

Don't miss this week's superb  
Cliff House School story:

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

# THE SCHOOLGIRL

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EVERY **2<sup>D</sup>**  
SATURDAY

Incorporating  
'SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN'



**WAS THEIR CHUM  
THE MYSTERY SCHEMER?**  
Surely it was impossible that  
Jemima Carstairs was the girl  
plotting against Barbara Redfern?  
And yet—  
See the grand Babs & Co. story inside.



A Powerful, Intriguing Long Complete Story of the Chums of Cliff House School, starring Jemima Carstairs, the most baffling girl in the Fourth.



# The CAPTAIN'S UNKNOWN ENEMY!

## The First Blow!



"STAND up, girls! The class," Miss Bullivant announced, "will now dismiss!"

Willingly the Fourth Form at Cliff House obeyed that order. The afternoon, under the particularly stern rule of the mathematics mistress, had been very trying.

Lines had fallen thick and fast, and bad conduct marks had spoiled many a page in an otherwise unblemished record book.

Barbara Redfern, captain of the Form, smiled a little. Mabel Lynn, her greatest chum, standing next to her, gleefully and excitedly grinned. Clara Trevlyn, the long-legged, untidy-haired, tomboy games captain of the Junior School, breathed a deep

breath of relief; and plump Bessie Bunter blinked through thick, round spectacles at a book on Miss Bullivant's desk. She coughed.

"Ahem! Miss Bub-Bullivant," she stammered, "can I have Poppy, please?"

"Eh? What—?" Miss Bullivant frowned. "Poppy? Poppy what?"

"My book, you know," said Bessie. "You—you took it away from me during lessons because you thought I was reading it."

"Thought?" Miss Bullivant frowned. "You were reading it, Bessie, and making the most extraordinary and absurd faces as you did so!"

She picked the book up and gazed at the title—"The Perils of Poppy Pringle at School!"—and looked at Bessie again. "Bessie, you can have this book when you have done the hundred lines I gave you for reading it."

"But—but— Oh, really, Miss Bullivant—"

"Now dismiss!" Miss Bullivant rasped.

Bessie glared. Very keenly inter-

ested in the blood-curdling adventures of Poppy Pringle was the plump duffer, and it was just awful to have left Poppy hanging by one hand to the stump of a bush which grew on the face of a dark, deep precipice.

Rather forlornly she drifted out with the rest of the class, at once hurrying off to Study No. 4, which she shared with Barbara Redfern and Mabel Lynn. But Mabs, waiting for Babs, gleefully caught her arm.

"Babs, did you see—through the window, during lessons? The costumes have arrived!" And Mabs' eyes shone—for Mabs, fearfully enthusiastic actress as she was, was producing several numbers for the shortly-to-be-held end of term school concert. "They'll be in the dormitory now. Come on. I'm dying to see them!"

"And so," Babs cried, "am I!"

They hurried forward eagerly. Mabs was quivering with excitement now. Babs laughed. It was good to see her chum's excitement, and she shared it with her, though goodness knows she

had enough to be excited about herself.

She must get that design for the programme finished before the end of the week. Apart from that, she had to rehearse like fun to fit herself for the three parts Mabs had given her in the show. In addition, there were her own many duties as Form and junior school captain to attend to. And above all else—

Babs' eyes glowed as she thought of that "above all else."

For Babs had been chosen by Miss Primrose, Cliff House's headmistress, to represent Cliff House's junior school at the Schoolgirls' Convention which was to be held at Eastbourne next Saturday, Lady Patricia Northanson representing the seniors.

A terrific honour, that. A frightfully nice and exciting time to look forward to, too; for, apart from the thrills of the convention itself, Babs' father had promised to call along for her and Lady Pat in his car and take them to Eastbourne by road.

But now—the costumes.

Eager as Mabs to see those costumes, she raced up to the Fourth Form dormitory. Girls other than herself and Mabs had obviously witnessed the arrival of these costumes, for a dozen had already forgathered, surrounding the enormous hamper which had been deposited in the centre of the floor.

Marjorie Hazeldene, the Fourth Form wardrobe mistress, was among them, and with her were the two little ones of the Second Form, blue-eyed Dolores Essendon and little Letty Green, who were doing a special turn in the concert. There was a cry as Mabs and Babs came in.

"Come on, Mabs, let's have a look at the things!" Clara Trevlyn cried impatiently. "We're waiting for you."

Mabs laughed again. She flew to the hamper. With eager fingers she undid the fastenings and threw back the wicker lid. A chorus of eager exclamations went up as the girls peered in.

"Hallo, that's my fairy costume!" Rosa Rodworth said.

"And my bird costume," little Letty Green shrilled.

"And here's my nursing costume! Whoopee!" cheered Diana Royston-Clarke. "Come on; let's try them on!"

Excitement then. How those girls did love to dress up! In a moment, it seemed, the orderly dormitory became a scene of chaos. Swiftly school tunics were discarded, the new and exciting costumes donned in their places. Every mirror in the dormitory was at once occupied. Then suddenly the door was pushed open again. This time it was Miss Bullivant who stood there.

"Barbara!" she rapped.

"Oh, y-yes, Miss Bullivant?"

"I thought you understood," Miss Bullivant said, glancing sourly over the crowd of girls, "that you were to remove the pile of new history books from my study as soon as lessons were finished? Why have you not done so, Barbara?"

"Oh crumbs!" muttered Babs. In the excitement of everything else she had forgotten that. "I—I'm sorry. I forgot," she said. "I'll do it after tea, Miss Bullivant."

"You'll do it—now!" Miss Bullivant pronounced. "It is not my habit, Barbara, to allow girls to be lax where duty is concerned. Slackness at all times is to be deplored, but slackness in a Form captain—the junior school captain—a girl who is supposed to set an example to the rest of the

## By HILDA RICHARDS

Illustrated by T. LAIDLER

Form—cannot be tolerated for a moment. You will come now and remove those books! At once!"

Babs made a grimace at Mabs. Sighing a little, she followed the mistress as she rustled out of the room.

Down the stairs they went, along the corridor, reaching the landing which overlooked Big Hall in which Miss Bullivant's study was situated.

A girl, slim, elegantly dressed, whose sleek brown hair was cut to a boyish Eton-crop, and in whose left eye gleamed a spotless monocle, was leaning on the banisters staring absently into the hall.

"Jemima!" Miss Bullivant rapped. "What-cheer!" Jemima Carstairs said lightly, and then, turning, pulled a face. "Oh, please forgive! Didn't know it was you, Miss Bullivant! Nice old view from the top of these stairs!" she said admiringly. "One does see so many things one never expected to see—"

Miss Bullivant frowned. Miss Bullivant, like many other mistresses, and many other girls at Cliff House, could never quite understand the bland, urbane, mysterious Jemima Carstairs, well styled the most puzzling girl in the Fourth Form.

**Blow after blow hit against Barbara Redfern, captain of the Fourth Form. Deeper and deeper into disgrace she fell. Babs and her chums grew desperate, asking themselves time and time again: "Who was the secret enemy?" There seemed only one girl who could answer that question—Jemima Carstairs, and Jemima remained mysteriously evasive.**

"I fail to see," she said tartly, "that there is anything extraordinary in the view from the top of the stairs, Jemima. But I most strongly object to girls lounging idly on the banisters; and as, apparently, you have nothing better to do with your time, you can take twenty lines! Barbara, come!"

And Miss Bullivant rustled on. Babs paused. She knew Jemima's little ways. Not for nothing had Jemima made that cryptic observation about the interesting things to be seen from the landing banisters. Jemima, meeting her gaze, smiled blandly, however.

"Our Bull," she murmured, "is in a paddy-waddy—what?"

"Bar-bar!" cried Miss Bullivant from the bottom of the stairs. "Come along!"

Babs jumped. Off she went. Miss Bullivant frowned as she pushed open her study door, indicating a pile of new linen-bound books on her table.

"There are the books," she said. "Take them and store them in the Form-room cupboard. They are new books, and only arrived this afternoon; so please be careful with them."

"Yes, Miss Bullivant," Babs said. She approached the books and gathered them up, glad, if the truth be told, to get out of the crusty mistress's company.

Both arms book-laden, she trotted out into Big Hall. Phew, what a pile! It was a pile which reached up to her nose, indeed, and rather obscured her vision.

Cautiously she felt her way up the stairs, which led to the Fourth Form corridor, and sighed with relief when the last one was reached. Now—

And then suddenly something happened. Near by there was a soft snick, the lights at the top of the stairs went out, and all at once Babs heard a swift patter of footsteps.

"Here, I say—" she indignantly cried.

And then she gave a gasp. For suddenly out of the darkness a girl had rushed upon her—a girl wearing a school-hat upon her averted head.

Babs felt a hand push at the books. She staggered back. The pile of new books broke in the middle and shot outwards with a crash. There came the sound of running footsteps.

"Here—" Babs spluttered.

She darted to the light and switched it on. Then she gazed in bewilderment along the corridor. For of her surprise attacker there was no sign.

"The—the idiot," Babs breathed, and fury boiled up within her as she regarded the pile of books—now spread-eagled all over the floor, some open, some on their sides, some standing up. Who had made that attack—so pointless, so silly? The girl had certainly made certain that she was not recognised.

Downstairs, the door of Miss Bullivant's study door came open with a crash. Miss Bullivant's voice, vibrant, indignant, rang up the stairs.

"Barbara, you clumsy, careless girl!

I thought I told you to be careful with those books?"

"Well, I—I was being careful," Babs stammered. "But some silly idiot—I mean, some girl—rushed at me—"

"What? Which girl?"

"I didn't recognise her," Babs said.

Miss Bullivant hurried up the stairs.

"Barbara, are you telling falsehoods? How is it you did not see her?"

"Well, she turned out the light!" Barbara blurted. "And she was wearing a hat, and she kept her head turned away, and—"

"And she turned on the light as she ran away, I presume?" Miss Bullivant looked irritably disbelieving. In a bad temper, Miss Bullivant did not want to believe anybody or anything at that moment.

"No; I turned it on myself," Babs said.

"I see. You are sure," Miss Bullivant asked coldly, "that you did not drop the books and allow your imagination to invent this story as an excuse, Barbara? Before you take them to the class-room," she added, "you can now take them to your study and carefully inspect every one of them for damage. If there is any damage, please report it to me. And, Barbara, you—"

"Y-yes, Miss Bullivant?"

"Just be careful," Miss Bullivant said acidly. "If this is your idea of carrying out your Form captain's duties, I may have to ask Miss Primrose to consider another girl for the convention."

And, leaving Babs crimson, she turned starchily back down the stairs.

## Sensation in Study No. 4!



"P"RETTY feeble trick!" Mabel Lynn said angrily. "Just looks as if somebody's out to make trouble for you. No idea at all who she was, Babs?"

"Not an earthly," Barbara Redfern confessed. "She made sure of that."

"But what the dickens did she do it for?"

"Wouldn't I like to know!" Babs set her lips. "It was obvious it was no accident, though. The joke, if it was a joke, was all planned and intended. Anyway, blow the books now!" And she gazed at the shelf above the table of Study No. 4, where she had temporarily stored the new history books, intending to inspect them later on. "We'll run through them after tea."

Mabs nodded, but with an anxious eye on the clock. Mabs had arranged a costume rehearsal for six o'clock, and was especially anxious that rehearsal should start to time. Bessie, however, who, having rattled off Miss Bullivant's lines in record time, was now reading her restored book as she ate her tea, nodded darkly at Babs.

"You've got to be careful about books," she said. "The villains in this story tried to blow Poppy up, you know. They had a jolly good wheeze for doing it, too. You know," Bessie said seriously, "even I couldn't have thought of a better one. Do you know what they did? They disguised a bomb as a book, you know, and set a time fuse—"

"Disguised as a string of sausages?" Mabs chuckled.

"No, they didn't. They had an intricate—intric—well, a sort of clockwork arrangement inside it, you know. Poor Poppy only just found it out in time, because she put the book on her bookshelf, and— Hallo!" she added, as Rosa Rodworth came in.

"Hallo!" Rosa said, and smiled sourly. "Barbara, you're collecting lines for the Bull, aren't you? Here are mine."

"Thanks! Put them on the table," Babs said.

Rosa put them on the corner of the table. She went out. But hardly had she disappeared when Frances Frost came in.

"Lines for the Bull," she said. "Within the next ten minutes there were half a dozen other callers—all with lines as the result of Miss Bullivant's punishment of the afternoon. The pile grew and grew."

"I'll take them along when we've dusted the books," Babs declared. "The Bull will be having tea now, anyway. My hat, I've got something to do, haven't I?" she added. "After prep, Mabs, I really must get down to finishing the design for the concert programme. Hal-lo!" she cried impatiently, as another knock came at the door.

The door opened again. This time it was Jemima Carstairs who strolled in, her monocle gleaming brightly in the electric light.

"What-ho!" she beamed. "Carry on, my children! Eat and be merry, for to-morrow—well, who knows what to-morrow may bring fourth, fifth, or sixth?" Jemima burbled brightly. "Mind if I park my weary limbs in this chair?" she added. "Just chipped in for a little chatter."

"Well, you'd better get it off your chest and chip out again!" Mabs

grunted. "We've got those books to run through before rehearsal."

"Oh, those!" Jemima gazed at them. "Nifty-looking volumes—what?" she said. "Bit dusty, some of them."

"That's because some idiot barged into Babs on top of the stairs and crashed them," Mabs said.

"You don't say? What idiot, forsooth?"

"That," Babs replied grimly, "is what I want to know! The Bull was frightfully ratty. She made a hint about me not going to the convention, after all. By the way, Jimmy, you were at the top of the stairs a few minutes before it happened. Did you see anyone there?"

"Nary a soul," Jemima sighed; "but— And there, for some reason, she broke off."

Rather strangely keen and alert all at once, she rose and went towards the pile of history books, running her eyes along them. While Babs blinked, Jemima took one down, looked thoughtfully at it, and, without opening it, returned it to the shelf. She nodded her sleek head.

"So!" she said. "Interesting, what?"

Babs stared. "What on earth are you babbling about?" she asked. "Jimmy, have you any idea who crashed into me?"

"Who knows?" Jemima said vaguely. "Let's think about motives."

"Motives?" Babs asked, puzzled.

"Oh, nothing!" Jemima murmured.

"Just nothing, old thing! Well, well,

## EASTER NEXT WEEK-END

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TWO DAYS EARLIER THAN USUAL

that is—on Thursday, April 6th.

here we are! Rehearsal at six, you said, old Mabsie?"

"I did. And, Jimmy, for goodness' sake, be on time!" Mabs replied anxiously. "Don't forget you're playing opposite Babs in the schoolgirl scene, and you hardly know your part yet, you washout! We're going to rehearse that first!"

"Rely on Uncle Jimmy!" Jemima said heartily; but again she stared at the books. "See you later!" she beamed, and, with a nod, strolled out.

"Mysterious duffer!" Mabs said. "What the dickens did she mean? All the same, we'd better buck up. Babs, I wonder if you could give me a hand with setting the stage before we start messing about with those history books?"

They rose, quitting the study. They were passing Study No. 7 when Clara Trevely and Marjorie Hazeldene and Janet Jordan came out.

"Lo!" Clara said. "What's the hurry? Can anyone help?"

"Yes, rather! Come and help set the stage," Mabs said.

"Done!" grinned Clara.

The five of them went off. Five, instead of two, made the task appreciably lighter, and in just over a quarter of an hour the stage was all set and waiting only for rehearsal. Babs, leaving Mabs and Clara & Co. in possession of the music-room, hurried back to the study.

The table was cleared, though Bessie, desiring only to be left in breathless peace with Poppy Pringle, had vanished with her book. On the

table were the lines to be delivered to Miss Bullivant, however.

"Hum!" Babs murmured. "Better get those off. Then the books; the rehearsal; after that prep; and then after prep I really must get down to that designing. Phew! What a fight against time! Well, here goes job No. 1!"

She caught up the lines—a good sheaf of them—and hurried down to Miss Bullivant's study. The mistress was not there, so Babs put them on the table, and, with a relieved sense of having executed one of her tasks, hurried back to Study No. 4. Now those wretched books!

She got back. One by one, she took the history books down, wiping them over. Rather nice books they were, in a good linen binding. She had nearly completed her task when Mabs came in.

"Everything O.K., Babs?" she asked. "We're ready to start."

"Just got to take these into the Form-room," Babs replied. "Then I'm free for the time being."

"Oh, goodie! Let me give you a hand, then."

She grabbed the duster. Another three minutes, and the task was complete. With Mabs carrying one pile, Babs the other, the books were conveyed to the Form-room, this time without incident.

"Job No. 2!" Babs laughed. "Now the old rehearsal!"

Back to the music-room they went, where girls already arrayed in costumes were impatiently waiting to begin. Mabs consulted her list.

"Right-ho! Let's have the school scene first. Jimmy, where are you?"

"Here, sweet one!" Jemima Carstairs chirruped.

"Good! On the stage, then! Now, Babs, run through it quickly, will you, just to get the hang of the words? Now, silence, everybody!" Mabs said.

"Jimmy, sit on the bench there. You're supposed to be under the tree reading. Babs, you stroll in from this end with the letter. Dash it! Where's the letter? Never mind, use— Oh, goodness! Can't you be quiet with that door?" she requested irritably, as the door behind her noisily banged open.

"Blow the door!" Rosa Rodworth snapped. Rosa had just entered, waving a sheaf of papers. "Babs—"

"Look here, we're rehearsing!" Mabs protested.

"Well, the rehearsal can jolly well wait!" Rosa said grimly. "I want to talk to Babs. Babs—"

"Well?" Babs asked resignedly.

"What the dickens have you been doing to my lines?"

"Your lines? Why, nothing!" Babs stared. "I handed them in to Miss Bullivant."

"I know," Rosa scowled. "That's the trouble," she said. "But you might have handed them in without soaking them with oil first."

"Oil?" Babs cried.

"Oh, rats! Don't pretend you don't know anything about it! The Bull was so fearfully wild that she's given me the rotten imposition to do again, with twenty additional lines for handing them in in such a dreadful condition!"

"And it's the same with meself!" Bridget O'Toole excitedly cried, bursting into the room. "Look at these lines! Smothered in oil!"

"But—but—" Babs stuttered.

"And look at mine!" shrieked Lucy Morgan, coming in after Bridget. "Oil all over them!"

"But—but—" Babs stared. "Oh, my hat! I tell you the lines were all right when I handed them in—perfectly all right. At least, I believe



they were," she added, remembering how hastily she had snatched them up. "I haven't done it!"

"Well, you don't suggest the Bull herself did it, do you?" Rosa scowled. "No; but—"

"Babs, you had a bottle of oil in the study, didn't you?" Gwen Cook put in. "Miss Gilbey asked you to get it to take to needlework classes to-morrow."

"Yes, I had. It was on the shelf over the table," Babs said. "But I haven't touched it, and it really hasn't been anywhere near your lines. Mabs, you haven't touched it?"

"Goodness, no!" Mabs cried.

"Well, anyway, it's not good enough!" Rosa scowled. "The lines were left in your charge, Babs, and while they were in your charge they got spoiled, with the result that we've got to do the rotten things all over again. We didn't give you away to the Bull, of course, but if there has been an accident, then the least you can do is to go and explain to Miss Bullivant—"

"There is no need," an icy voice interrupted at the door, "for Barbara to come and see me. I am here to see Barbara." And Miss Bullivant entered the room. "Barbara, I suppose you are aware that three of the new history books I gave you are missing? Where are they?"

"Missing?" cried Barbara. "Missing!" Miss Bullivant nodded grimly. "I gave you thirty-six. In the Form-room cupboard there are only thirty-three. Three of those books, therefore, have disappeared while in your possession."

"Phew!" whistled Jemima Carstairs. "The plot thickens."

"I beg your pardon, Jemima?"

"Nothing. Just nothing," Jemima said airily. "Rum and strange the things that happen, what? Ink and oil and missing books and so forth, and all that, you know! Interesting old life we lead, Miss Bullivant?"

"I fail," Miss Bullivant retorted, with a glare, "to see what you are driving at, Jemima! And for uttering absurd remarks, you will write twenty lines."

"Tut, tut!" murmured Jemima sadly, and unnoticed, drifted out.

"Barbara, you will kindly go and find those books—now!" Miss Bullivant said exasperatedly. "And I may tell you again that I am becoming far from satisfied with your work as Form captain. I presume you have so much on your mind in other directions that you are no longer able to give your attention to your real duties. Go now!"

"But, Miss Bullivant, the rehearsal is—"

faltered Mabs. "The rehearsal can wait, Mabel!" Babs gulped. She looked bewildered, despairing. She wished now that she had checked up on those books—but where the dickens had the three gone?

She stepped towards the door. But Rosa Rodworth caught her arm.

"Wait a minute!" she said. "Haven't you something else to say to Miss Bullivant, Babs?"

"What—"

"About the lines—our lines!" Rosa said significantly. "Lines?" Miss Bullivant frowned. "What is this?"

Babs coloured.

"There—there was oil on some of the girls' lines," she said.

"Of that, Barbara, I am perfectly aware."

"Well," Babs gulped, "I—I wanted to tell you, Miss Bullivant, that—that

when they were handed in to me there was no oil on them—"

"What? You mean you damaged them?"

"No, Miss Bullivant. I—I don't know how it happened—if it did happen while they were in my study."

"Then you are surely," Miss Bullivant almost barked, "not suggesting that I poured oil on the impositions, Barbara? Oh!" she said, and her eyes glimmered. "I see. The impositions were spoiled while they were in your charge. Really Barbara—"

"But, Miss Bullivant, I didn't know—"

"Naturally!" Miss Bullivant's lips became straight. "I do not expect you to admit, Barbara, that you had a careless accident. Really, this is becoming intolerable — intolerable! Very well. Rosa, Lucy, Bridget, you are excused doing those lines again, but, Barbara, just to impress upon you that your duty comes first, you will write one hundred times, 'I must bear in mind my captain's duties before all else.' Now go and find those books!"

Mabs shook her head in despair. Poor, poor old Babs—and her poor, poor old rehearsal. She said, as Miss Bullivant left:

"Well, buck up, Babs. I'll be doing something else. Clara, will you help Babs search for those books?"

"Pleasure!" Clara said. "Come on, Babs. Marjorie, you're not doing anything at the moment, are you? Like to lend a hand?"

"Of course!" Marjorie Hazeldene willingly volunteered.

They went out together. But in the corridor, Babs halted. Her face was just a little fierce all at once.

"Somebody's hitting against me," she said. "I don't believe these things are accidents. Those three books must have been grabbed by the girl who barged into me. She knew jolly well I should be called over the coals by the Bull. The lines must have been tampered with when I was helping Mabs set the stage."

"But who," Clara asked, "would do it?"

"And why?" Marjorie questioned. Babs shook her head. But Clara, frowning rather thoughtfully, made a suggestion.

"I suppose," she said doubtfully, "if the Bull got you out of the convention, some other girl would go in?"

"Well, yes," Babs said. "That would be Mabs, though—or you."

"Would it?" Clara shook her head. "Mabs is busy with her rehearsals," she pointed out. "I couldn't go on Saturday, anyway, because I'm playing for the senior second eleven against Whitechester. Blessed if I know. All the same, it does look like some sort of plot. Where do we start looking for these books, Babs?"

Babs shook her head. She didn't know. Rather feebly she suggested looking at the head of the stairs where the collision had taken place—though it was improbable that three brand new books could have lain about there without being noticed. They were not there, of course.

They tramped along the passage, popping into each study as they passed, half-heartedly hoping that somebody there would have information to impart. Lydia Crossendale, the snob of the Fourth, and the sole occupant of Study No. 1 at the moment, shook her head.

"Books? Haven't seen 'em," she grunted. "They haven't come in here."

In Study No. 2 they found Brenda Fallace grinding at lines. Brenda could give no help, however. In Study No. 3, Marcelle Biquet could not help, either. Study No. 4 they did not even enter. Study No. 5, occupied by Sylvia Sirrett and the Terraine Twins, proved useless, too. So did every other study. Babs at last shook her head.

"Give it up," she said. "We'll just pop back to Study No. 4 to see if Bess is there. She may know something."



"WHAT have you been doing with my lines?" demanded Rosa furiously, and waved them in front of the astonished Babs. They were smeared with oil. And here came Bridget and Lucy, holding lines that had been similarly damaged. "But—but—" stuttered Babs. "I tell you the lines were perfectly all right when I handed them in."

Without hope, they tramped back down the corridor. Reaching her study, Babs pushed the door open. And then she gave a start that was almost a jump.

For seated by the fire was a girl—but it wasn't Bessie. Two of the missing books were on the table by her side, and the third, rather mutilated, rested in her slim fingers. Babs, staring at her, gave a cry that was almost a yelp. "Jimmy!"

For Jemima Carstairs, of the smooth Eton-crop and the inscrutable smile, it was.

### Jemima is Evasive!



"WHAT cheer, Babs!" said Jemima, and then nonchalantly nodded, just as if reading those missing books was the most ordinary thing in the world. "Enter!" she invited hospitably.

"But, Jimmy, those books!" Babs cried. "We've been looking for them everywhere!"

"Oh, those!" Jemima shrugged. "Banish the furrows of worry and misery from thy girlish brow," she said, "for here that which was lost is found, what? Pretty good history-books, old Spartan, although," Jemima added seriously, "I have detected an error—"

But Babs was not interested in the error Jemima had detected. She was staring strangely at Jemima now, remembering all at once her mysteriousness, her cryptic remark of an hour before.

"Jimmy, where did you find them?" she questioned.

"Well, just here," Jemima said, in surprise. "Right on the old table, you know!"

Clara frowned.

"Honest?"

"Absolutely!" Jemima declared. "Then what," Babs asked, "brought you into this study in the first place?"

Jemima seemed to be taken aback a little by that question. She polished her monocle rapidly.

"Well," she said. "Well—ahem! Difficult sort of question, what? Just looked in," she added breezily. "Just thought, perhaps, I might do something to find the old missing books and, well, here we are!" she said brightly. "Books, a little crumpled, but nevertheless complete and intact."

"And there," Clara sniffed, "the matter ends, eh?"

"Well, doesn't it?" Jemima asked. Clara flushed a little.

"Now, look here, Jimmy, you didn't jolly well come into this study expecting to find the books here, and you know it," she said bluntly. "It's pretty certain now that there's a plot against old Babs—and it's my opinion that you know something!"

"Oh, heaps!" Jemima agreed brightly. "Fountains and mountains of knowledge dwell beneath my old grey hairs, what? If I can help—"

"Jimmy, don't rot!" Clara snorted. Jemima frowned seriously.

"Well, I do my best not to, you know," she said mildly. "Awful for a girl to fade away—"

Clara breathed hard. "You know I don't mean that. I mean, don't be an ass."

"Well, am I?" Jemima looked down at herself. "I observe in myself a biped, not a quadruped. But, Clara, beloved, for your solicitude on my be-

half, I thank thee. I will not decompose, nor, unless I am stricken by some wicked old witch's magic wand, will I turn into an ass—"

"Ha, ha!" Marjorie chuckled involuntarily, while Clara turned rather angrily red.

"I mean," Clara glared, "you know something about this! Somebody's making mischief for Babs. If they go on making mischief, it means that Babs won't go to the convention—"

"Perish the thought!" Jemima murmured.

"And if you want to know what I think, I think you're being jolly fooling and mysterious," Clara went on grimly. "If you know who the girl is, then it's up to you, as a friend of Babs, to say so."

"Well, old Spartan, suppose I say I don't know?"

"You've got a pretty good idea?"

"Aha! Aha!" Jemima shook her head. "But an idea is not everything, is it?" she asked. "My dear old Nurse Anastia—I've told you all about her before, haven't I?—my dear old nurse, she used to say to me, when I sat upon her knee as an infant: 'Jimmy—Jimmy, old boy,' she used to say, 'Some ideas are good, and some ideas are bad, and some aren't either, and most of them are merely flights of inspiration, or imagination.' And so there we are," Jemima announced, as though she had summed up everything in a very complete nutshell and given a satisfactory answer to every possible question. "Now, au revoir!"

And, leaving Clara glaring, Marjorie shaking her head and Babs biting her lip, she walked serenely to the door.

It was apparent from that moment that whatever "idea" Jemima had was one which was going to be carefully and securely treasured beneath that sleek Eton-crop of hers.

### "HELP! HEL-LUP!"

Barbara Redfern awoke with a start.

It was night—past eleven o'clock in fact. A strong wind was making the windows of the Fourth Form dormitory rattle, and the bright, silvery light of the moon filled the room.

Barbara, fitfully dozing, almost leapt as that alarmed voice sounded through the dormitory.

Rather restless had been Babs' semi-slumbers—rather worrying, too. From the moment the unknown girl had crashed into her at the top of the stairs everything had gone wrong.

Miss Bullivant had been particularly nasty when Babs had returned the three missing books, and, pointing out that one had its cover ripped, she had cut Babs' pocket-money by sixpence for the next seven weeks, in order, she said, to pay for the damage; and, thanks to the lines Miss Bullivant had given her, there had been no work on her already delayed programme that evening.

All very worrying. It seemed to Babs, and all Babs' chums now, that somebody was deliberately working for her disgrace. Also, there was Jemima—Jemima, who seemed once again so full of mystery that, if Babs had not known her better, she would have been inclined to believe, as Clara half-suspected, that Jemima had something to do with it all.

With these things on her mind, she had been only fitfully slumbering when the sudden cry from Bessie Bunter's bed made her leap.

"Bessie!" she cried. "Bessie, you chump!"

"Help!" Bessie yelled. "It's Poppy! Look, the villains have got her!"

They're dropping her out of the aeroplane! Cheer up, Poppy, I'm here!" she shrieked. "I'll catch you!"

"Bessie, you chump!" cried Babs—but she smiled, in spite of herself. Bessie, apparently, had not left the adventures of "Poppy Pringle at School" behind, even when she went to bed.

"What the Uncle Sam—" came a sleepy growl from Leila Carroll's bed.

"Here I am!" Bessie cried. "Now hold steady. Whoops! Oh crumbs, I've missed! Oh, dud-dar! Poor Poppy!" And then, as Babs leapt out of bed and shook her by the shoulder, she clutched Babs' arm. "Got you!" she screamed.

"Bessie, you old chump!" Babs cried.

"Eh? Oh!" Bessie awoke. "I say, what's the matter?" she grumbled. "Can't you let a girl sleep in peace? I was having such an exciting dream!"

"Sure you were. I guess we all shared it," Leila Carroll retorted.

"Go to sleep!" grunted Clara Trevlyn.

"Bessie, please!" Babs begged. Bessie grunted. But she turned over, feeling under her pillow before she relaxed again for her beloved book.

She had been reading it under the bedclothes, with the aid of an electric torch—the battery of the torch finally giving out just as Poppy was being hoisted aboard the villain's aeroplane.

Mabel Lynn would probably have something to say about that torch when she found the battery spent—for the torch, unknown to Mabs, had been "borrowed" by Bessie!

Babs, with a smile, turned back. She stopped suddenly, staring at Jemima's bed.

For that bed was empty, the sheets tossed back, and Jemima's dressing-gown and slippers missing from their usual places. Jemima was up, then. Jemima had crept out of the dormitory. Even as Babs stared there came a creak from the door, and Jemima appeared.

She seemed a little taken aback as she found Babs' eyes upon her.

"Oh, hum!" she said. "Evening, Babs! Nice night!"

"Jimmy, where have you been?" Babs asked.

"Oh, out!" Jemima answered vaguely.

"What for?"

"Oh, hunting things, and so forth. Strolling in the studies at night is frightfully exhilarating—what? My old Nurse Anastia used to say— Did I ever tell you about Nurse Anastia, Babs?"

Babs breathed hard. She knew that Jemima would carry on indefinitely about Nurse Anastia if she was encouraged. Carrying on about Nurse Anastia was Jemima's way of cloaking other and more mysterious activities. Jemima, obviously, was playing some very deep game.

But what?

### Sure Proof!



"HAVE to buck up, Babs. Only ten minutes before lessons!"

Thus Mabel Lynn the following morning.

Babs nodded a little breathlessly, and more than a little flurriedly. Thanks to her disturbed night, Babs had awakened neither fit nor fresh that morning. She had, indeed, awakened three minutes after rising bell, and had been reproved by Sarah Harrigan, the sour-tempered prefect, for being the last out of bed.

On top of that, Miss Gilbey had sent her with a message to the Head's house.





"JIMMY!" gasped Babs. "What cheer, Babs?" Jemima beamed, and nonchalantly nodded, just as if it was absolutely expected of her to be in Study No. 4, and just as if reading the missing books was the most ordinary thing in the world. "Enter," she invited hospitably.

and Miss Belling, before assembly, had commandeered her time in order to help her oil the sewing machines for needlework class, and Miss Keys, the drawing mistress, had dispatched her for more paper for drawing lessons.

A hectic morning, in all truth—certainly hectic with the knowledge that Sarah had reported her to Miss Bullivant for oversleeping—Miss Bullivant at present being in charge of the Fourth Form owing to the temporary absence of Miss Charmant.

And now here was first lesson bell ringing, and she still had the Fourth Form class-room duties to attend to.

"Can I lend you a hand?" Mabs asked.

"Oh, please, would you?" Babs asked. "Impot paper—that's here. Mabs, get the key of the class-room cupboard out of the bureau, will you? Top left-hand drawer. Bring it along."

Mabs nodded as she moved to the bureau. Along the corridor Barbara skimmed. Breathlessly she dealt out the clean foolscap sheets, and finished just as second lesson bell went. Now—where was Mabs?

Mabs, frowning, appeared. "Babs, you did say the key was in the top left-hand drawer?"

"Well, yes, I always keep it there," Babs said.

"Well, it isn't there now." Babs gazed in apprehension. Oh, goodness, the delay! No time, however, could be wasted in argument; at any moment now the Fourth would be streaming in. Perhaps rather rudely, she left Mabs standing as she flew back to Study No. 4. Bessie, sitting in the armchair reading her book, blinked up.

"I say, Babs, Poppy's in—" "Blow Poppy!" Babs exclaimed, and ran to the bureau. "Oh, my hat! The key! The key!" she cried. "Bessie, where's the key?"

"Key of what?" Bessie asked. "Poppy had a key. Poppy locked her desk, and the villains got it, you know, and when Poppy came to look for the secret treasure chart she found it gone. Well, it was gone, I mean. She couldn't very well find it gone, could she? Poppy said—"

"Bessie, haven't you seen the key?" Babs almost shrieked.

"No, I haven't seen it," Bessie said. "But Poppy found hers, you know. And guess where she found it, Babs?"

Babs, however, was pulling open drawer after drawer.

"It was hidden in a cake, you know," Bessie said. "Jolly cute weeze, wasn't it? The villains hid it in a cake to smuggle it out of the school. But Poppy, of course, was too clever for them—here, I say, don't run away when I'm talking to you!" she glowered.

But Babs frantically had fled—just as final bell commenced to sound.

For the key was missing—no doubt about that. As Form captain it was her duty to lock the class-room cupboard at night and her duty to open it and distribute such of its contents as were necessary for lessons the following morning. Babs distinctly remembered placing the key in its usual place last night—but of that key now there was no sign.

Somebody had taken it. For a moment Babs thought of Jemima—Jemima, who had got up in the middle of the night, who had confessed that she had been hunting things in studies. But Jemima wouldn't have done that—of course not. Who then?

Most of the Form were assembled when she reached the class-room. She flew to the cupboard, half hoping that the japer who had taken the key would have returned it. But the cupboard was locked.

"What's the matter?" Lydia Crossendale asked, as Babs stared at the cupboard door.

"The key—somebody's taken it!"

"Oh, my hat! Who?"

"That," Babs said grimly, "is what I'd like to know! Some silly idiot has—" And then she jumped.

"Oh, my hat, the Bull! Stand up, everybody!"

Just in time she darted to her place as Miss Bullivant, looking decidedly sour, came in. At once the salutation rang out.

"Good-morning, Miss Bullivant!"

"Good-morning, girls!" Miss Bullivant answered. "You may sit down. The first lesson—Barbara, what is the first lesson?"

"History, Miss Bullivant."

"History—ah! We will use the new books," Miss Bullivant said. "Barbara, I wish to speak to you. You have been reported to me by Sarah Harrigan for oversleeping."

"I—I'm sorry, Miss Bullivant."

"Your regret does not excuse the offence," Miss Bullivant said tartly. "You should remember, Barbara, as Form captain, it is your duty to set the shining example. For punishment you will take a further fifty lines, and let me stress my previous warning, my girl—that I consider you are becoming increasingly unfitted to be at the head of this Form. Well," she added tartly, "why haven't you girls got the books?"

"Pip-please, Miss Bullivant," Babs stammered, crimson-faced, "it—it's about the key of the cupboard—"

"What?"

"It—it's gone!" Babs stammered.

"You mean you've lost it?" Babs gulped.

"Well, it—it's gone from my bureau, Miss Bullivant."

"Carelessness! Carelessness!" Miss Bullivant snapped. "Really, Barbara, I am becoming more and more astonished. What is the matter with you, girl? Why is it that I can leave absolutely nothing to you? Upon my word," Miss Bullivant fumed, "this is becoming ridiculous! Take another fifty lines for carelessness. Now go and fetch Piper and tell him to bring his keys with him."

Babs, almost sick with dismay, went off. Presently she returned with Piper—another ten minutes delay. The porter had duplicate keys, and he swiftly had the cupboard door open. Then Miss Bullivant gave a thin scream.

"Bar-bara!"

"Oh mum-my hat!" stammered Babs, in dumbfounded dismay.

And the class, leaning forward, caught its breath in a sharp hiss.

For what a scene the interior of the cupboard revealed.

It looked at first glance as if a cyclone had raged inside it. The chalk-box was overturned, bottles lay on their sides, and the new history books—those precious books which had already caused Babs so much anxiety—were bundled all in a heap. Some were half open, and one at least had

a torn page hanging loose. Miss Bullivant's face turned livid.

"I see!" she said. "No wonder, Barbara, you found it convenient to lose the key of the cupboard. So this is the disgraceful state in which you left it! I think," she added angrily, "this decides the matter, Barbara. Already I have been too tolerant, too lenient. I can forgive a lot, but this continued neglect of your duties is altogether too much. So far from being fit for Form captain, Barbara, you are a disgrace to that position."

"Oh, I say—" murmured Mabs. "And I shall certainly recommend," Miss Bullivant rumbled on, "that your name be erased from the list of representatives attending the convention on Saturday. Barbara, sit down. I am disgusted with you. Until I have seen Miss Primrose, at all events, some other girl will take on your duties this morning, and that girl," Miss Bullivant went on, "will probably be sent in your place to the convention. Mabel Lynn—"

"Yes, Miss Bullivant?"

"You will hold yourself in readiness to take Barbara's place."

Mabs bit her lip. But her face was a little indignant.

"I'm sorry, Miss Bullivant, but—I couldn't do the convention if you wanted me to," she said. "You see, I—I've got a rehearsal."

"Very well. Sit down." But Miss Bullivant glared. "Clara Trevlyn—"

Clara gulped a little.

"Nor I," she said. "I am playing for the senior school eleven on Saturday."

"Very well. You may sit down. Marjorie Hazeldene—"

"Oh dear! I—I—" Marjorie gulped. Sheer loyalty to Babs would not let her take her place. "I—I shall be helping Mabs, Miss Bullivant."

"I see." Miss Bullivant's eyes narrowed a little, however. "In other words," she said, "being fond of Barbara, you do not wish to deprive her of this treat. Very well. I will not force any girl to do anything against her will, but I am sure there will be plenty of volunteers. Now, girls—"

A stir of excitement ran through the class.

"Who," Miss Bullivant said, "if it becomes necessary, will go to Eastbourne for the Schoolgirls' Convention in Barbara Redfern's place?"

For one tiny instant there was silence. Babs looked round, her eyes gleaming though her face was unhappy. Now, perhaps, she would get a clue to the identity of the mysterious unknown who had been plotting against her!

And then she started and everyone jumped, as coolly, a girl rose from the centre of the room, thoughtfully affixing a monocle in her eye.

"Ahem!" Jemima Carstairs murmured. "May I, Miss Bullivant, put my name forward? I'll go in Barbara's place!"

### Into the Trap!



"WELL, if that doesn't settle the matter, I'd jolly well like to know what does!" Clara Trevlyn wrathfully snorted after lessons. "It's Jimmy hitting against me?"

who wants to go to Eastbourne instead of you, Babs, and this is her way of working it. Well—and Clara's eyes glinted—"if she thinks she's going to get away with it, she's jolly well going

to find she's wrong! I'm off to have a chinwag to Miss Jemima Carstairs!"

And Clara looked grim. Clara looked stubborn. Her whole expression, indeed, seemed to suggest that the promised chinwag would develop into a first-class row.

But Babs worriedly shook her head. As the impulsive Tomboy tempestuously started for the door, she caught her arm.

"Clara, no. Wait a minute. I can't believe—"

"Oh rats! Actions speak louder than words!" Clara retorted huffily. "I'll own I'm surprised, but there's no getting away from facts. Jemima's shown her hand—"

"Jimmy hasn't!" Babs shook her head. "We've had doubts of Jimmy before, and we've always been wrong. Jimmy wouldn't play a low down game like this. Jimmy, as usual, has got some mysterious game on."

Clara paused.

"But what? Dash it—"

"I don't know. Who does?" Babs shook her head. "Only one person can answer that question, and that's Jimmy herself. I'm just as much in the dark as you are."

Clara frowned.

"Then you still think it's somebody else hitting at you?"

"Yes," Babs said.

"But Jimmy? Jimmy knows something!" Mabs put in, and Bessie, who was hissing in excitement as she followed Poppy Pringle's latest desperate adventures from the depths of the study armchair, suddenly looked up. "I think Jimmy ought to be made to explain," Mabs said indignantly.

"But why," Babs asked wearily, "waste time and breath? I've already talked to Jimmy. She admits she knows something, but what that something is wild horses won't drag out of her until she thinks fit. In any case," Babs added, "it's not official yet that Jimmy will be chosen to go to Eastbourne in my place. The Bull's got to see Primmy about that first. But the fact remains, somebody—either with the idea of bagging the convention trip, or simply to make things awkward for me—is doing a fair amount of plotting. If we only knew who that was—"

"If!" frowned Mabs.

"I say, you know—" Bessie put in, rising from her chair.

"Well, don't!" Clara grunted. "Get on with your book."

"But, I say, I've an idea." Bessie blinked up in glowering indignation. "It's a jolly good idea, too, and quite original, you know! I've just been reading it in this book."

Babs sighed.

"Bessie, don't worry—"

"But this is an idea!" Bessie wrathfully asserted. "It's something Poppy did, you know! In this book Poppy wanted to trap the villains, so Poppy made out that she'd hidden the treasure-chart in some place so that the villains would go after it. And they did, you know—except that one of them hit Poppy over the head with a club before she recognised him!"

"My hat!" cried Babs.

"What—"

"Bessie's got it!" Babs laughed excitedly. "Listen a minute—this is the wheeze!" she cried breathlessly. "Supposing we lay a trap for the girl who's hitting against me?"

"Well, just supposing?" Clara sniffed. "Sounds dead easy—I don't think. How do you mean?"

"I'm just thinking," Babs pursed

her lips. "Whoever's working against me is bound to be on the look-out to get me into some fresh bother. Well, supposing we make that easy for her? Supposing I collect the essay sheets and leave them in this study, and supposing, Mabs, after lessons this afternoon, you remind me, in front of the whole class, that the essay sheets are still here."

"Well, then"—and Babs nodded eagerly, as the scheme took concrete shape in her mind—"supposing I say 'Oh rats to the essay sheets! We'll attend to them after prep!' and stroll off without even going into the study?"

Mabs blinked.

"The girl, whoever she is, will hear that," continued Babs. "Aha!" she thinks. "Here's another good chance of hitting at Babs! We're out and the study's empty. In she comes to have a smack at the essay sheets. And that," Babs gurgled, "is where she gets her big surprise. For when she comes in, we three will be hiding behind the screen here, and then we've caught her!"

"But, look here, where do I come in?" demanded Bessie.

"You don't. You stop out—with Poppy!" Mabs chuckled. "All the same, it is a jolly good idea, and cheers to old Bess' Poppy for inspiring it. Right-ho," she said, "we'll do it! But mum's the word!"

"Mum as a gatepost!" Clara agreed.

And the little scheme was duly carried out. Fortunately, that afternoon the Fourth had no contact with Miss Bullivant, mild Miss Wright being in charge of the class.

Lessons came to an end, and Miss Wright gave the order to dismiss. It was then that Clara, coached in her part, said:

"Babs, coming down for practice?"

"Yes, rather!" Babs said.

"But," Mabel Lynn interrupted, "Babs, what about those essay sheets in the study? You're supposed to hand them to Miss Bullivant. Hadn't you better see to those first?"

"Oh, bother the essay sheets!" Babs said loudly, and there was no doubt that every girl in the Form heard. "The Bull won't want them till tea, anyway. Never mind the old essay sheets! Come on!"

And Babs was the first to lead the way out of the Form-room, Clara and Mabs crowding on her heels. Down the corridor, past Study No. 4 they went, and down into Big Hall, and so into the quadrangle. Having reached that point, however, they doubled back, using the prefects' entrance to re-enter the school.

"Now, come on!" Babs said.

Her eyes were gleaming. It was impossible, if what they suspected was right, that the plot shouldn't succeed. Back they crept up the back stairs, and, reaching the Fourth Form corridor, peered down it before sprinting for Study No. 4. That apartment they reached, and Babs, pushing the door open, breathed a sigh of relief as she noticed that the essay sheets she had left on the table were still in position and obviously untouched.

"Good, so far! Now behind the screen," she said.

They dodged behind the screen, and to the little tear in the fabric—the result of an accident some weeks ago—Babs applied one eye. Five—ten minutes went by.

"It's a flop!" grimaced Clara.

"Rats! Give her time," Babs said.

They waited. Three—four—five further minutes went by. Then suddenly there was a soft sound outside the door.

"Hist!" breathed Mabs,



They held their breath. Now the handle of the door turned; the lock squeaked. Now they felt the draught of air as the door was cautiously pushed open. They heard a quick intake of breath and the soft thud as the door was swiftly closed again. Their hearts thumped.

Then—  
"Oh, mum-my hat!" Babs gasped. "It's—"

"Jemima!" roared Clara, as she wrenched back the screen. "Jimmy, you traitor!"

Jemima Carstairs it was. Jemima was at the table, and Jemima had in her hands the essay sheets which Babs had planted there as a trap. For a moment her usual calm seemed to have deserted her. Her face turned scarlet.

"Jimmy!" Babs cried.  
"Jimmy, you—you rotter!" burst out Mabel Lynn.

"Ho! Hum!" Jemima groped for her eyeglass. "Fancy," she murmured, "meeting like this!" And she put down the essays. "Pretty nifty little plot—what?" she beamed. "Congratulations for the brain-wave, Babs, old Spartan!"

"And pretty niftily you fell into it!" Clara glared. "Just a bit too clever for you once in a way, weren't we? I think," she added bitterly, "that this proves things pretty obviously, doesn't it? Deny now that you're the girl behind all Babs' trouble!"

Jemima sighed.  
"Alas!" she said.

"You admit it?" cried Mabs.  
"No, no! Jump not," Jemima said soothingly, "to the naughty old conclusions. I merely heard dear old Babs say something about the essays in class—"

"And so," Clara said scornfully, "you decided to mess them up as you messed up Rosa's and the other girls' lines?"

Jemima glanced at her queerly.  
"You think that?" she asked.

"Well, what else do you expect me to think?"

"Mabs beloved, dost thou think that also?"

"Oh, stuff!" Mabs said, and reddened. "Well, yes, Jimmy, I'm sorry. I never thought of it of you, but—well, dash it, facts must speak for themselves. You must admit you showed your hand this morning when you volunteered to go to Eastbourne in Babs' place?"

"Oh!" said Jemima, and took her monocle, thoughtfully polished it, and then glanced at Babs.

"And what does our Babs think about it?"

Babs looked at her perplexedly. Red-handed they had caught Jemima, and yet Babs wasn't at all convinced.

Jemima might be baffling, mysterious, but Jemima also had always been the soul of honour, the most loyal of friends. She said:

"Well, you must admit it looks jolly funny, Jimmy."

"So does Clara, but she isn't—what?" Jemima retorted gravely; whereat Clara flushed and glared.

"But, getting back to the old brass tacks, Babs, dost believe your Uncle Jimmy guilty of this foul and fearful crime?"

Babs looked grim.  
"Before I answer that question, perhaps you'll answer one," she said.

"Why did you come here?"

"That," Jemima sighed, "I've just answered, fair one. I came to see these essay sheets."

"And why," demanded Clara, "should you want the essay sheets, if not to meddle with them?"

"Ah!" Jemima said profoundly.

"Jimmy, that calls for an answer," Babs said.

"There are three," Jemima murmured. "Three—yes. And there may be, you know, a fourth before long. But the fourth at the merry old moment is still a question."

The three stared at her.  
"And what," sniffed Clara, "do you mean by that?"

"Well," Jemima said thoughtfully, "Answer No. 1: Fingers. Answer No. 2: Ink! Answer No. 3: Oil. Answer No. 4: What motive? Motive was a bit puzzling until this moment, but I fancy I see a glimmer of light in the murky old darkness."

"And that," Clara growled, "is your explanation?"

"What—ho!"

"Well"—and Clara glowered—"if you want to know what I think—you're potty! Talking like a crossword puzzle doesn't alter facts, and the facts are still there. Either you are playing up against Babs, or you know the girl who is; and if you know the girl who is, it's up to you to speak out. Are you going to speak out?"

"Or are you," Mabs added angrily, "still going on being mysterious, mean, and horrid?"

Jemima sighed wistfully.

"I observe," she said sadly, "I am still misunderstood. Woe that it should fall to my unhappy lot to bear these great and terrible burdens. Wouldst that I could tell the fair maidens the secrets of my inmost thoughts. But as Plato or Gladstone or one of those learned old johnnies said: 'There is a time and a place for everything.' The place," Jemima said seriously, "is not here. The time has not yet arrived. Till it does, fair comrades, wait. In the meantime, profit, I prithee, by the pearls of wisdom which have fallen from my Solomon-like lips."

And leaving the three glaring perplexedly, she wandered towards the door.

### Asking for Trouble!



WELL, it was rot, of course—utter piffing rot. Babs, if she were

puzzled, did not, and could not, believe that Jemima was the girl plotting

against her. Neither, in their own secret minds, could Clara and Mabs. And yet, there it was.

There was the chain of evidence and of circumstances. There was the undeniable fact that Jemima had been the very first to volunteer to take Babs' place in the Eastbourne convention, and Jemima's evasiveness when she was asked questions which could surely have been answered directly. What was one to make of the girl?

Babs had worried about Jemima all the evening. She had worried still more since Miss Primrose had sent for her, and Miss Primrose, with Miss Bullivant standing stiffly at her side, had warned Barbara that if she did not pay more attention to her duties her name would certainly be withdrawn from the convention. Such a queer way Jemima had of saying things. What did she mean by those three answers?

Fingers? What fingers? Whose fingers? Where on earth did fingers come in?

And ink? What had ink got to do with the campaign against Babs? The oil was more easily understood. That, obviously, was a direct reference to the spoiling of Rosa & Co.'s lines.

Then there was the other word. Motive. Twice Jemima had said that. If she meant the motive for those tricks upon Babs, then that surely was clear enough? The motive, obviously, was to get her out of the Eastbourne convention. But apparently it was not sufficiently obvious to Jemima.

It was a puzzle, and worriedly Babs thought over it. In vain she tried to think of a girl who might be the unknown enemy. The finger of suspicion pointed only at Jemima.

The one girl Babs had met before the accident to the books at the head of Big Hall stairs was Jemima. The girl she had found in possession of the missing books was Jemima. Jemima had been out of her dormitory and downstairs the night before the key of the class-room cupboard was taken—that key now most mysteriously having been found by one of the maids in the process of clearing out the room, just as if it might have been thrown away after the cupboard door had been locked. Finally, it was Jemima who had been caught in the trap Babs had prepared.

And yet—and yet—  
Long that evening had Babs talked over the matter with Mabs, but Mabs was not inclined to find defences for Jemima. For an hour after going to bed Babs had racked her brains, but no solution to the mystery was forthcoming. Only one fact seemed to stand out at all clearly, and that did not help very much. If Jemima herself was not the guilty girl, Jemima had a pretty full knowledge of who the guilty girl was. Why, then, should Jemima not speak?

Anyway, the worst blow had not yet fallen. Miss Primrose, good sport as she was, had given Babs another chance, though the giving of that chance had been accompanied by a serious warning. In the meantime, Babs still had a thousand and one things to do, and, thanks to the interruptions which had occurred, had had no chance whatever of rehearsing her schoolgirl scene in which she and Jemima played the leading parts.

Mabs, also, was getting frightfully anxious about that part of the concert programme, for time was growing short. After breakfast next morning she tackled Babs.

"Look here, we've simply got to do that," she said. "We've got to, Babs. I'd like to spend the whole afternoon in rehearsing it—and even that wouldn't give us too much time. If I can get Jimmy to give the afternoon up, will you?"

"Why, yes!" Babs agreed. But she bit her lip. A whole half-holiday given up to the rehearsing of one item was asking a lot when she was so pressed for time herself. However, dear old Mabs' play must come first.

So off went Mabs to Jemima, to find that girl in Study No. 3.

"What cheer, old Spartan?" she greeted Mabs breezily. "Is it that you would have an audience of Uncle Jimmy? Park the old body on your wicker-bottomed bench"—indicating a cane-seated chair. "Now let the trouble gush forth from thy ruby lips."

"Jimmy, this is serious," Mabs said. "About the rehearsal—"

"Aha!" Jemima said owlishly.

"I've arranged with Babs this afternoon to go through the school scene. Babs is up to her eyes in work, but she's agreed if you'll agree. Will you?"

"Mabel, beloved, my hand on't!" Jemima said extravagantly. "Never shall it be said a Carstairs let down a pal. The show must go on, and all that sort of stuff—what? Barring accidents—and who, forsooth, may tell what

accidents will arise?—you can count on me."

"That's a promise?" Mabs asked.

"As ever was," Jemima beamed.

Mabs nodded. She was satisfied. Off she went again. Assembly bell rang then, and after assembly came lessons—with Miss Bullivant once again taking first period. It was evident from the start that Miss Bullivant was in a bad temper.

"No fidgeting, no whispering," she said grimly, when the class had got out its books. "Barbara, I trust you have completed all your duties?"

"Yes, Miss Bullivant."

"Very well. Take out your arithmetic books. Lydia Crossendale, take twenty lines for making faces at Clara Trevlyn!"

"I wasn't making faces!" Lydia said indignantly.

"I saw you. Take a further twenty for denying the fact."

"But I tell you—" Lydia cried vibrantly.

"Take another twenty for daring to argue with me!" Miss Bullivant stormed. "Now sit down!"

"Phew!" Mabs whistled, and gazed at Lydia as she sat down, for not usual was it that the snob of the Fourth courted trouble in this way. "Lydia's asking for it!"

It seemed that Lydia was. For before another ten minutes had passed Lydia dropped her pencil-box on the floor with a loud bang. That meant another twenty lines.

"But it was a pure accident!" Lydia indignantly protested.

"Accidents of that nature," Miss Bullivant said wrathfully, "are things to be avoided. The twenty lines are given to you, Lydia, for not having avoided it. Now please be silent."

"But it's not fair—" cried Lydia.

"Lydia, how dare you! Put a black mark in your conduct book. The next occasion I have to reprimand you will mean detention for this afternoon."

Lydia sulkily sat down. But her eyes were gleaming. Lydia, like Miss Bullivant, was in a bad temper that morning, and when Lydia was in one of those moods she was apt to forget her usual crafty caution.

Her eyes burned as Miss Bullivant turned to the blackboard again, and, with a spiteful glitter in their depths, she picked up her ruler. Breaking a bit off the end of her ruler, she used the severed piece as a pellet, placing it on the end of the ruler, and taking deliberate aim at the back of Miss Bullivant's head.

"Lydia, you fool!" hissed Mabs. "Do you want—"

And just as Lydia let the pellet go she stretched out a hand. Too late! The pellet, however, shot off at a tangent, and from Bessie Bunter came a howl as she slapped a hand to the back of her head.

"Wow! I'm shot!" she yelled. "Poppy, the villains have me! Wow!"

"Bessie!" cried Miss Bullivant.

"I've been fired at!" the plump duffer hooted.

"Sit down—sit down! You foolish girl. I—" And then Miss Bullivant's eyes gleamed as she saw the piece of rubber that lay on Bessie's desk, and, wise in the ways of the Fourth Form, held it up. "Who shot this at Bessie?" she asked.

Silence. "Who shot this?" Miss Bullivant repeated grimly.

There was a rustle, and everyone blinked as Lydia rose to her feet. It wasn't usual for Lydia to own up like this.

"It—it was me!" she muttered.

"I!" Jemima corrected. "One must say 'it was I.' Remember the rules of the old grammar—"

"Jemima twenty lines for talking!"

Miss Bullivant rapped. "Lydia, you are detained. Report for special detention task at two o'clock this afternoon."

"Cute—what?" Jemima murmured.

"What did you say, Jemima?" snapped Miss Bullivant.

"Oh, nothing!" Jemima said.

"Nothing! Just expressing my admiration—"

"Jemima," Miss Bullivant barked—and Mabs blinked apprehensively—"will you kindly cease to make idiotic remarks? Take twenty lines. If you are not careful you will find yourself detained with Lydia."

"Oh, I say, old bean—" Jemima demurred.

"What? Did—did you call me o-old bean?"

"Well, you know—"

"Jemima! Be silent! How dare you argue with me?"

"Oh, my hat, Jimmy!" Mabs whispered, in agony.

Jemima was heading right for detention—and Jemima must have known that.

But Jemima pretended not to hear.

"Argue? Tut, tut!" Jemima said gravely. "Never, never shall it be said that a child of my tender years should argue with her wise mistress!"

There was a titter from the class. Miss Bullivant reddened.

"Jemima, if you are trying to be insolent—"

"Perish the thought!" Jemima said stoutly. "Tut, tut, and mutt, mutt, as my dear old Nurse Anastasia used to say. Have I ever told you about her, Miss Bullivant? Frightfully wise and dear old topper, my Nurse Anastasia. She used to say to me, she used to say, 'Jimmy, my howling old infant—'"

"Ha ha, ha!"

"Oh Jimmy!" cried Mabs. "Jimmy, I—"

"Mabel, silence!" Miss Bullivant rapped. "Jemima, if it is your desire to create a disturbance in this class, you are succeeding. Please be silent! Another word, and I detain you!"

"Yes, But, Miss Bullivant, I haven't finished telling you about my dear old nurse—"

"Jemima!"

"She used to say—"

"Jemima enough—enough!" Miss Bullivant almost raved. "I have warned you. In defiance of that warning, you still persist. My patience is at an end. You are detained this afternoon!"

"Oh!" gasped Mabs. "But, Miss Bullivant—"

"Mabel, be quiet, otherwise, I will detain you, as well!"

Mabs slumped back, her face bitter. Jemima had got herself detained. Jemima could most easily have escaped that detention; but Jemima had acted all along as if she wanted to be detained. And Jemima knew how desperately badly she wanted her rehearsal. Jemima had promised that she would do her best to attend that rehearsal. Now—

Was any reliance ever to be placed on Jemima Carstairs?

In brooding disappointment, she waited until break came. Then, in the passage, she quiveringly faced Jemima.

"Thank you!" she said bitterly.

"Thank you, Jimmy! So that's the way you keep your promise! I thought you said you'd do your best to save this afternoon for me?"

"Ahém! Well—" Jemima demurred.

"You promised?"

"I did—yes," Jemima sighed regretfully. "But I did say barring accidents," she reminded Mabs.

"That was no accident. You know jolly well you could have avoided that. I believe," Mabs said bitterly, "you got yourself jolly well detained on purpose!"

Jemima gazed at her oddly.

"Strange!" she said. "Strange! How transparent all my little wiles do seem, and how grievous am I misunderstood. 'Tis a hard life, and a tough old world—what?"

Mabs glared.

"I think," she said bitterly, "you're a silly idiot, Jemima! And jolly mean, too! Anyway, I'm not relying on you any more, and if you don't want to act in the play, why can't you say so?"

"But I do," Jemima said. "Mabs, beloved, if you only knew how I am dying to act in the play. Whoops, the girl's walking out on me! Mabs—Mabs—" she cried.

But Mabs, with a furious glare, had stridden on her way.

## Two in Detention!



"TOUGH!" Jemima said.

Grunt! from Lydia Crossendale.

"Pretty awful, being detained on such a fine afternoon," Jemima went on.

"Oh, shut up!" Lydia said fumingly.

"Pretty terrible, being confined within the walls of a dreary old classroom," Jemima went on sympathetically.

Lydia gave another exasperated grunt.

Jemima sighed as she nibbled the end of her pen. Wistfully she looked towards the classroom window. Bright and sunny, with the happy voices of girls winging in from the playing fields, it was an afternoon, truly, to make detention as irksome as a prison sentence.

But there it was. Jemima and Lydia were detained. They were sharing close detention, which meant that they were locked in the Form-room with a special essay to write, and no prefect or mistress in attendance.

"Going to be a nice week-end—what?" Jemima observed chattily.

"Doing anything special, Lydia?"

"Yes, I am; I'm going home," Lydia grunted. "I've got a week-end's leave—my pater thinks I ought to rest up before the next examination. Now shut up!"

"Lucky you!" Jemima sighed, and at last got down to her work.

Lydia glanced at her downbent head, and then suddenly she sat up with a jerk.

"Oh!" she cried, clasping a hand to her face.

"Toothache, old thing?" Jemima asked considerably.

"Yes."

"Fierce old pain methinks," Jemima sighed. "Got it bad, old top?"

"Oh, awful!" Lydia said, and screwed up her face. "Oh goodness! Oh dear! Oh—oh—oh! It—it often comes on like this," she added. And—

"Ow, wow! J-Jimmy, I—I wonder if you could do something for me?"

"Anything," Jemima said gallantly, "in the cause of suffering!"

"At the tuckshop Auntie Jones sells some special tincture. It—it's the only stuff that will do the toothache any good. Oh dear! Jimmy, waw-would—"



could you—be a sport and nip off and get me some? You'll have to get through the window, of course."

Jemima sighed. She looked at the window and rose.

"Lydia beloved, I go," she said. "I alone will make the journey. Write the not in dreadful agony, but give me ten minutes and all will be well."

"Thuth-thanks," Lydia said. "Mum-mind you don't get caught, though."

Jemima smiled. After a careful look round she climbed through the window. She dropped on the lawn, and then, once out of Lydia's sight, raced for the servants' quarters, and like a hare skimmed up the deserted passages towards the door of the Fourth Form classroom.

That door, of course, was locked, and the key was in Miss Bullivant's possession. Jemima looked round. Then she stooped. One eye she applied to the keyhole, and for a full five minutes remained in that position, staring into the room. At last, with a smile, she straightened.

"Aha!" she said.

She darted out once again and down to the tuckshop. Three minutes later Lydia, still apparently working on her essay, was startled by a soft tap at the window, and Jemima, her face inscrutable, climbed in.

She chuckled.

"Got it!" she said. "And nary a one the wiser. Here we are, old Spartan—all safe and sound! Seems to me," she added brightly, "that all will soon be well—what?"

"Thuth-thanks," stuttered Lydia, and perhaps wondered for a moment at the strange smile on the face of the other girl as she took the bottle from her.

"WELL, I'm bothered if I'm going to have the worry of trying to get Jimmy up to scratch!" Mabel Lynn announced. "Everybody else is doing topingly. Babs, I'm going to cut the school scene."

Babs nodded. She had half-expected that, though she was sorry. In her opinion the school scene for the concert was going to be one of the best things Mabs had ever done.

The scene, once again, was Study No. 4, and the time was after tea. Rehearsal during the afternoon had gone with a swing. Everybody was really putting her back into things.

Babs, at the moment, was getting on with her programme design; Mabs was making some last-minute notes concerning the stage decoration; while Bessie, in order to be alone with the increasingly breathless adventures of Poppy Pringle, had meandered off to the library.

"It's a pity," said Babs, "but if Jimmy just won't get down to it, I don't see what else you can do. Anyway, if she does come up to the scratch, I know my lines."

"And who says," a cheerful voice asked at the door, "that I don't know mine? What cheer?" And Jemima, just as if nothing had happened, beamed in, one of the new history books in her hand. "Things go off well, old Mabs?"

"Yes, but no thanks to you!" Mabs said offendedly.

"Frightfully sorry I couldn't be present—what?" Jemima said. "Not exactly inspiring in detention, either! Grinding away at the old essay while the birds trill and carol and sing la, la, la, outside, and all that sort of merry old rot! Busy, Babs beloved?"

"Very," Babs said a little shortly.

"Pity," Jemima said.

"Eh? Why?"

"Well—" Jemima shook her head.

"Mind if I take the weight off my corns?" she added, and sat down. "I've just been having a merry old conversation with our Bullivant miss, you know. I do think that it's one's duty to bring to a mistress' notice a serious mistake, don't you?"

Babs blinked.

"Jimmy, what are you driving at?"

"Just this." Jemima opened the history book. "Remember, old Spartan, I commented on a printer's error in this book? The thing's worried me, you know, and I felt it my duty to point it out to Miss Bullivant. The error in question," Jemima murmured, "is the date of the Battle of Hastings. The date given in the book is 1966."

Mabs stared.

"And you've pointed that out to Miss Bullivant?"

"What else? One must tread the path of duty—what?" Jemima said

knew I had this programme to finish? I suppose you know I've got a hundred lines to do? I suppose you know that those books are all over the place and will take a jolly good half an hour to collect, apart from running through them. We all know about the printer's error, but nobody thought of pointing out a piffing little thing like that to Miss Bullivant. Anyway, you can go and eat coke!" she added crossly. "The printer's error can wait until afterwards!"

"But dear old Miss Bullivant—" Jemima murmured.

"Rats to dear old Miss Bullivant!" Babs snapped.

"Thank you!" said Miss Bullivant's voice at the door; and, as Babs wheeled, that mistress came in. "Barbara, you will take fifty lines for that disrespectful remark, and let me once again impress upon you, my girl, that,



"BUT this is an idea!" Bessie wrathfully asserted. "In this book Poppy wanted to trap the villains, so Poppy made out that she'd hidden the treasure chart in some place so that the villains would go after it!" Clara and Mabs sighed wearily, but Babs—"My hat!" she cried. "Bessie's got it! Listen a minute, this is the wheeze."

seriously. "Pretty dreadful to make out that the Battle of Hastings won't be fought for another twenty-seven years or so. However," Jemima said, with a sigh of relief, "the difficulty is now to be overcome."

Babs stared.

"Dear old Miss Bullivant says that the mistake must be altered at once," Jemima went on. "She says to me, she says: 'Jimmy, old boy, rush along as fast as your old and tottering legs will carry you to the study of Barbara Redfern and point out this serious error to her.' And then she said," Jemima went on, "she said: 'And, Jimmy, old totnot, tell old Spartan Babs, as captain of the Form, to collect all the books again and go through them, altering the offending 9 to an unoffending and strictly correct 0.' And so, lo and behold!" Jemima beamed, while Mabs glared and Babs stared in stupefaction, "here I am."

"In other words," Mabs said, "you've been trying to make work for Babs."

"Alas! if I had thought of that—"

Babs coloured a little.

"I suppose," she said bitterly, "you

as Form captain, it is your duty to set an example! I happened to hear what you were saying when I came in. I am glad to see, at least," she added, with a look at Jemima, "that one girl in this Form has a sense of what is right and proper. You will carry out my orders, Barbara, and you will carry them out at once!"

"Ahem!" Jemima said. "Ahem! Dear old Miss Bullivant, may—may I help?"

"If you wish, certainly," Miss Bullivant said. "And, Barbara, please remember, while those books are in your possession, I hold you responsible for their care! Get to work at once!"

She rustled out. Babs bit her lip. Mabs glared. Furious and bitter both the looks they flung at Jemima then. Jemima coughed.

"Well, shall we start?" she remarked mildly. "All hands to the merry old pumps—what?"

"Oh, you—you—" choked Mabs. "Oh rats! Come on! Let's get to it!"

(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.*



**A**RE you all ready and waiting for Easter now?

Have you got "something new" tucked away to wear on Easter Sunday? Are you saving up a special hunger for Hot Cross Buns on Good Friday?

Are all the gardening tools polished and waiting for a good attack on the garden over the holiday?

Our garden is looking really quite sweet.

We've had the garage painted, and it now looks almost startlingly green. Whether it's the paint—or whether it's the weather, I don't know—but certainly it seems to have gone all top-sided.

Mother thinks it's time we had a new garage, but father says it looks artistic that way—so there you are.

I've just realised that perhaps it's feeling a bit weak because the coal-shed has been removed from one side. The coal-shed never was a thing of great beauty, so father said it was to be moved.

The result was that the roof and walls were moved—leaving the floor and coal and coke behind! So we had to have a new coal-shed.

Still, apart from these tragedies, the garden really is looking well.

Our vicar came the other day when mother was gardening, and together they strolled around, talking about parish magazines, mothers' meetings, and women's institutes—or I suppose so.

The vicar also admired our flowers. So next Saturday mother is sending your Patricia and her small brother, Heath (or Heatherington in full) round to the church with flowers. And I expect we shall be able to help with the decorations for Easter Day.

I shall love doing that, for I adore arranging flowers.

## ● For Buttonhole Wear

Don't you admire really well-cut coats and skirts on schoolgirls? They always give that smart, "tailored" look, somehow, which is particularly attractive at this time of the year.

Of course, there are lots of new "suits" (to borrow a word from the menfolk) or "costumes" as they used to be called, around just now.

The ever-popular grey flannel takes some beating, I always think, and looks lovely worn with a navy blue jersey—hand-knitted, of course—and navy blue hat and shoes.

Or canary yellow looks sweet with it—except that you can't buy canary shoes yet!

But one thing a tailored jacket must have—and that's a fob in the buttonhole.

I've got one on my Spring suit that is much admired. It's a compass. (No, not a pair of compasses, for drawing circles, but a real compass that tells you where North is if ever you want to know and there's no weather-vane around to tell you.)

You must yourself have seen those watches that are meant to be worn on the lapels of coats—"très sporting," as I saw a label marked in a Paris shop window last year!

Anyhow, if you think you deserve a really snappy little fob to wear in the lapel of your tailored coat, here's one you can make very simply.

You'll remember that I told you before to buy yourself half a yard of coloured felt—because this was going to come in very handy for making all sorts of novelties.

Well, the "watch" in the picture is made from two circles of felt, one smaller than the other—one a penny size and one a ha'penny, say.

Stitch these together with twelve stitches to represent the hour hands of a clock. Now mark the hands—not forgetting that one should be longer than the other.

Tack the "clock face" on to a piece of ribbon and fix a pin at the top for attaching to your coat.

The other little "fob" in the picture is very cute and seasonable.

It consists of a piece of cardboard cut to the shape of an egg. This is covered with silver paper or with silk and the little chick is perched on top and stitched there. A piece of ribbon can be glued to the back and a pin attached for fastening.

## ● Many Varieties

Isn't it amazing the number of different kinds of bread there are! I wonder how many you know.

There's the "tin" loaf—which is supposed to be the best for making crisp and crunchy toast.

You all know the "sandwich" loaf, of course—the long square-shaped one which makes sandwiches without any waste at all.

French bread and Vienna bread are growing very popular to-day in this country. It's the lovely crust that people like so. They are, I think a favourite bread for lunch and supper time.

Then there's the good old "Cottage loaf," the one we all know and love—just right for every meal.

In addition we have the fancy loaves. There's milk bread, currant bread, sultana bread, and date bread—all of which make the most delightful change as a tea-time dainty.

So next time you answer the door to the baker and he asks you what sort of loaf you'll have to-day, you'll know all about them, won't you?

And here is a tip that many people find useful over Easter. If bread goes stale, it can be made crisp and new again by soaking in milk or water and then being popped in the oven for a short time.

## ● We All Do It!

Do you bite the end of your pencil?

It's a habit that lots of people have. When I was at school, people used to say that it showed you had a bad temper.

But I don't think it does. For one of the nicest people I know bites his pen so hard that he once bit right through the cap of his fountain-pen, and then right through the end of the pen itself! And he's got the temper of an angel!

All the same, I certainly don't think well-chewed pencils—or pens, either—look at all pretty. It isn't a bad idea, if you want to break yourself of the habit, to fix a rubber cap over the pencil end. You can buy them at two for a penny.

Not only are they jolly useful for rubbing out—but the rubber does act as a sort of reminder every time you put it in your mouth.

## ● For Easter Pennies

How do you like this cheery little purse?

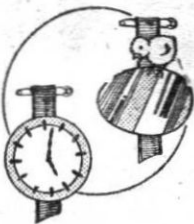
It is made of two pieces of material cut to the shape of an Easter Egg.

They are joined together, and a zipper is stitched across the centre to make the opening. The decoration is a little Easter chick, which is very easy to sew in yellow cotton or wool, for his head and body consists only of two circles with legs attached.

Remember your SCHOOLGIRL will be on sale on Thursday next week, in honour of Easter, won't you? Two whole days earlier than usual—lucky you!

Your friend

Patricia





Easter-time is—

## GARDEN-TIME

What the schoolgirl can do in her very own  
—or the family—garden over Easter



EVERYBODY knows that it's lucky to work in the garden at Easter-time—especially if the weather's fine, when you might get brown as well! So what can the schoolgirl do to help?

If you're like me, then you vote for planting. There's something extra-fascinating about sowing seeds and planting seedlings, knowing that a riot of bloom (we hope!) will result in the summer.

Most of your spring bulbs will have finished blooming by now. Some people leave a certain number in the ground for next spring. But other gardeners believe firmly in removing the bulbs to allow space for the summer flowers.

In planting, whether by seeds or more-developed plants, it is wise to remember that each plant or group of seeds requires plenty of space.

A little sand placed in the hole you have prepared to receive the plant is very useful if the ground is clayey, as so much of it is in and around London.

Plants should be watered gently after planting—but not when the sun is shining full on them. Wait till the sun has moved around or until the evening time, and use

a watering can with a "rose" on the end, for this is the nearest approach to the gentle fall of rain and much better for the tender new plants than a drenching.

## SOWING

You can buy penny packets of seeds in all garden shops now. Study the packets to see that you are buying "Annuals"—that is, flowers which will bloom this summer—and take your choice.

It tells you on most seed packets to what height that particular plant grows. So you must bear this in mind when doing your sowing.

All tall-growing flowers should go to the back of the flower bed, against the fence, and the shorter ones in the front, until you come to the border plants like Lobelia and Sweet Alyssum.

Gladioli corms, Dahlia tubers, and Chrysanthemums should also be planted now: so should Wallflowers, Forget-me-not and Foxglove.

## PLENTY TO DO

I expect father will do the pruning work in the garden—for this is rather skilled. The Standard Roses should be pruned, so should all shrubs that have finished flowering.

In the kitchen garden there is also plenty of planting to be done.

Potatoes, Carrots, French beans, Peas, and Savoy Cabbage—all these can go in at Easter-time.

If you are lucky enough to have fruit trees in your garden you'll want to be able to look forward to a good crop later on! So blossom should be protected where possible.

Herring netting is used for covering bushes and shrubs and small trees by a

good many gardeners—but old net curtain material does the trick quite well—even if it does make the garden look a bit like a perpetual washing day!

## LAWN CARE

If the lawn is looking a bit tired after the winter, it is now that new seed should be sown. If, on the other hand, the grass is good, now is the time to start mowing the lawn.

Talking about lawns reminds me of a mistake that is made quite frequently.

Many people think that the lawn should be rolled—with the roller—after every downpour of rain.

This is unwise, a gardening expert tells me. He says that rolling after heavy rain, when the ground is soaking can do more harm than good, for it makes the lawn uneven and bumpy. (You know yourself how even the heels of your shoes sink into very wet grass, leaving marks.)

Lawns should be rolled, of course, before being mowed. And the best time to do this is after a *light* shower, when only the surface is wet.

So that's a tip you can pass on to father—unless, of course, he is an expert and knows it already.

Perhaps father won't let you touch his precious shears, but don't forget that hedges should also be clipped now.

So whether you're a really expert gardener or whether you're just hoping to be one, you can see that there is tons to do in the garden. April—and Easter—is, in fact, the gardener's busiest time.

And even if you aren't very expert at sowing, mowing, pruning, or clipping you can still put in some very useful work at weeding, or tidying the tool-shed, can't you?

## LITTLE GIFTS FOR EASTER

*Tiny presents that the schoolgirl can make for her friends*

THE little novelty at the top here is a pen-wiper and pen-holder combined.

To make it, you must cut several pieces of material to the shape of the broken egg, choosing a pretty material for the top piece.

Stitch them on to a length of ribbon or tape. Now cut the little chick out from a piece of yellow felt and stitch him also to the ribbon, as shown.

Make a loop in the ribbon, slip a bright new pen under the chick, and the gift is ready. It is the egg-part that is used as the pen-wiper, of course.

## SO SPRING-LIKE

Very spring-like are the two little buttonholes which come next—just right for wearing in a lapel.

First you must find two pretty little twigs. Then make some leaves of green felt or silky material and tie these on to the twig.

The yellow catkins are thick pieces of yellow wool tied to the second twig. Pieces of yellow pipe-cleaners would do instead, if you'd prefer the "lamb's tails" to be stiffer.

Fasten a safety-pin at the back of each of these novelties so that they may pin on to beret, dress, or coat.

## FOR LITTLE TREASURES

The two dainty little boxes below are made from ordinary matchboxes. A piece of cretonne is glued around the top one and a pin-cushion is fastened to the top for holding pins and needles. The drawer in the matchbox is slipped open by a tassel fastened through one end.

The lower box is made by covering a matchbox with coloured paper and a tassel is fastened through one end of the drawer part. It would be most useful for keeping beads in or any other small articles such as needles, pins, and buttons.

Now just one or two very inexpensive suggestions for gifts that you could buy for the family.

Handkerchiefs are a particularly welcome Easter gift—for they make that "something new" to use on Easter Sunday.

Packets of hairpins, grips, fancy combs, chunky bracelets, dress clips, and necklaces are other presents that can cost very little yet give great pleasure.

This little novelty is a pen-wiper and pen-holder combined. A chum would just love it as a tiny gift—for who could resist the chick that has just hatched out of the Easter egg?



Spring Leaves and Lamb's Tails—a fine-weather decoration for the lapel of a new coat, or for a dress that would appreciate a touch of spring-time gaiety. A present for a chum or for an older sister.



Just match-boxes—but how pretty they can be made! And how useful for keeping in a sewing basket to hold those little treasures that have a habit of losing themselves easily.



(Continued from page 11)

They left the study. Jemima smiled strangely.

While Babs took one side of the corridor and Mabs the other, Jemima herself went to the class-room to collect any of the new history books which might be about.

Finally, all the books were collected, and the three of them, Babs and Mabs in fuming silence, sat down in Study No. 4 to work. They were in the middle of that task when the door opened and Lydia Crossendale came in.

"Babs—" she said, and then blinked at the pile of books on the table. "My hat! What are you doing?"

"Ask Jimmy!" gritted Babs. "Merely correcting a sad error—what?" Jemima murmured. "Making nines into nothings. Frightfully fascinating old task. Like to lend a hand, old Spartan?"

"No, thanks!" Lydia said hastily, and grinned. "Don't envy you," she said. "Babs, can I borrow your stamp catalogue?"

"On the shelf!" Babs granted.

Lydia took it and went out. Jemima paused to wipe her monocle, and gazed at the door. Then she shook her head and went on.

"Well, there," Babs said at last. "that's done! Mabs, pile them up in the corner, will you, old girl? I'll put them back with the other books in the class-room to-morrow morning. Well, I hope," she said to Jemima, "you're satisfied now?"

Jemima's face at that moment wore a peculiar, almost baffled, look, however.

"Well, yes—and no," she murmured thoughtfully. "Hum! Funny—dashed funny! Well, thanks for your very pleasant company! Such a relief to have corrected the old history—what? Mabs, like to have a rehearsal?"

"No!" Mabs said shortly.

Jemima sighed. She went out. But the evening then was ruined for Babs and Mabs. Prep bell sounded presently. After that there was supper, then call-over, followed by bed. And in the morning—

Hardly had Babs got downstairs than she met Miss Bullivant, and Miss Bullivant was almost shaking with wrath.

"Barbara—" she cried.

"Oh crumbs! Y-yes, Miss Bullivant?"

"What have you done with the new history books?"

Babs blinked.

"They're in my study, Miss Bullivant."

"Of that," Miss Bullivant rapped, "I am aware! I have just seen them, Barbara! I presume," she added, her eyes glittering, "that out of spite or revenge, or just sulkiness because I interrupted you in your worthless task last night, you mutilated them! Come!" she added.

And she rustled along the corridor, flinging open the door of Study No. 4. A crowd of girls, among them Jemima, Lydia, Mabs, and Clara, followed behind, seeing that something unusual was afoot. And then, as Miss Bullivant flung open the door, as she stretched an accusing arm towards the books, Babs gasped.

For the pile she had left so neatly and orderly was a higgledy-piggledy mess now. And not a single volume had been left undamaged. Some had the covers torn off; some had the spine ripped open as if by a knife; some were nearly torn in two. Babs turned white.

"Oh, my goodness! I—I—" she stammered.

"A pretty sight, is it not?" Miss Bullivant asked grimly. "This is the result of your slackness, your carelessness, and your spite! You will come with me now, at once, Barbara, to Miss Primrose! I do not think after this that even she will feel any leniency towards you! This means the end of your Form captaincy, Barbara!"

"But—but—" Babs stammered.

"Come!"

And Miss Bullivant, placing a hand on her shoulder, whisked the dazed and stupefied Babs away.

### Bessie's Brain-wave!



MABS was the first to recover from the stunned inaction which succeeded the disgraced Babs' departure. Then furiously she flung round on

Jemima.

"Jimmy—"

"Ah! Ha! Hum!" Jemima polished her monocle vigorously. "Lo, Mabs!"

"Jimmy, you—you did this! You did!" Mabs' eyes blazed. "It was thanks to you that Babs had to collect those books last night! You schemed for them to be in this study, so that you could get hold of them later! All the time you've been plotting against Babs!"

"Hey, steady—steady!" Jemima murmured. For a moment she looked a little shaken. "Calm down, Mabs! Just wait, old Spartan!" And she caught the almost crying Mabs by the arm and pushed her into Study No. 4, and then deliberately she turned and shut the door in the face of the others.

"Now, Mabs—"

"Jimmy, you did!"

"Mabs—no! In my solemn word!" Jemima said seriously.

"But you—you—"

"I got Babs to collect those books—yes," Jemima nodded. "I did it with a purpose. I expected to find something. I wanted to handle the whole of the books, you see—and I did. But—well—" Jemima gave a forlorn shake of the head. "I must confess now, old Spartan, that I was up a gum-tree. I expected to find something and didn't. But I'd never, never," Jemima went on seriously, "imagined that this was going to happen. She must be pretty desperate."

Mabs blinked.

"Who—"

"The girl who did this."

"But it wasn't Babs!" Mabs cried. "It wasn't, Jimmy. If you know anything—"

Jemima stared seriously through her monocle at the pile of books.

"I don't know the vital thing," she said slowly. "All I've been doing is to suspect. But there's a clue somewhere here—there must be," Jemima went on keenly. "If the girl who did the damage didn't do it to spite Babs, then she was doing it because she wanted something from these books—or one of them. Now what—hey? Perhaps," Jemima breathed, "there may be one or more of these books missing. Mabs, help me count them."

"But why—"

"Quickly!" Jemima cried.

Together they counted them. They recounted them.

"Thirty-six," Jemima said, and shook her head again, looking really worried this time. "None missing. Deadlock once more. Oh, hallo, Fatima," she said absently, as Bessie

came in, carrying her beloved Poppy and looking utterly excited about something. "Don't worry Uncle Jimmy, old Spartan; we're at grips with a mystery."

"And poor old Babs," Bessie glowered, "is at grips with Miss Primrose. But she's not jolly well going to get it in the neck for what somebody else has done, you know! There's one girl in this school, at least, who can jolly well prove her innocent!"

"Eh?"

"I can!" Bessie declared.

"You?"

"Yes, I can!" Bessie's face was glowing. "I know what those books were destroyed for," she informed.

Jemima looked at her.

"You do?"

"Yes, I jolly well do! There was a code in them! Poppy put a code in one of her lesson-books at school, and the villains found out about it, and so they got hold of all the school books and tore them up just like that to try to find the code!"

"Well, isn't that what happened here?" Bessie asked triumphantly. "Somebody else has put a code in one of those books, and that somebody else is after it, and that's why they've been destroyed, you know. Primmy wouldn't think of that, of course, but I jolly well have, and I'm going to go and see Primmy and prove old Babs' innocence!"

Jemima gazed at her. There was a glimmer in her grey eyes suddenly, a little flush upon her face. Wild and unthinking as Bessie's suggestion was, it seemed, strangely enough, to have made an impression upon Jemima.

"And if you're coming with me—" Bessie said.

"Oh, Bess, don't be silly!" Mabs said wearily. "This isn't any Poppy plot. The question is—"

"The question is," Jemima said keenly, "that there might be something in what old Bessie says. Nifty little story that must be," she said, regarding the book Bessie carried. "Bessie, can I have a look at it?"

"But—"

"Just a minute," Jemima said.

Bessie handed the book over. Jemima turned it round, fingering it carefully, peering closely at it. And suddenly she laughed.

"Well—" she said.

"Well, what—" demanded Mabs. "Well, nothing! Except," Jemima chuckled, "I'm a fool! Not-so-clever old Uncle Jimmy—that's me! Still, here we are, all bright, merry, and smiling. And off we all go right away to see Primmy. Bessie, you come, too."

"But what—" Mabs said.

"Pax, old Spartan! Just come!" Jemima beamed.

Mabs stared. Jemima looked absolutely happy then. Serene and unworried her face once more, and keen that glimmer in her eyes. Amazing girl this, who only two seconds before had been confessing herself a failure.

"Come!" Jemima cried.

She led the way out of the study, stopping in the corridor as she saw Lydia Crossendale.

"What-cheer, old Spartan! Toothache better?" Jemima asked sympathetically.

"Y-yes, thanks."

"You look a bit washed out, me-thinks," Jemima went on keenly.

"Dud-do I?" Lydia looked strangely ill at ease. "Oh, I—I didn't sleep well!" she blurted.

"Jimmy, come on!" Mabs said anxiously. "Babs—"



"No, wait a ticklet," Jemima said. "Tough, not being able to sleep," she said. "Didn't you even get a wink?"

"No," Lydia said. "Then," Jemima said, "you must have heard the girl who got up in the middle of the night to do the dirty work with the books. Did you?" Lydia paused a little. She bit her lip.

"Well, no—yes. Oh, I don't know! I—I thought I heard someone," she said.

"Aha!" breathed Jemima. "And it wasn't Babs?"

"Well, nun-no!" Lydia said. "I didn't see who it was. But—here, I say," she added, with alarm, "what are you doing?"

"Just," Jemima announced, "taking your arm. Mabs, grab the other one, will you? You see, we're off to see Primmy to try to prove dear old Babs' innocence. Any scrap of evidence that can be given in Babs' favour is welcome."

"But I don't know anything—"

"Prove? Can you prove—" Miss Primrose began.

"Yes, rather, you know. The books had a code in them," Bessie said. "Poppy—"

"Bessie, I prithee pipe down!" Jemima admonished. "Ahem! Lend me your book! Thank you! Miss Primrose, this is a book called 'The Adventures of Poppy Pringle at School.' You might mistake it, at first glance, for one of the ruined old history books, mightn't you? Observe that its binding is very similar. It has on it the same scarlet lettering. It is about the same thickness."

"Well?" Miss Primrose said, rather impatiently.

"This book," Jemima went on, "Miss Bullivant confiscated from Bessie in class, three days ago. Did you not, Miss Bullivant? With your kind permission, Miss Primrose, I will now ask Bessie a question. Bessie, when you went to get this volume from Miss Bullivant's study did you see there the pile of new history books?"

From Bessie came a shriek. From Lydia a sudden hoarse cry.

"Jemima, no—" Then—rip! Bessie gave a howl as the spine of the book was torn from end to end, and out of the remnants something tumbled on to the table—a twisted spill of paper. Too late, Lydia stepped forward. In a moment Jemima had snatched it and had passed it to Miss Primrose.

"Miss Primrose, examine it, please," she said.

"Miss Primrose, no!" gasped Lydia. "No! I—I— Jemima, you awful rotter!" she yelled furiously.

"Silence!" Miss Bullivant frowned. Lydia panted. Bessie blinked. Babs, not understanding, shook her head as she looked at the baffled Mabs. Very carefully Miss Primrose undid the twisted spill of paper; and then she started.

"Lydia—" "Oh crumbs!" groaned Lydia. "Lydia, I believe— Yes, this is your handwriting!" Miss Primrose



"JEMIMA," rapped Miss Bullivant, "if you are trying to be insolent—" "Perish the thought," Jemima said. "Tut, tut, and mutt, mutt, as my dear old Nurse Anastasia used to say. Have I ever told you about her, Miss Bullivant?" The Form gurgled, but the Form wondered. Why was Jemima deliberately asking for trouble?

"Yes, you do—heaps!" Jemima nodded. "You can tell Primmy what you told us, you see. Quick march, Mabs!"

And forward they marched, Lydia looking a little scared now. They reached the door of Miss Primrose's study. Jemima knocked and at once entered.

Babs, very white, rather desperate-looking, was in front of the headmistress' desk, beside her the grim-faced Miss Bullivant. And Miss Primrose, wearing her most flinty expression, was in the act of saying:

"I am afraid, Barbara, that I can not accept your statement. You are no longer fit to be Form captain. Jemima will take your place at the Eastbourne conven— Why, bless my soul!" she added, as Jemima, Lydia, Mabs, and Bessie burst in. "What is this?"

"Four girls come to shed light upon a mystery. Miss Primrose," Jemima answered gravely. "Excuse the lack of ceremony, but this is rather urgent. We just want to prove to you that Babs didn't deface those merry old history volumes."

"Well, of course!" Bessie glowered. "My book was on top of them. Wasn't it, Miss Bullivant?"

"Yes, I believe so. But I do not see how—" Miss Bullivant began.

"Aha!" Jemima smiled. "Right!" she said carefully, while they all stared at her. "Observation No. 1: This book, which is very like the history books in appearance, was left by Miss Bullivant with the history books. A girl in a hurry, or panic, indeed, might have mistaken it for a history book. Mightn't they, Lydia?"

Lydia Crossendale looked uneasy. "I don't follow—"

"No? Too-too bad!" Jemima sighed. "Let us try a little experiment," she said. "Miss Primrose, may I borrow that knife, please?"

"I really don't see, Jemima, what you should want with a knife, and I warn you now that if this is an attempt to waste my time, you will be punished severely. You may borrow the knife."

Jemima beamed. She picked the knife up. Then she put Bessie's book on the table, and, holding it with one hand, inserted the knife into the spine.

rapped. "And this— My goodness, they are copies of the questions to be asked in the next examination!"

"What?" cried Babs. "The questions," Jemima beamed, "which Miss Bullivant was preparing on the day she confiscated Bessie's book! You see," she added, while Miss Primrose stared in amazement, "Lydia hid that in the spine of Bessie's book, thinking, in the heat and haste of the moment, that Bessie's book was one of the new history books. And thereby," Jemima added, "hangs the story. It hath been Lydia, in her endeavours to recover that volume, who has brought all the trouble on dear old Babs' head."

'Twas Lydia, last night, who cut and tore the history books in order to try to find that paper. Was it not, Lydia?" But there was no need to ask that question of the ghostly white and trembling Lydia. Her expression at that moment simply screamed her guilt.

LATER, PRESSED by Babs, Mabs, and Clara for an explanation, Jemima said:

"The explanation is simple, though I

will confess, dear comrades, it gave me severe twinges at times. You see, Lydia's father had threatened Lydia that if she did not get through the coming exam she would lose her summer holiday. Lydia, desperately keen not to lose the summer holiday, found out when the Bull was preparing the questions. She sneaked into the Bull's study and copied out the questions, so that she would have plenty of time to swot up the answers before the actual exam.

"Copying them out, Lydia was interrupted by a knock on the door. Imagine her panic! If she was found with that crib on her! Think of the disgrace! So Lydia did the thing which nine out of ten girls would do in the circus. She hid the crib."

"By screwing it up and ramming it into the binding of the book?" Babs asked. "Yes, I see that. But how, you old washout, did you find everything else out? And why on earth did you try to make us think you were the guilty girl all the time?"

Jemima sighed. "I didn't," she said. "That was naughty old circumstances. First, I was just interested in what Lydia was doing. Then, being the true, loyal British chum I am, I was merely trying to solve the mystery and get you out of a scrape. I suspected, of course, our dear old Lydia from the first, but I was all up a gum-tree most of the time to guess at Lydia's motive. Still, here's the story."

An amazing, though simple story it was.

It had all started after afternoon lessons on the day Bessie's book was confiscated. Jemima, who had happened to be standing at the head of the stairs, had seen Lydia come creeping towards Miss Bullivant's study. Rather interested in the furtiveness of Lydia's movements, and knowing the Bull was out, she had watched Lydia go in.

"Ten minutes went by," Jemima said. "Aha, think I, what is friend Lydia up to?" Then along comes Sarah Harrigan of the Sixth. Sarah knocked at the Bull's door, and, of course, received no answer. Sarah waited. Again she received no answer. And she went in."

"And found Lydia?"

"Just that. I heard her talking to Lydia. Lydia said she was waiting for the Bull. Sarah said she'd better wait outside, and took Lydia out with her, and Lydia was looking frightfully sick. Also," Jemima said keenly, "there was ink on Lydia's fingers. Uncle Jimmy also had observed that when Lydia went into the room she had no ink on those dainty little fingers of hers. Obviously, it got there when copying out the questions."

Jemima explained further. The next development had come when the unknown had crashed into Babs—Lydia, of course. Lydia, desperately anxious to retrieve the book containing the incriminating crib.

Later, inspecting the books in Babs' study, Jemima had seen a smudge of ink on the back of one of the bindings, and that had told her for the first time that Lydia and the books were connected. Then had come the news that three of the books were missing. And Jemima, unknown to Babs, had gone off to search for them, finding them most surprisingly in Study No. 4.

"Where Lydia had left them?" Mabs asked.

"Having thoroughly investigated them—yes. Then, if you remember, you left the books in the study. The next development was the oil on the lines—Lydia, grabbing for those books when

you were out, had accidentally upset the oil and spoiled some of the top sheets, which she hid between the others. I confess," Jemima said, "that at that time I did not connect one with the other. I really thought, as you were suggesting, that somebody was out to give you one in the eye, old Babsie. Actually, as you see now, Lydia was not plotting against you at all. All she wanted all along was the missing book."

Babs nodded grimly. "Go on."

And Jemima went on. She went on to the following night. With the idea that Lydia was trying to disgrace Babs in Miss Bullivant's eyes, she had searched her study, and there had found traces of oil, proving again that Lydia was the hidden hand behind Barbara's worries. Next day the key of the classroom cupboard had been lost. Babs was blamed.

"I was sure then," Jemima went on, "that Lydia was trying to smash your chances for the convention. So when Miss Bullivant asked for a volunteer in your place I upped and waved my little flipper, as you observed. 'Cos why? 'Cos I didn't want Lydia to get her blow in fust. 'Twould have been easy, I thought, if they had made me Choice No. 2, for me to have climbed out at the last moment. Then came your little trap which, for once, completely deceived your Uncle Jimmy. Anxious as I was not to let Lydia get hold of your old faked essay sheets, I fell into the soup myself."

Clara grinned.

"I didn't mean to. You see, I had been watching Lydia. I thought, as you thought: 'Aha, this is where Lydia will have another snack at old Babs!' And so I kept a careful eye on dear Lydia. But Lydia, amazingly enough, wasn't interested. Though I had her in view from the time she left class, she never attempted to go near your study—wasn't interested, in fact. I thought, perchance, that she might have dodged me and done the dirty work without my knowledge. That is why I came to inspect the essay sheets for myself."

"Well, you know what happened, forsooth. You three nabbed me. I was sure that Lydia was making a set against Babs, but her ignoring those essays made me think for the first time that that might not be her sole motive. Next day Lydia got herself detained—rather deliberately. As you observed, feeling sure that Lydia had some new axe to grind by getting herself detained. I got myself detained, too. Sorry, old Mabs. During the afternoon I spied—

upon Lydia. I saw her rummaging among those books again, you know. And I wondered."

"And that," Babs said, seeing light now, "was what made you point out the printer's error to Miss Bullivant so that you could get hold of them all and inspect them?"

"Ah, how the girl at times does see daylight!" Jemima burred. "'Twas so. But again I was baffled, as you know. Last night I almost gave it up. Having examined the books and found nothing, I was almost saying 'Jimmy, old boy, you are a wash-out!' Then came this morning. Then, for the first time, I spotted how similar old Bessie's 'Poppy' and our new history books were, and, with the old brain working like lightning, put two and two together, and, as you know, got the old sum right. And so," Jemima beamed, "there it is."

"And we ninnies suspected you!" Babs said. "Jimmy, you old wash-out, why didn't you tell us?"

"Because," Jemima said, "I had only suspicions. Because, right until the scene in Primmy's study, I had no idea what was behind Lydia's interest in those books. But now," she beamed, "here we are. Sun shining, convention, and the rehearsal—Ahem! Mabs, if you think you'd like a rehearsal we'll have one, you know. I've learned the lines—every man-jack of them."

"Jimmy, no!"

"Mabel, yes!" Jemima grinned.

And she had. For Jimmy, if she had been busy on Babs' behalf, had not let Mabs down. And a few minutes' rehearsal soon had her up to scratch with the rest.

And so once again Jemima's mysteriousness turned up trumps for all concerned in the long run, though, to be sure, Bessie still stoutly claimed that it was really Poppy Pringle who had done the trick!

And so on Saturday Babs, cheered by her chums, was "seen off" with Lady Patricia Northanson in her father's car for the Eastbourne convention, and that same morning sulky, apprehensive Lydia Crossendale went home for her week-end leave. But Lydia went with a bitter heart, for with her went the exceedingly bad report in which Miss Primrose gave a full account of her misdeeds to her parents.

Jemima? Well, as Jemima beamingly remarked: "All's swell that ends well!"

And for once she was allowed to get away with it!

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

## SHE WANTED ALL THE LIMELIGHT



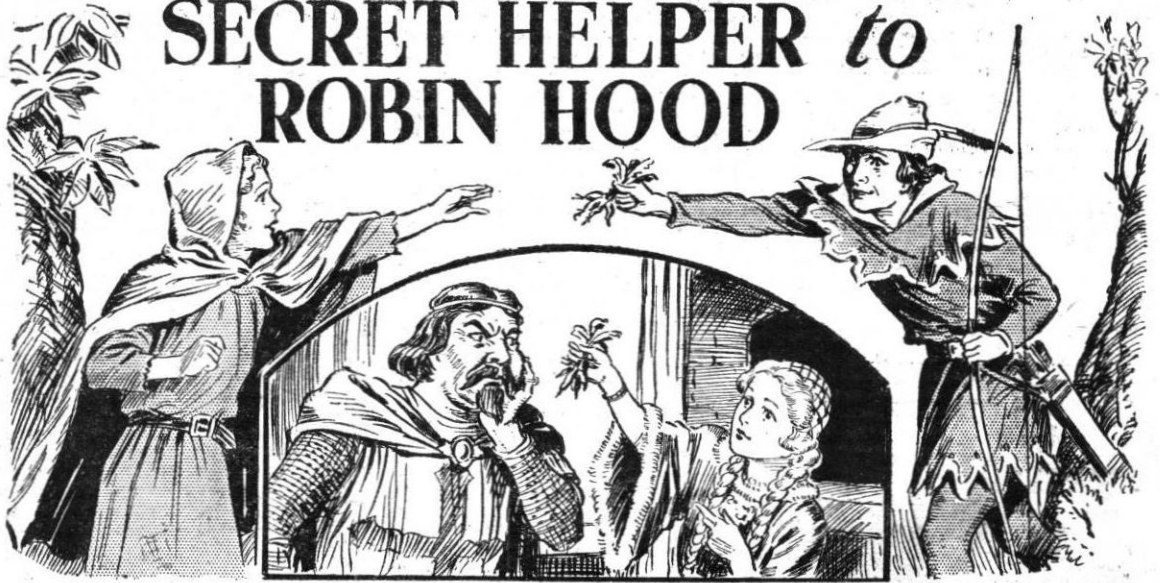
Who did? Why, Diana Royston-Clarke! For that spectacular, dominating Fourth-Former, so aptly named "The Firebrand," is again determined that, by hook or by crook, honour and glory shall come to her!

But what a strange Diana, as usual. One moment being Fairy Godmother to some little orphans; y honestly, genuinely wanting to bring them happiness. The next—ruthlessly prepared to sacrifice their happiness in order to cheat Mabel Lynn out of the honour which Diana herself covets. Don't miss this superb Hilda Richards story. It appears next week—and as that issue will be on sale Thursday, April 6th, you've two days less to wait for this lovely treat.



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

# SECRET HELPER to ROBIN HOOD



## A Tyrant With Toothache!

**T**HE young Lady Fayre, of Longley Castle, was rubbing her right ear and frowning heavily.

For the Baron le Feuvre, her uncle, had toothache!

There was only one person in Longley Castle who did not know it. Half the countryside knew it, too, although his groans did not carry much beyond the castle walls.

Some people suffer in silence, but the baron was not one of them. Nor did he care to suffer alone. Just as some people like others to share their joys, he liked others to share his pain. And as he could not lend others his toothache, he gave them pains of some other kind.

Hence Fayre's boxed ears!

Pretty, fair-haired, blue-eyed, the Lady Fayre looked at the moment anything but her gay self as she sat in the school-room of the castle.

Fayre, writing in her copy-book in the intervals of rubbing her ears, presently heard a step in the stone-flagged corridor outside the school-room.

Up she jumped, and rushed behind the large oak chest in the corner of the room. For it might be the baron approaching, and, in his present ill-temper, she had no wish to meet him again.

But it was only her tutor, the Venerable Brie, who entered. He limped into the room, his long white beard almost bristling and his kindly, gentle, short-sighted eyes glinting in unaccustomed ill-humour.

"Oh, you, good sir!" said Fayre, rising. "I feared it was the baron."

The Venerable Brie did not answer, but sat down, then rose again swiftly, as though he found sitting painful.

"Twas laid down by the Council of Chivalry," he said in aggrieved tone, "that it was to be considered an act of discourtesy for a knight, lord, or baron to wear a mailed boot when kicking anyone not a menial. And a tutor is not a menial."

Fayre clucked her tongue in sympathy.

"The baron kicked you?" she asked.

"He did so," said the Venerable Brie

gravely. "In every dark corner someone crouches from him in hiding. The baroness is dissolved into tears; the stocks have a queue waiting; the dungeons are fully occupied; and now the physician, Peter the Monk, has been flung into the darkest dungeon. I tremble for him!" sighed the Venerable Brie.

Fayre drew a breath, and her eyes flashed at the thought of the old monk being punished. He was a kindly man who spent his life healing the sick; and if he had failed to cure the baron's toothache the fault was not his.

"Oh, but that can't be!" she cried. "He shall be set free! I will see the gaoler!"

And, without another word, she slipped from the school-room and hurried down the stone staircase. She

**Fayre's uncle, the bullying baron, had toothache, so everyone else had to suffer. But—thanks to Fayre and Robin Hood everyone was made happy in the end, even the baron himself.**

did not believe that a word from her to the gaoler would be enough to free the monk, but she thought that she might in some way get the key from him.

But on the first landing she paused, heart thumping.

The baron's thunderous voice came to her, reverberating from the stone walls of the castle corridors and rooms.

"No, no, no, no! Peter the Monk stays in the dungeon! Fool, dolt that he is!" Then he groaned for a full minute. "Ahhh! Till he can heal my raging tooth he does not leave this castle!"

Fayre tiptoed forward, anxious to dodge past the entrance archway to the baron's private room without being seen.

She caught a glimpse of the baron, his face red and swollen, his eyes glittering and flashing with pain and rage. Facing him was Sir Geoffrey, an elderly knight.

"Tis said, my lord," murmured Sir Geoffrey, "that the magistrate is sick, and some poor people who need the monk's healing hands and herbs—"

Fayre jumped as her uncle's fist thumped the table.

"Before he heals another person, let him heal me! I'm the baron! I'm the lord of this county! And I'm in agony, groaning, groaning! Does no one know the cure for toothache?"

"Removal of the tooth—" began Sir Geoffrey.

There came the sound of some heavy metal object landing against a stone wall. Following it came the hiss of a sword being drawn.

Fayre lifted the hem of her gold-embroidered velvet frock, and went hurrying down the stairs, followed by Sir Geoffrey at full gallop.

"The next rascal who thinks to have my tooth pulled out shall have one pulled himself!" roared the baron. Then: "Oooooooo!" he groaned.

Sir Geoffrey dashed into the armoury to convey the information that the baron was no better; but Fayre went racing down to the dungeon.

In the armoury there was dark discussion of the possibility of drawing the baron's tooth by force.

The extraction of teeth in those days was a painful business—almost regarded as a necessary form of torture—and what the baron wanted was some secret herb that would banish pain utterly and completely. Being an untutored robber-baron, he did not realise the removal of the tooth was the only real cure. He believed the physician did not want to cure him by any painless process.

Fayre, feeling deeply sorry for the healer-monk, went down to the dungeons. There was a soldier on guard; but, saluting her, he made no effort to prevent her passing, for the Lady Fayre was free to go where she pleased within the castle, although debarred from leaving it.

At the foot of the winding stone stairs she found the gaoler chatting with another soldier, and she gave him her most pleasant smile, in preparation

By IDA MELBOURNE

## "Secret Helper to Robin Hood!"

for asking the favour of seeing the physician.

"Good-day, my lady!" boomed the gaoler.

"Good day, kind gaoler," said Fayre softly. "Could I have word with the good monk?"

The gaoler frowned.

"'Tis against the lord baron's orders."

"Ah! But I do bring him a message from the baron," smiled Fayre.

The gaoler's face cleared, and he clanked his heavy keys.

"That makes great difference," he boomed. "Come, my lady!"

Fayre looked at the grilles of the stout dungeon doors as she passed them, for from every one a face peered out miserably. Every prisoner hoped for

release, and, hearing steps, thought it might be his own order to be freed.

As Fayre passed there were heavy, disappointed sighs.

"If the baron's tooth rages much longer there will be need to build more dungeons," said the gaoler. "'Tis more than one man's work, too, to carry the food and such."

He halted then at the door of the last dungeon and rapped on the panels.

Peter the Monk came to the grille and peered out. He looked immensely sad and older than usual.

"You have come to free me?" he exclaimed eagerly. "Ah, it is good! The sick need me. Old Mrs. Wills; the poor lame girl; the old man with ague—"

"Nay, nay! You stay there. 'Tis

the Lady Fayre come to see you," said the gaoler. "Stand back from the door."

He opened the door for Fayre to enter the dungeon, then locked it so that the monk did not escape.

The kindly but worried old monk looked at her sadly, and again made his earnest plea to be freed.

"Good monk," said Fayre softly, "take heed of what I say. If you would be free, then—"

But a mighty roaring voice from outside brought her speech to an end.

"The baron!" gasped the monk, in quaking dread.

"The baron?" echoed Fayre. She paled with horror. "Oh, he must not find me here! He did not send me with a message. I came to offer you help—"

The gaoler's voice came to them through the grille. He was just outside, jingling his keys, speaking to the baron.

"Open the door!" snarled the baron. "For the last time—this rascal physician has his chance to heal me, or else to need healing himself for all the rest of his life!"

The key clicked; the door was hurled open!

## "Find a Cure, or Else—!"

LADY FAYRE had been paralysed with fright for just a moment; then, as she heard the key click, she jumped beside the door to such a position that when it opened she would be hidden from sight behind it.

The door opened, almost knocking her over, so widely did it swing. Then the baron, kicking out his mailed heel, slammed it to.

"Monk! Physician!" he roared to the quaking, terrified monk, who drew back from him, raising his left arm, crooked as though to ward off a blow.

"Y-y-yes, m'lord!" he quavered.

"Here is an hour-glass!" snarled the baron, holding out that ancient device. "When the sand has run once through it I shall have no more pain. Or else—or else you will for the rest of your days. Now! Heal me—look at my face—swollen! By my halberd, but you are more rogue or fool than physician!"

Fayre tiptoed towards the door, but as she touched the handle it made a sharp sound. The baron's quick ears heard it, and he turned.

"Fayre," he cried, in anger and amazement, glaring at her menacingly from under beetling brows, "what do you do here?"

Fayre leaned back against the door, pale and shaken.

"I—I—er—I—"

And then, in her moment of need, inspiration came. Her hand went to her cheek, and she gave a low moan.

"I did come in vain, my lord uncle," she said. "This physician knows not a cure for toothache—"

"You, too?" said the baron, and his eyes lit up with the first glow of pleasure she had seen for some time. "Hah! 'Tis no trifling pain, I'll warrant. Let who will mock it. I'll give them toothache!"

Fayre nodded her head, and she knew what he would say next, that if the physician could not heal the toothache he should be given it himself.

Then he would find a cure—thought the baron.

But Fayre knew the baron's methods. "My lord, we are ill-favoured of Fate. For the physician himself groans in pain—"

The baron swung to the monk and stared at him.

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

## BETWEEN OURSELVES



MY DEAR READERS. — I haven't quite forgotten it yet—being made an April fool, I mean. I've had a good many hearty chuckles since the affair.

It was the work of those impish twins who live next door to me—Iris, the one with the freckles on her nose, and Veronica, her double, without the freckles.

All Fools' Day dawned bright and warm. Grand, I thought. Just the day for some gardening. So into my gardening togs I got—you know, the sort of things fathers and uncles don in moments of such physical exertion—and sallied forth to do some weeding.

My garden abounds in weeds. In fact, at one spot the weeds have started up a rival show of their own. There was a simply enormous fellow there, the sight of whom filled me with almost vicious determination.

Gripping him with both hands, I tugged for all I was worth. And the result? Nothing—just nothing. The fellow seemed to have roots like an oak-tree.

As I straightened up, two cheery voices hailed me from over the fence.

"Hallo!" said Iris, smiling.

"Hallo!" echoed Veronica, also smiling.

"Weeding?" asked Iris.

"Gardening?" inquired Veronica.

"Hallo, twins!" I said in a deep, booming voice, and laughed. "Yes, I'm weeding, all right. Just going to remove that fellow."

"May we watch, please?" asked Iris.

"Oh, please!" begged Veronica. "We'd love to!"

"Why, certainly!" I said, and regarded the weed uncertainly.

"Why don't you use a fork and loosen the earth?" Iris suggested.

"It would be easy with a fork," Veronica supported her.

It was a good idea. Off I went to the tool-shed, and half a minute later I returned, fully armed. Then, watched by the interested sisters, I

loosened the mould, seized the weed in both hands again, heaved like a strong man—and fell flat on my back!

"April fool!" came a delighted duet from the fence.

Ruefully I picked myself up, weed still clasped in one hand. It dawned on me then what had happened. While I was fetching the fork, the twins had themselves loosened that weed, and I—I'd just walked right into the trap!

I've forgiven them now, of course. (But—don't breathe a word of it, though, will you?—I'm planning to get my own back next year!)

And now for a very few words about next week's issue, which will be on sale Two Days Earlier than usual—that is, on Thursday, April 6th. First of all, we have:

## "SHE WANTED ALL THE LIMELIGHT!"

Who did? Why, Diana Royston-Clarke! For this superb Cliff House story features once again that dominating, spectacular character, the "Firebrand" of the Fourth. And Diana is the same as ever—one moment sympathetic, generous-hearted, noble; the next a ruthless enemy, trampling roughshod over all who stand in the way of her latest ambition.

This time Diana's ambition is to play a big part at the opening ceremony of a country home for orphans—young girls in which Miss Primrose, the headmistress, is deeply interested.

Diana, of course, sees in it a chance for personal glory; but there is no doubt that the orphans simply adore her, and that Diana likes being their "Lady Bountiful."

But how different Diana becomes when she learns that Mabel Lynn is to be given the honour she has coveted! From that moment onwards Diana plots and schemes to ruin Mabel's chances, even to the extent of making use of the orphans who idolise her so much. There are many dramatic moments in this grand complete story. Don't miss it, will you?

As usual, of course, there will be another sparkling COMPLETE Robin Hood story, more enthralling chapters of "On Tour with Yin Su," and further Bright and Chummy Pages from Patricia; so order your SCHOOLGIRL in good time, won't you? With best wishes.

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.



"What, you, too? You have the raging toothache?"

The physician-monk was no fool. "I—why—'tis dire agony indeed, m'lord," he said, putting a hand to his face. "Would that I did'st know a cure for it."

He groaned deeply then. And Fayre groaned as well.

The Baron le Feuvre looked from one to the other.

"You did say," he said grimly, "that the one cure for the aching tooth was to have it removed. You did not seek to give me more suffering, eh?" His face darkened. "Gaoler!" he roared.

The gaoler opened the door.

"The Lady Fayre and the wise physician suffer the pain of toothache," said the baron, eyes glinting. "They will have the bad tooth pulled out. Bring in the chair and implements. I will pull the teeth myself!"

Fayre shivered with fright, and the physician's eyes were wide, almost bulging. Unheard, he muttered that pulling teeth was no work for the untrained.

"My lord," said the gaoler, with a deprecatory cough, "your lordship doubtless forgets that the —hem!— chair was at your command hurled from the castle walls."

The baron started.

"'Tis so," he admitted. But his dejection which the thought of a missed experiment brought did not last long. "No matter. It shall be brought in again! Find the puller of teeth, find the chair—"

Lady Fayre made a jump for the door and pushed past the unprepared gaoler. Then, heedless of the baron's shouts, she went racing as fast as she could go up the stairs.

In a moment the order to hunt for the chair would be passed on; and the dentist would be sought, too. When they were found, the next object of search would be the Lady Fayre; but, unlike the dental chair and dentist, she would not be found.

In her bed-chamber, she hurled open the lid of the oak chest and dragged out a shabby green frock and ragged brown-hooded cloak.

This was quite definitely one of those occasions when it was better to be a village maiden than the Lady Fayre! And better, too, to be outside the castle than in.

Some short time later Fayre went over the drawbridge into the lane, hurrying to the woods to the one friend she had, Robin Hood, the outlaw.

**R**OBIN HOOD, handsome, gay, and most charming-looking, in his green jacket and tight hose, stood with folded arms surveying the Lady Fayre.

Fayre had found him in the wood by the simple means of sounding the whistle he had given her, and then awaiting his answering call.

"Robin Hood," said Fayre, breathing hard. "I come to seek your aid. The physician Peter the Monk is prisoner in the baron's dungeon."

"What!" exclaimed Robin Hood, his smile fading. "A prisoner—but there are sick needing him. Only this morning a message has come asking for him—"

"And there are others," nodded Fayre. "But the baron will not set him free until he has cured his toothache."

Robin Hood became grave. He knew that the monk was sorely needed by sick villagers, and that there was no one else with the knowledge to heal in his absence.

"The rascal baron must set him free," said Robin Hood hotly.



"**CURE** my toothache, senseless monk, or regret it for the rest of your life!" roared the baron, rushing into the dungeon. Just in time Fayre slipped behind the door. She dare not let her uncle see her here!

Never had Robin Hood guessed that this shabby mystery girl, who had more than once done him useful services, was really the Lady Fayre from the castle, niece of his enemy, the baron; and Fayre had resolved that he never should do so.

"But worse will befall him than being held there," went on Fayre. "The baron threatens that he will pull out one of the physician's teeth."

Robin Hood stared at her, frowning, and then his eyes twinkled in a smile.

"No, no, his tooth-torturer is now an outlaw," he said. "He is even one of my own merry band."

"And the chair?" exclaimed Fayre anxiously. "Should the baron capture the chair which he had thrown from the castle walls, he still could draw the monk's tooth—and the Lady Fayre's."

"The Lady Fayre's?" said Robin Hood. "Does she suffer toothache, too?"

Fayre explained. "Lady Fayre pretended she had toothache, and the physician pretended so, too. And now the baron demands that they have them cured by pulling out the teeth."

"So ho," said Robin Hood, with a whistle. "It is bad. Unless they find some other cure—"

Fayre looked at him with new eagerness, remembering that his friend Friar Tuck knew many secret remedies.

"Friar Tuck. Perchance he knows a cure for toothache?" she asked. "If so, then the physician's could be healed, Lady Fayre's—and the baron's. Ah, then all would be peace. The physician free—"

Robin Hood summoned Friar Tuck, and that fat, follow man heard the whole story, frowning, chuckling, and becoming solemn in turn.

"There's no lasting remedy except to have the tooth taken out," he said, shaking his head, "although methinks a certain herb does give some temporary ease from pain."

"Any cure will suit the Lady Fayre," said Fayre quickly. "So long as it seems that she is cured—"

And then suddenly her eyes lit up, and she gave a sharp cry of joy! For a dazzling idea had leaped into her mind.

"Robin Hood! I have it! The good

monk shall be set free—and the baron cured to boot! Harken—and I will tell—"

Then she lowered her voice to a whisper.

When she had told her plan, her heart was light once more, and leaving Robin Hood to carry out his part of it, she went dancing back to the castle, carrying in her basket some herbs specially prepared by Friar Tuck.

But, reaching the castle gates, Fayre found a large crowd gathered. Angry voices were raised, and here and there men were armed with weapons.

"Set free the monk—"

"The monk heals the sick!"

"We need the monk—"

But the drawbridge had been raised, and there was nothing the villagers could do but to shout and protest and plead.

Sometimes, when a soldier's head appeared over the wall, a stone was thrown; but stones were thrown back in a shower, and an archer appeared in view to give warning that if they did not go their ways he might take a shot at them.

The murmuring, angry crowd gathered on the far side of the road, and Fayre joined it to hear what was said. One and all were planning vengeance on the baron—but as they were only humble villagers, they could do little that would hurt him.

"Fear not," said Fayre. "The good monk will be freed soon."

Even as she spoke the drawbridge was lowered, and on the far side of the portcullis stood the baron himself, a whip in hand.

"Now, rascals—what is it?" he demanded harshly. "The monk shall be freed when he has cured my aching tooth, or when there is a hundred pieces of gold paid as ransom. Have you the gold?"

There was a mutter from the crowd. Simple folk, poor, they dealt in pence, not golden pounds—and as for a hundred pounds, it was a sum payable only by a bishop or rich noble!

Fayre boldly stepped forward. She had no fear of being recognised; for her ragged clothes alone disguised her, and the hood shadowing her face, added to the baron's short-sightedness, would make her safe from detection.

"Oh, good my lord," she said in a disguised, quavering voice.

"What! Well!" he demanded.

"I have heard it rumoured you have the toothache, my lord, and I bring a magic remedy."

The baron skipped in the air with joy. "A remedy? The tooth is not taken out?"

"Ah, no, my lord! It is a simple herb," said Fayre.

"Raise the portcullis!" roared the baron.

Up it went with a clanking of chains, and Fayre walked through the archway into the courtyard.

### Robin Hood, the Dentist!

"NOW—this cure! Where is it?" the baron demanded.

Fayre regarded him for a moment in anxious silence before speaking. Then she said:

"Oh, my lord, take care! First, let it be tried upon some more humble person. For it is said that when the herb is too strong evil may result."

The baron, even though he was impatient to try the cure, was not eager for more evil results.

"We will try the remedy on the monk," said the baron. "May he be quickly cured!" he added piously.

It was but a few minutes later that the unhappy monk, escorted by the posse, came on to the scene. He did not recognise Fayre, who naturally kept her face concealed as much as possible.

"Monk," said the baron, "this wench has brought a magic cure—a herb. 'Tis said 'twill give instant cure."

Peter the Monk knew a good deal about herbs, and as he took the small root from Fayre he sniffed it and frowned upon it.

But it was quite harmless, he realised, and even, in some mild cases, beneficial. It would be beneficial in his own case if it saved him from having a tooth pulled out by the baron.

The baron watched the monk with deep interest as he ate the herb; and no one spoke or moved. For there was a chance, it seemed to many, that the monk might suddenly fall flat on his face—since even herbalists make mistakes.

Instead, he smiled.

"By my halidom!" he gasped. "The pain is gone—"

"Gone?" asked the baron eagerly, and wheeled upon Fayre. "Then give me some of the good herb, wench!"

Fayre looked into her basket, and bit her lip.

"I—I— The monk has eaten it all!" she faltered.

"What? You have no more! Go—get some!" commanded the baron angrily.

Fayre shook her head, as if in dismay.

"My lord! 'Tis impossible. The secret is known only to the wizard friar of the woods. Did he know it were for you, he would not give it, I fear."

The baron drew up.

"Indeed! And why not?" he demanded.

"Ah! He deals only with the poor, not the rich," said Fayre. "But if the rich do seek his aid, then he charges one hundred gold pieces."

The baron stiffened, and his brows knit in anger.

"What? A hundred gold pieces to cure me of the toothache! And a poor man—what would he charge a poor man?"

"Nothing at all, if he wore rags," said Fayre.

The baron's eyes glinted with cunning.

"Ragged clothes can soon be acquired," he said. "Tell me where this wizard friar lurks, and I'll have all his herbs—free!"

Fayre gave detailed directions, to which the baron listened carefully.

"And the monk now is free?" she asked.

"What? No, not until my toothache is cured, or the reward of one hundred guineas is paid!" scowled the baron.

Then he ordered an officer to bring in a poor man from the roadway and borrow his shabby clothes. Going with him to the guardhouse, the baron presently reappeared.

Fayre was startled by her first glance at him. She hardly recognised him, even though she knew who he was.

The baron looked a wreck—dirty, dishevelled, shabby.

"I may be rich," he said, "but I am no fool. I go to see the friar!"

The portcullis was raised again, and the baron passed through into the roadway. Then, chuckling at his cunning, tapping the ground with a stick, he went as Fayre had directed him.

He walked for half a mile, and then halted as he saw the sheriff and his men arriving on horseback. They came at a fast canter, and the baron stood on one side, to watch them go past.

But they did not go past. The men reined up, and the sheriff pointed to the ragged tramp.

"Drive the rascal to the woods! It's the baron's order to sweep tramps and pedlars from the highway—"

The baron remembered that order he had given, but he was not in a position to countermand it now. And his position was even less pleasant a moment later, for two of the posse took him by the shoulders and flung him from the road.

The baron, unused to such treatment, fought savagely back at them.

Blows rained on him, and the sheriff drew his sword. He might have used it then, had not there come a shout from the woods, and the sound of a bugle call.

Green-clad men raced into the open, spread out into line, and then swept forward upon the sheriff and his posse.

The baron swung round and saw them.

"Robin Hood!" he muttered, then reeled from a punch in the back.

"All right, beggar!" called Robin Hood. "Hold on!"

In a minute there was a scurrying battle. Armed with quarter-staves, Robin Hood and his men clashed with the posse's swords. But the length of their staves gave them the advantage over horsemen; and hearty prods dismounted two.

For ten minutes the battle raged; then three horses galloped into the distance without riders, while the posse went clattering off in terror on foot.

"Into the wood!" snapped Robin Hood.

He and Friar Tuck went on either side of the baron, and they kept him running for nearly half a mile, until a secluded glade was reached.

There Robin Hood called a halt, and the baron, more used to horse-riding than running, panted in relief.

"And now," said Robin Hood, turning to him with a grim smile, "whither bound, baron?"

The baron nearly collapsed with shock.

"Baron—you—you know me?" he choked.

"Know you? Of course! And, mayhap, the posse did, too!" said Robin Hood with a wink. "Not often they

have a chance to take swipes and clouts at the baron, huh?"

Baron le Feuvre looked about him uneasily. He was completely surrounded by men in green—and he was unarmed.

"Baron," said Robin Hood, "have no fear. You are suffering from toothache!"

"Yes, but—but I seek the magio friar."

"He is here," said Robin Hood. "But his fee is two hundred golden pieces."

The baron started up.

"Two hundred! It was one, I was told!"

"Oh! You tried to swindle him out of one by pretending to be poor," said Robin Hood. "One and one make two. But the cure is certain."

The baron tenderly touched his aching jaw.

"You will then set me free?" he asked.

"If you play no tricks like sending for troops," nodded Robin Hood, "and we find the gold tallies rightly."

The baron looked about him again, and suddenly saw the mystery girl who had brought the herb to the castle.

"You! Go back to the castle with a message," he said gruffly. "Bring two hundred pieces of gold—"

"And the monk, to make sure that all is safe and well?" asked Fayre.

The baron hesitated, but Robin Hood gave the answer.

"Yes; take the ring from his finger as token."

Friar Tuck then wrote a message, which the baron signed with his own special mark; and Fayre, dancing gaily, took it to the castle!

FAYRE and the monk stood together in the wood as the baron, blindfolded so that he could not see the secret herb used, was led to the wizard friar.

"'Tis the only way," said the monk, shaking his head.

Then they turned away as the baron was suddenly tripped and pushed into a large chair that had once graced his torture chamber. And by an ingenious device of his own invention, his arms were pinioned, and his legs trapped.

"Hey—hi— he yelled.

Within a minute it was over; and the Baron le Feuvre, minus his aching tooth, was let free from the chair, eyes goggling.

"Two—two hundred gold pieces to take out my tooth—in my own chair!" he raved in fury. "And my head-man would have done the deed for naught."

The man who had done the deed dodged out of sight behind the trees—for he was the baron's head-man.

Then, in seething fury, he stamped homewards through the wood, while Fayre took a slightly longer course, but ran all the way.

A cloud seemed to have lifted from the castle on the morrow.

For the Baron le Feuvre was no longer suffering from toothache. He was himself again, surly, bullying—but by comparison with yesterday's mood, a gay, tender-hearted lamb.

The poor had their monk again—and, in addition, a gift from Robin Hood, a hundred gold pieces to share.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

THERE will be another splendid COMPLETE story featuring the young Lady Fayre and the gallant Robin Hood in next week's issue, so order your copy well in advance. And remember—it will be published on Thursday, April 6th, instead of Saturday, the 8th.

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, but learn a strict governess is to take charge of them. Afraid she will forbid them dancing, May tries to miss the woman, but, going to the wrong station, walks right into her!

(Now read on.)

**Startling Suspicions!**

MAY turned cold inside as she felt Miss Simpson's eyes fixed upon her. She was doomed; there was no chance of escape. The artful dodge she had planned was ruined, thanks to the dancing mistress' careless mistake in checking the train.

It was only a moment before Miss Simpson spoke, but it was time enough for a dozen thoughts to rush through May's head.

Once she acknowledged that she was May Joliphant, there could be no dancing at the Theatre Royal.

No governess would permit girls in her charge to dance on a public stage with professional dancing girls. And Miss Simpson, as the letter introducing her had made clear, was no ordinary governess. She was strict.

In half an hour the girls would prepare to take their places on the stage; the Novelty Nine, without May, would be the Novelty Eight. And if Yin Su and Daphne were forbidden to dance, then there would only be six.

May moved forward, still battling with her conscience and her loyalty to the Novelty Nine.

"Are you May Joliphant?" asked the woman in the camel-haired coat.

She spoke haltingly, diffidently, and a spot of colour came into her cheeks. Her voice had a piping note, which made her seem more bird-like than ever.

"I—I—"

May nearly said "no."

"Yes, I'm May Joliphant," she groaned.

"Ah! I am Miss Simpson. I'm your new governess, my dear," said the woman, and giggled.

May drew a breath. Her eyes rounded in surprise, in incredulity; for no strict governess she had ever met had giggled or wriggled or blushed when she had announced herself.

"Miss Simpson. Oh, how do you do?" said May briskly.

"Oh, I'm all right. How are you?" asked Miss Simpson. "You look well enough."

May felt hope dawning; for impossible though it had seemed at first, she suddenly realised that Miss Simpson fell into that fluttering grade of feeble humanity known as goops.

And if she was—

May's eyes glimmered. If Miss Simp-

**The governess who came to take charge of May & Co. seemed an awful stupid, but May wondered—was she just acting a part?**

son was not strict at all, but rather weak and twittering, then even yet the situation might be saved.

There was only one thing to do; give her a fair trial.

"I'm not as well as I was," said May, frowning.

"No?" said Miss Simpson sharply, and stepping forward to take a closer look at May, she tripped over her case, staggered, and would have fallen but for May's support.

"You don't seem so well yourself, Miss Simpson," said May, suppressing a chuckle.

"Oh, I'm all right; I just stumbled, dear," said the new governess.

Then she peered closely at May.

"You have a rather flushed look," she said anxiously. "I do hope you aren't going to be ill."

"I hope not," said May affably. "But you never can tell. Let's hope it's not catching, like measles."

Miss Simpson shot back, and lifted

her eyebrows so sharply that her neat, rimless pince-nez fell off.

"Measles!" she said, in shocked tone.

"Or whooping cough," said May.

"Good gracious! Tut, tut," frowned the governess, and bit her lip. "If you are feeling really ill, you had better come to a doctor's at once."

"No, no. I'm not so bad as that," protested May hurriedly. "I'll sit down for a bit, I think."

She sat down, and Miss Simpson sat beside her, eyeing her shrewdly. Then suddenly she remembered that she was to meet three girls.

"Where are the others, dear?" she asked, giving a stout, middle-aged woman a hard, searching look, and then shooting a measuring glance at a child of eight.

May made up her mind. "No. The fact is there's some Chinese dancing—some old-type, beautiful Chinese dancing—at a place here."

"Ah! And naturally the little

Chinese girl wanted to see it. Naturally," said Miss Simpson. "Now I've always wanted to study Oriental art myself, but what with having an ailing aunt, and my canaries—"

"Shall we go?" said May, jumping up as a plan took shape in her mind.

"Oh, yes! Where is this place?" asked the new governess, adjusting her glasses.

May nearly skipped with joy, and could have laughed at her earlier fears of the strict governess.

"We'll go there at once," she said eagerly. "Porter—"

May took charge; as Miss Simpson was looking in her handbag for her ticket, which was gripped between her teeth, growing almost frantic with alarm.

BY  
**ELIZABETH CHESTER**



## ANOTHER SUPERB HILDA RICHARDS STORY



This is one of the early adventures of the celebrated Chums of Cliff House School, and is simply packed with thrills from beginning to end. But there's plenty of typical Fourth Form fun, as well.

Like each of the **FOUR** grand books, Now on Sale, this costs but fourpence, and can be obtained at all newsagents and stationers.

Don't forget the number of the Babs & Co. story—**No. 672.**

in the MARCH issues of

## SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN LIBRARY

The **THREE** other magnificent numbers are:

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**No. 675.** "GIRL RIDERS of GHOST GULCH!" a fine story of Australian adventure, by Clive Bancroft.

She stumbled along beside May, still searching, but when they reached the barrier, May halted.

"Excuse me," she said, and taking the ticket from the governess's teeth, handed it to the smiling ticket collector.

Then, hailing a taxi, May gave the address softly to the driver, and helped Miss Simpson in.

"Now," said the governess. "Here we are, and you are in my charge. You must understand, May, that I am strict—very strict. I have always been strict, and I shall never alter. One is either strict or one isn't. This seat is rather uncomfortable," she added.

"You're sitting on your umbrella, Miss Strict, I mean Miss Simpson," gurgled May, fighting to control herself. "Oh, so I am!" said Miss Simpson, removing it and putting it across her lap.

May turned to her.

"Were you engaged by post, Miss Simpson?" she asked.

"Oh, yes!"

"I thought so," said May.

"Oh, I had an interview with—er—h'm! Strange, I can't remember the lady's name. In fact, I don't think I knew it," said the governess, sounding surprised.

May gave a quick start.

"My goodness!" she exclaimed sharply. "You don't mean—" But she did not finish the sentence; instead, she asked, "What was she like, this woman?"

"Oh, tallish!" answered Miss Simpson vaguely. "Quite smart, aristocratic—"

May was tense with excitement, for a sudden alarming thought grew in her mind; perhaps an intuition rather than a thought, although now that she weighed it in her mind, she could justify it.

Was Madame X again meddling in their affairs? Madame X had stolen their luggage and, by a cunning ruse,

tried to debar Yin Su from dancing. Was she behind this new obstacle, a governess?

Who was the woman who had appointed Miss Simpson? Indirectly, officially, Miss Vesey, of course; but Miss Vesey was ill in bed. Who, in her place, had interviewed the new governess?

"Miss Simpson—tell me," said May breathlessly. "Had this woman any jewellery?"

May had in mind the distinctive emerald ring.

"Jewellery? Why, I really couldn't say," mused Miss Simpson. "Had she? Er—yes, a ring—"

May's breath was stifled; her eyes widened, and then she positively shouted the next question.

"An emerald ring! Was it a large emerald ring?"

The governess recoiled, hand to ear, startled and shocked.

"Good gracious, you needn't shout, girl! I am not deaf."

"Sorry," said May. "But was it?"

Miss Simpson eyed her haughtily.

"I refuse to tell you anything more. When you can ask questions in a reasonable manner—"

"Ah! Then it was an emerald ring," said May grimly.

Miss Simpson tossed her head, behaving as though she considered that the time had come to assert her authority.

"I have not said it was. It may have been a ruby ring, a sapphire, a diamond, or plain gold."

May regarded the governess intently. To Miss Simpson the answer did not seem one of any importance, and she sat with her head tilted, fixing May with a look of reproach.

"My golly!" murmured May, awed.

True, Miss Simpson had not admitted that the woman who had interviewed her had an emerald ring—only that she

had a ring. But she was being very guarded about it, which suggested that the ring was an emerald. And May meant to find out one way or the other!

But Madame X! Was it possible that she could have interfered with Miss Vesey's plans, and interviewed the governess on her behalf? Could she have tampered with the correspondence, even? In fact—was the letter announcing the arrival of Miss Simpson a mere forgery?

### A Thorough Testing!

**M**AY was bewildered; she could not come to a decision. For, thinking things over clearly, she could not believe that Madame X, sending someone in her pay to act as their governess, would choose such a foolish person as Miss Simpson.

Miss Simpson suddenly broke her aloof silence.

"Now that you are calm," she said quietly, "I will answer your question. The ring, so far as I remember, was either a sapphire or an amethyst. No—I'm wrong," she exclaimed. "A ruby—"

May shot her a searching look, and wondered if anyone, even flutter-witted Miss Simpson, could be in doubt as to whether a ring was a ruby or a sapphire—one red, the other blue in colour!

And as that thought occurred, another came. Was it possible, she asked herself, that Miss Simpson was not stupid, after all? Was she just pretending to be stupid? Had she suddenly seen the danger in discussing her employer; had she realised that the emerald ring was a clue to Madame X's identification?

A fool—or an artful actress? Which was she?

May's mind was in a whirl. She had been dismayed when she had first learned that a governess was to take charge of them, for an ordinary governess would certainly not allow them to continue with the Novelty Nine! But if Miss Simpson was an impostor, with no authority over them, what did it matter what she thought, or ordered, or desired them to do?

"Um!" murmured May, frowning heavily.

Miss Simpson was tut-tutting to herself, gazing reflectively first at one corner of the taxi roof, then the other. There was clearly something on her mind.

"I really do wish you had not mentioned that ring. Now I shall get no peace until I remember. A ruby—an amethyst—no—a garnet? Or perhaps—"

Her face was twisted in perplexed thought.

But May's perplexity waned; she had made a decision. If Miss Simpson was really a simp, and not merely pretending, Madame X was not likely to have employed her. Miss Simpson was then likely to be genuine.

The first thing, then, was to solve the riddle: Was she a fool?

The taxi stopped, and May climbed out first, helping Miss Simpson down, a plan already forming in her mind.

"And now," said May, paying off the taxi. "I'm sure you would like to meet the Chinese dancer, Miss Simpson?"

"Oh, I shouldn't know what to say," demurred the governess, with a little nervous giggle.

May kept a straight face as she replied.

"You have to say 'happy to meet you!' in Chinese."

"But I don't know any Chinese! I was especially told it was not necessary. I don't know any Chinese at all, except the name of Mrs. Dorkin's Pekingesee."

"Oh, I'll tell you what to say," May assured her, and led the way to the stage door. "Now," she said, almost grimly, "you had better repeat the words after me. O wata—"

Miss Simpson became coy, but she was persuaded at last.

"O wata," she murmured.

"Nass-i."

"Nass-i."

"Yam," finished May.

"O wata, nass-i, yam," said Miss Simpson, tapping her forehead to commit it to memory.

"That's jolly good!" said May, staring at her intently. "Rush it out all in a bunch, three times, bowing deeply, and put the tip of your right thumb in your right ear. Keep the knuckles bent, and twist the hand backwards and forwards each time."

If Miss Simpson was acting the part of a goop, she was brilliant. There was no question about it. Committing the words to memory, she tripped over the threshold and apologised to the door-post.

May hurried ahead and whispered to the porter.

"Keep her here until she's sent for," she said.

The porter eyed Miss Simpson casually, and went on reading his paper.

May, reaching the dressing-room, was greeted by a chorus of delight. Yin Su, being fastened into a property Chinese costume, which the dressmaker was even now altering to her requirements, looked round and clapped her hands.

"May, May! I am so happy!" she said.

"Good!" said May, her eyes glimmering.

"May, what happened?" asked Daphne softly.

May drew her closer and spoke in a low tone.

"I collected the letter at the post office. It said that a new governess was arriving by the two-three train. She's here!"

Daphne fell back, eyes wide.

"Here? A new governess! Oh, May! But she'll never let us go on the stage!" she wailed.

May chuckled.

"Wait!" she said. "She's either a very clever actress or her middle name is mutt. I'm just trying an experiment. According to the result, our fun is either over or taking on a new lease of life. Listen, girls!" she added to the dancing girls. "I bet none of you has enough control not to laugh if you don't want to."

"Oh, haven't we?" asked Vere. "We're stage girls."

"Right! If you can watch a little introduction between a Chinese dancer and a friend of mine without giggling I'll stand you all a spanking tea."

"Done!" came an eager chorus.

May turned to Yin Su.

"Yin Su, are you nearly ready? I want you to meet a friend of mine and talk nothing but Chinese. Quick! Put on your mask—"

Yin Su picked up the rather startling dancer's mask. The face was cold and ghostly.

"Great pleasure to meet friend of May's," she smiled. Noble, well-born person of great intellect—"

"You're telling me!" responded May, giggling inside.

Yin Su fitted the mask, and, being encased in her wide-skirted gold, black, and red frock, she nodded that she was ready.

May ran down the corridor to where the governess was waiting.

"Right!" said May, beckoning Miss Simpson.

"O wana tat yam," said the governess.

May groaned, and then went through it all over again until Miss Simpson really knew it, by which time Yin Su had appeared.

"Oh!" gasped the governess, and put her glasses straight. "What a cold, expressionless face!"

"S-sh! The Chinese never show their feelings," warned May.

The Novelty Nine, with Daphne gaping and goggling in their midst, stood behind Yin Su, determined not to lose their magnificent tea at May's expense by foolish giggles.

Yin Su, bowing, made a polite Chinese speech.

"Er—er— Oh, wata nass I yam. Oh, what an ass I am! Oh, what an ass I am!" said Miss Simpson, and put her right thumb in her right ear and wagged it.

Explosive sounds came from the chorus girls, but no more.

May did not laugh; she was studying the governess too intently. But even now the truth eluded her.

"Good, Miss Simpson!" she said. "Now we'd better go in front—"

And May hurried the flustered governess away to the main door, asking for two seats at the back of the dress circle.

The Novelty Nine were not due on immediately, so May could afford time to take her seat with the governess. They were early—the first arrivals.

"Dear me! Where are the others?" whispered Miss Simpson.

"With the Chinese dancing-girl," said May.

Presently people filtered in—men, women, and a few youngsters—as this was a special matinee. May, realising that Miss Simpson would soon grow more insistent that she met Daphne and Yin Su, looked about her, and suddenly had a brain-wave. She could kill two birds with one stone—make another attempt to learn the truth about Miss Simpson—and keep her out of the way, too.

Two girls of about May's own age presently entered the upper circle un-

accompanied, and May slipped from her seat and went up to them.

"I say, would you do me a frightfully good turn?" she asked bluntly. "I'll stand you ices if you will."

The girls exchanged looks and smiled. Then, leading them behind the back barrier of the seats, May whispered. A moment later she took them to Miss Simpson. "Only a mutt, she argued, would accept either as being Chinese."

"Daphne," she said to the taller of the two girls.

"Oh!" exclaimed Miss Simpson. "How do you do, my dear?"

"And Yin Su," said May to the other girl; the paler and shorter of the two.

Miss Simpson gave her a hard look, and then nudged May.

"She doesn't look a bit Chinese," she whispered.

"No," admitted May candidly. "She doesn't, does she?"

"How very interesting," commented Miss Simpson almost excitedly.

Then she made room for the girls, thinking that they would sit one on either side of her.

But the girl who had answered the name Daphne shook her head vigorously.

"Oh, no!" she said, pointing to the other side of the circle. "We're sitting over there."

Miss Simpson knit her brows at that, and May wondered what she would say. She looked quite bewildered.

"Over there? Oh, but—" she began.

"Shush!" came a reproving murmur from the other people near by, and some called "Sit down!" as she rose.

The two giggling girls, not wishing to take the joke any further, hurried away to their own seats, leaving the governess waving to them and calling in vain, and at the same time arguing with people who were urging her to be quiet.

May slipped quietly away, and did not stop running until she reached the dressing-room, arriving there in great excitement.

"Saved!" gasped May, as she entered the dressing-room to find all the girls in merry mood, still discussing the weird antics of the absurd Miss Simpson.

"You owe us tea!" called Vere.

"But, golly! We've laughed fit to kill



"QUICK, Yin Su! Get the mask on!" May whispered from the door. "Miss Simpson's with the doorkeeper." Everything depended on making the governess think Yin Su was not one of her charges.



ourselves since we got back here, May. Where ever did you find her? I've never, never seen anyone so completely taken in as she was."

May explained who Miss Simpson was, and there were understanding "Oh's!"

Daphne was most perturbed; in a complete whirl.

"May! She's not our governess!" she exclaimed. "She can't be—a woman, like that. Who ever engaged her?"

"Apparently, Miss Vesey," May said. "But don't let's worry about her."

Any further questions Daphne wanted to ask had to be postponed, for at that moment Miss Anderson opened the door to tell them that the hour had arrived; they were due on the stage.

The Novelty Nine moved as one girl for the door. For better or for worse, wearing pretty, frilly stage frocks of delicately shaded tints, giving all the seven colours of the rainbow, and two more—infrared red and ultra violet—they were ready to dazzle and delight the audience—they hoped.

May and Daphne, for the first time in their lives, were to go on to a stage and face a real audience.

### Missing!

NEITHER May nor Daphne really knew how they felt as they stood in the wings. They were hot and cold in turn, and in turn elated and depressed. Stage fright numbed them, excitement thrilled them.

Miss Anderson beckoned Yin Su aside and lined them up. Only six were to go on at first—the chums remaining behind.

Relief flooded over them as they saw the six others dance on, and then they suffered a pang of envy as the girls, with graceful rhythm, finished a faultless dance, and brought rippling applause.

"Now you two—Daphne, May—on!" said Miss Anderson.

On went May and Daphne, doing a simple step they knew, to join the rest. With an expert on either side to give them little nudges and touches, they managed to keep in rhythm and step.

But it was hard work, demanding ceaseless concentration, and neither could even look at the audience, which was just a darkness, broken here and there by what seemed light-coloured balloons. But the balloons so-seeming were human faces.

The bright footlights shone on to them, the limps picked up the principals, and Daphne felt a warm thrill of pride run over her.

"Oh, it's lovely—lovely!" she breathed.

"Smile, smile," said the girl on her left through the side of her smiling mouth.

The applause was like machine-gun fire. A thrill.

Daphne parted her lips widely, showing eyes and teeth, and off the stage they went, Yin Su tripping prettily on, bowing and spreading her hands.

Then, panting a little, pink-cheeked, bright-eyed, they watched from the wings as Yin Su, suffering no kind of stage-fright that was noticeable in her dance, held the audience silent.

Yin Su excelled herself. Graceful, perfectly poised, flexible as a slender flower, every movement was a poem.

All too soon the dance was over—too soon for the audience, which for a second remained hushed. Then terrific applause broke out, calls of "core," thumping, shouting, and even whistling.

Once more Yin Su danced, and again delighted the audience, but she could manage no more. Out of practice, out of training, two such dances were a great strain, and the curtain was dropped before she could gallantly make a third attempt.

"Wonderful, Yin Su—wonderful!" said May enthusiastically.

They had no time to give her further praise, for Miss Anderson signalled to the Chinese girl that she would now have to go back to the dressing-room and change into a novelty costume such as the other girls wore. The change had to be made quickly, too, for until Yin Su returned they were only eight.

May and Daphne dashed back to the stage, and being well-placed in the line, were able to follow the steps without seeming to lag.

With a comedy dance for two by Freda and Vere, the show was brought to an end, save for the last line-up in which Yin Su should take part.

But Yin Su did not appear.

May looked anxiously at the wings, but there was no sign of the Chinese girl, and Miss Anderson signalled them off before the usual time.

Amidst tremendous applause the curtain fell to end their act, and in a chattering, excited group they went from the wings into a corridor.

"Well done!" murmured the dancing mistress eagerly. "You all did splendidly, especially you two girls; and I only hope that those we get to replace you will be half as good. For, of course, you won't be able to stay with us."

"Of course not," said Daphne, with a sigh. "Even though she does seem a duffer, she couldn't possibly agree to our staying on. It's—such a pity, because it's been grand fun, hasn't it, May?"

"Marvellous!" May agreed.

With the rest of the Novelty Nine

they returned to the dressing-room, where Yin Su had gone on ahead of them. One and all were eager to congratulate the Chinese girl on her really wonderful performance; for undoubtedly she had been the "hit" of the show.

When May opened the door of the dressing-room, they had a shock. Yin Su was not there!

"Hallo!" May exclaimed to the elderly dresser. "Where is Yin Su?"

"Yin Su? The Chinese girl?" asked the dresser. "Why, there was a Chinese gentleman sent a card round saying that he'd like to see her, miss."

May stood quite still, filled with sudden alarm. It was the first time that she had allowed Yin Su out of her sight—and in the circumstances, she had had no alternative.

May did not stop to ask more questions, but hurried at once from the dressing-room, down the long stone corridor to the stage door, with Daphne at her heels, even more agitated than she was herself.

Neither had uttered the fear uppermost in her mind—kidnapping; but that fear had been present ever since they had been left in charge of Yin Su.

May reached the doorman's little cubicle breathless and gasping, and he looked up at her over the newspaper he was reading, startled by her obvious concern.

"The Chinese girl?" gasped May. "Has she gone out?"

"Chinese girl? Yes!" he said slowly. "That batty woman—that woman you brought here took her—"

"Took her?" May interrupted. "Oh, where to?"

The doorman came from his cubicle shaking his head.

"She didn't say; she just whisked her off, grabbing her by the hand. The Chinese girl didn't seem like she wanted to go at first, but she went."

May looked at Daphne and groaned in despair.

"Oh, fool that I am! She took me in. That governess, Daphne—she's paid by Madame X. That must be it; that's the only explanation. She wasn't a fool at all; she was artful and cunning. And now, she's got Yin Su!"

She explained no more to Daphne then, but ran out from the stage door into the stone-paved courtyard, looking in all directions. She ran down to the roadway, looked up and down without seeing either the governess or Yin Su.

But she saw a man selling newspapers.

May hurried to him at once, bought a paper, and put her question.

"Ah! Chinese girl, and a fussy sort of middle-aged woman?" he asked.

"Why, yes, I did see them. And where do you think they went? Over that fence!" he said impressively; and pointed to the fence that enclosed the courtyard in which the stage door was situated. "Over that fence—"

May waited to hear no more. She turned and ran for the fence. Reaching it, she sprang at the top, gripped it tightly; and then hauled herself up so that she could look over at the plot of waste land tangled with undergrowth on the far side.

**WILL** May and Daphne be able to find Yin Su? And is Miss Simpson really a cunning enemy, after all?—On no account miss next Thursday's enthralling chapters of this grand story.



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