

Fascinating LONG COMPLETE Story  
of Cliff House School.

"THE RETURN OF JUNGLE JESS!"

# THE SCHOOLGIRL

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Incorporating  
"SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN"



## MISS BULLIVANT AT BAY!

But there was no cause for  
alarm with the Jungle Girl  
on the scene.

(See the grand Babs & Co. story inside.)



Magnificent LONG COMPLETE story of Barbara Redfern & Co. of Cliff House—



### An Amazing Meeting!



"SHALL we go in?" asked Barbara Redfern, captain of the Fourth Form at Cliff House School.

Tomboy Clara Trevlyn looked at her chum and leader.

"Why not?" she countered.

"Well, the circus is not open yet, I guess," American-born Leila Carroll said doubtfully. "Still, no harm in having a look round. I'll say it looks as if it's going to be some show!" she added admiringly.

"And it's jolly well on Cliff House ground, you know," Bessie Bunter put in. Fat and bespectacled, she blinked. "I dud-don't see what harm there can be in looking round. What do you say, Marjorie?"

Gentle, peace-loving Marjorie Hazeldene considered the point.

"Oh, I—I should think it would be all right," she said at last.

"And, after all," golden-haired Mabel Lynn contributed, "they can only shoo us off, anyway. Let's risk it."

But the six Fourth Formers, standing at the newly erected entrance of Gregson's Gigantic Circus, had, by that time, decided upon that point.

Like a magnet, the super Gregson's circus had attracted them this sunny afternoon, and they were all acutely conscious of the irresistible desire to explore farther.

Not often was it that a circus pitched

so close to the famous old English school, and not often was it that the school gave permission for such a show to be staged on property which belonged to it. That very fact, they felt, gave them some sort of right to have a look round.

Anyway, as Mabs said, it was worth the risk. They could not very well trespass, as they were practically on school property, and they would not be cheating, because the circus had not yet been opened. In any case, they

He nodded slightly to them as they halted, half-expecting to be told to get out, and passed on towards a huge marquee which stood to their right.

"That's Mr. Big Bill Gregson himself!" Clara whispered. "I've seen his photograph in the local paper. Anyway, he didn't seem to mind, did he? Let's have a squint into the big top."

All on tenterhooks of curiosity to know what was going on in the big top—the main show tent—they stepped

**A circus in town! Exciting indeed for Babs & Co. But how much more exciting for them to discover that one of the circus performers is none other than Jungle Jess, that astounding "Queen of Wild Animals," whom they first met on a South Seas island holiday. Wonderfully happy are they all, until — Jess' return brings with it a baffling mystery and a most disturbing problem.**



were all going to buy tickets for the opening performance, which was to be given to-morrow night.

"Come on, then," said Babs.

She stepped through the painted entrance, as yet devoid of turnstiles, and her chums followed her.

As they did so a string of high-stepping liberty horses came prancing across the turf in front of them, led by a huge man in a bursting scarlet jacket and a pair of brown corduroy breeches.

towards the main entrance, and in a little group gathered there. At once their eyes lighted up at what they saw.

Mr. Big Bill Gregson himself was acting as ringmaster, and cracking a whip, while the dozen liberty horses bucked and pranced to get into position before a huge hurdle.

Three or four performers, all dressed in short equestrienne skirts, were standing by, and on the opposite side a second flap was open, giving a

—School, reintroducing their amazing, but lovable, charm from the South Seas.



# The Return of JUNGLE JESS!

glimpse of a group of other circus hands, who were also stealing a private view of the rehearsal in progress.

"Lola, back with the roan," Gregson ordered. "Get him into line there. We're going to do the mounting jump, and don't forget I want to see all you girls leaping on the horses at the same moment." Right, then. Now—"

The whip cracked again, and the chums stood, glowing and thrilling, as they realised they were about to see the rehearsal of a most difficult equestrian turn.

Up went the heads of the horses. A shout from the ringmaster, and they galloped forward. Babs held her breath.

"Watch!" she cried.

But before the mounting jump was taken there was a startling interruption.

From the opposite flap came a yell: "Leopard! The leopard's escaped!" Faces, suddenly scared and panic-stricken, melted as if by magic. Then through the entrance bounded a lithe, tawny shape, the sight of which held the chums petrified.

It was a leopard!

For one brief instant they all saw it as it stood there, its greenish eyes gleaming, its tail slashing to and fro. Just for a second it paused, and then, as the cry from outside was repeated, it leapt.

Then Bessie gave a shriek.

"He-he-help! It's kik-kik-coming

for us! Oh dud-dear! R-r-run, you know!"

"No!" cried Marjorie. "No, no! Wait!"

"It's coming!" shouted Clara. "Marjorie, you idiot—"

But Marjorie, that most timid, shy and gentle of girls, was standing still, her eyes burning with a strange, incredulous sort of light.

"Kullo," she said softly—and perhaps just a little shakily.

"Kullo?" Babs started. "Marjorie, it's never—"

Panic was forgotten then. With eyes of incredulous wonder, they all stared towards the bounding animal. But Marjorie, as if to set their doubts at rest, boldly went forward, and as the leopard stopped, she gazed down at him. Then she uttered one strange word:

"Chup!"

"Mum-my hat!" breathed Babs.

"Phew!" whistled Clara.

Wonderment and joy of recognition spread over her features as the leopard, now tamely squatting on its haunches, extended towards Marjorie a huge, furry paw, at the same time licking his chops and purring with pleasure.

"Kik-kik-kik-Kullo!" stammered Bessie.

Kullo the leopard was. Kullo, their old friend they knew so well! The same animal who, twelve months ago, they had first met in the Pacific Ocean on Pirates' Island, in the company of that strange jungle girl, Jess Pickering. But Kullo—here!

"Kullo!" cried Babs, and he greeted her with a purr of pleasure.

As she came forward, he lifted his paw to her, and Marjorie laughed. But before they could do anything else, there came a frantic bellow from Big Bill Gregson.

"Gee, get out of it! That leopard will eat you!"

"Says you!" Leila laughed back.

"We know him!"

"You what?"

"We know him," Leila said. "He belongs to a friend of ours—Jess Pickering!"

Big Bill Gregson blinked. Then he spun round as there was a rush of footsteps and a girl, dressed in a leopard skin, and with a mass of glossy black hair flying from her head, came agitatedly rushing into the great arena, a rope over her arm.

"Jess!" the whole crowd of Cliff House chums shrieked simultaneously.

"Chakka!" Jess said. "Chakka!"

Then, seeing them, a whoop left her lips. "Marjie—my Marjie!" she shrieked, the rather desperate anxiety which had been in her face changing to a look of utter joy. "Marjie!"

"Jess!" Marjorie gasped. "Oh my hat! I say— Oh dear! How the dickens did you get here?"

By  
**HILDA RICHARDS**

Illustrated by T. LAIDLER.

"I sign the paper," Jess said. "But—Clara—all my friends I love!" she cried. "It is you! I see you again! Oh, I so happy!"

The chums stared, laughing now, while Kullo, with a grunt, stretched himself out like a dog who has found a warm fireside. But it was Big Bill Gregson who spoke next.

"What is this?" he asked puzzledly. "Anyway, save your joy! Jess, this is the third time in three days this cat of yours has escaped!"

"Kullo not escape," Jess flashed quickly. "Someone let him out of cage! Always you tell me Kullo escape, and always I find his cage undone! But, my friends!" she cried, transformed, and slipping the rope over Kullo's head, dimpled as she looked at Babs & Co. again. "You come to see me?"

"Wait a minute," Gregson snapped. "We've got to get this cleared up. Hallo!" he added, spinning round as another girl came flying into the booth.

This girl was slightly older than Jess. Her narrow, amber eyes full of fury, she pointed a quivering finger.

"You jungle cat!" she raved. Jess stiffened.

"You not call me names!" she cried. "Your beastly leopard!" the girl ground out. "He's upset my supper! I was cooking on the camp-fire," she stormed to Gregson, "and—and this animal came leaping out of his cage and upset my stewing pot all over the fire! That girl let him out. I saw her do it!"

"I did not let him out!" Jess cried indignantly. "It is an untrue story you tell, Zoe Lee! Always you are the one to tell the story about me when Kullo escapes from his cage, and always you seek to get me into trouble! You bad girl!" she cried quiveringly.

"I tell you—" Zoe raved. "All right, tell it later," Gregson snapped. "All the same, Jess, this has got to stop. That animal's a menace—a danger. The leopard's yours, and you're responsible for him. Understand that! Now, Zoe, you can come with me!"

Zoe Lee pouted, and Babs did not miss the glowering look of hate she flung at the jungle girl as she followed the circus-owner out of the big top. Jess glared after her.

"That Zoe—she hate me," she said. "Always has she hated me from the first time I come to the circus. Always, too, she has hated my Kullo"—and she affectionately stroked the soft fur of her jungle pet's head. "But you!" she cried merrily, flying, as was her wont, from one emotion to another. "How you come here?"

Babs laughed. "Don't you think," she asked, "that question ought to be answered first by you, Jess? We thought you were with your grandfather?"

"We part," Jess said simply. They gazed at her. Marjorie, concern on her face, shook her head. A strange child was this Jess, but perhaps she, better than any of them, knew the primitive emotions which swayed her.

On Pirates' Island Jess had lived—mistress of every savage animal it contained; a supreme and unquestioned queen among them all.

Until the chums themselves had landed there she had never talked to another girl, had not even known her own language. Even now she spoke in queer, clipped syllables, which showed that human speech was still something of a difficulty to her.

But Jess liked them; would, without a second's hesitation, have laid down

her life for any one of them. But of them all it was Marjorie, so much more refined and gentle than any of them, and so utterly different from herself, that she liked best.

"We part," Jess repeated. "I join the circus. I sign the paper, and tomorrow I perform in this big tent among strange people with Kullo, and for it I get money. But I have been lonely," she said wistfully. "Sometimes I have been very sad thinking of you, my Marjie, and I have so longed to see you again. But we are happy now?" she added brightly.

"Very happy," Marjorie said softly. "Oh, Jess, what a surprise-packet you are! But why did you not come back to school after you had left?"

This was a reference to the very brief attempt which had been made to educate Jess at Cliff House after her arrival from Pirates' Island.

"I like not the school—only you and Babs and my friends, Marjie," Jess said simply. "I like to be with Kullo, grandfather, the sea, the little house on the beach. But grandfather, he angry with me. He find Kullo once sleep in his bed, and we have big row. I leave, you see. That is all," she added, as if that explained everything.

"And—and your grandfather doesn't know you're here?" Babs stammered.

"Why should I tell him?" Jess asked proudly. "I come here. And now I am glad I have come, because I have found you again. I am glad in spite of Zoe. See, let us go somewhere!" she added eagerly. "I have so much to talk to you about."

The chums gazed at each other. The same suggestion was in all their minds.

"Well, what about coming to Cliff House?" Leila asked.

"Cliff House—the school?" Jess laughed. "Yes, it will be fun to go there again," she said. "I take Kullo?" she asked quickly.

Marjorie flushed. "Well, Jess, you know there's a rule against wild animals at the school."

"Kullo not wild," Jess said protestingly. "Kullo tame. Kullo love me, and loves my friends. But, Marjie, if you say Kullo not come to school, then Kullo stay here—in cage. Come," she added excitedly. "Kullo, Kullo!"

The leopard rose and stretched himself. Scampering before them, Jess led the way out of the tent. Two or three circus hands, grouped in the entrance-way outside, hastily skipped back as the leopard appeared.

But Jess seemed not to notice them. Utterly enchanted, she danced along. Presently she reached a cage set aside from the others, and nimbly opened the door. A word from her and Kullo leapt into it, disappearing through the opening that led to his enclosed sleeping quarters.

Then Jess produced a key and locked the padlock which secured the door.

"Now Kullo go to sleep," she said. "And see, I have locked his door! If you wait here I put on the schoolgirl clothes which I know will please you. Then I come," she added simply.

She darted away, sprinting up the steps of a small near-by caravan. The chums looked at each other, smiling, even now hardly realising they had met their strange friend again.

"But she ought not to be allowed to run wild like this," Babs said anxiously. "I'll bet her poor grandfather's worried out of his life. Marjorie, what are we going to do about her? We can't let her stop here."

"Wait," Marjorie counselled, "until we've talked to her. Funny, meeting

her like this again, and— Why, look!" she added, pointing.

They all turned to the collection of caravans and tents on the other side. Now, as they watched, they saw the foxy-faced Zoe, clearly unaware of their presence, creeping stealthily towards the cage. And beside her was a tall, thin man with a waxed moustache, and a woman whose thinning grey hair and sharp-pointed face gave her a somewhat witch-like appearance.

Clara frowned. "That's Samson, the lion-tamer," she said. "I've seen his photograph with Bill Gregson's. But what—"

Clara broke off as Zoe, with a whispered word to her companions, left them standing and approached the cage.

And now they saw she had something in her hand. It was a heavy key.

She had not seen them yet, and they realised, by the stealth of her movements, that she was bent on some sinister enterprise. She reached the cage, darting out of sight behind the woodwork portion.

Babs' eyes became sharp. Suddenly she remembered Jess' passionate defence that Kullo had been freed by someone else, and suspicion which was almost conviction stabbed through her mind. Just a glance at her chums she gave, and then quickly slipped round the side of the cage.

"Zoe!" she cried. Zoe, her hand on the padlock which secured the door of Kullo's sleeping quarters, turned, with quite a jump.

"What are you doing?" Babs inquired.

She received quite a shock as she saw the snarl which twisted the startled Zoe's face, as she saw the look of baffled hate which for a moment appeared on her features. But Zoe did not reply. She turned, and, without even opening her lips, slipped away. At the same moment there came a violent bang from Jess' caravan, and Jess' voice rang out.

"Marjorie—Babs! I am here—ready! I come!"

Babs paused, smiling in spite of herself at the sound of that ringing voice. When she turned again Zoe Lee had gone.

### Shocks for Cliff House!



"NO tea. Not like tea," Jess said happily. "Water!" She

took a great draught at the glass she was holding. "Now may I have an apple, please?"

"But what about these lovely salmon sandwiches, you know?" Bessie Bunter protested.

"No like salmon. Apple. If not apple, banana; and if not banana, orange," Jess said. "Fruit—yum!"

And contentedly Jess munched fruit and drank water, while the rest of the Cliff House chums gathered round the hospitably laden table of Study No. 4 in the Fourth Form corridor of the ancient school gazed at her.

Surely Jess was the strangest of guests to be entertaining!

She sat on the back of the easy-chair, not in the seat as any other girl would do, and from the eminence of that lofty height beamed into the faces of her chums.

"But, Jess, what are your plans?" Marjorie asked.

"No plans," Jess shrugged. "I perform in circus. I teach Kullo tricks, and together we do them. Then one



day perhaps I get money to go back to my lovely Pirates' Isle and join leopards and monkeys which still love me. Kullo and I talk often of that day," she added dreamily.

"And your grandfather?" Babs asked.

"Just for a moment a petulant shadow crossed Jess' face.

"My grandfather not worry about me," she said.

"But he doesn't know where you are, you goose," Clara protested.

"All the same, he not worry," Jess repeated obstinately.

"But—but haven't you written?" Mabs asked.

"No like writing," Jess said finally.

"But let us not talk about me. Talk about you—and the school. I love to hear about the school."

Hopelessly the chums gazed at her, but Jess, beaming again, happily munched her apple. Impossible—so utterly impossible—to do anything with this jungle child. As she had been in the wild fastnesses of Pirates' Island, so she still was—a law unto herself.

At the same time they were all anxious.

For, knowing Jess' grandfather, they could guess the worried state of his mind.

"No like to come back to school—happy in circus," Jess chattered on. "Mr. Gregson, he a very nice man, though sometimes he become very vexed. Only Zoe is a bad girl," she added, with a frown.

"Why is it that she doesn't like you, Jess?" Babs questioned.

"I do not know. But Zoe always she hate me. Zoe say that my turn is no good. Zoe make up stories and tell the fibs about me. Yesterday I find Zoe poking at Kullo with a stick through the bars of his cage, so I throw her in the ditch. Zoe does not like me for that."

"Sure guess that's not surprising!" Leila murmured.

"And sometimes," Jess added, "I go to the lion cage and there I talk with Simba, who is a great beast and loves me truly. Last night," she added simply, "I sleep with Simba."

The chums shuddered. The bare idea of sleeping with a full-grown lion was enough to make their flesh creep, yet Jess spoke of wild animals as if they had been of no more circumstance than domestic cats or dogs.

But Babs was frowning. Why should Zoe hate Jess? And why should Zoe be going out of her way to make trouble for Jess and her leopard?

And Marjorie was thinking: "As soon as Jess is gone I am going to write to her grandfather and tell him where she is."

Tea progressed—a happy meal. Then, all at once, from outside, there was a terrific commotion.

"Look!"

"A leopard!"

"Quick, run for your lives!"

"Hallo!" cried Babs.

She was the first to jump to her feet, to be followed a second later by her startled chums. Towards the window they flew.

"Oh, my hat!" cried Clara. "Jess, it's Kullo! He's escaped again!"

"Kullo no escape," Jess replied indignantly. "I shut him up!"

"Then look!" cried Babs. "Oh, great goodness!"

They all stared, blinking down into the quad. Kullo was there assuredly—racing up the drive with great cat-like strides. His tail was swishing, his teeth were bared, and girls, screaming in panic, were running this way and that.

Then, as they watched the fleeing

girls, a new figure came rustling out of the schoolhouse—the grim, angular figure of Miss Bullivant, dressed in her best black, and holding an umbrella firmly in one hand. She stopped in the path of the leopard, shaking her umbrella like a walking-stick.

"Shoo! Go away, beast!" she cried.

Kullo crouched and growled. Then suddenly he raised himself. With his tail lashing, he crept forward. Miss Bullivant hesitated a moment, finding her courage oozing rapidly. Margot Lantham, from the safety of the pavilion roof, on to which she had swarmed, yelled to the mistress.

"Miss Bullivant, run—run! He's going to spring!"

"Er—er—" Miss Bullivant stutted, and then turned and fled.

Kullo, with a roar, went flying after her.

Jess cried out.

"Miss Bullivant is a great stupid!" she cried. "Marjorie—Babs—come!"

She flew towards the door, the chums stumbling on her heels.

The whole school seemed to be in a state of ferment as they rushed down the stairs, Jess well ahead of them. Across Big Hall they sprinted in a body, with Bessie labouring in the rear. And then; outside—

"Kullo!" shrieked Jess.

"Help!" yelled Miss Bullivant.

In spite of the gravity of the situation, the chums almost burst out laughing.

For Miss Bullivant, unable to reach the schoolhouse, had, in her desperation, leapt into the gardener's barrow on the verge of the lawn. And Miss Bullivant, panting, red-faced, was standing on the floor of that barrow, frantically waving her umbrella at the leopard, who, crouched upon his stomach, his tail swishing to and fro, glared defiance out of his greenish eyes. From various points of vantage in the neighbourhood, the scared faces of girls timorously peered at the scene.

"Go away!" squeaked Miss Bullivant. "Go away! Shoo!"

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Clara.

"He not hurt you," Jess promised.

"Please remain still. Chakka!" she rapped, and at the sound of that beloved voice, Kullo whisked round.

Then, to everybody's amazement, the great animal rose, gave a sort of spitting purr at Miss Bullivant, and went bounding towards his mistress, just as Babs & Co. raced up to her.

"Kullo, that bad," Jess said severely, and stroked him. "You must not follow—have I not told you? La, la!" she said quickly, as she saw the bristling of his crest. "Who has been teasing you?"

"Teasing him?" Babs said.

"Somebody has been teasing," Jess' eyes smouldered. "See how the fur on his crest bristles? See how he carries his tail? Kullo nice cat, Kullo well-behaved, but if Kullo teased, Kullo like human being who is teased, and grows angry. Somebody teased him before he was let out," Jess affirmed.

"And somebody, by the looks of it, is coming to tease you!" Leila Carroll muttered. "Here comes the Bull—"

"Oh, my stars—and Primmy, too!" whispered Babs. "Jess, grab the leopard—quickly!"

Girls were emerging now, most of them recognising Jess Pickering, looking a little more assured. Till that moment, of course, they had never identified the leopard with the girl who once had been a scholar at Cliff House School. Miss Bullivant, also identifying the leopard and its owner, had, with what dignity she could muster, climbed out of the wheelbarrow, to be joined

now by a decidedly angry-looking Miss Primrose, who, disturbed by the commotion, had just issued from the school.

The chums stood in a group as the headmistress and Miss Bullivant came up. Miss Primrose fastened her gaze full upon Jess.

"So it is you, Jess?" she said.

"Yes, Miss Primrose, it is me," Jess replied.

"I am pleased to see you," Miss Primrose said, but she did not look it. "I should have preferred you to visit the school without that wild beast, however, Jess."

"I did not bring him," Jess retorted.

"I leave him in the circus."

"But he followed you," Miss Primrose pointed out, "and following you, has caused a considerable disturbance in this school. I will not allow him here again. If you cannot conquer the temptation to bring him along with you, Jess, you must stop away."

"Oh, my hat!" Babs gasped. "Miss Primrose—"

"Barbara, do not interfere, please! I am considerably annoyed. Jess, you understand that? Now please take that animal away at once!"

Jess stood still, fierce roses of mutiny glowing in her cheeks.

"Kullo not animal—Kullo not beast!" she retorted defiantly. "Kullo is cat—my friend!"

Miss Primrose turned a little pink as there was a titter from the girls.

"Jess, I do not wish to argue with you," she said. "I am aware that you are still a little strange to the ways of the world. But I do warn you," she added, "that if I find you here with that leopard again I shall send you away. Er—ahem!" she added, as the sound of hoofbeats rang on the drive. "Why, upon my word! It is Mr. Gregson!"

Mr. Gregson it was, in his conspicuous red coat, and mounted on a white horse. With him was another rider—a girl, seated on a high, spotted chestnut. It was Zoe.

Smartly they cantered up, while Jess, her face very red, caressingly stroked Kullo's silky ears. Big Bill Gregson jumped down, removing his hat with a flourish.

"Your pardon, Miss Primrose! I am looking for a leopard, which has escaped."

Miss Primrose looked annoyed.

"Then your quest is at an end," she said tersely, "and I may say, Mr. Gregson, that while giving you permission to utilise Wildmint Meadow for your circus, I do not welcome the incursion of your wild animals to the school."

It was the circus proprietor's turn to go red.

"I am sorry! It should never have happened," he said humbly. "If it had not been for the utter carelessness of the girl—this girl—who is in charge of the animal, it would never have occurred." Nettled himself, he fastened his eyes upon her. "Jess, I have told you repeatedly about leaving Kullo unlocked in his cage."

"She's just out to make trouble!" Zoe spitefully sneered.

"Is she?" Babs looked at her.

"Wait a minute," she said quickly. "I think we've got a place in this. Jess did lock Kullo up, because we saw her!"

"That is true," Jess replied. "Thank you, Barbara!"

"Then how," Big Bill Gregson asked, "is it that he got out again?"

"Ask Zoe," Babs said.

"Zoe?"

"Zoe has a key, too. Haven't you, Zoe?" Babs asked. "I know, because I saw Zoe with it in her hand. If it

hadn't been for me, Zoe would have released the leopard herself."

Zoe turned purple.

"It's a fib!" she cried. "Mr. Gregson, you don't believe that? Naturally, she is sticking up for Jess, because Jess is her friend. I have no key—and, anyway, why should I want to let the leopard out? You will apologise for that!" she flamed.

"Babs not apologise," Jess said quickly. "Babs tell the truth. You apologise to her, Zoe, for saying she tell a fib!"

"Why, I tell you——"

"Please!" Miss Primrose impatiently broke in. "Mr. Gregson, really—all of you! This is becoming intolerable! Go, Jess, and take that animal with you!"

"I not go!" Jess' eyes blazed. "I insulted! My friends insulted! Kullo insulted!" she said angrily, and glared at Zoe, at the circus proprietor, and at Miss Primrose. "I not go!"

Mr. Gregson made a clucking sound. Miss Primrose bridled.

"Mr. Gregson, take this girl away!" she ordered.

The circus-owner, looking almost ferocious, made a dive at Jess.

But Jess, jungle-trained as she was, divined his intention even before he had launched upon it. She gave a little cry.

"Kullo!"

Adroitly she dodged as the proprietor clutched at empty air. Kullo growled, and then, as Jess skipped aside, he padded after her.

The chums, watching her, caught their breath. For Jess, reaching the first of the old elms which bordered the drive, gave a sudden lithe upward bound, caught a branch, and, with a ringing cry, reminiscent of her jungle days, drew herself up. One moment she was there, dangling in midair; the next, she had gone.

Kullo, with a snarl for those around him, leapt at the trunk and vanished after his mistress.

"Jess!" shouted Marjorie.

Twenty feet up, a dark, olive face peered down.

"No come!" Jess said.

"Good gracious me!" Miss Primrose gasped. "What an extraordinary child! Jess, my dear, come down!"

"No come down until Zoe apologise to Babs!" Jess stated angrily. "I stop here. I stop here a day and a night!"

"Jess, do not be foolish!"

"Not foolish!" Jess retorted. "I stop!"

Clara grinned, but Marjorie looked anxious. Miss Primrose suddenly bit her lip, remembering from her previous experience of the jungle girl that Jess was quite capable of carrying out her threat. Mr. Gregson glared.

"Jess, if you do not come down I shall sack you!" he threatened.

"No care," Jess retorted. "Me happy here; me stay and go to sleep," she added, and retreated.

The chums smiled. Miss Primrose was scarlet now. Mr. Gregson was looking almost apoplectic.

"Perhaps I can persuade her," Marjorie said anxiously, and looked up. "Jess! Jess!" she added, in her most soothing voice.

Instantly the leaves parted. The faces of both Kullo and Jess peered down into the drive.

"Lo, Marjie! You want me?" Jess asked softly.

"Jess—yes! Please—please do come down," Marjorie begged. "Mr. Gregson isn't going to hurt you!"

"Tell Mr. Gregson if he sorry I

come," Jess replied. "But I only come because you ask me, Marjie!"

Mr. Gregson turned purple.

"I—I'll be blowed!" he spluttered.

"Please!" Marjorie begged. "Please, Mr. Gregson! She—she doesn't really understand. Mr. Gregson says he is sorry, Jess!" she called up. "Now come down, there's a dear!"

There was a pause, then a rustle, then a soft voice called to them, and with a sudden parting of leaves Jess magically appeared, Kullo at her side. She dimpled.

"I come," she said. "You see, my Marjie? I come because I love you, not because I want to come. Now I go," she said contentedly. "But I shall come again my Marjie, many—many times! Kullo, come!"

Watched by the wondering girls, she glared at Zoe, and then, with a toss of her head, walked on down the drive, a proud, triumphant little figure, the huge leopard striding contentedly at her side.

### What Babs & Co. Saw.



"OH, Marjorie—Barbara—are you going out?" exclaimed Miss Charmant.

It was half an hour later. Jess, Kullo, Mr. Gregson, and the spiteful, treacherous Zoe had gone, but Marjorie after consulting with Babs, had written a letter to Jess' grandfather, who lived in a remote village on the Yorkshire coast.

Having written that letter, Marjorie, naturally, was most anxious that it should catch the next post but since the last collection of the day had been made at Cliff House, the chums had decided to walk into Friardale and dispatch it from the post office there.

With that mission in view, Babs, Marjorie, and Clara were on their way through Big Hall when the silvery voice of Valerie Charmant, the pretty mistress of the Fourth Form, arrested their progress.

"Yes, Miss Charmant; we're going to Friardale," Babs answered brightly.

"Ah!" Miss Charmant smiled. "Then I wonder," she asked, "if you'd call at the circus for me, and book thirty tickets for the opening performance to-morrow night?"

"Thirty?" gasped Babs.

"That is right," Miss Charmant smiled again. "My little treat to the Form," she confessed. "The tickets are half-a-crown each, I believe, but Mr. Gregson, as a small concession to the school, is allowing us to have them at half price. There is the money, Barbara."

Babs glowed. The rest of the Co. grinned their delight. No wonder they all loved Valerie Charmant. What other mistress in the school would have thought of such a ripping treat for her pupils?

"But, please," Miss Charmant warned, "do not be late for call-over."

Then, leaving the delighted Babs with the envelope containing the money in her hand, she swept off towards her own study.

"Now that," Clara gurgled, "is what I call a real sporting gesture. Good old Charmer!"

"Good old Charmer," indeed!

In high good humour they swung along. Truth to tell, not one of them had thought about anything, except Jess, since the jungle girl's departure from Cliff House. And now they would have a chance to meet her again.

In quick time they reached Friardale, and posted the letter, and at Clara's suggestion took the short cut across the fields towards the circus. In the act of climbing the stile, which led across Lavenham's Field, however, Babs gave a sudden start.

"I say—— Oh, great goodness! Look!" she cried.

They all stared. And then they all paused. Two hundred yards away a flock of sheep were running helter-skelter across the field, pursued by a great tawny-spotted leopard.

"Kullo!" Clara gasped. "Worrying sheep! Kullo!" she cried.

But the leopard did not look round. As the sheep, baaing lustily, disappeared through the hedge, he disappeared after them.

For a moment the chums looked at each other. Their faces were serious then. Worrying sheep was an offence for which Kullo was liable to be shot.

"Somebody's let him loose again," Marjorie said thickly.

Babs' eyes gleamed. She, like all the rest of them, could guess who that was—Zoe!

"Come on!" she cried.

As they tore forward they heard a series of terrified cries and bleats, then the crack of a gun!

"Hallo!" Babs said, and stopped. "Somebody shooting at him!"

"Oh, my goodness!" Marjorie gasped. "Look, there he goes!" she panted.

There the leopard went, indeed. He had bounded back again over the hedge, apparently unhurt. They saw him, as light as a cat, alight on all fours, then go streaking along the valley in the direction of the circus.

"Gone back," muttered Babs. "Don't think, after all, he can have done much harm. Better get back ourselves," she added. "That's one of Nicholls' fields where the men were shooting. If Nicholls sees us, he's bound to report. Come on!"

Anxiously they raced back towards the path. They all felt uneasy and puzzled, perhaps more than a little disappointed in Kullo. But they all dreaded the consequences for Jess' sake. Those sheep were Nicholls' sheep, and Nicholls was not the sort of man to let such an offence go unchallenged.

Nicholls didn't. For when the chums reached the circus, it was to find Nicholls there with Big Bill Gregson, and a defiant Jess, who was hotly exclaiming:

"Kullo no leave his cage. I tell you! Kullo with me ever since I come back from the school!"

"I'm going to prosecute you!" Nicholls roared. "If——"

"Hold on!" Gregson said. "Mr. Nicholls, I'm sorry. If there's any damage done, it shall be paid for."

"I mean it to!" Nicholls retorted. "Moreover, I shall take it up with the authorities."

The chums looked at each other as he strode away. Big Bill Gregson, his face bitter, turned upon Jess.

"Jess," he said, "I'm getting fed-up with that leopard of yours! I am sorry now that I ever thought of putting you both in this show. What the dickens do you mean by letting him go a third time?"

"He did not go!" Jess cried. "It was not Kullo!"

Babs frowned.

"But, Jess, we saw him!"

"But you did not see him!" Jess cried. "Babs, how could you?" And so great was her vexation that she was almost in tears. "When I come back from Cliff House, I sit with Kullo in



his cage. I talk to Kullo, and Kullo never leave me."

Marjorie stared. "Jess, you're sure?" "Am I a fool that I do not know what I do?" Jess said angrily. "Marjorie, how could you ask that?"

Marjorie turned a painful pink. "Jess, I—I'm sorry. Of course I believe you," she said. "But—but if it wasn't Kullo, who was it? Or are there two leopards in the circus?"

"There are not two leopards," Mr. Gregson said. "Jess is just trying to cover up her own carelessness. Yesterday, at Lantham, the thing escaped, almost terrifying a woman out of her wits. I tell you I'm about getting fed up!" he raved. "And I warn you, Jess, that if I have any more of this, that leopard will go!"

"Then," Jess flashed, "I go with him!"

She seemed genuinely upset and distracted, and Marjorie anxiously shook her head.

"There, Jess, don't worry," she said soothingly. "Of course, if you say it wasn't Kullo, we believe you. But—but it's queer," she added.

Queer it was indeed. Not for a moment did they believe that Jess was telling fibs, but if the guilty leopard was not Kullo, what other animal could it be?

It took them a long time to quieten and pacify Jess after that, but she brightened considerably when she learned they were all coming to the opening of the circus to-morrow.

"And you watch me—and Kullo?" she asked eagerly, her olive face suddenly radiant again. "I perform for you. I show you all those clever tricks I have taught Kullo. My eyes will be all for you," she said happily.

"Come—you promise you will come?" "Of course we do," Marjorie smiled. "But—but in the meantime, do look after Kullo."

They went off then to buy the tickets, Jess laughingly accompanying them to the entrance. Clara frowned as she looked at her wrist-watch.

"I say, have to buck up," she announced. "We're going to be late. Vote we cut through the woods," she added anxiously.

That, obviously, was the best suggestion, the woods being the shortest route to Cliff House.

Breathlessly they set out, too busy now to talk. But Babs, as she went, was frowning to a strange uneasiness, a strange suspicion. Either there were two leopards or else Jess was lying.

Knowing Jess, she could not bring herself to believe the girl capable of a deliberate untruth, and yet, how could there be two leopards without anyone being aware of the fact?

She thought of Zoe—Zoe, whom she was perfectly convinced now had been responsible for at least two of Kullo's escapes. Where was Zoe? Thinking of it now, she remembered that Zoe had not put in her usual spiteful appearance during the argument with Farmer Nicholls.

"Hallo!" Clara said suddenly.

Babs came to herself with a start. She paused—they all paused, staring through the trees. Twenty or thirty yards away a strange little group were standing. And among them was Zoe herself, accompanied again by Samson, the lion-tamer, and the witch-like woman whom they guessed was his wife. But this time they were not alone. Two other people were with them—two foreign-looking men in reefers and peaked, sea-faring caps.

Zoe, looking up, saw the chums, and hurriedly hissed something to her com-

panions. The five stood still, looking at them until the Cliff House girls had passed.

But once away from them Babs paused.

"Scheming, eh?" she asked keenly. "Looks like it," Clara said, with a frown. "Looked sort of guilty, didn't they? Who were the sailor-looking fellows?"

But nobody, of course, knew the answer to that.

"I say, we'll have to hurry!" Mabs said anxiously. "Oh, great golly, wait!" she cried. "Listen to that!"

That was the chime of the church clock, pealing across the woods. They all gasped.

"Seven," Clara said. "My watch must be slow. Oh, my hat, Piper will be closing the gates! Sprint for it!"

They sprinted desperately. But they would have been better advised to spare themselves the effort. When, panting for breath, they reached the gates, they found them securely locked. With dismay in her heart, Babs tugged the bell.

from visiting the circus for twenty-four hours. Now go to your studies."

The chums stared at her. Babs blinked.

"But—but, Miss Primrose, that means we shan't be able to go to the opening performance to-morrow night!" she protested.

"Exactly!" Miss Primrose said.

"But—but we—we've promised!" blushed Marjorie.

"I am not concerned with what you have promised," Miss Primrose said tartly. "You will obey my orders. Now go."

And, feeling as if they had been whipped, the chums went.



"JESS, my dear, come down!" Miss Primrose exclaimed, more amazed than angry. But Jess shook her head. "Me happy here," she said. "Me stay and go to sleep!"

**Cruel Zoe!**



"I T'LL break Jess' heart if we're not there," Marjorie Hazeldene said worriedly.

"Blow it, we've got to go," Clara Trevlyn said. "I vote we risk it!"

"And I vote you be awarded the prize for being a full-size chump," Barbara Redfern said. "How can we risk going to the circus when half the school will be there? Even Primmy herself is going, I hear. We should just be hauled out of our seats and carried off by the scruff of the neck."

Perhaps that was a rather violent picture to paint, but it was one which reflected their own apprehension. A rather gloomy silence fell.

"Then," Mabs said flatly, "the only thing we can do is to tell Jess we can't turn up. And if," she added, "we do that now, she'll have to-morrow to get used to the idea of not seeing us. Supposing you telephone her, Marjorie?"

Marjorie nodded. She did not look comforted. Marjorie knew how keenly Jess would be looking forward to seeing them, and how utterly downcast she would be at the news. Jess had

The door of the porter's lodge opened. But it was not only Piper himself who appeared. Miss Primrose was with him.

"Barbara, you are late!" she rapped. "Where have you been?"

"To—to the circus, Miss Primrose."

"To see Jess?"

"Well, we—we did see Jess," Babs confessed. "But we went there to get tickets for Miss Charmant."

"Of that," Miss Primrose said starchyly, "I am perfectly aware. Miss Charmant is considerably upset at your long absence. It is quite apparent that you have been spending your time talking to Jess."

The chums crimsoned.

"I have no desire to prevent you meeting Jess, or Jess from coming here," Miss Primrose continued. "At the same time, I must say that I do not consider, in view of all that has already happened, that too much encouragement is good for Jess, and since the circus has been the cause of your breaking school rules, you will refrain

declared that she would play only for them to-morrow night, and Marjorie knew that it would be for their special benefit and entertainment that Jess would act. They would be her joy, her inspiration. Without them—

Doubtfully Marjorie shook her head. But what else, in the circumstances, was to be done? She rose. From the school's likeable head girl, Dulcia Fairbrother, she obtained permission to use the telephone, and at once got through to Gregson's Circus. It was a girl's voice which answered her.

Marjorie did not recognise it, but the voice was the voice of Zoe Lee.

For Zoe was filling in her time acting as Mr. Gregson's secretary, and just at the moment, in Mr. Gregson's empty caravan, was working on the books which must be ready for the great opening day to-morrow. Her eyes glinted as Marjorie's voice came through.

"This is Marjorie Hazeldene, of Cliff House School. May I speak to Jess Pickering, please?"

"And this," Zoe said, "is Mr. Gregson's secretary. Ahem! I'm sorry, Miss Hazeldene, but I'm afraid you cannot speak to Jess in person as Jess has never used a phone before. In any case, she has shut herself up with her leopard for the time being. Can I give her a message?"

"Well, if you could be very, very tactful," Marjorie breathed, still not connecting the voice at the other end of the wire with Jess' enemy.

"Of course, Miss Hazeldene, of course."

And so Marjorie, seeing that nothing else was to be done, told her. Zoe's lips curled in a sinister sneer.

"She will be frightfully disappointed, as you say, Miss Hazeldene, but I'll do my very best to break it gently to her. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye—and thank you!" Marjorie gulped gratefully.

She rang off then, and Zoe, putting down the instrument her end, chuckled softly before turning back to her work.

"HALLO, MY KULLO!" Jess breathed, and stretched out by the side of the leopard, who lay like a great cat, she fondled his silky ears. "Kullo, I not happy."

Kullo purred.

"Always, my Kullo, when things go wrong, they blame you," Jess went on angrily.

Kullo blinked.

"And always it is not you who are to blame."

Kullo showed a tip of pink tongue.

"My Kullo," Jess said softly. "You do not mind. Nothing do you mind while you have me, eh? You love me, Kullo, as I love you; but here, in this strange country of England, what are we to make of ourselves? I am a human being, Kullo, but my heart is not with human beings—except Marjorie and her friends. Only Marjorie, and Babs, and those girls bring me happiness."

Kullo blinked intelligently, as much as to say: "And I, too, mistress."

Jess, with a sudden smile, hugged him.

"But by and by," she said, "then we get money, Kullo—lots and lots of money. We will go on a big ship, and then, once again, we will go back to Pirates' Island. Then you shall see your brothers and your sisters; then, once again, we shall meet Kon, the chatterer and Simba, the lion who lived by the stream. And some day, perhaps, when they are tired of wearing silly clothes and eating from plates with knives and forks, Marjorie and Babs shall come and join us, and for ever we will live happy and contented."

"Wurrurrur," said Kullo, as if enjoying the idyll.

Jess laughed, her childish visions restoring her happiness now. But her dark eyes glowed as she thought of Pirates' Island where, for so many years, she had reigned as queen, its wild animals her subjects, with none to question her orders or her authority.

A sigh came from Jess' lips. All that over again! Could she ask for greater happiness?

Only in one respect. Only one thing had life in civilisation taught her. That was as simple as Jess' own primitive nature. It was to love Marjorie and Babs and their friends—but gentle Marjorie above all.

The reverie was broken by a knock on the outside of the cage. It was followed by the voice of Zoe.

"Jess! Jess, are you there?"

"What do you want?"

"Come here."

Jess pulled a face. Kullo growled a little. But obediently she rose. She went to the door and opened it, and then, stepping out, closed it again. Zoe stood before her.

"What is it?" Jess asked.

"I just thought it would interest you to know that the police have arrived and—"

"The police?"

"The police," Zoe sneered. Her amber eyes, very much like Kullo's, yet without their hint of kindness, were gleaming. "Nicholls has reported your leopard for worrying his sheep, and the police are serving a summons now on Mr. Gregson. Shouldn't be surprised," she added mockingly, "if they don't take your leopard away with them!"

Jess' face paled. In spite of her years, Jess' mind was still as simple as that of a child. And, like a child, she had all sorts of terrors. Fear of the police was one of them.

"No!" she cried. "They could not! They dare not!"

"But they will!" Zoe laughed.

"And they'll probably shoot him!"

"Dead?"

"Dead as a doornail," Zoe said.

One hand went to Jess' breast. With eyes of utter horror she stared at her tormentor. Zoe chuckled, enjoying this, as she always enjoyed the pain her spite caused.

"But they would not!" Jess said.

"They can't! My friends Marjorie and Babs will never allow them to take me away and kill Kullo!"

Zoe laughed mockingly.

"And how," she taunted, "can they prevent that?"

"I do not know. But they can,"

Jess said. "Marjorie and Babs are clever. Marjorie and Babs know. Tomorrow I shall see them again, and then I shall ask them about these things, because I do not trust you, Zoe!"

Zoe sneered.

"Well, if you want to know, they're not coming to-morrow."

Jess' eyes flamed.

"You tell the fib!"

"I'm telling you the truth—they're not coming to-morrow," Zoe said.

"Wait and see, that's all! They're fed up with you and your leopard, because I heard them say so. Can't you see that you're only a nuisance to them? Can't you see that they don't really want you? They just feel sorry for you because they yanked you off that awful island. When you get to know civilised girls a bit better you'll jolly well realise they're just playing you for a fool!"

Jess gulped.

"Not Marjorie?" she cried.

"Marjorie is the biggest hypocrite of

any of them!" Zoe sneered. "She—here!" she added in alarm.

For that was just a little too much for Jess. A threat to herself, a threat to Kullo, even, she could endure. But to hear such lies about her own dear Marjorie—

Her face became alight with sudden passion.

But she said no word. Words very soon failed Jess. Essentially a girl of action, she acted now—and she acted with a speed and strength that was surprising in one of her tender years. Though Zoe was bigger, and looked stronger, Jess, in one quick step, had caught her up in her arms. Zoe screamed.

"Jess, you fool—you fool!" she cried.

"I put you," Jess panted, "where you tell no more lies!"

"Jess, let me down!"

But Jess did not let her down, though Zoe kicked and struggled frantically. Steadily she carried her towards the huge empty lions' cage. There she released one arm and opened the door of the cage; then, with a heave, flung the gasping Zoe across the floor. Her eyes glowed.

"Now, there you stop!" she panted savagely.

And slam! went the door of the cage.

From Zoe came a shriek which brought Big Bill Gregson rushing from the horse lines. But by the time he had arrived on the scene Jess had vanished back into Kullo's sleeping quarters.

And there, tucking herself in, she deafened her ears to the commotion outside.

"Barbara—Clara—All of You!"



"HALLO!" Barbara Redfern muttered suddenly. "Look who's coming!"

Barbara, with the rest of the Form, was at lessons next morning. And

Barbara, with the rest of the Fourth, was feeling bored. For the lesson was mathematics.

Perhaps it was not surprising, in those circumstances, that her attention had wandered and that her glance now, instead of being fixed upon the blackboard, was upon the class-room window.

Plainly, through that window, showed the old elm-bordered drive up which a solitary figure, minus shoes and stockings, was pacing towards the school.

"Mabs, it's Jess!" she muttered, and then coughed as Miss Bullivant, with a frown, looked round.

"Barbara, you were talking! Take twenty lines!"

Babs pulled a face and then threw another hasty glance through the window. But Jess had disappeared now, obviously having reached the school.

A few seconds later, Mary, the maid, appeared in the class-room. She said something to Miss Bullivant, and Miss Bullivant frowned. Then she looked at Marjorie.

"Marjorie, Jess Pickering has apparently called to see you. You may be absent for five minutes. No longer, mind."

Marjorie, a little flustered, rose. Babs smiled as she went out. In less than five minutes, however, she was back again, and it was obvious that the arrival of Jess had disturbed her. For Marjorie looked anxious and worried, and several times during the



lesson was seen biting her lip. In growing impatience Babs, Clara, Leila, and the others waited for the lesson to end. Then they all surrounded her.

"Marjorie, what did Jess want?" Babs exclaimed.

"Come to the study," Marjorie said abruptly.

To Study No. 7, which she shared with Clara Trevlyn and Janet Jordan—Janet, at the time, being away on special home leave—they went. And there, Marjorie faced them.

"It's Jess," she said, just as if they hadn't guessed that. "We've got to go to the performance to-night."

"But how on earth can we—?" Mabs began.

"We've just got to!" Marjorie shook her head. "If we don't, it will just about break Jess' heart. Zoe, apparently, has told her that we're deliberately planning to let her down. She says she won't be able to act unless we're there, and I honestly believe that if we aren't there she'll refuse to perform at all. And—and—well," Marjorie faltered. "I'm sorry if I've done wrong, but I don't think, if any of you had been in my position, you'd have been able to do otherwise. I—I promised Jess that we would be there."

In consternation they stared at her. Clara whistled.

"But what about Primmy? Did you tell Jess she would be there?" the Tomboy wanted to know. "Didn't she realise what a fix we're in?"

"Yes; but that made no difference." Marjorie shook her head again. "You know what a funny, obstinate way she has of thinking at times, and her idea is that if everybody else in the school can come, we should be able to come as well. At the same time," Marjorie added, "she understands that we don't want to be seen by Primmy or any of the others, and she says that, if we get along before the performance is due to begin, she'll find us a hide-out where we can watch without being seen."

Babs' face cleared.

"Well, that's O.K., then," she said. "It's just a question of sneaking out of the school. That shouldn't be hard," she added. "We go, then?"

"I—I'm sorry," Marjorie said. "I had to—"

"Oh stuff! Anyway, I'm jolly glad!" Babs stated. "But have to be careful," she added. "Better meet near the crypt about half-past five. Don't all go together in case there are questions asked."

And that was the plan of campaign decided upon; though, to be sure, that plan only affected Babs, Mabs, Clara, and Marjorie herself. Whatever Marjorie had promised on their behalf they stuck to, and now that the risk had to be taken they were all glad, for they were all longing to see Jess make her debut as a public performer.

In point of fact, breaking out of school after afternoon lessons was easy. Long before the general exodus from Cliff House commenced Babs, Mabs, Clara, and Marjorie met in Lane's Field, Bessie, Leila, and Jemima Cartstairs having been instructed beforehand to deal with any awkward questions which might be asked. For safety's sake, they took to the woods, and well before the time the show was expected to commence came within sight of the circus. Here everything was hustle and bustle, with everybody so frightfully busy that their presence went unnoticed. It was only when they were nearing Jess' caravan, indeed, that they were first spotted.

And that was by Zoe and Samson and his wife.

Not very far from the door of Jess'

caravan they were standing—a muttering little group. Their eyes were fixed on that caravan as Babs & Co. happened along, and there was something so stealthy, so sly, in their whole attitude that it was obvious at once they were plotting some mischief. Instinctively Babs paused.

At the same moment Zoe turned and saw them. She muttered swiftly to her companions. The mutter was clearly one of warning; for at once the three, with a glance towards the girls, shuffled off.

"Now, what," Babs asked, her eyes narrowing, "are those three up to?"

No answering that question, of course. They went on. But before they reached Jess' caravan the door burst open in sudden, wild excitement, and Jess herself, utterly rapturous and clad in nothing, except her jungle leopard's skin, flung herself upon them. She was radiant; almost quivering with delight.

"So you have come!" she said. "Oh, I am so happy! All afternoon I have looked for you. Zoe say you not come."

"Well, Zoe's a fibber," Clara growled. "Here we are. And how topping you look!" she glowed admiringly. "Feeling fit for the performance, Jess?"

"Fit?" Jess frowned. "I go and do the performance," she said simply. "Now you are here I do not care. When you were not coming I was very sad, and did not want to perform. But come! I show you where you may watch me, and no one else shall see you. I have the spot all ready for you," she added quaintly.

She laughed then, utterly transported. It was good to see her childish enthusiasm and her glee, and it made them feel ashamed somehow that it had been left to the pressure she had had to bring on them to make them risk breaking bounds. Like some brown-skinned little fairy she scampered before them towards the huge marquee.

"Come!" she said.

They entered the big top, reeking strongly of the new tan which had been flung down. Though it only required half an hour for the beginning of the performance, a few workmen were still busily hammering away, and a group of circus-hands, with much noise, were fixing huge, towering barricades of iron bars in which the wild animal performances would be given.

Up a narrow flight of new wooden steps Jess gleefully led the way, arriving at the top in a narrow passage, one wall of which was formed by the canvas of the big top itself; the other by the backing and backstreets of some immense piece of plywood scenery. Jess pulled Marjorie by the sleeve.

"Look!" she cried.

She indicated a slot in the scenery. Marjorie peered; then she laughed.

For the slot, cunningly cut, gave a view of the circus arena and the seats beyond the bandstand, the platform of which it overlooked.

"Topping!" Marjorie breathed.

"Then you stop here," Jess said. "You wait until performance finish; then I come back, and you shall tell me what you think of Kullo, and we go to my caravan. Safe here," she added contentedly.

The chums chuckled as they looked at her. Jess certainly spoke truth there; a snigger or more cunningly hidden point of vantage it would be impossible to find. It was good, too, to see Jess so full of joy. For a few moments they remained talking. Then

Jess scampered off; and the chums, applying their eyes once more to their vantage point, watched interestedly as the band took its places, and the big tent began to fill up.

Not one of them noticed, however, the sudden, sly, foxy face that appeared at the top of the wooden steps; not one of them saw the glaring eyes of Zoe Lee, who looked at them for a moment as they stood, eyes glued to the slit in the screen. As suddenly, she turned on her heel and went skipping back.

"Look! There's Lydia Crossendale & Co.," whispered Clara.

"And there's Diana and Margot Lantham," chuckled Babs.

"And there's old Bessie and Leila and Jemima," said Mabs.

They chuckled as they recognised the people coming in. A crowd of Cliff House girls, a great number from Whitechester, followed by a crowd of Friardale boys, among whom were Babs' great friends, Jimmy Richmond & Co.

It was exciting, thrilling, somehow, to be standing there recognising everyone.

Now the band struck up. Babs looked at her watch.

"Programme starts in two minutes," she said. "Get ready, girls!"

The chums tensed with a pleasant sense of anticipation. Now there was a stir, a movement. Then came a roar and a rumble of hoofbeats, followed by a shrill neigh, as the first of the high-stepping liberty horses pranced into the ring. Big Bill Gregson astride its back. Then came three other horses, with gleaming coats and glittering brass accoutrements.

And—

"Barbara!" cried a sudden voice behind Babs.

"Eh?"

Babs turned; and then, paralysed with stupefaction, almost sank through the floor. For confronting her was a terrifying, formidable figure—a figure whose eyes were gleaming, whose cheeks were shaking with wrath. Miss Primrose!

Behind Miss Primrose, just for a moment, Babs caught a glimpse of a sneering, mocking face.

The face of Zoe Lee!

"Barbara!" Miss Primrose rapped. "Clara, Mabel, Marjorie—all of you!"

The others spun round, and for a moment became rooted. But not before they had noticed, with a glimmer of fury and understanding, the soft-footed figure of Zoe Lee turn swiftly and skip back down the stairs.

"Oh crumbs! A-hem!" Babs stuttered.

"I thought," Miss Primrose said, "you were all confined to bounds?"

"Well, you see—you see—"

stuttered Babs.

"I am afraid I do not see," Miss Primrose said.

"Well, we—we—we just had to come along and—and see Jess," Marjorie said feebly.

"I do not see that you had to do anything except obey orders," Miss Primrose stormed. "Thanks to this girl—" She looked round. "Upon my word, she has gone! You are aware that you are confined to bounds. You are aware that being confined to bounds means that you are not allowed out of the school. Apart from that, I certainly forbade you to attend the opening performance of this circus. You will come back to school—this instant!"

Sick with dismay, the chums glanced at each other.

What of Jess now?

"Jess—on, in five minutes," Mr. Gregson announced. "Everything ready?"

"Everything," beamed Jungle Jess happily, and snapped the brass collar, used only for these performances, round the neck of the docile Kullo. "I show you something, Mr. Gregson."

Big Bill Gregson smiled.

"Well, I hope you do, Jess," he said. "Be ready to take your call."

He stepped back down the steps of the leopard cage wherein this conversation took place. Jess laughed gleefully as she fondled Kullo's soft ears. She was really anxious now to get into the ring and perform. She did so want Marjorie, and Babs & Co. to enjoy themselves when they had made such a special effort to see her.

"Kullo, we go," she said.

Eagerly she caught at the silver lead to which the animal was attached. Kullo rose, yawned, and then, as docile as any domestic cat, followed her out. But Jess paused as, outside, she found confronting her the girl she had such good reason to dislike. The girl was Zoe.

"And so," Zoe sneered, "that is how your friends treat you?"

Jess blinked at her.

"I do not understand. You mean Marjie?"

"Who else? Thought they were coming to see your performance?"

"They are," Jess flashed quickly.

"Yes?" Zoe laughed mockingly.

"When they didn't even stop to see the parade?" she teased. "Oh, I know! As soon as your back was turned they snooped off—and they've been off," she added, "ever since. If you don't believe me, go and look!"

Jess quivered. Her happiness gave place to passion then. Zoe was fibbing—fibbing—of course Zoe was fibbing. Marjorie and Babs would never let her down like that. Marjorie and Babs had promised! And yet—why should Zoe tell that fib?

Wild, impetuous as she was, Jess suddenly had to make sure. She knew that, with such doubts clouding her mind, she would never be able to give of her best in the circus arena. Impulsively she sprang towards the wooden steps.

Up them, two at a time, she flew, to reach the narrow landing. And then she gasped, an icy hand seeming to catch at her heart. Of Marjorie and the others there was no sign.

Jess felt herself crumbling. Dead and leaden the weight which seemed suddenly attached to her heart. So Zoe was right, then? Zoe, for once, had told the truth. Marjorie and Babs—to treat her like this.

She did not want to perform now. She felt that she suddenly hated the circus ring. A sudden sob shook her, and realising that in another moment she would have burst into disappointed tears, she abruptly turned away. Slowly, as though her feet were leaden, she tramped down the stairs, dragging Kullo with her. Outside she met Big Bill Gregson.

"Jess, get into the ring," he said. "You're on."

"No want to go on!" Jess said dumbly.

"What?"

"No want to go on," Jess said.

"No?" He glared. "When I've just announced you," he said sharply. "What lark is this? You're going on, and you're going to like going on!" he snapped. "This way!"

In spite of Kullo's warning growl, he caught Jess by the shoulder. Just for a moment mutiny flashed up in her eyes; then she shrugged. No, she

couldn't fight back; somehow she hadn't the heart to fight back. With her teeth set she allowed herself to be propelled forward, and Kullo, as though sensing her dejection and taking it to himself, drooped his tail between his legs.

At the entrance to the arena, now blazing with light, Gregson gave her a push.

"Now do your stuff!" he hissed.

Jess stumbled forward, to come to a halt as a storm of cheering greeted her. She saw Bessie and Leila, she saw Miss Charmant and Miss Bullivant, and she smiled a peculiar, twisted smile. But she did not do anything. She stood still, her eyes anxiously, eagerly going round the huge circle of faces.

The audience, waiting attentively, were silent now. From behind her came Gregson's furious voice.

"Go on, can't you?"

Jess sighed. She shrugged again. She didn't care—she didn't care! Without Marjorie and Babs there was no pleasure in this. But perhaps some latent sense of duty awoke within her in time, and without interest she beckoned to Kullo. Kullo understood, and a cry of excitement came from the audience as he began to pace the ring.

But Jess went through her performance without enthusiasm, without interest—almost, in fact, with mechanical weariness. The turn, which should have been so brilliant, which Big Bill Gregson had been hoping to make top of the bill, was a washout from the first moment. Neither leopard nor Jess seemed to have life, enthusiasm, or energy.

It ended at last—long before it had been intended to—and Jess, followed by a half-hearted clap, came out. Gregson, his face the colour of a boiled beetroot, glared at her.

"And that's what I've put up with you and your rotten leopard for a fortnight for?" he cried bitterly. "That's a turn I've spent money on! That's a turn I've billed as the sensation of the age! Sensation!" He groaned. "I'll say it was! The biggest sensational flop I've ever handled! Get out of it!"

Jess just looked at him. Without a glance to right or left she went on. Back to Kullo's cage she went, and there, taking the leopard's collar off, she flung herself down on his straw and, clutching him by the neck, sobbed as if her heart was utterly broken.

### Her Quaint Idea of Justice!



"O H dear!"

The words, accompanied by a sigh, came right from Marjorie Hazeldene's heart.

And they were echoed, with no less feeling, by three other girls in the Fourth Form dormitory.

Those three were Babs, Mabs, and Clara Trevlyn.

An hour since the circus party had returned, with news of the utter failure of the billed-to-be-brilliant turn of Jungle Jess.

Babs & Co. could guess why. They had deserted her. Why? Because, willy-nilly, they had fallen victims to the treachery of Zoe—that girl who, having sneaked to Miss Primrose about them and got them off the scene, had then obviously told lies about their going to Jess in order to upset the little jungle girl during that performance which was to have marked the first rung of her ladder to circus fame.

And because they realised that Jess' failure had been simply due to their

own non-appearance, they all felt wretched and guilty, and, in a way, failures themselves. Poor, poor Jess!

"Oh dear!" Marjorie said again, and there was a suspicious quiver in the words.

"Marjorie, old thing, I know!" came in concerned accents from Barbara Redfern's bed. "I'm feeling just like that about things myself."

"And I," said Mabs.

"Poor old Jess! I wonder what she's doing now?" muttered Clara.

"Grurr! Sleep!" came a drowsy mumble from Rosa Rodworth's bed.

The chums lay still. But sleep, disturbed by the vision of the mental state of their little jungle friend, was far from their eyes, even though the girls about them slept soundly.

Silence again then, broken only by the twitter of a disturbed bird outside, the sighing of the wind in the branches of the trees. Then suddenly:

"Chakka!" came a strange cry.

"Babs!" cried Marjorie, starting up.

"Why, what—"

"Didn't you hear that? It's Jess! Listen!"

"Chakka!" came the cry again, a strange, thrilling cry.

In a moment the chums had flung back their bedclothes and darted to the window, peering out. Outside was bright moonlight now. Black shadows and silver radiance formed the colour scheme of night, and below them, on the centre of the lawn, stood a strange, wild little figure in a leopard-skin. At her feet crouched a bulky form.

Jess it was—with Kullo!

"Open window!" Jess ordered.

Babs lifted the window. She peered down.

"Jess—"

"Going up!" Jess announced.

"But, Jess—"

Jess, however, had darted into the darkness of the nearest elm, whose branches spread almost to the sill. As they blinked, losing her form in the black shadow, they heard a soft rustle of leaves, the creaking of branches. Babs jumped.

"My hat, she's climbing the tree!"

"And the leopard," Clara said.

"I say, close that window," came Lydia's voice.

But the chums had no eye or ear for anything then except the elm-tree. Another rustle. They could not see what was happening, but suddenly they heard a low, deep breath. And along the branches came a swaying figure. It was—

"Jess," Babs cried, "you'll kill yourself!"

"No kill myself," Jess grunted, and scrambled to the end of the branch.

Then she flung herself forward so that for one fleeting instant she was in empty air. While the chums held their breath and Marjorie almost fainted on the spot, Jess' sure hands clutched at the window-sill, and, like a cat, followed by the greater cat, Kullo, she tumbled into the room.

"And now," she said, just as if she had entered in the ordinary way through the door, "why you run away from the show, Marjie?"

"My hat, what's this?" cried Rosa Rodworth. "Whoops, there's a leopard in the dormitory!"

"Quiet!" cried Babs. "It's Jess!"

"But—"

"Kullo no hurt you," Jess said disdainfully. "Kullo like bed-rooms. Marjie, I come," she announced, ignoring the startled cry of awakened girls. "My heart is broken, Marjie, and I cannot sleep until I hear from you why you run away."



Marjorie gulped. It was Babs who hastened to explain.

"Jess, we didn't run away. We were caught by Miss Primrose."

Jess' eyes flickered.

"Miss Primrose take you away?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Miss Primrose is a bad woman!" Jess said angrily. "I go and tell Miss Primrose what I think of her. Kullo, come!"

"My hat, she means it!" Clara cried. "Collar her!"

But as well try to "collar" an eel as Jungle Jess in that mood. As Clara darted at her Jess skipped aside, and Clara, with a cry, went shooting across the room, collapsing on to Priscilla Terraine's bed. Then Jess was out of the door, Kullo at her heels, pausing only for an inspired instant to turn the key in the lock. From the room came Babs' voice:

"Jess—Jess—"

But Jess did not heed. Quivering with anger, she was racing down the corridor below, the huge leopard padding at her heels. Her brief stay at Cliff House had made her familiar with its lay-out, and Jess, once having visited a place, was never at fault.

She reached the gallery. Along it she flew, and her eyes gleamed as she saw beneath Miss Primrose's study door the bar of light which told her that its occupant was still in. She reached the door. Without knocking, she flung it open.

Miss Primrose, writing at her desk, gave a jump when she beheld the startling apparition of Jungle Jess in her leopard's skin and the fierce Kullo.

"Mum-my goodness!" she cried. "Jess—"

"I come to talk to you!" Jess said.

"Jess, go away this instant!" Miss Primrose cried, her eyes bulging as she regarded the leopard. "How dare you—"

"I dare anything. I am not afraid," Jess said disdainfully. "You spoil the happiness of Marjie and Barbara. You spoil my turn in the circus. You make me think things about Marjie and Barbara that are not nice, and I say you are a bad woman to make me think them!"

"Jess, you—you foolish child—"

"I am not foolish child! I am angry girl. Also I am a sad one, because you have caused me such unhappiness. Now, for once, I do some talking. Please sit down."

"Jess, how dare—"

"Sit down!" Jess almost barked. "Kullo!" she rapped, pointing.

The great animal sprang on to a chair facing Miss Primrose, and, for a second, his neck stretched. Jess glowered.

"If you do not sit, Kullo will bite you," she stated calmly.

Miss Primrose, rather hastily, sat down again.

"Jess—Jess—"

"Now I talk," Jess said angrily. "Now you listen to me. You have done me a wrong, and Babs and Marjie a wrong, but I know you are kind in heart, and now you may undo them. To-morrow the circus will open again, and I shall be there. Will you not now let Marjie and Babs come to see me?"

Miss Primrose gasped. "Jess, I will do nothing of the sort! This is outrageous—a threat—"

"No threat," said Jess quietly. "Kullo guard you while I go now to see my friends again. Perhaps, when I return, you let them see me at circus to-morrow."

"Jess—really—good gracious, girl—come back!" Miss Primrose spluttered, as Jess made for the door.

"Kullo, guard!" Jess said, as the

leopard growled menacingly. "I back later," she added, disappearing.

Miss Primrose quivered, trying to look indignant, but really scared out of her wits by the hypnotically baleful stare of the green eyes fixed upon her. There was that in those eyes which dared her to disobey Jess' orders.

Jess leisurely went back along the corridor. She knew Kullo would not really harm Miss Primrose. Indeed, Jess did not think there would be any need for him to be tested, for Miss Primrose was clearly petrified with fright.

But Jess had forgotten one thing. The telephone. Even before Jess had reached the Fourth Form dormitory, Miss Primrose was talking to a furious and scandalised Big Bill Gregson at the other end of the wire.

And Big Bill, in the intervals of spluttering indignation with which he

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Babs. "Primmy will have a fit! Jess, you chump! You utter idiot!" she cried. "Come on!"

Jess pouted.

"No go," she said. "Primmy bad woman. Do Primmy good. Kullo not hurt Primmy, because Kullo understand I do not wish him to hurt her. He only frighten her and keep her in order," Jess explained.

The chums almost collapsed.

In vain they implored, they cajoled. But Jess was adamant. What was happening to Primmy lined up with her own notion of what was right and just, and she stood firm. It was only when Marjorie had a chance to make her argument felt that she gave way.

"But, Jess— Oh, Jess, dear!" Marjorie said anxiously. "Don't you see? We don't want you to do it—it means trouble—not only for you, but



"If you want to know," Zoe sneered tauntingly, "your precious friends aren't coming here to-morrow." Jungle Jess' eyes blazed. "You fib!" she cried. But Zoe's sneer did not vanish. "Well, wait and see, that's all!" she jibed. "They don't want you!"

listened to Miss Primrose's story, was yelling for his white horse to be saddled.

Jess, reaching the Fourth Form dormitory, knocked on the door.

"Please let me in," she said.

"Jess!" Babs cried. "Oh, my hat! You idiot, you took the key!"

"Oh!" Jess said. "I lost it!" she explained. "I go back and look for it." She retraced her steps, realising that she must have dropped the key. But it was ten minutes before she found it and returned. Then she grinned cheerily at the sea of amazed, incredulous faces which confronted her. "Very good," she announced, "very good! I leave Miss Primrose to make up her mind."

"What!"

"With Kullo to guard her, Kullo not let Miss Primrose move," Jess answered serenely. "By-and-by Miss Primrose grow tired and say you can come to the circus, and then we shall all be happy again. This thing I do," Jess added proudly.

for us. Jess, dear, be reasonable; be sensible. Come, now, and call Kullo off!"

Jess' eyes softened.

"Marjie, you wish this?"

"Yes, Jess—yes! But let's go quickly!"

Jess nodded, though the puzzlement in her eyes showed that she did not understand. But Marjorie's wish, as always, was Jess' law.

With the chums crowding at her heels they reached Miss Primrose's study. Miss Primrose was seated in her chair, and Kullo still had his green eyes fixed upon her. She almost gasped as Jess appeared.

"Jess, take this animal off!"

"And let Marjie and Barbara come to-morrow?" Jess asked.

"Jess, I have told you—no! How dare you, girls! How dare you! Upon my word, I— And then she gave a start. "Ah, that is Mr. Gregson!"

"Gregson?" Jess cried, and wheeled.

(Continued on page 14)



I USED to think I'd never make a fisherman—or should it be fisherman?—for the simple reason that I just couldn't pick up worms and other bait necessary for this skilled pastime.

But now this Patricia of yours has decided that perhaps she isn't such a duffer after all at the piscatorial art, or fishing to you. Mind you, I still can't touch worms with that aplomb, nonchalance, sang-froid (and other foreign-sounding words!) that fishermen display.

But—I can catch tiddlers.

I took my small brother, whose full name is Heatherington, but who is called Heath for short, on a grand fishing(!) expedition the other day.

I've an idea he thought we'd come back with a whale, an octopus, or at the very least, some salmon for supper—quite regardless of the fact that our only fishing "lines" were threepenny nets!

Anyhow, he soon forgot to be over-ambitious, and we found our enthusiasm was as keen as any angler's when we netted our first "tiddler."

These went into our jam jar in the approved manner, and were solemnly taken home on the bus—much to Heath's pride, and the bus conductor's amusement.

After they had been shown to mother, who sounded as proud of our skill as if we had brought home all the fish in the Zoo Aquarium, they were left for father to see when he returned.

But meanwhile, someone else found our treasures!

And that "someone" was our family puss-cat, Minkie.

He was actually dabbing at the water with one fastidious paw when I caught him at it.

"Minkie," screeched Heath, coming on the spot at that moment. "You bad cat!"

Snatching him up, Heath gave him a lecture, wagging a chubby forefinger at him.

"Can't you see, Minkie, that them's only little fishes—an' you're a big cat?"

Minkie gave a sort of don't-care toss of his tabby head.

"If you wan' to worry other a'mals, you must choose bigger ones—bigger'n little tiddlers!" Heath went on severely. "'Cause they're only little fish—oh, Minkie!"

For at the word "fish," Minkie had leapt from his small master's arms and made a bee-line for the larder, deciding that after all, perhaps fish on a plate was worth more than silly fish in water—especially when you don't like getting your feet—I mean, paws—wet!

Anyhow, father did see the tiddlers, and they were solemnly placed in our little pool in the garden, and when I tucked

# OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS

*How popular PATRICIA is with you all; youthful and gay, yet wise and helpful, too. Each week she writes to you in that cheery, chummy way that you all love, telling you of her own and her family's doings, of things to do and things to talk about.*

Heath in bed that night, he insisted on telling me a marvellous story of the fish father had caught in Scotland when he was a young man.

"And favver's fish was as big as—as—as the Queen Mary," finished Heath solemnly. Until it occurred to him that that was perhaps not quite true. "Least, I think it was," he added in a valiant attempt to stick to facts.

## ● Shine Not Wanted

Do you find that your school tunic is not looking as new as you'd like it to, these days?

Much as we all love the sun, it certainly has a habit of showing up any blemishes, whether in our skin, our clothes—or even in the home.

But perhaps what can worry us most about our tunics—even more than spots or stains—is that horrid shine they will get—particularly where we sit down.

And nothing makes a garment look old more quickly than this.

So here's a way to remove it.

Pour half a pint of hot water into a jug, and then add a tablespoonful of ordinary vinegar, and a tablespoonful of ammonia.

Stir this, and then dab the shiny garment with the mixture. (Use either an old sponge, or a piece of rag.)

Just pat gently without making the tunic too wet. Then heat the iron, and press the tunic, placing a damp cloth over it first.

You'll be thrilled with the result—and so will mother—for it will look as good as new again.

In fact, it wouldn't surprise me at all if mother doesn't immediately decide she'll treat father's suit and her own costume likewise!

## ● So Dainty

Perhaps it's a bit early to start growing excited about summer holidays yet—but it's not a bit too soon to be thinking over the clothes that you'll be taking away with you.

Naturally your thoughts will fly to bathing costumes, dresses, and beach outfits first. But that doesn't mean you can entirely forget your undies, does it?

And nighties—or pyjamas, of course—are very important on holidays. For even if

you fold your own in the mornings, I expect the landlady will make your bed. And if it's a pretty nightie that she tucks away under the pillow—well, it is rather nice to be thought of as "that girl with such dainty clothes," isn't it?

So if you think your nightie is a little

bit on the plain side, what about making it in holiday mood—and longer at the same time—by the addition of net frilling?

You can buy this for threepence a yard, all ready to sew into place. A frill around the sleeves, more around the neck, and down the opening at the front, would look very sweet. While another piece right round the hem of the nightie—or round the legs of pyjamas—would just give a finishing touch.

## ● Bespectacled

I do hope you're all remembering to take your sun-glasses with you at the week-ends when you're having a trip to the park, out to the country, or to the sea.

Girls who wear ordinary glasses, particularly, should be careful to protect their eyes from sun-glare.

Perhaps you think you can't wear sun-specs because you wear ordinary specs. But, of course you can. You can buy a pair a little bigger than your present ones, and wear both together if you like.

Or you can buy special tinted lenses which fit over your own glasses.

So now there's no excuse for screwed-up eyes, or wrinkly frowns in the sun, is there?

And, by the way, a lot of doctors say that tinted spectacles are marvellous for people who suffer from hay-fever—that nasty sneezing and water-eyed complaint that so many people get in the summer.

So that's well worth knowing, to pass on to other people, if we don't have it ourselves, isn't it?

## ● Dirndls Again

You'll probably say "hiss-ss!" or "boo-oo!" at me if I dare to mention the word dirndl again.

Just once more, please. I want you to look at the dirndl skirt in the picture.

It would make such a useful and pretty skirt for the seaside—and so beautifully cool, too.

Any youthful dressmaker could run it up in no time. It is simply made from a strip of material—quite straight—seamed up the side and gathered into a band at the waist.

Then, to make it fit with extra comfort, the contrasting shoulder-straps are added.

With it, of course, you can wear out all your favourite blouses that look like becoming too small for you if you don't watch out!

Bye-bye now until next week, my pets.

Your friend,  
PATRICIA.







# IT'S CAMERA-TIME AGAIN

You want the snaps you take this year to be better than ever—not a failure among them. So here's how!

**T**AKING snaps is fun, isn't it—even though it can be rather an expensive hobby.

But that only makes it all the more important that all the pictures you do take this summer should be absolutely super—not a dud or a near-failure among them.

First you must give your camera a look-over after its winter rest to make sure that it is in perfect order.

Be certain there is no film in it left over from last year. (If there is, you must snap these off and remove the film before you start tinkering.)

## PREPARATIONS

See that the winder pulls out easily and clicks back into position again quite smoothly.

Remove the back of the camera and dust out the inside. But on no account use a damp rag for this—and dust very, very gently.

Dust the lens very carefully, and see that when the "clicker" is worked it opens and closes the shutter.

Now invest in that new film, and if you feel a bit nervous about inserting it into your camera properly, ask the man at the shop to do it for you.

You don't have to go down to a cellar or into a dungeon to insert a film these days, but it's advisable to select a shady spot for doing this.

It is a good plan to wind the film around until the "pointing fingers" are shown through the little red window, and to leave it like this if you are not going to take pictures immediately. This will ensure that if the spool should get accidentally wound still farther your snap will not be spoiled, as it might be if you jump past the figure 1.

## TWO RULES

There are two unbreakable rules that the schoolgirl should remember when taking snaps.

One is, *keep the camera steady.*  
The other is, *never take photographs right into the sun.*

Bearing these two rules in mind, you should always be certain of a good, clear snap.

When photographing people you should always attempt to get their figures well into the centre of the view-finder.

I've seen some very funny snaps—and taken them myself, too!—where this rule has been forgotten, in which the figures have no heads, or only half of one. Very amusing to the onlooker—but not to the photographer!

## NATURAL PICTURES

Except perhaps for formal groups, such as at weddings and so on, it doesn't seem

the fashion these days to pose your subjects before taking the snap.

The picture of a well-scrubbed schoolboy standing on the front step is never so attractive as that same lad just going to knock a boundary on his home-made cricket pitch, or fixing a new tyre on his bike.

The difference is that one picture tells a story, whereas the other doesn't. One is interesting, and the other's a bit dull. You can see that, can't you?

## SMILE PLEASE

When I have been the person being snapped there is one difficulty that I encounter—one that you may meet, too.

The photographer has the sun very nicely behind her, which invariably means that it's shining full on poor me. So I screw my face up into the most dreadful contortions—all because I'm told to look at the camera, and smile! (As if anyone can give a real-looking smile then.)

So now I always say: "Don't you think the snap will be just as good if I look over there—away from the sun?" It may not give a full-face picture of me, but who'd want one of screwed-up eyes and a false smile, anyway?

That is another point to remember then, you youthful photographers. Don't force your subjects to face the sun direct, especially when it is strong. Let them smile, if they can do so naturally, but let them just look natural, if having a photograph taken is no laughing matter.

## THE WAY THEY DO THEIR HAIR

Miss Richards and Patricia have planned this little feature between them, describing Cliff House Fourth Formers' hair styles for you.

### This Week: JEAN CARTWRIGHT

**T**HERE are some girls at Cliff House who insist that Jean Cartwright, the sturdy Scots girl, has the prettiest hair in the school.

Mind you, there are also others who say they don't like auburn hair at any price.

But neither admiration nor criticism worries Jean. She has all the pride of a fine Scottish ancestry in her veins. She always has had auburn hair—and she likes it! Neither does she mind if you call it red, or caroty. That's Jean.

But even if opinion is divided over the beauty of the colour of Jean's hair, there is not one girl at Cliff House who doesn't think it is unusual.

It is not fiery but more of deep auburn, with bright gold glints in it. Neither is there anyone at Cliff House who doesn't admire Jean's curls. They're completely natural, and she says they're entirely due to the Highland air of her home.

As a baby, Jean says, her mother found her curls absolutely unmanageable. They would even twist themselves round the brush and round the comb—making it very difficult for whoever was doing her hair.

Now, the curls are not quite so strong, of course, and Jean combs them upwards as flat to her head as they will go.

The secret of this hair-style is in the cutting. The hair is not trimmed in a straight line at the nape of the neck, but is cut to a length of four inches all over the head, and the ends thinned.

Jean, being thrifty, washes her hair herself, and she doesn't use a special shampoo, either.

"Mother always used soft soap for my hair when I was an infant," she says. "So it's certainly good enough for me, now."

One thing Jean does believe in for the hair—and that's brushing.

"For," as she says, "it's still the best beauty treatment known for the hair—and it's free!"

(Next Week: Christine Wilmer.)



## MORE HASTE

More haste sometimes means less speed, we know. But not always!

**BLACKING** will go on to your school shoes much more easily and polish up more brightly if you slightly warm the brush in front of the fire first.

**DRAWERS** that stick and are difficult to open and shut should be removed and rubbed round the edges with household soap. They pull out very smoothly then.

**WHEN** "topping and tailing" gooseberries it is neater and easier to use scissors than a knife. And it's quicker, too!

**A SWIFT** way of polishing windows is to use a screwed-up sheet of newspaper instead of a duster.

**AN OLD** sugar castor or flour sifter filled with water makes an excellent gadget for damping down dry clothes before ironing. The result is more even, and it saves time, too.

**WHEN** wanting to use a stamp that you have steamed from an unposted letter don't waste time looking round for some glue. Instead, damp the flap of the envelope, place the back of the stamp on this for a moment—and it'll stick beautifully.

**WRITING** the address on a large, brown paper parcel can be a tedious business. It can be done very swiftly by dipping a match-stick in ink and writing with this. The address will be beautifully clear then—and delight the postman.

(Continued from page 11)

But heavy footsteps were tramping up the corridor, accompanied by the lighter, faltering footsteps of Piper, the porter, who had just let Mr. Gregson in. And even as Jess turned, her hand on Kullo's collar, Big Bill, a tower of quivering fury, appeared.

"Miss Primrose, I am sorry! I have hurried—," he said, and then his gaze fell upon Jess: "I might have guessed," he said bitterly, "that you would get up to some trick like this! But this time, Jess Pickering, it is the last—the very last! Bring that beast along, Jess Pickering, and when you get back, go and pack your clothes! You're sacked!"

"JESS, CAN we come in?" Listlessly, dumbly Jungle Jess looked up.

She was relaxed on the carpet in her caravan. There, away from Kullo, she had vainly been endeavouring to snatch a little sleep.

But sleep, even though dawn was beginning to filter through the caravan window, would not come.

She was weary, miserable, utterly alone. Mr. Gregson, in a furious temper, had sacked her. She was to leave.

Indifferently then she looked up as the voice of Samson, the lion-tamer, fell upon her ears.

"Come in, if you like," she said. Samson, outside, looked at his wife. She nodded. Then they both looked at the third figure who was with them—the figure of Zoe.

Zoe chuckled. "Sounds as if the fruit's ripe for the plucking," she whispered. "She's in the right mood to listen to anything. Good hunting," she added softly. "But don't let her know that I've got anything to do with this, otherwise she'll smell a mouse."

Samson grinned. His wife nodded. "And don't forget, if she falls for it, I get twenty pounds," Zoe went on.

"You shall have twenty-five," Samson said softly.

He stepped into the caravan, his wife behind him. Jess, still lying prone, gazed up without interest.

"What do you want?" she asked. "You know I have to leave."

"But that's it," Samson nodded. "We know, Jess. That's why we've come to see you. Not feeling happy here, are you? You never have been happy in England?"

"No," Jess consented. "But you'd be happy, Jess, if you went back to Pirates' Island?" Samson asked, grinning.

Jess' eyes widened. She looked up with swift, thrilled interest.

"There only may I be happy," she said simply. "But how may I be happy on Pirates' Island when I cannot get there? I have no ship."

Samson smiled. "That," he said, "is why we've come to see you. We know a ship that's going to this very island you're always talking about."

Jess sat bolt upright. "Tell me," she said quickly—"tell me how I may go, and I give you everything I have!"

"Bless you, Jess, we don't want nothing!" Samson said. "We're just kind folk, and our heart is torn in two because we can see how much you are suffering. But this is the way of it," he went on, with a lightning glance at his wife. "You're sure you'd like to go?"

"Sure? I am sure only of that!"

Jess answered excitedly. "How do I go?"

Samson explained. The ship, he said, was calling in at Belwin Bay that very morning. It was a brown ship called the Dragonfly, and it was flying a blue flag at the mast. It was run by two friends of theirs—two French sailormen, who, having heard Jess' story, would be only too pleased to take her to Pirates' Island if she wished to go.

Greedily Jess drank it all in. Bright-eyed, she listened.

"What you do is to go along to Timmin's cave," Mr. Samson said. "But don't tell anyone. Presently you will see the ship, and when you see it, you must signal by waving your hands or something. Then these men will come along. You tell them that I have sent you, and that is all right."

"I go now!" Jess said excitedly. "Is that all I do?"

"That's all."

"Oh, thank you—thank you!" Jess said. "Thank you! I go!" she cried, leaping up. "Always will I bless you for this!" she said. "Always will you be my greatest of friends—except Marjie and Barbara! I fetch Kullo."

The two smiled at each other as she darted away.

Quivering now, she leapt into her pet's cage. She flung the door open. Joyfully she broke the great, great news to him, and five minutes later, watched by the crafty Samson and his wife, and from the distance by Zoe herself, she went careering across the fields.

Reaching the cliff-top, she scanned the horizon with anxious eyes.

There was a tiny speck far out at sea. Was that the promised ship—the ship which should take her back to the one place on earth she knew she could be happy?

Hurriedly she climbed down the little path that led to the ledge half-way up the cliff. Here was the small cavern known as Timmin's Cave, set high above the beach. With a laugh, she scrambled into it, Kullo padding at her side, and, contentedly squatting with her knees up, looked anxiously at the speck upon the horizon.

Her ship! She was going back to Pirates' Island!

Radiance seemed to fill her. Nothing now she cared for Zoe Lee or the circus, or Miss Primrose or Cliff House. Nothing now for— But wait!

And suddenly a swift shadow chased the happiness from Jungle Jess' face.

But what of Marjie—of Barbara? She was going away—she was leaving them—and they did not even know. She had never said good-bye to them!

Jungle Jess gulped, then feverishly she groped in the little bag she carried beneath her leopard's skin. Out of it she withdrew a stump of pencil and a little diary, which Marjie had given her six months before. Painfully and laboriously she began to draw her letters, the composition of each one bringing from her a deep, deep sigh, as though she had performed an exhaustive physical effort.

And, quaintly worded, quaintly spelt, this is what she wrote:

"Good by! Than you for al you have don for Kullo an me. Now I go to leav you for my ilan an to hop with al my hert you wil com to me somday. "Kullo's lov an my lov.—JESS."

As she wrote, almost perspiring in the effort of composing that message, Kullo watched her out of a flickering, curious, amber eye.

Jess smiled happily as she finished.

"Now," she said, and closed the book. "Kullo, this you shall take to Marjie, so now listen to me." For a few moments she spoke to him rapidly in a sort of lisp, hissing voice, and the alertness in the animal's eyes showed that he understood. "Now, Kullo, take it!" she said.

Gently Kullo's sharp teeth fastened upon the book. He looked towards the sea, and he looked towards his mistress. Then, with a low, pleased purr, he disappeared.

In such a way was the strangest message Marjorie Hazeldene had ever received delivered by the strangest messenger.

## Drama on the Cliff Top!



MARJORIE, Babs, Clara, and Leila were in the quad when Kullo ap-

peared. They were a glum group, an anxious group, and their tired eyes

showed how little they had slept last night. First breakfast bell was now ringing, and because of the imminence of that important function the quad was deserted. But not one of them felt anything but nausea at the prospect of food.

They were all worrying about Jess—Jess, who was to be sacked; Jess, who, it seemed, they were powerless to help. Rather desperate they were feeling over their little jungle friend—so desperate, indeed, that it was gentle Marjorie who was in the act of suggesting that they should defy detention and go off there and then to see how she was faring, and if possible persuade Mr. Gregson to give her another chance. Apart from that, the letter they had all anxiously looked forward to from Mr. Pickering, Jess' grandfather, had not arrived.

Then suddenly they saw Kullo. In utter astonishment they paused as the great animal came loping up the drive. Marjorie cried out.

"Kullo—" In a few giant strides Kullo had reached her, and, gazing up at her, dropped a little brown leather-covered diary at her feet. Then he turned and made off.

"Kullo—" Clara cried, jumping after him.

But a dozen steps showed her the impossibility of catching up with the speedy leopard. Like a streak, Kullo vanished through the gate, and Clara turned back.

And then she started as she saw Marjorie, her face white, her eyes round. She had the little diary open, with Babs and Mabs staring over her shoulder.

"Marjorie, what is it?" Clara cried. "Look!" Marjorie said.

She indicated the book, and Clara jumped as she read Jungle Jess' strange message.

"My hat! She means—she's run away!" she gasped.

"What else?" Leila asked. "But—how's she going to get to her island?"

Marjorie bit her lip. "Who knows?" she said. "But it's obvious Jess has made up her mind to do something. This is her good-bye message, and—and— Oh, goodness! knows what the little chump may do! Babs—Mabs—all of you! We've got to stop her!"

"But how?" Babs wanted to know. "First, go to the circus," Marjorie said. "She may still be there. If she



isn't, we might be able to get news. But we've got to hurry!"

"And—detention?" said Mabs. "Blow detention! We're going now—at once!" Clara snapped. "Come on! Better get through the gap in the hedge. Piper will only stop us if we try to get through the gates."

They nodded, quivering with anxiety. Whatever happened they had got to find Jess, to dissuade her from this mad new project which had taken a hold on that wild imagination of hers.

Immediately they made for the hedge. And as they did so, the window of Miss Primrose's study, above them, went up. Before they reached the hedge they heard her voice.

"Barbara, Mabel! Where are you going?"

"Oh, great uncle, we're caught!" Clara groaned.

"Never mind," said Marjorie. "Never mind! Don't listen! We haven't heard. It's Jess we've got to think of—Jess!"

"Marjorie!" cried Miss Primrose, and blinked. "Why, upon my word, those girls are breaking bounds!"

For a second she stood, horrified and amazed. Then, as she saw the five girls squeezing through the hedge, she shook.

"Those girls—they are detained!" she cried to someone else who was in the room—that unpopular prefect, Connie Jackson. "Look, they are racing across the field—in the direction of the circus! This is Jess again—that girl! Connie, get your hat and coat at once!"

"You mean—" Connie asked.

"I mean," Miss Primrose said, her voice trembling with wrath, "that I am going to fetch them back. And this time—this time," she breathed, her eyes beginning to glitter, "I will make an end of their disobedience. I shall expel them all!"

"STEADY! PUT the brake on!" hissed Babs. "Caution!"

"Why, what—?"

"Shush!"

She steadied herself, clutching Clara's arm as her four chums flew headlong on her heels.

They were in the circus now, but the circus, also at breakfast, was deserted. Instead of following the track which led to Jess' caravan, however, Babs & Co. had cut through the circus, and now, darting between the two enormous cages, had reached the crest of a slight slope which looked right into the caravan. And it was the sight of what was going on in there which made Babs halt.

For Zoe Lee, the girl she did not trust, was there—and Zoe was kneeling in front of Jess' cabinet, leisurely turning out Jess' belongings. In the caravan were also the lion-tamer and his wife and one of the French-looking sailors in whose company she had seen them previously. Of Jess herself, however, there was no sign.

Small wonder in that moment of desperate anxiety on her jungle chum's behalf that Babs' suspicions should leap into vivid life. It was instinct which guided her then.

"Bob down!" she cried. "They'll see us!"

They bobbed down. As they did so Samson broke into a laugh. His voice reached them through the open window.

"Ay, the little fool thinks she's off to her island all right, Jules," he said to the sailor man. "She's waiting in the first cave now, ready to be taken off by the Dragonfly. She'll be mighty surprised, I guess, to find herself in Spain."

The chums stared at each other.

"It is good," The man nodded. "You have worked well. Now she has the dismissal there will be no worry about breaking her contract here. For you, Zoe, and you, Samson, there will be suitable reward. The scheme has gone well."

"My hat!" breathed Babs.

The chums caught their breath in a little hiss. In a flash they understood. Now they saw the plot—they saw the peril in which the guileless Jess had placed herself. These precious three—Zoe, the lion-tamer, and his wife—had worked towards this situation to trick Jess to give herself up to some foreign gang, who were to take her to Spain on the pretext that she was returning to her beloved island. Jess was in the cave at this moment.

"At any moment the ship will be there," the sailor said. "Pete and Lascar will take her off according to instructions."

dropped anchor and four men began lowering a boat.

"Come on!" shrieked Marjorie. Desperately they ran on. Now the rowing-boat was coming towards the shore. They reached the edge of the cliff and glanced down.

"Jess!" they all yelled.

For Jess, waving her handkerchief, was standing on the ledge in front of the cave, dancing with joy as she signalled to the sailors.

"Hallo!" Jess beamed up at them. "So you come," she cried. "I so happy. All I want is to see you before I go."

"But, Jess, you're not going!" Babs cried.

"Oh, yes!" Jess said. "I go—very soon!"

Babs, Clara, Mabs, Leila, and Marjorie desperately glanced at each other. Then Marjorie's lips set as she began to slither down the steep path which led to Timmin's Cave.



"KULLO guard you while I see my friends," Jess said quietly. "Perhaps, when I return, you let them see me at circus to-morrow." "Jess—really. Good gracious, girl—come back!" Miss Primrose spluttered, drawing away from the docile leopard who sat opposite her. But Jess, with a smile, was already leaving the dumbfounded headmistress' study.

"Kids, come on!" Clara cried. "We've got to be there before that ship."

They rose, doubling back the way they had come. But hardly had they reached the main road again than they paused. Miss Primrose, with Connie Jackson, was fifty yards to their right, having just entered the circus.

"Barbara—" the headmistress called.

"Come on!" Babs said grimly.

The chums, running all out, headed for the open field and then Timmin's cave.

Jess! They must save Jess!

Grimly, Miss Primrose stuck to the trail. Connie ran ahead, but soon puffed, dropped back, and the distance between pursued and pursuers increased.

Presently Babs & Co. were in sight of the sea, and, nearing the cliff's edge, saw the rakish-looking steamer which was at that moment nosing its way into the natural harbour beneath the cave. As they watched, the ship

Babs cast a quick look round. Miss Primrose and Connie, two or three hundred yards away, were stalking angrily across the cliff, and behind them was leaping a tawny brown shape.

Babs paused at the sight of that. What was it?

"Babs, come on!" Clara panted.

"Wait a min—" Babs got out, studying the shape.

But Clara pushed past her. After her went Leila and Mabs. Marjorie had reached Jess now and was clutching her arm, but Jess, her eyes fixed on the boat, which was nearing the shore, was shaking her head and dragging herself away. Kullo, by her side, growled.

Nearer, nearer Miss Primrose and Connie approached. They were running now.

And so was the tawny thing behind them.

Babs paused again. What was it? It looked like a cat, but was much too

big. It moved too swiftly for a cat, too.

And then Babs gasped. For suddenly, with a whitening face, she had identified that leaping shape on the track of Connie and Miss Primrose. It was a leopard—another leopard. Certainly not Kullo this time, because Kullo was on the ledge beneath her feet.

Babs stood rooted with terror. The leopard, unknown to Miss Primrose, was just behind her now.

"Miss Primrose!" Babs shrieked again.

They saw Miss Primrose appear at the edge of the cliff, where it dropped away sheer, and then—into view came the leopard, a bright brass collar glittering on its neck.

Miss Primrose, turning, started back, her face suddenly green with fear.

The enraged leopard crouched. Stricken with horror, girls and mistress stared at it.

"She—she'll be killed!" Clara gulped.

She would. One more step, and Miss Primrose would go hurtling to the beach below.

But while they all stood frozen, too afraid to shout, too numbed to act, Jess herself spotted the danger. One swift cry she gave:

"Kullo! Arramaba!"

Kullo understood. Kullo knew. As the strange leopard gathered for the spring, so Kullo sprang. One magnificent leap up the side of the cliff he gave, and as though suddenly invested with some human brain, he charged straight at Miss Primrose. Miss Primrose staggered forward, just as the strange leopard rose in midair.

If she had not fallen when she did, most assuredly she would have done one of two things—stepped to a ghastly fate over the edge of the cliff, or met the full force of the brass-collared leopard's charge.

As it was, she flopped on to her face. It was Kullo who, trotting round, met the strange animal with an angry growl and a snarl. And in a moment the two leopards were locked in savage conflict.

Babs, Jess, and the others flew up the slope. While Jess tore towards the leopards, Babs and Clara ran to Miss Primrose, helping her to her feet. There was a terrific snarling and yapping, followed by a staccato cry from Jess. When, finally, they had all sufficiently gathered themselves together to look round, there was Jess calmly grasping the strange leopard by its collar, while Kullo, teeth bared, watched it vigilantly.

"Very good!" Jess said composedly. "Miss Primrose, you are not hurt?"

"No, thanks—thanks to—Kullo!" Miss Primrose gasped. "But—but—Oh, goodness, I am shaken! Where did the other leopard come from?"

"Other leopard not know," Jess said. "But now, please, you see, there are two leopards, and Kullo has been getting the blame for this one. 'Aha!' she cried, as three more figures came running across the field. 'Here is Mr. Gregson, and Zoe, and the lion-tamer. I go.'"

"Jess, please don't go!" Marjorie cried. "The sailormen won't take you to Pirates' Island. They'll take you to a queer place. You must stop here."

"But—" Jess began.

And then Babs, who had been staring at the approaching figures, realised that it was not Samson with Mr. Gregson and Zoe, but someone else—some-

one at the sight of whom a glad shout ripped from Babs' throat:

"Mr. Pickering!"

For Ned Pickering, Jess' grandfather, it was!

"Jess here?" Mr. Gregson cried.

"And that leopard! Jess, you fool!" he gasped. "You—you utter idiot! Zoe, grab that leopard of yours. Yes, it is hers, because I saw it escape from her in the circus this morning. Zoe had been secretly training it, hoping, Jess, that when you went she would get your job. And this," he added, "is the leopard which has been doing all the damage Kullo has been blamed for."

Jess stared round-eyed.

"A good job," Mr. Gregson said. "that your grandfather came when he did. I went to your caravan, Jess, and there I found Samson and his wife. They were talking and laughing with a sailor—but I'll tell you about that later. I asked where you were. They said they didn't know, but when I told them that this gentleman was your grandfather, and that he was going to call in the police to try to find you, they broke down."

The chums exchanged looks.

"And they confessed?" Babs asked. "Everything." He looked grim.

"Towards they are—all of them! Then I went to find Zoe. I found her training this leopard, which got away and bolted. Thank goodness we've found you!" he gasped. "And thank goodness your friend Marjorie wrote to Mr. Pickering who, instead of replying, rushed here at once. Jess, these men are scoundrels!"

"They would have taken you to Spain!" Marjorie cried.

"But my island—" Jess almost wept.

Her grandfather came forward.

"Jess, my little lass, I'm sorry," he said. "Why did you run off in such a temper, leaving me to hunt for you? I've been scouring the country. But, Jess, if you want to go to your island, and—"

"Come and let's talk about things," she suggested.

And Jess, only too happy to have so many wonderful things to look forward to, eagerly allowed herself to be escorted away in the midst of her chums.

THE END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.



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No. 1 of a Fascinating Canadian series introducing a sparkling new character—

# KIT OF RED RANCH



By ELIZABETH  
CHESTER

## A Strange Homecoming!

"HALLO, Bill, here I am! And, gee, it's grand to see you, Bill. How's everything and everyone down home?"

Kit Hartley, in blue shirt, riding-breeches and boots, stood with a bag in either hand on the exit from the lonely halt where the train that had just steamed out had dumped her and her luggage, and shot those excited questions at Bill Hicks, who sat on the seat of the one-horse chaise sucking his pipe.

Just back from school, Kit was mighty glad to see old Bill, the grand blue hills in the distance, the trees, the scrub, and to breathe the pure, sweet air of the lovely Canadian countryside where she had been born.

There was nothing in sight but the scene and the winding roadway; not a building but the station behind her. And after school it was a change—a big change, but one that gave her heart a throb.

"Gee, Bill!" said Kit, and stretched her arms.

Bill turned to her, frowning. "Reckon you didn't get mah letter," he said.

Kit folded her arms, and then wagged her right forefinger at him.

"I got it, Bill, but I reckon you shouldn't have written it!" she said. "What's all this about a feud? Why, even you don't really know what's behind it."

Bill grunted, and jumped down. He was a middle-aged, bearded man with a gruff exterior but a heart of gold, and Kit wanted to hug him. But she knew better. Tough men like Bill grew red and embarrassed at such a show of honest emotion.

"Listen, Kit!" said Bill, lumbering forward and picking his words as he took his pipe from his mouth. "This hyer feud—"

He broke off and wheeled, his hand

going to his belt as from the distance came the thunder of horses' hoofs.

Swiftly, Kit seized Bill's gun-hand. "That's no way," she said. "Who's this coming?"

"Fergusons?" said Bill crisply. "Get back into the station."

Kit did not get back into the station. She dumped the suitcases into the trap, and then scrambled in and took the reins.

"Are you riding with me or walking?" she said crisply. "You wrote me that letter to keep away; but I came.

**Fresh from school, Kit Hartley returned to her home in the Canadian backwoods—only to be ordered back. There was a feud in progress. But Kit, cheery, resourceful and full of pluck, didn't mean to go back. "I'll stop this feud," she vowed—and, being Kit, she did, too.**

I came particularly because I knew about this silly, stupid feud. And it is silly, 'cos none of you knows why it's on!"

And, leaning forward, she patted the horse on the rump.

"Coo-oh, Daisy. Up you go, dear! It's Kit again."

The mare turned her head and whinnied, and Kit clucked back at her.

"You've got more sense than old Bill. Get going, Daisy. Clitter, clatter—"

As the mare jogged forward towards the oncoming riders Bill muttered something. Then he climbed up, too.

At the same moment the cloud of dust in the distance dissolved itself into a group of hard-riding men. They slowed their horses, and presently reined up at the roadside, waiting for the trap to jog up to them. Kit, swinging her whip aloft, gave a cheer of welcome.

"Ah-eee-e, Fergusons!"

The group of men sat awkwardly, one or two putting hands to wide-brimmed hats, some frowning down at their horses' necks. There were six of them in all, brothers, cousins, uncles—the Fergusons of the White Ranch.

"Well, here we are, boys, back from school, full of a lot of useless nonsense that cost old dad a packet to get me taught," said Kit breezily. "How do, cap'n?" she asked the red-faced, moustached man in the forefront, astride a piebald mare.

"I'm fine, Kit," he said in heavy tone. "Glad to see you looking so bonny, lass. But I've come to tell you that this is as far as you're going."

Kit's heart thumped as she heard that. There was a quiet, ominous note in his voice that was new to her. The cap'n and she had been pals before she had gone to school, and she did not understand this.

"I'm going along to Red Ranch," she said.

"Take Daisy's head and turn her," said Captain Ferguson to his son.

A young man rode forward, and like a flash something was whipped from Bill's holster.

"Stand clear of that nag's head!" roared Bill to the young Ferguson. "Where Miss Kit wants to go she's going. And no thump-headed Ferguson'll stop her."

"Turn the horse, Ned," repeated Captain Ferguson.

Kit heard Bill give a grunt, and saw his grip on the gun suddenly tighten. In another moment that gun might have barked—already every Fergusons' right hand was to his thigh, where a gun rested. But Kit jumped up her eyes blazing.

"Now listen to me, you great big, silly, grown-up boys!" she cried. "This is a fine lot of fuss about a girl coming home from school. I've come back here to see my dad—and feud or no feud, I'm going to see him, whether you like it or not!" She turned to Bill. "Give me that gun," she said in her fiercest tone.

She snatched it by the muzzle and Bill, scared that there would be an accident, let her have it.

"Now, Kit, now!" he said anxiously. "Take it easy. That's a light-trigger. It might go off."

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But Kit had no intention of firing that gun or letting it be fired. She turned and tossed it to the back of the shay.

"Now shoot, you silly play-boys," she said. "Bang, bang, bang—"

And Kit held out her forefinger and wiggled her thumb.

Then, cracking the whip just over the young Ferguson's head, making him duck, she urged Daisy on. The mare moved forward, and the Fergusons stood as though turned to stone.

As Kit well knew, there was not a man in the whole country would draw a gun on another unarmed. And Bill was unarmed. He sat beside her, fuming and seething with rage, arms folded, whiskers bristling. But he was unarmed, all the same.

Humming a tune of the old days, Kit sent Daisy along at a steady pace towards the red roof that could just be seen in the distance nestled at the foot of the finest firs in the country.

"Bill," she said. "Fore I've been here a couple of days you boys and the Fergusons are going to be playing leap-frog together and eating out of each other's billy-cans. Why do you think I was so all-fired keen to get back after your nice rude letter? The silly feud is going to be stopped!"

Bill said nothing for a moment; then he glanced at her sideways.

"There's a train'll be taking you back in hef an hour," he said thickly. "It's the one yer dad said you'd be catching, and you'll catch it if it takes six of us to carry you there. With the feud on, it's no place for a girl."

Kit glanced at the wood beside the road as they went down into Lazy Hollow. Thick woods—rabbits scuttling to safe burrows.

"Take the reins, Bill," she said. "Want to see something in the case and—"

He took the reins and Kit climbed over the seat. She took the lighter of the two cases and, with an effort, swung it to the grass; then, as Daisy slowed for the rise, she jumped off.

"Hey—" yelled Bill, looking back. "So-long!" called Kit. "When the train's gone, I'll be seeing you again! The next won't be till to-morrow, and by then I'll have cleaned things up!"

And Kit, running for the woods, made for the little secret cave she knew.

Once in the woods, she walked slowly through the lovely trees, drinking in

the cool, invigorating air. Rabbits scuttled away; birds sang aloft, and near-by cold water rippled over sharp rocks. The trees, mighty and straight, rose to the clear blue sky, their top-most branches rustling gently.

On and on she went, then clambered up a steep bank. Pausing half-way up to lean against a tree, she cooed.

"Redwing!" she called. "Red-wing! Ahooooo—ah-ooooo!"

And, putting a finger in her rounded mouth, she gave a redskin call. She sounded it three times and paused; then, with leaping heart and dancing eyes, she heard the response. From afar it came, getting louder and louder, until, over the brink of the steep hill, hard to see amongst the scrub and in the deep shade, appeared a slim, girlish figure.

Redwing, in her little tunic and feathered trousers, black hair sleekly brushed back, little red wing proud on a headband, came dancing down towards her.

"Miss Kit," she called, in her soft, gentle voice. "Miss Kit! Oh, Miss Kit! You come! Many say not so never come. Redwing sad; much tears."

Then she paused before Kit, knelt, and threw up her hands, her shining, copper-coloured face alight with joy, her dark, slanting eyes sparkling.

Kit hugged her.

"Knew you'd be right here, Redwing," she said. "Waiting?"

"Waiting. Waiting—two, three months," said Redwing.

"I've been too long away for many reasons," said Kit heavily. "Redwing, tell me, what's this feud about?"

Redwing's face clouded.

"Two men bad hurt," she said. "Much firing. Ranch-houses burn. Oh, bad, bad! Miss Kit go 'way plenty soon. Bad danger. Your dad think Fergusons steal his cattle. Take back what not his. Someone shoot—shoot back! Bad, bad!"

She took Kit's hands and tears sparkled in her eyes.

"Go soon. Take Redwing back school-place."

Kit looked fondly into the Redskin girl's eyes and stroked her sleek hair. "So it's just up to me. If they can be got to shake hands they'll all admit their mistakes."

Redwing looked up and her eyes wrinkled in a smile.

"Redwing not forget," she said, and, putting her hand behind her back, pulled round a small parcel that was slung to her neck by a cord. "Many happy returns of day, Miss Kit," she said.

Kit looked at the parcel, and her eyes filled with tears. She could not speak. Bill had forgotten it was her birthday; her dad had sent no word—had even ordered her back. But Redwing—

"Gee-gee—" said Kit, and tore open the parcel frenziedly.

Then she gasped. Two gauntlet gloves came into view, wool-covered leather gauntlets worked with little coloured beads in most amazingly intricate design.

Kit gave Redwing another hug.

"They're the swellest gauntlets ever I've seen!" she breathed, and drew them proudly over her hands. "Guess the girls back at school would be mad with envy."

Then, her eyes clouding, she looked at Redwing.

"I'm hiding out," she said. "I'm hungry. We've got to stay around awhile in the cave. My dad would send me back on the railroad. When the loco steams out in twenty minutes it'll be the last for to-day, and then I want to track right across to the White Ranch."

"Fergusons!" cried Redwing. "No, no, no! Bad men say anyone this side who go other side not come back!"

"Oh, they say a lot of things, these big boys," smiled Kit. "But we don't have to take any notice. Cap'n Ferguson strums the piano pretty well in tune, so I'm booking him."

"Booking?" said Redwing, frowning.

"My concert," said Kit. "A get-together, round-the-camp-fire concert for my birthday party. I've bin planning this for awhile now, and I'm not having it kicked to pieces just for a potty thing like a feud."

Redwing eyed her shrewdly.

"You t'ink sing-song—get-gether—make 'em sing and laugh?"

Kit nodded.

"It's an idea we can try. Come on, let's get some eats, Redwing!"

Redwing led the way then to a secret cave, where, in expectation of such a picnic as this, she had stored some eggs, rice, cold meat, fruit, and bread.

It took her no time to start a fire, and Kit hung the dixie on to the cross-sticks after filling it at the pool near by.

Presently they heard the last train steam out.

"O.K. I'm safe for a day!" said Kit.

The happy, simple meal finished, they cleared up, and then Kit set out for the White Ranch, with the Redskin girl picking the shortest route.

### Kit Tackles the Job!

AS they covered the ground there came to them now and then the hallooing from Kitty's father's men, calling her. They had been hunting her for an hour, but Kit knew that she was safe here.

The White Ranch lay over the plain, but there was a way of reaching it by skirting the mountainside, which was quick for such a wonderful guide as Redwing and gave ample cover.

And all too soon for Kit, who was loving this glorious trek through the mountain trees and scrub and wild flowers, the buildings and white roof of the White Ranch came into view.

Most of the boys were out on the prairie, but Kit saw Cap'n Ferguson with his son and nephew in the compound.

"Hulloa-there!" called Kit, hurry-



ing forward. "What I came to ask is, can I have the loan of your piano?"

"Piano?" said Cap'n Ferguson, frowning. "But you got a piano at the Red Ranch. Leastways, some of it's still a piano."

"Funny old thing, isn't it?" chuckled Kit. "But dad's no piano player. A good tenor voice, but not a pianist. Which reminds me—I've had a tune running through my head all term. It goes—lum-tiddy-iddy-lum-tah-dum dum—"

Cap'n Ferguson, about to turn away, paused.

"Wrong. Lum-tiddy-um— No. H'h! Yes—lum-tiddy— I know it well enough—"

"You got the middle bit wrong, dad," said his son Ned.

"Well, I think so," said Kit, nudging Redwing.

Redwing cleared her throat and hummed.

"Oh, come!" pleaded Cap'n Ferguson. "That's wrong again. I'll lay I'm not much of a one at figgering out tunes in the mind, but give me the old joanna and I'm on easy street."

He hummed twice, grew irritated, and then walked into the ranch. A moment later the piano tinkled. Ned followed his father in, and Kit went outside the window, since she would not cross a threshold unbidden.

"That's better!" she yelled. "Lum-tiddy-da-de-da—"

"Don't stand there bawling through the window. Come inside!" said Captain Ferguson.

Kit winked at Redwing.

"Funny thing about the cap'n; he can never quite remember a tune, and it drives him nearly dotty trying. The feud doesn't seem to have changed him any."

Kit walked into the house as though she had never heard of the feud, took a chair beside the cap'n, and started to play.

First time, oddly enough, she hit the tune. The cap'n punched it out. Then he took bass and she took treble.

Kit, delighted at the success of her ruse so far, changed the tune. But at that moment Redwing gave a shout.

"Horses—men riding hard!"

Kit ran to the window and stared out.

"Gee! It's dad—heading this way!"

"Your dad," snapped Ned. "Where's my gun?"

"Gun?"

His father swung round from the music-case.

"Get these gels out of here—quick! If that old fool finds them around he'll figure we kidnapped them."

"Kidnapped us? Oh, no! I'll explain to dad," said Kit quickly.

"Explain nothing! Scram! Get out of here before the whole works blows up!" said Cap'n Ferguson brusquely.

"There'll be no explaining he'll listen to. He hasn't listened to anyone or anything for the last three months, or this feud would have ended. We didn't steal his cattle—and we haven't stolen you. Scram—quick! There'll be no explaining, I'm telling you."

"Dad won't do anything reckless," Kit said. "Just you disappear from here yourselves, and no questions can be asked."

"You disappear first," retorted Cap'n Ferguson. "I don't want to be accused of kidnapping you. You should never have blown along."

Kit ran to the door with Redwing.

"Back way!" shouted Ned. "Come along here—duck down—keep low—follow the Redskin if she uses her nut!"

Redwing led the way, creeping low, and moving with panther speed, Kit following as best she could. Pretty soon they were on the rising ground behind the shack, where cover was to be had in plenty, and then they looked down.

Her father, dismounting, strode forward, followed by Bill and three other men, all gripping guns.

"Gee! But I'd give anything to know those guns weren't loaded," groaned Kit.

She looked beyond the ranch and saw the three Fergusons riding away. They were no cowards, but they adopted Kit's wise plan. If they were not there, no questions could be asked.

Kit, sinking down to watch, groped about her for her sombrero; then she jumped.

"Redwing, my sombrero—in the shack! If dad sees it there he'll know I've been there; he'll think I was kidnapped! He won't believe me! Oh golly! What can we do?"

Desperately she racked her brains. And all at once inspiration dawned. She seized Redwing's arm.

"When I run down to dad yelling, get to the shack, take my sombrero, and bring it to the Red Ranch," she said.

With that Kit broke cover and ran down the hill.

"Hey! Dad, dad! Hulloooo-e-e!"

Her clear voice carried; and her father pulled up as though shot, lowering his gun as he saw Kit running helter-skelter down the mountainside.

"Hey, steady!" he said gruffly.

But Kit, not giving him a chance to stand back, hurled herself at him and flung her arms about his neck.

"Gee, dad! You great big, swell galoot!" she said. "Fancy seeing you calling on the Fergusons! Why, I was just figuring on doing the same and giving them a grand surprise!"

She laughed breathlessly as he tightened his arms about her. Then he held her off and looked at her, pride in his eyes, she was glad to see, and love—yet withal a sternness.

"Well, Kit, you've grown," he said. "Kinder reckon I'm mighty fond of you, Kit."

"Same with me of you, dad. Gee! But you're looking grand. Do something just to please me."

"Do what?" he asked, on his guard.

"Waal, jest let me hear that tenor voice chanting like it used to as we make for home," said Kit.

Her father stared at her.

"Sing? Why—why, I don't think I've sung for these three months," he said awkwardly. "A feller can't just start singing to order, Kit."

"O.K.! Well, sing as we ride," said Kit.

Bill made a snarling sound.

"This ain't no time for fooling," he said darkly. "There's death stalking around. Tain't no place, either, for gels—not after the train to-morrow."

"You've said it," said Kit, nodding.

"But to-day I reckon I can say how-to to everyone—eh, dad?"

Her father holstered his gun, gave a backward glance at the White Shack, and then, an arm around her shoulders, turned away.

Kit thrilled; for the moment victory was hers.



"NOW listen to me, you great big, silly, grown-up boys!" Kit exclaimed scornfully. "I've come here to see my dad—and feud or no feud, I'm going to see him, whether you like it or not!"

## An Accident—on Purpose!

TWO minutes later, mounted behind her father, Kit was jogging across the plain for home, leading her father in tune, stirring his memory, and making him proud of his voice.

Bill, riding near by, was making the twanging noise of a banjo, his fingers twitching. He had been pretty hot on the banjo.

Back at the shack the cowpunchers had ridden in, and were unsaddling their horses, when Kit sprang down from behind her father. She ran to greet them with a cheer; and the boys, looking solemn, had their eyes on the boss; then, seeing his smile, they gave Kit a ready cheer in return.

"Good to see yer, Kit!"  
"Mighty fine meeting agin'!"  
"Just for the day," nodded Kit; "then I'm hitting the railroad trail back to safety, away from the hissing bullets of the feud, boys. No place for a gel."

Kit did the rounds then—looked up all the horses, the dogs—even the chicks that had grown apace—ran into the shack to her own room, danced with joy, ran down again, and presently was slamming out a tune on the piano.

"Dad—dad, let's have a sing-song this evening," she cried.  
"No camp-fires burning. Camp-fires make easy targets," he said crisply.

Kit said no more; but when dad was busy talking to the boys, she slipped out to meet Redwing. Redwing had retrieved the sombrero without being seen by anyone, and Kit gave her a hug.

"Not make friends—yet?" asked Redwing.

"Not yet," nodded Kit slowly, "but I've been thinking, Redwing. There's a fair-sized canyon yonder, not four hundred yards from the White Ranch."

"Deep canyon," said Redwing.

"What kind of swimmer is Ned?" asked Kit.

"Ned swim good," said Redwing.  
"Ah! Well—listen," said Kit, diving her hands in her pockets. "There's just something else I'd like you to do, Redwing. Just fix Ned to be by the canyon some time during the next hour. Say you've seen mighty big fish, and take care you ask him to get one of the strongest men to catch it. That'll rouse Ned. He'd try to catch a whale if someone said it needed a bigger, stronger man than him."

Redwing's eyes twinkled; she understood. And away she went, leaving Kit to return to the house. Half an hour later she said she'd be looking up Redwing.

"Alone?" said her father, frowning.  
"With these Fergusons snooping around? It's not safe, Kit, for you to go out alone!"

Kit laughed at him and tweaked his ear.

"Silly old dad. They don't shoot at girls. You'll be sending old Bill to trail me next."

A moment later she saw her father steal a glance at old Bill, who nodded. It was Kit who did some stealing next; but she did not steal a glance. Tea was being served, and in the safety of the house Bill had dumped his gun and holster under his jacket on a chair. Kit moved them both to the passage, took out the cartridges, and silently replaced the gun in its holster. Bill was a slow thinker, but a quick shooter; and as Kit saw things there was no harm in men having guns if there were no bullets in them.

It was five minutes later that she

decided to look up Redwing; delaying that long only because she knew that Bill would be trailing her, and he hadn't quite finished his tea.

At a leisurely gait that gave him a chance to follow, Kit set out for the canyon. Bill, loyal and dogged, followed.

Calling Redwing, Kit heard the response when she was near to the canyon.

"Miss Kit—big fish—big fish!" cried Redwing, running into view.

"Where, where?" asked Kit.  
"Down in water," said Redwing.

Kit took a breath; she knew the path half-way down, and made for it.

"Hey!" roared Bill, running forward.

Down the path Kit went, to set her lips, and then, springing forward, somersaulted from the ledge down to the icy-cold water, doubling up into a knot.

On the bank Redwing stood silent, aghast. Bill, stumbling forward, knocked back his hat and muttered:

"I can't swim!" he said thickly.  
"But, by gosh, I reckon I can wade some way—"

"Big chief, Mr. Ned!" shrieked Redwing, pointing.

Ferguson it was who appeared from behind a rock. Seeing Bill, he halted, grasping for his gun, as Bill did for his.

"Miss Kit—in water!" choked Redwing.

"Help!" came a shrill cry from Kit.

Gun-play shelved, both men turned, and Ned ran to the edge. Then, kicking off his boots and hurling aside his hat, he went down the path and took a clean dive into the water.

"By heck!" mumbled Bill. "A Ferguson!"

Ned struck out with clean, sure strokes, and Kit, who had been treading water, went as limp as she dared, keeping an eye on him; for Kit could swim pretty well as fast as Ned—and in her suitcase was a school medal for life-saving. But this was her ruse to stop the feud.

Ned reached her, grabbed her.  
"Keep calm!" he muttered, as she plunged.

Down the path came Cap'n Ferguson, to run back and reappear soon afterwards with men and lariats.

"Lend a hand here, Bill," said the cap'n.

They all lent a hand, and pretty soon Ned was out of the water with Kit. For a girl who could swim, Kit did not show much life on reaching the shore. She lay limp and slack and helpless.

"Get her home quick!" said Bill thickly, his face ashen. "This'll about break the boss. He's wrapped up in that gel!"

"Home? Too far, man! Get her to our shack!" said Cap'n Ferguson.

"What! The White Shack?" said Bill, aghast.

Cap'n Ferguson turned on him.  
"You thick-headed numbskull!" he said. "Do you think your boss'd rather she handed in her checks or came to life in one of our warm rooms?"

"Mebbe yer right. But reckon I'd better go tell the boss," Bill growled.

But Redwing was well ahead of him, and half-way home, Bill met the boss cantering on horseback, flat over the animal's neck to avoid the low branches. He did not pull up until he reached the White Shack, and behind him rode half a dozen of the boys.

When Kit allowed herself to come to, there were a dozen in all round the couch on which they had placed her—as many of her father's men as the

Fergusons. She blinked her eyes and looked at Ned.

"You saved me, Ned," she murmured. "Thanks a lot!"

Her father dropped down beside her. "Kit—you all right?" he asked.

"Thanks to Ned I'm fine, dad!" she said. "Right as rain. Let me get up—let me have a bath and get these togs off."

Barely had she spoken than Redwing tumbled into the shack with an armful of dry clothes.

"I certainly thought I was heading for the last round-up," said Kit, smiling. "I'm heading—" she sang.

Ned laughed and joined her. Cap'n Ferguson went across to the piano and thumped it out. Bill found his banjo, and Ned stopped singing to produce his harmonica.

Kit left them singing to change, but when she returned they were still at it, and the Fergusons were getting food. Her dad was wringing Ned's hand, and old Bill was thumping his back.

"Reckon a brave guy like you couldn't have had anything to do with cattle rustling, Ned," said Kit's father.

"Aw, it's mighty foolish of us to take it tough when you thought we had," cut in Cap'n Ferguson. "I'm mighty sorry about that feud. Give you my word I never took your cattle."

"No sorrer'n I am! I take that; and I own I was wrong," said Kit's father.

"I was wrong!" corrected Cap'n Ferguson.

"That's it, have a feud about that!" laughed Kit. "Skip it, and I'll tell you a secret. It's my birthday!"

"Quit kiddin'," said her dad. "By jiminy, so it is!"

With everyone wishing Kit "Many Happy Returns," shaking hands with her, and themselves, and each other, the sing-song started; and it didn't wind up until long afterwards, when they sang "Home Sweet Home" and "God Save the King."

Then they sang "Good King Wenceslas," and asked Bill to name it. "God Save Our Home," said Bill doggedly.

"Wrong!" chuckled Kit.

"Wrong?" Bill glared. "Reckon it's you lot who's wrong! If that ain't 'God Save Our Home,' I'll eat my stetson!"

"Then better get yourself in training," Kit retorted, "because it's 'God Save King Wenceslas'!"

At which Bill gave a violent start.

"By hokey, so 'tis!" he gasped.

With roars of laughter the party broke up after the cheeriest, happiest evening any of them had had for four months.

"Am I catching that train to-morrow, Bill?" said Kit, as she wished him good-night back at Red Ranch.

"Aw, forget it!" he said gruffly.

"But I allus did say gels and feuds didn't kinder hit it off together. It's one or the other. But I'll allow those Fergusons have got something—though it took you falling into that canyon to bring it out."

"You've said it," nodded Kit gravely, and caught Redwing's eye.

The last thing she heard that night as she dropped off to drowsy slumber was her Redskin chum's good-night call from the wood.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

**WELL**, what did you think of that story? Wasn't it one of the loveliest you've ever read? And isn't Kit a most attractive character? Be sure to meet her again next Saturday in another fascinating COMPLETE story.



Further chapters of our dramatic and unusual serial—



By  
**Margery  
Marriott**

**FOR NEW READERS.**

**BRENDA DAY**, who has spent most of her life in an orphanage, is delighted when she is asked to become companion to wealthy

**VERONICA SCHOLES**. Veronica lives with her aunt and uncle and her five-year-old brother, Dickie. Part of Brenda's duties consist of looking after the lovable youngster.

On arrival at Fernbank, the Scholes' house, she meets a mysterious boy, **RONALD BENSON**, who tells her he is working on her behalf and that for the sake of her future happiness she must remain at Fernbank and do well in her new position. He warns her to let no one know that they are friends and working together.

Veronica discovers that Brenda has a mysterious boy friend. She is intrigued, and plans with a friend of hers, a certain Mr. Jones, to discover if Ronald Benson is the boy. Brenda and Ronald learn of the scheme, and realise they must counter-plan. Next morning they set their plan into action. Ronald calls at Fernbank. Brenda opens the door to him, knowing that Veronica is in the nearby study, listening.

(Now read on.)

**Bluffing Veronica!**

**T**HERE was a ring of indignation in Brenda's voice as she addressed Ronald Benson in the hall at Fernbank.

"It's like your cheek to come here asking me to straighten things out between you and Veronica. If you're so keen on putting things right, why don't you speak to her yourself?"

"I've already told you once!" Ronald snapped. "Because she's fed-up with me."

"Well, if you've been as rude to her as you've been to me I don't wonder at it!" Brenda retorted.

There came a lull at that point, which served two purposes.

It gave Brenda and Ronald a chance to exchange winks, regain their breath, and seek fresh inspirations for this heated argument; and it also served to persuade Veronica, listening behind the study door, that Ronald was considering how best to deal with Brenda's last remark.

For all this was the sheerest make-believe for the benefit of Veronica alone. Brenda and her boy friend wanted Veronica to listen; wanted her to overhear every word, and be brought into the "dispute."

It was the only way of making Veronica imagine she was wrong in supposing them to be friends; wrong in suspecting Ronald of being the young man whom Brenda had been meeting so secretly.

"Keep it up," Brenda breathed, head half-turned towards the study. "She's coming. Don't forget—you've been hanging around to try to see her—"

Ronald, nodding quickly, resumed the bluff.

"Well, it's like this," he said loudly. "I was promised a part in the pageant. In fact, I got the idea Veronica said she'd see about it—"

"Perhaps she did, and they wouldn't have you!" Brenda remarked, on a note of cynical amusement.

"More likely she didn't even bother!" Ronald snapped. "I notice she's been keeping out of my way. I've tried to see her dozens of times—stood about in the lane—but she's always—"

"Hallo! So it's you two, is it? What on earth's bitten you both?"

**BRENDA AND HER BOY FRIEND STAGE A MOCK BATTLE OF WORDS! To deceive their enemy, it had to be realistic, but its very realism caused a minor disaster for Brenda.**

And on to the scene came Veronica, looking most dreadfully surprised as though she hadn't the faintest idea of what was going on. And indeed Veronica was surprised; sorely perplexed, too.

What a shock! Ronald and Brenda, rowing, behaving like enemies. She'd been imagining them in league together, engaged on some peculiar mission. And really Ronald had been lurking round the house to see her!

Ronald and Brenda reacted admirably to Veronica's appearance. Ronald, looking suddenly sheepish, began fumbling with his hat and staring at the

carpet; Brenda, starting back, bit her lip.

"Well," said Veronica, who wanted time to collect her own scattered wits, "well, what's up? Come into the study and let's straighten all this out."

She led the way. Brenda and Ronald, exchanging encouraging winks, followed. Once in the study, with the door closed, Brenda began.

"He," she said, darting a glance at Ronald, "has been talking a lot of rot, saying that you promised to get him a part in the pageant, and then let him down, and that you've been keeping out of his way—"

"But, good gracious, that's absurd!" Veronica exclaimed.

"Just what I told him!"

Ronald shifted uncomfortably. "Veronica," he began, "are—are you sure you weren't mad at me for not dancing with you at the squire's? I got the idea—"

"Ronald, you've been getting too many ideas, it seems," Veronica assured him smilingly. "Of course I wasn't."

"It was I who was mad with him—and with jolly good reason," Brenda said, fixing Ronald with a stare. "Of all the terrible toe-crushers I've ever had hopping on and off my feet he's the limit!"

"Brenda, dear," Veronica protested.

But it was an extremely mild, half-hearted protest, for Veronica was far too preoccupied with thoughts of her own.

Amazing, the way things turned out. Even now she could scarcely credit them. But then, what else could she do? Here, at this very moment, she was being confronted with the most concrete evidence that she and Mr. Jones had been wrong.

Brenda, sensing Veronica's puzzlement and uncertainty, kept up the pressure.

"Well, you might at least say something," she goaded Ronald.

Ronald played up admirably. "Seems I've been acting like a cad," he said gruffly, twisting his hat. "Veronica, I'm dashed sorry for thinking

about you the way I have. Only—well, I was pretty keen on doing something in that show, and when you said you'd use your influence I knew it was a cinch."

"Really?" said Veronica. She almost smpered. "Oh, I don't know," she said, with a little laugh. "I haven't as much influence as all that."

"But you've a pretty cute way of handling people!" Ronald said. "That's why I couldn't make it out. What went wrong?"

It was a poser—for Veronica. Actually, she had never promised to use her influence, powerful or otherwise, on Ronald's behalf; nor had he asked her to. But having allowed herself to be flattered into accepting the statement, she could not very well deny it now.

"Oh—er—as a matter of fact, Ronald, all the male parts were already filled," she glibly explained. "But if you'd like me to see if there's any chance to—"

"Would you?" Ronald asked eagerly.

"Only too pleased to, Ronald!"

And Veronica smirked again. Come to think of it, Ronald was very popular in Featheridge, and might be a useful friend to cultivate.

And another thing, Veronica suddenly realised—this gave her an excellent opportunity to put Brenda in her place.

"Don't you think, Brenda, you were

rather rude to Ronald just now?" she said sharply.

Brenda kept a straight face by an effort. The plan had worked to perfection. Veronica was utterly deceived, utterly convinced. But there was no harm in piling it on. The more they did, the less chance would there be of Veronica's suspicions returning.

"Well, perhaps I was," she admitted to Veronica, in a regretful tone, "but"—and, as though swept away by her feelings, she swung round on Ronald—"but he deserved it!" she flashed out. "He shouldn't have come here making wild charges against you. I haven't forgotten how he behaved at the dance. I saw through him then. And I think I see through him now. He's not your friend, Veronica. He's just making a convenience of you! When it suited him he could say all sorts of beastly things about you. Now he's trying to toady to you because he wants to get in your good books!"

"Brenda!" Veronica cried, secretly delighted at this display of anger.

But another voice came from the doorway; a voice that quivered with horror and anger.

"Brenda, how—how dare you! How dare you speak to one of Veronica's friends like that! Upon my word, I have never heard such unwarranted impudence in all my life!"

With a gasp, Brenda swung round. There, standing on the threshold, her

usually kindly face set in hard lines, was Mrs. Scholes!

### Dangerous Moments!

THESE was a moment's silence. And then Brenda, filled with utter consternation, and realising that her play-acting with Ronald had taken a startlingly dangerous turn, managed to find her tongue.

"Oh, Mrs. Scholes," she began, "I—"

She broke off, biting her lip. For there was simply no excuse she could give beyond telling the truth. And she could not do that without exchanging this disaster for an even greater one.

Helplessly, she looked at Ronald; with dismay in his eyes he looked at her.

"I—I'm sorry, Mrs. Scholes," she muttered then.

"Sorry!" exclaimed Mrs. Scholes. Closing the door, she stepped into the room. "I should think you are sorry, Brenda—and thoroughly ashamed of yourself, too, behaving like that to one of our guests. I'm sure there could not possibly have been the slightest justification for you to use such insulting words. You will apologise to Ronald at once!"

"Oh, I say, Mrs. Scholes," Ronald burst out, with some idea of lessening the apparent seriousness of Brenda's offence, "it wasn't exactly Brenda's fault. I was pretty rude to her. I'm dashed well certain that if—"

"I know you too well, my boy, to believe you could have given Brenda just cause to speak so rudely to you," Mrs. Scholes gently interrupted him. "It's nice of you to try to shield her, but it won't do. Brenda, apologise, please!"

Brenda did apologise, scarcely realising what she was saying, except that the words tumbled from her lips in an incoherent stream.

But Mrs. Scholes seemed satisfied in a grim sort of way, even if her anger showed no signs of abating. Curtly nodding to Brenda, she added her own regrets, and then suggested that perhaps Ronald would like a cup of coffee.

But Ronald politely declined the invitation.

"I'll be going now, if you don't mind, Mrs. Scholes," he said. "And I'm glad we understand each other now, Veronica," he added, with a smile. "And—" He hesitated, biting his lip, then glanced at Mrs. Scholes. "Would—would you mind if I had a few words with Brenda alone?" he asked. "I'm sure I could convince her I'm not such a bad sort of chap, after all!"

It seemed an excellent suggestion, appealing to all four of them; to Mrs. Scholes, because, shocked and hurt by this lapse on the part of a girl she had come to regard with great affection, she wanted Brenda to make amends; to Veronica, because she hoped such a chat would only widen the breach between them; and to Brenda and Ronald especially, because he had something to tell her, and she could sense it.

When Ronald withdrew, she saw him to the door. Outside, in the porch, they spoke with lowered voices.

"Oh, Ronald, what awful luck," Brenda whispered ruefully; "just as things had worked out so well. I'll have to be frightfully careful now—"

"I know," Ronald's face was grim. "If you should get—well, get the sack," he said, breathing heavily, "it'd ruin everything—all my plans. You've simply got to stay here, and that means you've got to get back into favour as soon as you can!"

"And so I will," Brenda vowed, eyes flashing. "Mrs. Scholes will give me a

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

## BETWEEN OURSELVES



MY DEAR READERS,—Your Editor had a very pleasant surprise yesterday afternoon. Gusty, our irresponsible office boy, arrived with my tea, and somewhat to my annoyance, brought it in an old and chipped cup and saucer. To add to this he had slopped quite a large quantity of the tea into the saucer. (No, girls, that wasn't the pleasant surprise! Please be patient a while.)

Well, Gusty smacked my tea down on my desk, and looking considerably flushed and excited, bolted headlong from my room. Promptly I jumped up, meaning to remonstrate with the young rascal, when there came a tap on the door and a very great favourite of you all made one of her infrequent appearances.

It was Patricia. Next second, in dashed Gusty again, more flushed than ever, with the cup and saucer I usually have.

I began to understand then. Gusty had seen Patricia coming and Gusty, I may tell you, has a very soft spot indeed for our young and charming contributor. Hence the cracked china for me—and the best, of course, for Patricia.

Gusty was forgiven automatically, because it is rarely that the office sees Patricia. Usually she posts the copy for her delightful pages. This time, she had brought it herself, but "Not just to see my frightfully busy Editor,

I'm afraid," she twinkled at me. "I'd rather like you to ask a question for me in your weekly chat."

### PATRICIA WOULD LIKE TO KNOW.

And now let me ask you, girls. Patricia wonders which feature—or features—in her two pages appeals to you the most. Her chatter about her own and her family's doings; her how-to-make and beauty hints; those very practical and helpful suggestions for parties, holidays, and pastimes; little tips to help you enjoy your hobbies the more—but perhaps I need go no further. You all know which appeal mostly to you.

Oh, but I mustn't forget the little features which Patricia and Hilda Richards plan between them, dealing with hair styles and dresses, etc., of your favourites at Cliff House.

So, girls, next time you write to me, perhaps you'd be good enough to state your preference and I can pass on what you say to Patricia. I am sure that you find interest in everything she writes, but it is your especial choice which Patricia wishes to know.

Now space is running short and your Editor wants to ask a little favour, too. Do let me know what you think of our new series—"Kit of Red Ranch." Will you? Thank you.

### "BABS & CO.—NEW COOKS AT CLIFF HOUSE!"

is the title of next Saturday's Long Complete Cliff House story, and the title is intriguing, yes? Babs & Co. actually do help cook for the school. Why, and what happens, you will read in a story which is delightfully original.

Another serial instalment, No. 2 of "Kit"—you won't forget to let me know, will you?—and further pages from Patricia complete next Saturday's SCHOOLGIRL. I do hope you enjoy it, girls.

Bye-bye for now.

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.



chance. She's so fair and kind, Ronald, and I'm sure she likes me really."

"But Veronica doesn't!" Ronald said fiercely. "Oh, I know it must all seem the dickens of a puzzle to you," he went on, as Brenda stared, "but you can take it from me that Veronica isn't exactly one of your fans: I'm not saying she actually dislikes you, but she—she's inquisitive, and you've intrigued her."

Brenda nodded. Undoubtedly she had intrigued Veronica. And just as undoubtedly Veronica's recent actions had not been exactly those of a friend. Could there possibly be anything more behind it than that?

Did Veronica—and that strange man she had been with at Miss Allen's—have any bearing on the mystery of her own life, which Ronald was so actively probing?

It was Ronald himself, with his very next words, who answered that question, although not in a way that made things any clearer for Brenda.

"Better not hang about here any longer, old thing," he whispered, "or they'll start wondering. But before I go there's something you can do for me. You know that the things we've been doing, the visit to the photographer's and Miss Allen's, are all leading somewhere?"

"Yes?" said Brenda eagerly.

"Well, I've discovered something else. Years ago, when Veronica was a kid, she used to hide things—toys and books, and all that—in queer sorts of places, and then scribble little drawings to show where they were; sort of maps, you know."

He paused. Interestedly Brenda waited. Her heart was beating with excitement, and for the moment she forgot the disturbing developments of the last few minutes. Veronica again—and that thrilling, fascinating, but tantalising mystery of her own life. If only Ronald could tell her more; if only—

"Now one day," Ronald resumed keenly, "Veronica hid something out of the house. She drew a picture to show where it was, and hid that, too. Then, being only a kid, she clean forgot where either of them was, and to this day neither of them has been found. But they're going to be found," he added, a note of determination in his voice. "We're going to find them, Brenda. And when we do—by jingo, we'll make things hum!"

"You mean it'll clear everything up?" Brenda said swiftly. "About—about me?"

"I'm hoping so," Ronald said cautiously. "But first to find that drawing. It's almost certainly somewhere in this house—but where, goodness knows. So I want you to keep your peepers open, and if you find anything that looks as though it might be what we're after, let me know at once. Phone me."

Brenda nodded. Her face was radiant. She'd find that childish drawing. She had the opportunity. Easy, in the course of her duties about the house, to examine every possible hiding-place.

Anxious for no suspicions to be aroused, she and Ronald bade good-bye in carefully chosen words, delivered with sufficient strength to carry to the study. Brenda, closing the door, turned, instinctively bracing herself.

What were Veronica and Mrs. Scholes going to say now?

During her absence, Veronica had been saying a good deal to her aunt, in a cunning, hypocritical way.

"I don't want to run Brenda down,



FROM the broken ornament, Brenda slowly drew a folded piece of paper. Her heart was beating swiftly. It seemed that the "battle" of the play-room had revealed the vital clue.

aunt," she said, as though speaking with great reluctance, "because I—well, I like her a lot. She's quite a nice kid at heart, I'm sure, and I think it's as much my fault as anybody's that she's been breaking out recently—that affair of the damaged hot-house, and now this. I was—"

"But, my dear girl, how can it be your fault?" Mrs. Scholes stared.

"I've treated her too much like a friend, aunty," was Veronica's artful reply. "She's forgotten her place. I'm sure she doesn't mean to, but she doesn't realise that she's only a paid companion, after all, and not quite one of the family. If only she was made to appreciate that I don't think we'd have any more trouble at all. Supposing I gave her something to keep her busy—some mending of mine, tidying out of my room, and other things?"

"That's certainly a possibility," said Mrs. Scholes slowly. She glanced up as the door opened, and Brenda appeared. "Oh, you run along and get things ready, my dear," she said to Veronica, with a meaning nod. "I'll send Brenda up in a minute. Brenda, I'd like a few words with you!"

Brenda stood aside for Veronica to pass out of the room. She could sense that something was in the air. Rather apprehensively she waited.

"Brenda," Mrs. Scholes commenced, in an even voice, "I'm sure there's no need for me to say how pained and shocked I am at what recently happened in this room. I should never have believed it of you, Brenda. I should never have—"

There was quite a lot more gentle reproach, kindly criticism.

She clenched her hands when Mrs. Scholes mentioned the tasks that Veronica was even now preparing. To put her in her place. That was their object, of course. Sounded as if Veronica was behind them. It was scarcely the sort of thing Mrs. Scholes would do.

But she'd tackle them without a murmur. She'd go ahead just as though nothing had happened. Mrs. Scholes was a perfect darling; she made you love her even if she was reproving you. She'd give no further cause for complaint, if only to show her gratitude

to Mrs. Scholes—and because, unlike his wife, Mr. Scholes had very little use for sentiment.

With a light of resolution in her eyes, Brenda hurried upstairs.

### Checked by Dickie!

AT that moment Veronica was just finishing a hurried telephone conversation with the mysterious "Mr. Jones," whose identity, for reasons best known only to himself and Veronica, they were most desirous of keeping secret. And Veronica was in most jubilant mood.

"So, you see, Mr. Jones," she said, with a chuckle, "there's absolutely no need for us to worry about him. Ronald Benson's no more her friend than—"

"You are," came Mr. Jones' voice, from the other end of the wire.

"Or you, come to that," Veronica banded. "No, he's not the fellow she's running around with. It's obviously someone else. We'll find out who in good time. You keep your eyes and ears open; I'll do the same here."

"Whoever the fellow is, I don't like it," said Mr. Jones. "If I could only be sure what they're up to, and if it conflicts with our little business—"

"Oh, that's utter rot!" Veronica cut him short. "Of course it doesn't. In any case, I've made certain she doesn't have time to see the fellow to-day. It's probably just some stupid— Sssh! Here she is! Bye-bye!"

And Veronica, hastily replacing the receiver, skipped away from the bedside table where the telephone stood. By the time Brenda knocked she was back at the chest of drawers, which she had deliberately disarranged in order to give Brenda unnecessary work.

"Come in," she said pleasantly. "Oh, there you are, Brenda! Look! I want you to see to these things."

She recited a list of requirements. Quickly Brenda got to work, and was kept busy all the morning. The afternoon tasks went by the board, however, for a whole host of Dickie's little chums arrived for an impromptu party.



Brenda, in her very best clothes, was there to greet each tiny visitor as he or she arrived. So was Dickie, of course, a very smart, rather self-conscious Dickie in brown velvet trousers, white blouse, brown tie, white socks, and patent leather shoes.

Very politely he stepped forward, hand outstretched, to welcome one guest after another. Then Brenda, with a friendly smile, would also shake hands, until finally there were nearly a dozen children all clamouring to go to Dickie's play-room.

"Well, children," Brenda cried, when they were in the play-room, "what's it to be? What games do you want? What toys would you like?"

"I vote we play doctors," said one little girl at once.

"Coo! Doctors is softies. I want to be an airman," retorted a boy.

"Let's play hospitals," said another girl.

"S-s-s-soldiers, pip-pip-please!" said one little chap, who both blinked and stuttered.

As the party was staunchly divided into those four factions, a deadlock seemed inevitable. But suddenly Brenda got an idea.

"I know, children," she exclaimed. "Supposing we play all four at once? Then the doctors can make the wounded soldiers and airmen well again in the hospitals, can't they?"

"Ooooo—gorjus! Fine! Ra-ther!" they chorused.

A hospital was speedily erected from overturned chairs, and equipped with strips of rags, to do duty for bandages, detachable sides of a fort to serve as splints, and a box full of odds and ends to provide thermometers, stethoscopes, etc.

Then another problem arose. "Who's going to be the poor wounded soldier?" Dickie said, frowningly surveying his guests.

"Bertie," said another boy promptly. "I was wounded last time," Bertie protested. "You can be, Tommy," he added, addressing another boy.

But as Tommy grimaced, on the verge of tears, Brenda rushed to smooth matters off. All right, she'd play the part. What did she do?

She soon discovered. First of all the soldiers and airmen went into cover while the nurses and hospital staff prepared in their home-made building for the patient, whose arrival was apparently a foregone conclusion.

Then Brenda was told to crawl from one side of the room to the other, "looking like a nasty enemy." She managed the crawl, and was nearly there when Dickie gave a yell.

"Nasty bad enemies! I can see 'em! Charge!"

And before Brenda could anticipate anything like it, she was swept over by an avalanche of hurtling, boyish forms. With a crash, a small table hit the ground beside her. Books, toys, sweets—all were scattered, far and wide. But Dickie & Co. were in their element.

While two of them knelt on her chest, the others blazed away at point-blank range; and if their guns wouldn't fire of their own accord, a rapid "Bang, bang, bang!" with the mouth did just as well.

"Don't wriggle, Auntie Brenda!" Dickie requested. "You're badly hurt you know. An'blance—quick!"

Brenda was dragged across the shiny linoleum to the "hospital," and her arms and legs were crudely bandaged in splints. Nobody troubled to

examine them for injuries. It was taken for granted that she had every injury that could occur to fertile juvenile minds.

But one little girl thoughtfully took her temperature with a stick of barley-sugar, at which point Tommy decided that he wanted to be the wounded soldier, after all.

It was all great fun, if rather hectic from Brenda's point of view, and they had a glorious time. Then, to give them a chance to get rid of some of their excitement, Brenda organised a game of hide-and-seek, packing them off to the other rooms while she counted fifty.

"Phew!" she breathed, fanning herself. "Good training for a wrestling match, this. And what a mess!"

The floor was a shambles, so she crossed to the overturned table, and began hastily packing up some of the things. Wooden bricks, a squeaky lamb, a couple of books, some acid drops—minus bag—and something that made Brenda's heart give a twinge of dismay.

Dickie's favourite toy, Tommy and Elly—actually a china model of a tiger and elephant. And it was broken in two pieces!

Brenda picked the pieces up. Thank goodness it wasn't so bad, after all! The break was clean, and could easily be mended with glue.

Relieved, Brenda was about to rise when suddenly she started. For a long moment she stared at the larger portion of china; it was hollow.

Excitedly she groped inside with finger and thumb; tremblingly she withdrew them, holding a folded piece of paper. She straightened it out. It was old and faded; but on one side was a crude drawing in pencil of a book and some sort of building.

Brenda's heart raced.

She'd found it—found it! This was the paper Ronald wanted—the clue to that vital "something" which could bring their efforts to triumph!

Brenda scrambled to her feet in a fever of excitement.

"I've got to phone Ronald— Oh golly! He must see this!" she muttered. Then her face fell. "Oh," she added dubiously, "supposing I can't get away!" Perhaps Mrs. Scholes won't let me!

Before seeking Mrs. Scholes, Brenda hunted out the hidden children; then, leaving them in the care of the eldest girl, whom they regarded in some awe, she dashed downstairs.

It was fortunate, as it happened, that the postman called just before she reached the hall, because when Brenda found Mrs. Scholes in the library she was able to infer in a roundabout way that her reason for wanting to go out was connected with a letter.

"There's no objection to your having a little time off after tea," Mrs. Scholes intimated. "That is, of course, when you've settled Dickie. But you'd have to be back by eight to look after him. We shall all be out."

Brenda did some rapid calculating. Dickie went to bed at six, or thereabouts; by half-past he should be asleep. That would give her an hour and a half to see Ronald and return.

"Oh, thank you, Mrs. Scholes!" she said in elation. "I'll be back by eight all right."

Hurrying back upstairs, she first of all hid the drawing, together with the broken toy—which she mentally resolved to repair that night—in a drawer of her dressing-table. Then she

went along to Veronica's room, carefully closing the door after making sure there was no sign of her young mistress.

Satisfied, she crept over to the telephone. In ten seconds she was through to Ronald, and—

"Oh, Ronald," she breathed, "what do you think? That drawing you told me about—I—I've found it!"

From the other end of the wire there came the sound of a jubilant cry.

"Oh boy, oh boy! This is marvellous! But, I say, Brenda, you're sure it isn't one of young Dickie's?"

"Oh, yes! It's very old—all faded and creased—"

"That'll be it!" Ronald cut in excitedly. "Look here, could you possibly get time off this evening? Oh, cheer-o!"

It was soon arranged—seven o'clock at the spinney. Gaily, Brenda returned to the play-room; and more wholeheartedly than ever she entered into the kiddies' frolics. Yet she was seething with excitement for the great moment when she handed Ronald that strange paper.

Tea-time came and went, and by twenty past six Dickie, washed and groomed to perfection, was sitting up in bed.

But she was elated. Everything was going splendidly. Unfortunately, she had forgotten one thing which Dickie certainly had not.

"Auntie Brenda," he presently piped, "please I want Tommy and Elly."

"Tommy and Elly?" Brenda repeated and bit her lip.

There was nothing else for it. Dickie would have to know of the accident sooner or later, though she had hoped to postpone the breaking of the news until his precious toy was repaired.

"Just—just a moment, darling!" she said, turning towards the door. "I'll go and get them."

In the corridor she passed Veronica, who, apparently having nothing better to do, was inspecting from the open doorway one of the vacant bed-rooms.

Brenda fetched the broken portions of the toy, made sure the drawing was well tucked away at the back of the drawer, and then returned to Dickie.

"Oh, Dickie," she said, dropping on to his bed and putting an arm about him, "don't be unhappy, darling, will you? Auntie Brenda will soon make it all right again, but—but Tommy and Elly have had an accident—"

Tentatively Brenda held out the broken pieces. Dickie took them, staring as if stunned for several seconds; and then, to Brenda's dismay, he suddenly broke into sobs and clung to her as if he would never let go.

"There, now, don't cry, darling!" she whispered. "Tommy and Elly won't be broken for long."

But Dickie was inconsolable. He sobbed and heaved, and choked with all the grief of a child whose most precious possession has been taken from him for ever.

Brenda, holding him in her comforting arms, bit her lip.

She must get away—she must—she must! But how, when Dickie had first to be pacified, and then settled off to sleep, all in such a short space of time?

**BRENDA cannot leave Dickie like this, for even if his unhappiness meant nothing to her, it would mean further disgrace with the Scholes. Next Saturday's chapters bring you surprising developments.**