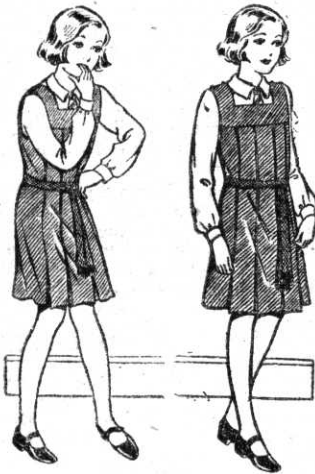


While it's resting, you'll want to wear your hat, of course. If yours is one of those that has a plain black band on already, it would be very easy to make two little slots in the front of this, and to slip a gaily coloured feather through. Most holidayified, it would look.

Another notion is to make two cheery bobbles and stitch these lightly on to the front of your hat.

Good-bye now, my pets, until next week,  
Your friend,  
PATRICIA.





People will judge you by the way you stand. Are you nervous and embarrassed like the girl on the left, or calm and confident like the one on the right?

**D**ON'T you think it's dreadful to be so shy that you're awkward and nervy in other people's presence? This is known as self-consciousness, for it generally means that a girl is so conscious of herself that she just doesn't know what to do with her hands, her feet—or anything. Self-consciousness isn't the same as conceit, of course. It just means that the girl can't forget herself.

If only the shy girl could learn to do that, she'd be half way to conquering her nervous mannerisms that make her feel so gawky and awkward.

"Think of others" sounds rather like one of those texts that we were given at Sunday School when we were small, doesn't it?

But, quite seriously, this maxim could very well be the means of curing the too-shy girl.

You see, when you are thinking of others, you are then forgetting yourself. And when you forget yourself you won't stammer, stutter, blush or fidget in embarrassment.

So you shy and nervous ones, remember that first, will you?

Next time a mistress asks a question in class, and then pounces on you, saying: "You tell me," there's no need for you to go red, and stammer and stutter until the answer to the question flies right out through the window.

Immediately you hear the question asked, just concentrate on the answer. Instead of worrying how you'll look as you stand up, think instead of the mistress' jumper, of the writing on the blackboard—of anything except yourself.

You'll be surprised at how clearly your reply will come—without even a blush.

**AN ORDEAL**

But there are other occasions when even the bravest of schoolgirls can feel nervous. Take a visit to the head-mistress, for example.

It can be an ordeal—I know. So here's how to do it.

You walk, with your head up, your shoulders down, and arms swinging gently, along the corridor.

You tap on the door, not too softly, nor yet demandingly.

Then—while waiting for a "come in," you take a deep breath. Then you open the door, enter with a smile, and close it behind you, without turning.

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IMPORTANCE  
OF  
POISE

*All schoolgirls who value their appearance—and who doesn't?—will find this article very helpful.*

There, that sounds so easy, doesn't it. And you'll make a much better impression on the Head than if you crawl around the door furtively, like a small mouse who knows she shouldn't be there.

Of course, you should be there. And your manner and whole way of standing should suggest that. There's no need to look arrogant, or haughty about it—but just try to look as if you've been invited and you're welcome.

If the headmistress does not look up, then you just stand there quietly.

When she does look at you, you should smile and say "Good-morning."

Just smile—that does help your poise, you know. There's no need to grin like a Cheshire cat, nor to shout your greeting.

But after this, you'll feel quite at home, for your headmistress will most certainly smile back, and you won't be feeling nearly so scared.

**LITTLE HABITS**

One of the biggest tragedies about nervousness is that it can so easily make you form funny little habits that aren't at all attractive.

I don't need to tell you that nail-biting is one of these. And I know how desperately you who do bite your nails try to break yourselves of this. Well, overcome your "nerves" and you will succeed.

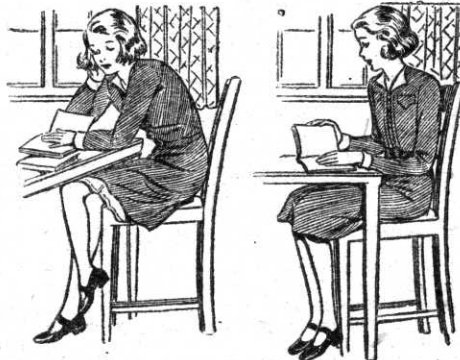
Screwing a hankie round and round into a ball between your hands is another very odd little habit that isn't a bit charming.

One of the best ways of overcoming schoolgirl nerves is, of all things—breathing exercises.

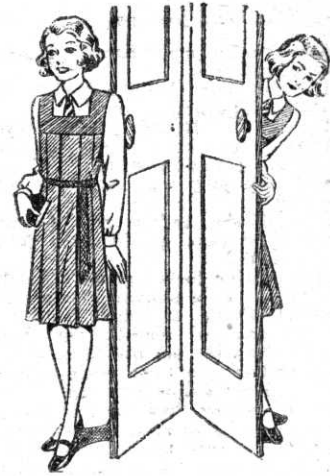
**SIMPLE EXERCISES**

To stand in front of your open window every single morning, and breathe in and out ever so deeply is really wonderful for this. (Incidentally, it improves your voice and your complexion.)

And always when you feel you have a particularly big ordeal in front of you, take a very deep—though silent—breath. You'll be astonished how steady this is, and how calm you'll feel afterwards.



The way you sit can affect not only your appearance, but also your good health. So if the faults of the girl on the left are yours, do try to break yourself of them.



There's a right and a wrong way to enter a room. By looking at the pictures above you can see for yourselves which is the right way, can't you?

At one very famous school of deportment where young and fashionable debutantes go to learn curtsying before they are presented at Court, they do this exercise for hours at a time. They also have to say "mah" in a very deep voice.

And do you know what this does? It keeps the tummy flat!

**SITTING PRETTY**

But it's not only when standing that deportment is important.

The way you sit can make no end of a difference both to your figure and your self-confidence.

You can see how badly the girl on the left in the picture below is sitting. It's exaggerated, of course, but lots of girls do sit very much like that.

To show her petti like that, just for a start, isn't attractive. (Even though some of the new spring dresses have pettis made to show, hers isn't.) By twisting one foot round behind her leg, she'll certainly make her stockings grubby, for another thing.

Resting her elbows on the table like that is going to wear the sleeves of her dress out.

It will also make her elbows red and scrubby-looking. That won't matter just now perhaps, but it will when the summer days come along, with pretty short-sleeved dresses to be worn that show up the elbows. She'll be so sorry then.

But, most important, just look at that back. If she's not very careful, she'll get the most horrid hump-shoulders—and might even spoil her nice straight spine.

Incidentally, believe me or not, it's much more comfy to sit plump on your "sit-upon" as Mrs. Nature intended you should, with your backbone in a line with the back of the chair.

You can concentrate much better that way, you'll find, and homework won't seem nearly such a fag. Also you'll be breathing much more freely, giving your lungs the chance to expand as they should (just look at that girl on the left again—the bad person!) so that you won't get tired so quickly.

Being sensible young schoolgirls, who know the value of a nice "carriage"—to use an old-fashioned word—you will, I am sure, watch out for all these figure faults. But when I tell you that bad posture can spoil your good looks as well—then I'm quite sure you will.

For we're all human enough to like to be pretty, aren't we?



(Continued from page 11)

"She—she hit me!" howled Eunice, pointing at Bessie.

"I didn't hurt her!" cried Bessie. "She's only putting it on!"

"Is she?" Helen's amber eyes glittered. "You know you've no business to hit a smaller girl!"

"Well, she jolly well asked for it!" Babs said.

"And if she hadn't got it from Bessie, she'd have got it from me!" Mabs glowered.

"So!" Helen looked grim. "So the three of you were bullying?" she said. "Right! That's enough! You will each be detained for the next half-holiday. Now get out of this room!"

The chums gazed at each other—helpless. Letty's lips quivered. But Helen, as prefect, had the law on her side—though, to be sure, she was exercising her powers most unreasonably. Primmy, of course, would be bound to uphold Helen's authority.

They went out, followed by a hiss from Eunice which Helen made no attempt to subdue. In Study No. 4 they faced each other angrily.

"It's a plot," said Babs. "The more I think of it, the more I'm sure of it. Helen and Eunice are just working hand in glove against that poor kid. It was Eunice who fastened the sweet-taking on to her—Helen who backed her up. Helen's now backing her up in this new charge."

"But why," asked Mabs, "should they want to make a dead-set against her?"

"Why?" Babs shook her head. "I don't know. But you can't say they've been exactly friendly since she came to the school, can you?" she asked. "There's something more in all this than just mere spite!"

The chums stared at each other. Before any of them could speak again, however, there came a knock on the door, and Dolores, her own face woe-begone, came into the room, her arm wrapped tenderly about the shoulder of a white-faced Letty.

Their hearts touched, the three chums gazed at the little ones.

Letty eyed them awkwardly.

"I—I've come to say—" she stammered. "Oh dear! I—I'm sorry for getting you into trouble."

"Don't worry," Babs said.

"But I do," Letty gulped. "I don't seem to do anything but get you into trouble!" she cried. "An—an' it's not fair. I never ought to 'ave come to this school. I'm not wanted 'ere!"

"Letty, my dear—" Babs cried.

"Well, I'm not! They're all against me, except you and Dolores. Eunice says I oughter run away."

Quick the look which passed between the three chums.

"Meaning," Babs guessed, "that she'd be pleased if you did run away. Well, never mind Eunice. Don't take any notice of her. We don't believe what she says, anyway, and we're your friends, Letty. Mabs, get the chairs," she added quickly. "Let's all sit down now and have a nice little talk together, and forget all the worries of Eunice, and her mean little jeers. We won't worry about the rehearsal to-night. Let's tell fairy tales."

"Oh, yes!" Dolores eagerly cried. "The one about Snow White. You tell it, Barbara. You tell fairy tales ever so nice."

Letty gulped.

"And can we stop 'ere—till bed-time?" she asked.

"Why, of course."

"Oh!" said Letty, and smiled. "Oh, that will be lovely!" she whispered.

"I—I like being 'ere. I don't seem to care some'ow, when I'm with you."

Mabs smiled tenderly, while Babs blushed, and Bessie, a suspicion of a tear in her eye, turned away.

### Bessie Keeps Her Ears Open!



**B**UT little Letty Green, had she only known it, was not destined to remain in Study No. 4 until bed-time.

For events, not to be known until later, were taking rapid shape in the Play-room of the Second Form.

It was Eunice, of course, who set the suggestion afoot—Eunice acting upon the orders of her elder sister.

Using her authority in the Second Form, she sent a round robin to Miss Primrose, accusing Letty of theft. Her sister Helen was sent for, and when she cunningly supported the charges, Letty herself was summoned.

Wondering, apprehensive Letty went to the headmistress' study. The moment she noticed Helen there she knew trouble was in store, even before she saw Miss Primrose's stern face.

"Letty, I am sorry to tell you that it has come to my notice that you have been guilty of stealing things in the Second Form—" Miss Primrose began.

"But I ain't—I ain't!" Letty burst out.

"My dear child—please!" Miss Primrose frowned. "You must not tell stories, Letty."

"But I'm not telling stories!" Letty panted. "I ain't done nothing wrong."

Helen sighed as she looked at the headmistress, shaking her head at the same time. Letty, reading condemnation in the headmistress' face, burst into quivering tears.

"Shush—shush!" Miss Primrose looked a little upset. "Please don't cry," she said. "I am not going to punish you this time. But I do warn you, most seriously Letty, that if anything like this comes to my notice again, I shall have no alternative but to send for Mr. Tunbridge and ask him to take you away. You understand that?"

"Yes; but I 'aven't!" Letty choked.

"Never mind, my dear. You may go. But let this be a lesson to you."

Letty gulped. She went out, leaving Helen behind with Miss Primrose. It wasn't right. It wasn't fair. Helen had put Miss Primrose up to this. And for Miss Primrose to send for Mr. Tunbridge—

Letty shuddered at thought of that. No, no! She'd run away first!

"Hi, you!" said a sudden voice. "Where's that shilling for my pedal?"

Letty spun round with a start. Ida Jackson, scowling, bad-tempered, was before her.

"Oh dear! I—I haven't got it!"

"Then when are you going to get it?" Ida cried.

"I—I don't know."

"Don't know?" Ida's voice became shrill. "Don't know? Then what about me? You broke the pedal—you've got to pay for it! You—"

And Ida broke off there. For the door of Miss Primrose's study opened, and Miss Primrose, with Helen peering over her shoulder, exasperatedly looked out.

"Really, what is all this?" she asked. "Ida, why are you shouting like that? And what is this about Letty breaking something?"

Ida turned red.

"Well, she broke the pedal of my bike. They want a shilling to mend it, and they won't let me have it until I pay the shilling."

"I see." Miss Primrose frowned. "Well, Letty, as you damaged the pedal, it is certainly your duty to pay for the repair. See that you do so as soon as you can."

Letty gulped. Dejectedly she strolled off. After her went Helen—Helen now with a strangely thoughtful look upon her face. At the end of the corridor she paused, frowning as she saw Bessie Bunter rolling towards her. She called sharply:

"Bessie!"

"Eh? Oh, yes!" Bessie blinked. "What is it?"

"Go and tell Eunice I want her in my study."

Bessie grunted. Helen, with the air of a queen who has given her orders, rustled off. Bessie made a grimace at her back and ambled off towards the Play-room. Then suddenly her eyes gleamed as she remembered what Babs had said in Study No. 4. Eunice and Helen were working some plot against little Letty Green. Did this mean that there was some new mischief afoot?

Bessie did not stop to think further than that. From that point Bessie had made up her mind to try to find out what was going to happen at the interview between Helen and her sister. She went to the Play-room, and there, finding Eunice, she told her her sister wanted her. Eunice at once went off, and, at a respectful distance, Bessie followed.

But when Eunice disappeared into Helen's study, Bessie was outside. Very suspiciously was Bessie's ear near the keyhole of Helen's door, though ostensibly Bessie was fiddling with her shoelace. There was a murmur of voices inside the room. Then suddenly came Helen's tones, sharp and clear:

"I tell you, you've got to do it. If anything is said, nunny, you've only got to deny it. You know you will have me to back you up. Even Barbara Redfern can't do anything if you deny it. It's our only chance. Now buzz!"

And Bessie, taking that hint to herself, buzzed at once—very rapidly. In Study No. 4, five minutes later, she was breathlessly relating what she had heard to Babs and Mabs. Mabs frowned, but Babs looked keen.

"I don't usually like you nosing round, old Bess," she said, "but it's a good job you did this time. Mabs, what do you make of it?"

"Something's going to happen," Mabs said, with rather a worried glance.

"Something is. And that something," Babs prophesied, her eyes glimmering, "is going to happen to Letty Green. O.K., kiddies! We'll keep our eyes skinned."

### "I'm Going to Tell the Truth!"



"**H**ALLO, Letty!"

Letty Green wheeled in wonderment.

It was the following morning, just after breakfast, and Letty was climbing the stairs from Big

Hall. In her hand was a letter which had arrived by that morning's post—a letter from Mr. Noah Tunbridge, who had written to tell her that he was calling to see her that day. Rather worried the frown on Letty's brow, for she was thinking with dread of what Miss Primrose might have to say to him



—and still thinking of that unpaid debt to Ida Jackson.

Then she stared now as she saw Eunice—Eunice coming towards her with a positively friendly smile upon her face.

"Hallo!" she said again.  
"Allo!" Letty said, and blinked.  
"What's the matter?" she asked.

"Matter? Oh, nothing," Eunice shrugged. "Well, there is," she said. "There—there's something I want to say. I suppose you know Uncle Noah—Mr. Tunbridge—is coming to-day? He wrote to Helen this morning and told her so, and—and he said he hoped we were all good friends, you know. Well, I'm sorry," Eunice said frankly. "I know I've been a bit of a cat, but—but—well, we don't want Uncle Noah to come and find us not good friends, do we?"

Letty paused.

to feel that the friction between her and Eunice was at an end.

"Oh, Eunice, it—it's topping of you!" she faltered.

"Oh, stuff!" Eunice said. "Here you are—take them. But don't forget—no sneaking if you're asked where you got them from," she added warningly. "I should go and pay Ida now, if I were you."

Letty gulped. In a moment all the dislike she had ever felt for this pasty-faced girl fell away from her. Almost trembling with joyful eagerness, she snatched the money, and hardly able to stammer out her thanks, hurried off with it to the Third Form Common-room. The first person she saw was Ida.

"Ida, 'ere," she said.  
"Whoops! My hat!" Ida cried in astonishment, as the twelve new pennies were poured into her hand. "Where did you get this?"

And then, at last, Letty understood, and understanding, her heart felt like a stone. Eunice had fastened this on her. Eunice had broken open that box, and pretending to be her friend, had lent her that stolen money. The sheer horror of the knowledge caused her face to whiten.

"I—I don't know nothing about it!" she stammered.

Miss Primrose did not look convinced. "Letty, a few moments ago you gave Ida Jackson twelve new pennies. Where did you get them?"

"Why, I got—" Letty began, and then, remembering the sacred ban of sneaking, halted. "Nowhere," she said.

Miss Primrose's face hardened. "Letty, I am sorry. I can't believe you. I warned you, my dear, what would happen next time you were caught pilfering. This is enough. Letty, you will go to my study. There



"I DIDN'T take the money. It was my sister Eunice!" The bully of the Second Form started in horror as she heard that voice. It seemed that her big sister was confessing to the Head. She didn't know that plump Bessie Bunter was behind the screen, that the chums were using Bessie's ventriloquial skill in an effort to save Letty Green.

"No. Of—of course not," she said. "But I'm willing to be friends, if you are."

"Then that's all right," Eunice said. "I want to be friends—so does Helen. And we've got an idea, you know, of how to be real friends. I suppose you haven't paid Ida yet?"

Letty's face clouded.

"No."

"Well, then, let me lend you the money," Eunice suggested eagerly. "Look"—and triumphantly she dived her hand into her pocket, and with a glance round produced a handful of new pennies. "You can have those—all of them," she said generously, and Letty caught her breath. "But only one thing," Eunice added warningly.

"Y—yes?" Letty said, her eyes on the coins.

"You haven't got to tell anyone I've lent them to you, you know. If you did, I should get into trouble, because Miss Primrose doesn't like girls borrowing money. Promise?"

Letty gulped. She could not take her eyes off those new pennies. They would take her biggest worry off her mind. And she was relieved—immeasurably—

"Never mind. There it is," Letty said, trembling in her relief. "Count it," she added anxiously.

Ida counted.  
"All right," she said. "Thanks. But—"

But Letty did not wait to be questioned. With the sensation of a great load being lifted from her shoulders, she broke away. But as soon as she arrived in the Play-room—

Consternation then! Miss Gilbey was there. So was Miss Primrose. Eunice was there, no longer looking friendly, but looking decidedly spiteful. In Miss Primrose's hand was a money-box, its lid broken open. It was the box to which the Form contributed from time to time towards the various charities which Cliff House helped to support.

Miss Primrose's eyes immediately fell upon Letty.

"Letty, I want to know!" she exclaimed grimly. "Did you break open this money-box and extract twelve pennies this morning?"

Letty's eyes went round. She looked towards Eunice. But Eunice made a threatening grimace. That grimace said, as plainly as any words: "You dare sneak!"

you will remain until your guardian comes. And when he comes—"

"Miss Primrose—" sobbed Dolores.

"When he comes, I shall ask him to take you away," Miss Primrose said.

"Miss Gilbey, will you take her to my study, please?"

And Letty, looking almost as if she were going to faint, was grasped by the mistress.

"SO THAT'S it, eh?" Babs' eyes smouldered as she looked at the tearful Dolores, who, bursting into Study No. 4, had just broken the startling news. "That's the plot, is it—and a jolly clever one too! Helen's put Eunice up to this, of course. Eunice is banking on Letty not sneaking. If Letty had sneaked they'd have denied everything—just as Bessie heard them planning to do yesterday."

It was a quarter of an hour later.

"And now," Mabs said worriedly, "her guardian's coming. Letty will be taken away. Babs, we can't let her go; she shan't be taken away!"

"But how," Babs questioned, "are we going to prove it?"

How? That certainly was the question.



"Oh, Barbara, please—please do something!" Dolores quavered. "Please, Barbara, you can save her, and, oh"—glancing through the window—"Barbara, here—here is Mr. Tunbridge!"

Babs set her teeth. In the quadrangle a tall, middle-aged man of military bearing was in the act of stepping from a car. She watched him. She saw a figure run out to meet him and shake him by the hand. The figure was that of Helen Hunter.

There was a conversation. Babs saw the man start; saw Helen pointing towards Miss Primrose's study window. The man frowned, looking at her anxiously. He shook his head. Then he and Helen hurried into the school.

"The trap's set," Babs said. "Helen's leading him off to the slaughter of the lamb. But what can we do? What—My hat!" she cried, in sudden excitement. "I've got it!"

"Got what?"

"The idea. Bluff Eunice. Bluff her into giving away Helen."

"Bluff! But how?"

"By Bessie!"

"Eh?" Bessie asked.

"Bessie—her ventriloquism!" Babs spoke rapidly. "Bessie, listen!" she said eagerly. "You know the waiting-room next to Primmy's study?"

"Well, of kikk-course!"

"If you were in there could you imitate Miss Primrose's and Helen's voices, making it sound as if they were coming from the study itself?"

"Oh, yes!" Bessie said.

"Right! Then here's the idea! Go up there—now. Hide behind the screen. I'll go and find Eunice. When I bring her in, you start the conversation between Helen and Miss Primrose. Helen's got to break down to Miss Primrose. Helen's got to blame everything on to Eunice. You see—"

"Oh!" Bessie said, and her eyes lighted up. "I say, I was just going to suggest that myself, you know!"

"Well, buzz!" Babs said tersely.

Bessie buzzed at once. Babs, with a nod to Mabs and Dolores, went out after her. She went to the Play-room. "Eunice," she said, "Miss Primrose wants you. We're to wait in the waiting-room until she's ready."

Eunice licked her lips. She felt nervous. But Helen would see her through, she told herself, and once she got into Primmy's study, Helen would be there. With a grin, she followed Babs.

Babs led the way in silence. Would the bluff succeed? Supposing, after all, they were all wrong?

It was too late to worry about that, however. The thing was to trick the truth from Eunice. Into the waiting-room next to headmistress' study she led the way, Eunice nervously following. One swift glance Babs cast towards the screen in the corner, but if Bessie was there, she gave no sign. From the next room there came a murmur of voices, punctuated by a sob in a child's voice.

And then—

"But I tell you it wasn't my fault!" Helen's voice was startlingly plain. "I didn't take the money. It was my sister Eunice!"

Eunice's eyes became suddenly as big as saucers.

Then Miss Primrose's voice sounded. "Helen, do you realise this is a confession?"

"I don't care!" Helen's voice said. "I'm not going to be blamed for what my little cat of a sister has done! She hated Letty, while I've been trying to protect her. It was Eunice who stole Chrissie Wadhurst's sweets. It

was Eunice who stole Priscilla Pacey's bracelet, and thought of this scheme, and carried it out. I don't see why I should be blamed for what she's done!"

Eunice flushed crimson. If she had been trembling before, she was quivering now. But she was quivering with indignation, with rage, with a passionate sense of the wrong being done to her. She looked at Babs grimly now.

"It's a fib!" she shrilled. "I didn't—I—I'm going to tell the truth! She thought of it all. She did it. She broke open the money-box and gave me the pennies!"

"Then," Babs said, "go and tell Miss Primrose. Go now!"

Eunice glared. She looked at the door, and then, her face flaming, she darted at it.

Quivering she hurled it open and burst into the study next door. Miss Primrose turned in amazement.

"Eunice—"

"It's not true!" Eunice cried. "I won't be blamed for what Helen did! Helen hated Letty because Letty was in her way and was getting her pocket-money stopped! It was Helen who thought of all those things!"

"Eunice," Miss Primrose cried, "what are you talking about?"

"Well, I heard what she said about me, and I'm sticking up for myself!" Eunice cried. "It was Helen's idea from the start. I did steal the sweets and the bracelet, because she told me to, but I didn't steal the pennies, because she did that herself and handed them to me to give to Letty. She wanted Letty kicked out of the school in disgrace!"

"Eunice!" shrieked Helen. "Eunice, you awful sneak!"

"Well, you've sneaked against me!" Eunice cried. "It was your idea from the start to finish. I only did what you told me to! I—"

And then she stopped as she found Letty's eyes upon her, as she saw Miss Primrose, a grim light of understanding in her frown, as she saw the shocked face of her guardian.

"You—you told them—"

"I told nothing, you little fool!" Helen raved. "Nothing! Have you gone mad?"

Barbara Redfern in Disgrace—Believed to be Slack and Incompetent as Captain of the Fourth Form!

Jemima Carstairs, Babs' monocled chum, Behaving in a Most Amazing Way, Raising Strange Doubts in Babs' Mind.

Fat, Dufferish Bessie Bunter on the Track of a Gang of a Desperate Crooks—who only Exist in her Imagination!

AND ALL THROUGH THE ACTIVITIES OF SOMEONE WHO SEEMS DETERMINED TO BLACKEN BARBARA'S GOOD NAME!

Don't miss this superb Long Complete Hilda Richards story, featuring all your Cliff House favourites. It will appear in next week's issue—on sale, you know, two days earlier than usual; that is, Thursday, the 6th, instead of Saturday. Order your copy now.

"Perhaps," Miss Primrose suggested, "it is a case of a guilty conscience, Helen." Her face was grim and severe in its outlines. "So this has been a plot?" she said.

"It—it—" mumbled Helen, white to the lips now. "I—I never—"

"Thank you. I don't think you need try to deny it." Miss Primrose's tones were scornful. "I think I see now. A case of dishonour among thieves, eh? Though I must say," she went on scathingly, "I think you two are worse than thieves! Mr. Tunbridge, I am sorry. But I am glad that Eunice, at least, had the courage to own up before I committed a grave injustice. Helen, you are suspended!"

"And," Mr. Tunbridge said, eyeing her contemptuously, "as far as I am concerned, you are both disowned! I never, never thought it of you, and I am heartily ashamed of you! Letty, my dear"—and he took her hand gently—"look at me! I am going to tell you something!"

"Y-yes," stammered Letty.

"In future, my child, instead of my ward, you will be my adopted daughter. As for you two—please go away. I hope never to see you again."

And Helen and Eunice, with a sick, furious look at Letty, went, passing Babs and Bessie in the corridor. Bessie grinned.

"How was it?"

"Fine—oh, fine!" breathed Babs. "Bessie, I'll stand you a plateful of jam tarts for this. Now let's go down to the tuckshop and get ready to give Letty the warmest, the most glorious reception she's ever had. All's well that ends well."

And all was. But all was far from well for the dejected Hunter sisters.

For many, many days, each believing the other the betrayer, they did not speak, while Letty, their once despised victim, was the heroine of the school, and, with Dolores and her big friends, Babs, Mabs, and Bessie, certainly the happiest girl in the school. The clouds which had marred her beginning had, thanks to the Co.—particularly to Bessie—rolled away, and a serene future as the adopted daughter of Noah Tunbridge seemed assured for her.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.



The CAPTAIN'S UNKNOWN ENEMY!

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. After various adventures, they discover that a mystery woman wearing an emerald ring, whom they call MADAME X, is scheming against them. They join a dancing troupe who are short of members. Yin Su's Chinese dance will save the show, but a note is delivered warning her not to appear. May believes the mystery woman sent it.

(Now read on.)

## How Could Yin Su Dance Now!

MAY ran down the corridor to find the callboy who had delivered the mysterious Chinese message to Yin Su. She was convinced that Madame X, if she had not delivered it, had inspired it, and by quick action there was yet a chance that the person who had delivered it might be seen.

Reaching the doorman's small office, May rushed past him and pushed wide the doors.

But the stage door gave into a yard, and there was no parking accommodation for cars there; so, turning back, she confronted the doorman.

"Who delivered the Chinese message, please?" she exclaimed.

He looked up over his glasses, and stroked his white moustache.

"A Chinese lady."

"Chinese?" echoed May, taken aback.

"Oh! How was she dressed?"

"She had no hat, but a long brown coat. And I could see the trailing hem of a long yellow frock underneath."

"A message," she said to me, 'to Yin Su,' she said 'one of the dancing girls.'"

"And that was all?" asked May, disappointed.

"That was all, miss. Anything wrong?" he added keenly. "Something happened?"

May shook her head worriedly. Nothing had happened, except that if Yin Su were told that that message was from a Chinese woman she would take it seriously, and refuse to dance.

And if Yin Su did not dance, then

the Novelty Nine's act would be ruined.

May turned, and, not guessing that Yin Su had followed hard upon her heels, almost bumped into the little Chinese girl.

"You heard?" asked May anxiously.

Yin Su nodded.

"Unfortunate; most sad; nothing Yin Su can do," she murmured softly.

"Oh! You—you can't dance now?" asked May.

Yin Su shook her head, and gave a little shiver.

"Illustrious ancestors moan in sorrow. Illustrious ancestors brought to shame by wicked Yin Su! Oh, unhappy Yin Su!"

## A MASK, A TAXI-RIDE, AND A PHONE CALL TO A CHINESE LAUNDRY

### That was May's plan to save the Dancing Troupe

Daphne came hurrying down the corridor, wondering what it was all about, and May told her.

"The message that Yin Su was given," she said, "warned her that she must not dance in public."

Daphne gaped in astonishment.

"Why ever not? What is it to do with anyone else, for goodness' sake? Who forbids it?"

"Her ancestors," said May.

Yin Su cast down her eyes.

"Most wise English girls understand all things. Simple Yin Su, most ignorant and stupid, must show great respect to noble and illustrious ancestors of high birth. Wicked Yin Su to dance before people without mask to cover face."

May and Daphne exchanged looks, dismayed and perplexed. They could not doubt that Yin Su was deeply sincere or that the message had alarmed

her. But in their hearts they could not believe that her dancing could disturb her ancestors.

If there were peril, if there were any threat to her personally if she danced, then they could understand her dismay.

But they were sympathetic. Yin Su's sincerity earned their respect, and neither of them felt inclined to say anything to persuade her to change her mind. And yet—

From the doorway of the dressing-room Miss Anderson looked out.

"Ah, there you are!" she exclaimed. "I hope it was not bad news, Yin Su? I don't want you to be distressed before your wonderful dance."

Yin Su clasped her hands and looked wretchedly miserable.

"It is bad news, Miss Anderson," murmured May.

And then, knowing that the news had to be broken, she explained just what the message was that had so changed Yin Su.

Miss Anderson paled. Her thoughts went at once to the stage manager, his praise of Yin Su's dancing, and his eagerness to see her at the matinee.

"Oh dear!" was all she said, but there was a wealth of deep emotion in the words.

For Miss Anderson now the day was ruined, and when the news was taken to the rest of the troupe their laughter would fade.

Without Yin Su to do her speciality dance they were only six—a small number—and the stage manager would miss that Chinese dance. His heart being set on it, he would take no further interest in their act.

Miss Anderson looked suddenly much older, and very grave.

"I—I am sorry!" she said. "I—I suppose it wouldn't be possible—"

May turned to Yin Su.

"Masked? Could you dance masked?" she asked.

Yin Su hesitated, and it was clear to May that she was fighting a battle with herself. She wanted to please, but her conscience was loaded by the thought of her wrongdoing.

BY

ELIZABETH CHESTER



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

## BETWEEN OURSELVES



**MY DEAR READERS.**—It isn't only your Editor who receives interesting letters from you—or perhaps I should say exceptionally interesting, for all your letters are interesting in one way or another. Hilda Richards does, too.

A short time ago our popular author received a letter from one of our Australian readers. The writer had recently been appointed captain of her Form, and her jubilation and pride were slightly tempered, it seemed, by the difficulties she had to face.

There were new responsibilities for her, a sense of duty, of course, and no end of pitfalls. It was so easy for her to be accused of favouritism, so easy for girls to take umbrage when they were left out of Form activities simply because, in the new captain's honest opinion, there were others more capable or deserving.

Miss Richards' correspondent was just a tiny bit worried, we could see. She wanted advice. Well, she could not have gone to a better person for advice, could she? Hilda Richards sent her such a chatty, understanding letter that I'm sure our Australian friend will soon be able to smooth matters out for herself, so that she'll be able to enjoy to the full the fruits of her honour.

And as for Miss Richards herself, well, she profited, too, by the problem, for it gave her an idea for one of her Cliff House stories. Next

Saturday's story, in fact, which is entitled:

### "THE CAPTAIN'S UNKNOWN ENEMY!"

The captain, in this case, is Barbara Redfern of the Fourth, and the story deals chiefly with the duties which Babs has to fulfil, the difficulties she has to overcome, and the trouble that comes to her when she appears to shirk her responsibilities.

I'm sure I need not add that it is certainly not Babs' fault. It is, in fact, through the activities of a secret enemy that she is repeatedly censured. Who is the person striking against her?

But that is not Babs' only source of wonderment and dismay, for dear old Jemima Carstairs, the monocled Fourth Former, decides to behave in that weird and wonderful way of hers which can completely baffle even her closest chums—and in this case leaves Babs filled with all sorts of disturbing doubts.

There are, you see, three strong themes to this story—Babs' work as captain of the Fourth; an unknown enemy hitting against her; Jemima, acting as only "Jimmy" can—oh, and I'd nearly forgotten! There's another theme, too; some really delightful light relief supplied by dear, dufferish Bessie Bunter, on the track of imaginary crooks, whom she is sure are lurking in the school!

Don't miss this superb story, but order your SCHOOLGIRL now. If you do, you'll also make certain of our other splendid features; another fascinating COMPLETE story of the Young Lady Fayre and gallant Robin Hood; further exciting chapters of "On Tour With Yin Su," and more of Patricia's Bright and Chummy Pages.

And now, bye-bye, all of you, until next week.

With best wishes,

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

"Perhaps possible," she said uneasily. May looked at Miss Anderson. "There's a chance it may be just a trick, this message," she said. "Don't give up hope yet."

Yin Su took May's arm as the dancing mistress turned away.

"Not cross? Not think bad of Yin Su?" she asked, with a flutter of lashes, as she gave a tearful smile. "Yin Su try. Yin Su—"

She swallowed hard.

"Dear, I'm not cross," said May gently. "Of course I'm not. I understand. Only there is just a chance that this is a trick to ruin things for us. It may be Madame X, the woman with the emerald ring."

"Madame X?" murmured Daphne. "Good gracious! Yes, of course! Perhaps she came disguised as a Chinese woman. But how did she know we were here?"

"How did anyone know?" asked May, shrugging. "Except that when her car drove past the charabanc, perhaps she did see us, after all."

And then May, struck by another idea, snapped her fingers.

"Wait!" she said. "Hang on! I've thought of something!"

And, leaving them guessing, she turned and ran to the dressing-room.

Following her, a moment or two later, they found her changing.

She gave no clue to what she had in mind, but, quickly dressing, hurried out.

Yin Su looked across sadly at Daphne. There was silence in the dressing-room; the others were looking at her queerly, and some of the looks were not as warm and amiable as before.

Wretchedly Yin Su clasped her hands. If she could have done so she would have defied her ancestors. Yet, thinking of them, could she dance with gaiety, spirit, with anything but restraint? And a poor dance it would be then.

Daphne, gentle, consoling, touched Yin Su's arm.

"Leave it to May," she urged.

### A Home-made Proverb Does It!

**M**AY had gone through the theatre to the box-office, and, in a state of excitement, she was asking questions. People drifted in during the day to book tickets, so that the clerk on duty had seen a number of women.

"I couldn't remember one clearly unless you described her face," he said,

shaking his head. "That's almost all I see of them, you know."

But as May could not describe Madame X's face, she could not help in that. And then, as she turned away, she almost laughed.

"You see their hands, too, when they pay money?" she remarked. "And this woman had an emerald ring."

The clerk started.

"An emerald ring? Yes, there was one lady had one—quite noticeable it was, too. I saw it as she opened her handbag, and thought it looked a spanker."

May's eyes shone with triumph.

"Did she go through to the front at all? Did she see what was happening on the stage?" she asked.

He shook his head.

"It isn't allowed," he said.

"People do things they aren't allowed to," May pointed out. "And she might have gone down the corridor to the stalls, mightn't she?"

The clerk had to admit that for anyone with nerve and curiosity it was dead easy, as he was not there for the purpose of spying on people who entered the theatre.

May moved away, satisfied now that her solution was the right one. Madame X had recognised them in the car, and a moment or two after they had all entered the theatre, she had come to book tickets for the performance.

Then, while the clerk's attention was distracted, perhaps by a friend of hers asking a question at the desk that necessitated the man turning from the small hatch, she had slipped down the corridor to the stalls, and witnessed the rehearsal.

After that?

"After that," May told herself, "she wrote the message in Chinese—or got someone who knows Chinese writing to do it for her—and had it sent to Yin Su."

But May, thinking deeply as she wandered back to the dressing-room, still felt baffled. She just could not imagine why Yin Su's acting on the stage mattered to Madame X. What she would lose by it, why she wanted to prevent it.

But supposing she had a motive, then she had acted with sound knowledge of Yin Su's character?

May stood still in a corridor, pondering. Where the woman with the emerald ring had succeeded, May herself must not fail. She, too, knew Yin Su's character, and she must be as artful as Madame X.

Slowly she returned to the dressing-room, but before she reached it Vere Dillon came out, looking very anxious. "Can I have a word with you?" she asked.

"Of course," said May, guessing what was coming.

Vere looked grave.

"It may seem cheek, and that," she said, "but you don't know how much this show means to us girls. Of course, Yin Su's nothing to do with us, and we can't matter to her possibly. We only met you by luck in the first place. All the same—I—well you—"

May saw, and smiled.

"You want Yin Su to dance?"

"Do we not?" said Vere eagerly. "Oh, my golly, she'd make the show! She would, really. Just that Chinese dance—it would stand out, jump out, hit them in the eye, and we'd go over bang! One of us could learn that dance to carry on with, too, for the rest of the booking."

Her voice was thrilled and excited, and May knew that she was not speaking for herself alone, but for the whole

Novelty Nine, including those luckless ones who were ill, dreading that they had lost their jobs, and lost the booking for their friends.

"Vere," said May, "I'll fix it. Whether I'm doing right or wrong, I hardly know, but I think right, anyway. Just do one thing, and I think I can say she will dance."

"Anything. What is it?"  
"Find a Chinese in this town—quickly," said May. "Or help me to."

Vere became alive and alert at once. "Chinese? Laundry!" she said promptly. "They drive down here from the ports. A Chinese girl delivered laundry once to my digs here. My word—yes! I'll find a Chinese for you. Golly, won't I! You want her as a double?" she hazarded.

"Oh, no; a man will do—"  
Vere rushed to the porter's office and snatched up the trades telephone directory, rushing through it to the letter L. Then, snatching the phone, she got busy. One, two, three calls, and she winked at May.

"Wun Fu?" she asked, into the mouthpiece. "Just the man! A small job of work for him in what's left of his dinner-hour. Put him in a taxi and send him to the Theatre Royal. We'll pay the fare, if it isn't more than two-and-six—about two bob. Jam!"

She swung round to May and laughed.

"Done! All settled! Wun Fu velly muchee Chinese gentlemen at your service."

"Then we meet him outside," said May. "Next thing—paper and ink."

Two minutes later May and Vere, waiting on the pavement, saw a taxi drive up, and, with glad hand-waves they welcomed the polite Chinaman who stepped from it.

"Wun Fu," he said, in high-pitched, sing-song voice, "velly please do any ting. Plenty nice actor; most musical voice. Play bad man. Was tree times dead body in triller play. Not move once."

May paid off the taxi, and smiled.

"We don't want anything like that, thank you," she said. "All we want is a polite letter, written in Chinese characters, of the most highly cultured kind."

Wun Fu bowed, and Vere, indicating a small cafe near the theatre, led the way there.

Seated at a table, given coffee and biscuits, Wun Fu took fountain-pen and paper, and prepared to write, while May dictated.

"Oh, miserable and tortured ancestors!" May began. "Er—woe that deep shame should be brought upon them. Loyalty uplifts even the mean man, bent-backed in sordid toil. Let loyalty be your guide—loyalty to your friends. Hide shame by a mask, and then will moaning ancestors be stirred by pride."

And then, with a flowery salutation, the letter was rounded off.

Wun Fu wrote carefully, taking pleasure in his work, and the characters had a most pleasing, artistic appearance.

"Well done!" said May, delighted. He was given more coffee, and paid his fee; but he was in no great hurry to go, and stayed to tell them in his sing-song voice the difference between good writing and bad.

It remained then only for Wun Fu to deliver the note to the doorman. May and Vere watched him perform that last duty with grace, and then walked in themselves.

"Another Chinese note," frowned the

doorman. "You have to read Chinese upside down, but even then it don't make sense. Hey, boy!" he called.

May and Vere went ahead of the note. In the dressing-room Yin Su looked the picture of misery and shame, quite woebegone and crest-fallen, conscious that she had lost her popularity.

"Don't take it to heart, dear," said May encouragingly. "After all, that letter was just what one Chinese thought. I dare say another might give a different opinion. After all—"

The call-boy rapped, and Miss Anderson, opening the door, took the note from him. She studied it, and then gave it to Yin Su.

"Gracious—another note!" said Daphne anxiously. "Another ticking off, Yin Su?"

Yin Su unfolded it, and read. As she did so a touch of colour came to her cheeks and May saw a sparkle in her eyes.

"Wisdom has come to me," said Yin Su breathlessly. "For wisely it is said that two minds are greater than one, and second thoughts more matured than first. I will dance!"

Miss Anderson gaped, and then almost flung herself at the Chinese girl, while the delighted troupe cheered spontaneously.

"Oh, you darling!" said the dancing mistress.

"Masked?" asked May.

"Yes, masked," nodded Yin Su.

"Loyalty uplifts even the mean man, bent-backed in toil."

May, recognising her own Chinese proverb, made in England, chortled but held her peace; for Yin Su was now satisfied, her conscience clear.

A mask was needed, but Miss Anderson could be trusted to see to that; there was a well-stocked property-room at the theatre, and a shop just round the corner.

"Oh, May, it's really happening?" breathed Daphne, in thrilled but quaking tone. "We're really on the stage! If mother knew—if my Aunt Geraldine did—"

She shuddered.

"Who cares?" asked May. "If the woman with the emerald ring knew—"

But May's words ended in a secret smile, for she had an idea that the

Madam X, who so mysteriously haunted them, would know. She would be in the audience when the curtain rose.

"So what?" May asked herself.

"Lunch," said Miss Anderson. "And you girls are our guests. There's a nice little restaurant nearby, but we must hurry."

May turned to Daphne, pulling her to one side.

"Daph, take charge of Yin Su. I'm going to dash to the post office to get that letter of instructions, and—I jolly well hope—money!"

For from time to time they were due to receive letters from Yin Su's absent governess, giving money and instructions.

May, almost dancing with glee at her triumph, hurried from the theatre, and, forgetting the expense, saved time by hailing a taxi.

### When Two Wrongs Were One Right!

MAY gave her name at the Poste Restante counter of the post office, and, showing some other letters in her handbag and the name tag inside her hat, was accepted as the May Joliphant to whom the blue-enveloped letter was addressed.

There was something familiar about the envelope's shape, colour, and texture of paper, but she did not pause to weigh it up. It was addressed to her, and she opened it.

A crackling five-pound note was inside, and she smiled as she took it out. Then, having put the note safely in her handbag, May unfolded the letter.

"Dear May," the letter ran, in small, neat writing, "Miss Vesey, your governess, is dictating this to me, being too ill to write herself. I am her nurse, Millicent Fowler. As you should receive this not long after breakfast, if you have followed instructions—"

May smiled. Following instructions when a governess was far away was not important!

"—You will have no difficulty in obeying the next instruction," she



"NOW then—please write this," May ordered, and while the Chinaman laboriously copied in his native alphabet, and Vere looked on in astonishment, May dictated a really amazing letter for Yin Su to receive.



read on. "Go to the railway station and meet a Miss Simpson, who will be waiting there for you. She will be dressed in a light fawn camel-haired coat, brown hat, stockings and shoes. The train arrives at three minutes past two. Be sure to be there on time. Miss Simpson is very strict, and if you are late you will regret it. Take orders from her as you would from me, for she is taking my place."

There was more, but May did not read on. It was enough.

At three minutes past two they had to be at the station! And if they were, if they placed themselves in Miss Simpson's charge—

"Oh, golly! The theatre's off—the dance is off!" May told herself in horrified dismay.

It was not imaginable that any governess, even one not strict, would agree to their acting on the stage.

May crumpled the note, and, heavy of heart, walked out to hail another taxi. She could have kicked herself for collecting that message, for now she could not pretend that she did not know.

In groaning despair she paid off the taxi outside the little restaurant near the theatre, and, undecided what to say, she hesitated.

But something had to be decided. Either they must obey—and desert the Novelty Nine in their hour of need—or else ignore the message, show open defiance.

It was a hard decision to make alone, yet she hesitated to give Daphne the burden. And Yin Su had suffered enough indecision about her dance. Now her mind was made up, and to make her change it would be unfair.

"Oh, bother—bother!" sighed May. "What am I to do?"

Daphne, looking from a window of the cafe, had seen her now, and came running out.

"May, did you get it? Any money?"

"Five pounds!" said May.

"Oh, how splendid!" exclaimed Daphne. "And what else? What have we to do?"

"Oh, just—just carry out some instructions," said May. "I say! I'm hungry—"

But Daphne had noticed her worried manner.

"May, what is it?" she asked anxiously.

"It?"

"Yes; there is something in the letter you don't like, or else—have you seen Madame X again?"

"No, not a sign of her," said May.

"Then what is it?"

But May opened the door of the restaurant, walked in, and waved a return greeting to her warm welcome. She might have been a lifelong friend of the Novelties, so warmly was she cheered.

"Here's your place," said Vere. "Next to me. Get down, Binks!" she added to her dog. "We've ordered you steak-and-kidney pud. Steak-and-kidney pud," she chanted, "is nearly always good, unless the pie-crust's wood, and then it isn't food!"

"All, well?" Miss Anderson asked May. "Did you get your letter?"

"Just," said May, trying to shake off gloom. "How far away is the station from here?"

"Station? There are two—Central and West," said the dancing mistress.

"Oh! Well, which one does the two-three arrive at?" May asked, surprised.

Miss Anderson opened her handbag and found a time-table. Flicking the pages, she announced:

"At the West."

May heaved a sigh of relief, and her eyes glimmered.

"Tra-la-la! What fun we're going to have!" she murmured.

For May had seen the simple way out; and for the rest of the meal she was as merry as the others, so that Daphne thought that she had judged wrongly in thinking that something was amiss.

Someone told Yin Su that the pie-crust was wood, and the Chinese girl politely put it to one side. Birds' nests, yes—wood, no.

"Only oak," said Vere playfully. "Nelson ate nothing but oak, you know. Besides, it's a sort of label of goodness. You must have heard it at the flicks? Oke?"

"Very nice, but Chinese girls not good strong eaters," said Yin Su apologetically.

"Try just a splinter. I'll saw you off a bit," said playful Vere. "Or you could have it french-polished to keep as a souvenir."

Peals of laughter came as Yin Su, with rounded eyes, watched May eat quite a large piece of pie-crust; but

## BRENDA'S MYSTERY TASK IN HOLLYWOOD!

That is the title of one of the enthralling stories you will find in this week's number of our popular companion paper. It is a story that takes you behind the scenes of the world's most famous Film City. Don't miss it. The name of the paper is—

## GIRLS' CRYSTAL

Six Fine Stories In Each Issue

2<sup>nd</sup>. Every Friday.

Daphne's kind heart melted, and she explained how pastry was made.

"With a rolling-pin," she said.

"With a pin?" asked Yin Su in surprise.

"Well, it's called that, but it isn't," said Daphne. "It's just wood."

"Oak?" hazarded Yin Su.

"Don't take any notice!" laughed May. "It's made of flour!"

"Lilies?" said Yin Su, and realised that she was being teased.

With Oriental calm she took the piece of pie-crust to her mouth, and with desperate determination bit it right through. It tasted good, wood or not, and she ate some more.

They hurried through the meal, but enjoyed it none the less for that. May, although the last to arrive, arose first from the table, and having the five-pound note, insisted that she should be allowed to pay. But Miss Anderson claimed that the bill was already settled.

"May——" said Daphne.

"Just off," said May hurriedly.

"Where to?"

"Central Station."

And, without further explanation, May hurried from the restaurant, running as hard as she could go to get away from Daphne and awkward questions. Boarding a bus, May looked back. Daphne stood on the pavement, arms waving, shouting almost hysterically, so May waved back.

Yin Su joined Daphne at the road and asked what the trouble was, and why May had hurried off; but Daphne, unfortunately, knew little more than she did.

"For some reason or other, she has to meet the two-three train," she said worriedly. "And Miss Anderson distinctly said it would arrive at the West Station. May has gone to the Central."

"Perhaps train go one day to one station another day to other," said Yin Su. "Perhaps also there is other train at later hour."

"Yes," said Daphne worriedly. "Oh dear, I know there's something wrong! But I can't think what. There was something in the letter May got, and she hasn't told us."

Daphne turned back, still deeply concerned about May's going to the wrong station.

"Perhaps I ought to go after her," she suggested.

Miss Anderson asked what the bother was, and then consulted her little timetable again.

"The two-three," she murmured. "Why—how stupid of me! It goes to both stations, arriving at two-three at the Central and two-seven at the West."

Daphne heaved a sigh of relief.

"You had it wrong the first time, then, Miss Anderson. You said it was two-three at the West."

"Did I?" said the dancing mistress vaguely. "I can never read timetables. The trains I've missed—oh dear, oh dear! It's just nobody's business!"

"Well, anyway," smiled Daphne, checking the times for herself, "whatever May's reason for going, she's going to the right station."

May was smiling, too, for she had arrived at the Central Station and had four minutes to wait. In conscientious mood she was determined to wait and wait, until at least ten-past-two. By that time, she could comfortably return to the theatre for the matinee.

At two o'clock she looked down the line, smiling. For could a girl help going to the wrong station when there were two and the one intended had not been mentioned by name? Of course not!

At two-two she heard a distant rumble on the line, and a moment later saw a train. It arrived with screech of whistle and she stood back, thinking that it was surely a through train.

At a second before two-three, the train ground to a standstill, and doors were hurled open.

"Oh!" said May, feeling hollow inside with dismay.

The awful truth dawned on her then. She had come to the right station! This was the train she had to meet, and at any moment strict Miss Simpson—

A carriage door opened in front of May, and a woman stepped down, a fussy-looking woman dressed in a camel-haired coat, brown stockings and shoes, and hat—

She stepped down on the platform, her bird-like face turned to May, and fixed her with a keen, penetrating look.

**FACE to face with the very person she wanted to avoid! No wonder May is alarmed. What ever will she do? Be sure not to miss next week's grand chapters of this fascinating story.**

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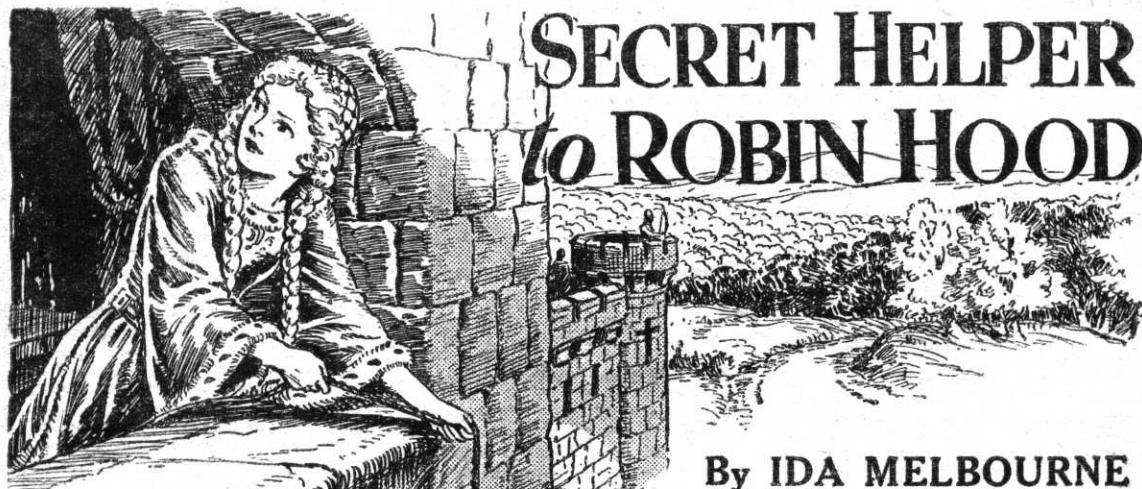
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COMPLETE this week. Another delightful story of the Middle Ages.



# SECRET HELPER to ROBIN HOOD

By IDA MELBOURNE

## The Page-boy Prankster!

THE young Lady Fayre looked at the penny-piece in her hand and frowned at it, displeased. The reason for her displeasure was that she had expected not a penny-piece, but a gold one as reward for writing well done.

From the penny she looked across her school-room in Longley Castle to the chancellor of her uncle's treasure chest—a man with smooth, deceptive smile and exaggeratedly humble manner.

"But, Mr. Chancellor," she protested, frowning, "my lord uncle did say it should be a gold piece!"

The chancellor rubbed one hand over the other, and then shook his head, still smiling, although his eyes had quite a glint.

"My lord baron does not squander money," he murmured. "He told me it should be one penny-piece. And, my lady, what purchases could be made with a gold piece here?"

Fayre said nothing. She could not spend even a penny in the castle, it was true. In the village there were shops, pleasant places, where sweets were sold, pretty ribbons, cakes; but, unfortunately, Fayre was not allowed to go to the village, as the chancellor knew well.

"Look after the pence, my good young lady," he said, with a touch of sneer in his tone, "and the pounds will e'en look after themselves. Good-morning, my dear young lady!"

He backed through the heavy curtains that guarded the archway of the room, and almost immediately there came an angry mutter, and a violent smacking sound, as of a hand meeting a human face.

"Ow!" came a gasp.

Before Fayre had time to move forward to investigate, the curtain parted, and a page entered, rubbing his left ear and frowning heavily.

"Oh! What happened, Percy?" asked Fayre sympathetically, but guessing the answer.

"The chancellor—hit my ear!" grimaced Percy, pinching it to make sure it was still there.

Fayre frowned indignantly.

"The chancellor needs to be taught a lesson," she said. "Anyone would think



he was baron of this castle, instead of my uncle! It might be his gold, instead of my uncle's, too, the care he takes of it!"

And Fayre held up a sheet of paper, on which she had written so carefully some sentences dictated to her by her tutor, the aged, bearded Venerable Brie.

Percy, the page, glanced at the sheet, but as he could neither read nor write it conveyed little to him.

## The young page was a victim of the baron's thieving chancellor—but Lady Fayre and Robin Hood soon altered all that!

"Lady Fayre," he said keenly, "you have some fluid called ink. Is it dark? It stains?"

"Ink? Yes," said Fayre readily. "The Venerable Brie makes ink. Red, brown, green—"

Percy rubbed his hands, and a glint of pleasure shone in his eyes, chasing away the brooding gloom.

"Ha! Meseems I am in good fortune!" he said. "In a moment I will be with you again—"

And he hurried out of the room, to return with a wooden bucket, in the bottom of which was a quantity of soot, and a yellowish, sticky substance.

"What ever's that?" asked Fayre, with interest.

"Honey," said Percy. "Honey and soot. Now, where is the ink, pray? Red, green, brown—"

Fayre laughed.

"Ink and honey? It will not mix. It

would not do as writing fluid," she protested.

"'Tis for the chancellor," Percy said, with a wary glance at the back door. "To wash his hair. He shall be anointed like a bishop."

Fayre caught her breath. All at once she understood just why this mixture was needed, for on a previous occasion someone had emptied a bucket containing a similar mixture over a visiting earl.

"Have a care!" she warned anxiously.

"S-sh!" responded Percy. "Never mention this, my lady. The ink, please!"

Fayre shook her head, although her eyes glimmered.

Percy might get into serious trouble if he were caught. He might be put in the dungeons, in the stocks. He might even be whipped.

"No, Percy!" she said firmly.

"No?" he said, surprised. "You like the chancellor?"

Fayre looked at the penny-piece in her hand, and then recalled how distinctly the baron had promised gold. But he was away from the castle, and the chancellor had been left to do the rewarding.

"Do I like the chancellor?" she asked,

her brows knitting. "I do not. I think, after all, that ink, mayhap, would do him good. In that jar yonder is some strange fluid, and in the others, too."

Percy found the fluids first, and, smirking with pleasure, poured in some red, some green, and some brown ink into the bucket.

That done, he stirred the mixture with a stick, and, thanking Fayre, winked and hurried away. Fayre had meant to give him some advice about taking care, but he had run on so quickly that he was soon out of sight.

Turning the penny-piece over in her hand, Fayre looked out of the window towards the pretty village, the thatched roofs of which she could see in the distance.

The money seemed to burn her hand. A penny was not a vast sum, but in those days, when Richard Lionheart was on the throne, it was money



enough to provide a normal girl with pocket-money for a whole week. As Lady Fayre, she was not allowed to leave the castle without permission, yet she resolved to go to the village, all the same. So, with light step, she hurried to her bed-chamber.

There, peeling off her red frock, she hid it, and took from the large chest in the corner of her room another frock, that was dark green, and shabby. With the frock was a brown, ragged cloak—such a cloak as no lady would ever wear unless she wished to be mistaken for a peasant girl.

That was just what Fayre did want to happen; and with light heart and dancing steps she dressed in the shabby clothes, as she had often done before.

A minute or two later she was tripping down the stone steps of the castle to freedom.

Reaching the second floor, however, she paused, for a well-known cough was heard—the chancellor's. Although her disguise was good enough to allow her to pass the guards, she was not quite sure that the chancellor, who knew her well, would be deceived by it. There being no hurry, she could afford to wait.

In the shadow of a large buttress she stood concealed as the coughing chancellor drew nearer, and then, with a suddenness that brought to her throat a scream she could barely stifle, there came a commotion.

Clatter! Crash! A yelp from the chancellor, muttering, and, from the shadows of the staircase, a gurgle of mirth.

Fayre, peeping out, eyes round, drew in her breath sharply. In the archway five yards from her stood someone whose head was obscured by a mass of soot, ink, and honey. The same mixture swamped him almost from head to foot.

Through the mixture fierce eyes glared, fixed upon Fayre, who covered the lower part of her face with the brown cloak.

But, wide-eyed, still she stared. Not because of the strange mixture of red

and green and black that clung to the victim and slowly trickled down him, but because, although this person had a cough like the chancellor, the unfortunate victim of the booby-trap was dressed in a friar's rough, girdled cloak and hood!

His face was bearded, too, which the chancellor's was not. Amazed, perplexed, and sorry for this unwanted victim, Fayre stood as in a trance, staring.

But not for long. The victim, glaring at her, snarled and sprang forward!

Only Fayre Knew the Truth!

FAYRE'S trance-like state ended at the moment when the bearded friar leaped forward, and with the speed and agility of a startled rabbit she dodged sideways as he rushed.

"You—you, girl—stop!" he snarled. Fayre, already three steps down the stairway, did stop. She stopped because the voice that came through the beard was strangely like the chancellor's.

"What are you doing here?" he ground out menacingly. "Did you put this trap here, wench?"

If he had recognised her as the Lady Fayre he would not have called her wench. Fayre knew, to her relief, that her disguise had deceived him. But although he was deceived, she was not.

The white beard that jutted from his face shifted now as honey stuck to it. Then, despite the coloured inks and soot and honey, Fayre recognised him.

It was the chancellor, after all!

He pushed the beard back into place and shook his fist; but Fayre did not wait to hear his comments. She ran down the stairs as fast as she could, anxious to reach the barbican before he could warn the guard to stop her.

And as she ran she muttered to herself:

"The chancellor, disguised! What can it mean?"

She overtook the chortling page without even pausing, and ran into the courtyard. There she had to pursue her way at more moderate pace for fear of attracting too keen attention.

Looking back, however, she saw no sign of the chancellor, in his disguise or as himself. He did not call from a window or in any other way signal to the soldiers in the courtyard.

The porticulis was up, and the guard who had seen Fayre in this disguise before gave her a casual nod and suffered her to cross the drawbridge.

"Disguised," mused Fayre, as she strolled along the lane. "Disguised as a friar. I wonder why, for goodness' sake?"

At that moment she heard from the woods the sound of a high-pitched, clear-noted hunting horn, and her heartbeats quickened.

"Robin Hood!" she murmured, her eyes alight.

Robin Hood, outlaw, friend of the poor, and in particular a friend of Fayre! With a glad cry, she danced into the wood, blowing the whistle he had given her, and it was but a matter of moments before he crashed into view through the undergrowth, smiling, bowing.

"Aha! Mystery maid!" he exclaimed, with a laugh. "Were you calling me, or were you frightening the wolves with that whistle?"

"Both," smiled Fayre, who had never let him know that she was not what she seemed to be—just a peasant-girl.

"And what brings you here?" he asked. "Some poor person needing aid? Someone hungry? Someone oppressed? News of the bad baron, my enemy?"

"The bad baron," answered Fayre, "has tired of hunting Robin Hood; he is hunting wild hart, which cannot shoot arrows at him."

"Ah, talking of arrows, if you would watch the fun come to the butts, where we are having a tourney," urged Robin Hood.

Fayre went with him into the glade, where targets had been fixed for the outlaws' practice, and was greeted cheerily by fat Friar Tuck, Little John, and others of the band she had met.

There, forgetting the money she had to spend, and how long she had been gone from the castle, Fayre watched and applauded and laughed with the rest.

But half an hour after she had joined the watchers an outlaw, springing through the trees, gave a shout to Robin Hood:

"A friar comes—a long-bearded friar with dirty smock, marked with red and green stains. Is he known?"

As Robin Hood swung round, Fayre, filled with sudden alarm, jumped up.

"Take care, Robin Hood," she exclaimed. "Be sure he is indeed a friar and not—not a spy of the baron!"

Robin Hood laughed. "No spy of the baron could fool Robin Hood," he said.

But Fayre, convinced that this friar was the chancellor in his disguise, followed the gay outlaw through the undergrowth. The friar was approaching slowly, bent-backed, carrying a small sack and stabbing the path with a long stick. His rough garment was, as the scout had said, stained red and green, while the beard that had been white was now all black. But there was no mistaking him. The chancellor.

Fayre moved swiftly aside as Robin Hood halted and gave the friar a sign to come no nearer.

"Well, and what is your business, good friar?" asked the outlaw.

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For reply the chancellor tossed down a sack.

"Gold," he said in low tone. "Gold from the baron's treasure chest. Open it. Make certain I speak truly."

Robin Hood, keeping his eyes warily on the friar, picked up the sack, unfastened the cord about its neck, and, plunging in his hand, pulled it out again claspings gold pieces that flashed in the sunlight.

Fayre held her breath, bewildered, unable to understand the chancellor's motive. But she was sure that in some cunning way this was a plot to trap Robin Hood, and, but for attracting the friar's attention to herself, she would have gone openly forward and warned her friend.

But the chancellor might recognise her as the girl he had seen in the castle.

"It is gold," agreed Robin Hood. "How came you by this, good friar—or should I say bad friar?"

The chancellor gave a grim chuckle. "There is more," he said, "and if you would have a thousand pieces of gold, Robin Hood, I will be your aid. I have means to steal the key of the baron's chest."

Fayre stiffened in horror, and of a sudden she knew that this was not a plot to trap Robin Hood. It was, on the contrary, a treacherous scheme to rob the baron.

"I see," mused Robin Hood thoughtfully. "We rob the baron's chest for the poor. But how can Robin Hood get into the castle?"

The friar hesitated before replying, then he said:

"Give first proof that the gold will go to the poor. When half the number has been given to poor people, then will I tell you how the rest may be stolen. Enough! I have done my part. 'Tis now for you—"

He turned away, and Robin Hood and Fayre both watched him until he was out of sight.

"Gold," said Robin Hood to Fayre, yet frowning in puzzlement.

"Gold—yes. And know you who he was?" Fayre asked tensely. "The baron's own treasure chancellor. I have been in the castle to—do errands for the Lady Fayre. I know well his voice. The beard was false, but the voice his own."

Robin Hood drew up, his eyes gleaming.

"A trap? A trap of the baron's to lure me into the castle?"

"Maybe—yes," said Fayre uncertainly. "Or else this rascal chancellor has robbed the baron of twice what is in that sack, and means to let the blame fall on you."

"A traitor!" exclaimed Robin Hood. "I like not traitors, nor sneak-thieves. I rob after fair fight from barons who have taken their gold by force of arms from the poor, but I do not pick pockets."

Fayre now was anxious to return to the castle to find out what was being planned there—to learn what story the chancellor would tell the baron.

"Robin Hood, be on your guard," she warned him, turning away. "If such thing is possible, I will go into the castle, and what I learn of the baron's plans I will tell to you."

Without pause, Fayre ran back to the castle.

The moment she set foot in the courtyard she knew that trouble brewed. Soldiers were gathered in groups, and servants came from other parts of the castle grounds, from dairies, bake-houses, smithies.

She was only half-way to the keep when she heard her uncle's roaring voice, and in a moment she saw him.



**FIERCELY** the young page slashed the baron free, while Robin Hood and his men rushed to prevent him. But they rushed very slowly, and Fayre hid a smile. For this was all a plan of hers, though neither the page nor the baron realised it.

The baron rushed through the doorway, pursuing a page, kicking at him, and shouting in anger:

"Hold him!"  
As the nearest soldiers rushed to obey, Fayre, with sinking horror, saw that the page was Percy.

"Hold the thief!" roared the baron. "He shall be whipped; he shall go into stocks—"

Percy's voice rose in horrified protest. "My lord baron, the chancellor lies! I did not rob the treasure chest, I know nothing of it—not even that 'twas robbed!"

Fayre ran forward, then checked herself, realising that she was apparently but a village girl, and could not protest on Percy's behalf. Yet the wicked chancellor's cunning plot was clear to her, and to her alone.

He had contrived to blame Percy for the theft!

Clenching her hands, she fought hard to control her bursting desire to speak as the baron snatched the terrified page by the shoulder.

"The dungeons—a whipping!" he snarled. "And then you shall become for evermore an outlaw, with every man's hand against you!"

Fayre could not stay to see this cruel injustice done. If she stayed she would speak and betray her true identity, and once that was done her power to help Percy would be gone.

With flying feet she hurried up the stairs to her bed-chamber, and there changed into her red velvet frock. But she was slower in changing this time, for her fingers trembled so with agitation.

Only she could save Percy from his terrible fate; only she knew that the chancellor was the thief.

Somehow the baron must be taught the truth. He had to be convinced not only of Percy's innocence, but of the chancellor's guilt. And Fayre meant to find the proof.

After she had changed she paced her room, thinking deeply; then, an idea dawning, she hurried downstairs.

By this time the unfortunate page had been taken to the dungeons, and thither went Fayre, lifting the hem of her long red frock.

Soldiers guarded the stairway to keep

back the crowd that would otherwise have gone below; but Fayre, being privileged, was allowed to pass through.

She hurried down to the dungeons, in one of which the young page was being strapped into the stocks.

"A flogging first!" thundered the baron.

Fayre walked past the leering chancellor into the dungeon.

"Oh!" she gasped, drawing up. "Why, prithee, uncle, 'tis Percy!"

"Yes, 'tis Percy!" he retorted, scowling.

Fayre turned then to the chancellor, and in her tone was well-assumed compassion.

"Oh, Mr. Chancellor," she said, "I trust no serious ill befell you through the evil doings of this prank-player."

The chancellor was taken aback, not knowing quite what to reply; but the baron burst out angrily.

"Prank-player! You call it a prank?"

"Why—why—" faltered Fayre demurely. "'Tis surely a prank to make a booby-trap for so worthy and trust-worthy an officer as the baron's chancellor?"

The chancellor's eyes glinted.

"Hah! You have proof of that, m'lady! 'Twas he, then?"

"'Twas indeed," said Fayre, catching a piteous look of appeal from Percy, but ignoring it.

The baron had not heard of the booby-trap, and he was interested. He wanted to hear more, and demanded to be told it.

"Ink was used—red and green," said Fayre, studying the chancellor's face. "Why, look! The poor chancellor still bears stains on his face!"

Grunting, the chancellor allowed the baron to see the marks, and then, not realising that Fayre had seen the trap in action, admitted that he had been its victim.

"Honey and soot I saw in the bucket," said Fayre, in frowning disapproval.

"Indeed, yes," said the chancellor fiercely. "I did not speak of it, my lord baron, thinking the lad was to be punished severely enough—"

"An extra five strokes of the whip!" roared the baron in fury. "Fayre,



this rascal is a thief! This lad whom I have nursed, housed, and trained in arms, has robbed me—robbed my treasure chest!"

"Oh, shame!" said Fayre. "Why, Robin Hood could do no more."

"No, and like as not he's in league with Robin Hood," said the cunning chancellor. "Robin Hood doubtless put the plot into the lad's mind."

"Robin Hood?" cried Fayre sharply. "Why—why, then here, uncle, is the chance to trap this Robin Hood."

The gaoler with the whip paused as Fayre signalled to him.

"To trap Robin Hood?" asked the baron eagerly.

"Why, yes, uncle—come with me," said Fayre, beckoning him into the corridor. "But, first, let the whipping wait, or the plot cannot be tried."

"Eh? Why not?" demanded the baron.

But Fayre did not answer until they were in the corridor.

"Uncle," she said then, "this page may know the secret way to Robin Hood's lair. If indeed he is in league with him, he can lure Robin Hood into a trap. Set him free. Tell him he is outlawed, and—why, he will go at once to Robin Hood. You can follow him."

The baron, his eyes gleaming, returned to the dungeon, and Fayre, heart thumping, listened.

"Page, you are outlawed!" thundered the baron. "Begone from this castle and never return! Lash him out, gaoler, with your whip!"

The surprised Percy, set free, gasped and yelped in pain as the whip curled about his legs; then he ran as fast as he could, knowing that if he loitered he might become a mark for arrows. He was henceforth an outlaw, with every man's hand against him—every man's except a fellow-outlaw's.

After him clattered the baron, to mount his horse, ride ahead of the lad, hide in the wood, and then follow him. And swift of foot, dressed in her shabby frock and ragged cloak, went Fayre. She was last to leave the castle, but because she knew the way would be the first to track down Robin Hood.

### A Page of "Valour"!

**R**OBIN HOOD surveyed the panting, gasping mystery maid as she clung to his arm. She had found him with her shrill whistle, but she could not speak yet for hard breathing after her non-stop run through the woods.

Then jerkily she told him what had happened, save only that she had witnessed it all herself.

Robin Hood, always on the side of the oppressed, was at once filled with sympathy for the page.

"By my best arrow, if I could get that chancellor, I'd wipe the earth with him!" he exclaimed.

"You shall!" gasped Fayre. "Oh, Robin Hood," she begged, "please help this page. Let the baron know the true culprit—"

"Wait!" exclaimed Robin Hood. He hurried away, returning a moment later with a bundle of clothing, a friar's hooded robe, and a dyed false beard.

"The chancellor's?" cried Fayre. "Yes. I followed him through the wood. I saw him change, and knew that you were not mistaken. By his

robes that he wore underneath this friar's frock I knew him as the chancellor," said Robin Hood grimly. "This is proof enough."

And then he turned as he heard his name called faintly in a boyish voice. Percy, stumbling, through the wood, was calling:

"Robin Hood! Help! Robin Hood—"

They saw him, a moment later, and just behind him amongst the trees the flash of chainmail in the sunlight.

"The baron!" breathed Fayre.

"A brave man but a fool!" scoffed Robin Hood.

"Don't fight him alone," said Fayre quickly. "I have a plan to save the lad. Capture the baron, rope him to a tree, and then—"

She lowered her voice.

A moment later a dozen outlaws in their green clothes, that made them difficult to see, spread wide to encircle the lurking baron.

Even as Percy came upon Robin Hood, the baron's angry shout was heard, followed by the clash of arms. But the clashing ended soon. Outnumbered, the baron was easily captured.

Roped to a tree, a cloth fastened to his mouth, he goggled in frenzy as he saw Robin Hood.

"Who are you?" demanded Robin Hood, looking at the page.

"I am a page from the castle, Robin Hood. They say I robbed the treasure chest. It's a lie. I did not. But I am now outlawed. If they catch me I'll be killed!"

Robin Hood laughed.

"I want no boys here. Begone! I have but one good friend at the castle, the chancellor who brought me a sack of gold."

"What? The chancellor?" cried the page.

"The chancellor. See this robe?" asked Robin Hood, holding up the friar's frock.

"Why—why, that's the frock of the friar who was caught in my booby-trap!" cried Percy, amazed. "And his white whiskers. Why—why, it was a disguise—"

"Ha, ha, ha! My boy, it was the chancellor—Robin Hood's friend," said Robin Hood. "He is my chancellor, with a key to the treasure-chest."

Fayre looked towards the baron, who had heard every word, and saw that his face was purple with rage as he struggled at his bonds.

"Begone, feeble boy," said Fayre. "An outlaw indeed! You have not the heart of a rabbit! Why, there's your baron—see? A prisoner, and you, have not the courage to fight to free him!"

The startled page turned and then ran to the baron.

"My lord, you here?" he gasped.

The baron glared at him and then at the ground, trying to signal to the lad that his drawn sword had been left in the grass by his captors; and presently the page understood.

But instead of stooping to snatch it up, he shouted defiance at Robin Hood and ran.

Fayre's face fell with disappointment; for she had thought that at least the page would try to set the baron free. But she had misjudged Percy's artfulness. Though he ran, the moment he was out of sight he dropped to hands and knees, and, obscured by bushes, crept back to the sword.

Picking it up, he slashed with the sharp blade at the bonds.

He severed two of the bonds and then wheeled as he heard Robin Hood's shout. Robin Hood and two others, with quarter-staves, rushed at him.

Percy, gritting his teeth, faced them sword in hand, and Fayre danced with excitement, knowing that Robin Hood intended to be beaten back.

Wielding the sword desperately, Percy fought at his three assailants and the sword clashed on the quarter-staves. Robin Hood's fell, and the outlaw chief staggered back as though afraid, covering his head with his arm.

Another lurched back, groaning that he was "done." In wild excitement Percy slashed at the third, who turned and ran.

The page swung round to the baron, slashed the remaining bonds and severed the gag.

"Boy, well done!" gasped the baron, seizing the sword. "Noble work! Were you of age you should be knighted for this. Come!"

And Percy, leaving Fayre chuckling merrily, went reluctantly with the baron, thirsting for further conquests.

**F**AYRE, IN her own frock again, ran down to the dungeon. The stairway was crowded, and even her pleas for passage were ignored.

"There's a whipping, my lady," said an officer of the guard.

"Not the page Percy?" said Fayre.

"Why, no—he's a hero. He fought Robin Hood and defeated him; he saved the baron," said the officer.

"'Tis the chancellor being whipped," Fayre turned away and almost bumped into Percy, who was beaming in pleasure until he saw her.

"Oh, well done, page!" smiled Fayre.

"I little thought m'lady was a tell-tale!" he answered coldly.

"Indeed?" said Fayre, her eyes twinkling. "But for the tell-tale you would have been whipped. If not the tell-tale's, then whose suggestion was it you be free and outlawed and pursued by the baron?"

Percy's eyes widened. "Why, yes, I do think 'twas yours, m'lady Fayre!" he exclaimed. "But 'twas a grave risk; the baron was captured, and if his sword had not been left, and I had not known the way to lay about me, he might be yet a prisoner."

"Ah! But your valour saved him," said Fayre. "Brave page!"

Percy the page blushed modestly, and Fayre, laughing softly, tripped back in gay mood to her chamber, whither later the page, who had been rewarded with gold, sent a large package of sweets and cakes as thanks; and whither, too, the baron, having heard of the chancellor's gift of a penny when a gold piece had been ordered, sent two gold pieces.

For such was the depth of the baron's treasure-chest that even a thousand pieces less made but little difference. And considering it was Fayre's own, she was accepting charity from no one but herself!

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

**BE** sure to meet the young Lady Fayre and gallant Robin Hood in another delightful COMPLETE story next Saturday.