

Don't miss "LITTLE DOLORES' GREATEST AMBITION!" The superb LONG COMPLETE Cliff House School Story inside.

# THE SCHOOLGIRL

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EVERY 2<sup>D</sup> SATURDAY

Incorporating  
"SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN"



**"GET OUT, DOLORES!  
YOU'LL NEVER SEE THAT  
PONY AGAIN!"**

*A dramatic incident from this  
week's fine Babs & Co. story.*



Magnificent LONG COMPLETE story of the famous chums of Cliff House School, featuring that lovable Second Former, Dolores Essendon, and—

# Little DOLORES' Greatest Ambition!



It Meant So Much to Her!



"A HUNTING we will go, a-hunting, we will go," sang Clara Trevlyn lustily, "a-hunting, hunting, hunting, hunting, a-hunting we will go!"

Barbara Redfern glanced at the irrepressible Tomboy and chuckled.

"Just you think again," she advised. "We're going to the stables to work—not hunt."

"And if you don't stop that noise you call singing and look where you're cycling, you chums," put in Mabel Lynn pointedly, "you'll jolly well have me off my bike!"

"Eh?" said Clara. Then, realising that she was indeed guiding her bicycle towards Mabel's, she hurriedly straightened her front wheel. "Trouble with you girls," she added cheerfully, "is that you're jealous of my voice!"

At which her chums grinned broadly. There were six of them cycling along the Friardale Road, and all six were members of the Fourth Form at Cliff House School.

There was Barbara Redfern of the sparkling blue eyes and wavy brown hair; golden-haired Mabel Lynn, Barbara's especial chum; plump Bessie Bunter—these three shared Study No. 4 together; Tomboy Clara Trevlyn, her unruly hair dancing in the slight breeze; and her co-sharers of Study

No. 7—gentle Marjorie Hazeldene and Janet Jordan.

"To the stables we will go—to the stables we will go," Clara suddenly burst out again in her hearty if not very melodious voice. "For working, working, working, working—"

"That's more like it," Babs chuckled. "To the stables it is—and work it is!"

And to the stables—and work—it was! The stables in question were the Pillar Reins Riding School, on the Friardale Road. They were owned by Mr. Simon Renfrew, a distant cousin of their own kindly headmistress, Miss Primrose. Recently opened, the stables had been doing well, and Barbara & Co.—quite enthusiastic horsewomen—had ridden horses from Pillar Reins ones or twice.

Then Mr. Renfrew had lost two of his grooms—one through illness, and the other because of a better offer from a stables at Kenmarah. For the moment he was unable to replace these men. It was then that Babs had come forward with the bright idea that she and her chums should rally round and help at the stables.

Naturally, she had asked Miss Primrose's permission, and "Primmy" had given instant and cordial consent, pleased at this offer of assistance to her cousin. She had added a proviso, however, that Babs & Co.'s activities must not interfere with school routine.

Thus it was that the chums had waited until afternoon lessons had finished before dashing off to their dormitory, changing into sweaters and jodhpurs, and hurrying away on their cycles.

"Much to be done, kiddies," exalted Babs cheerily, as they pedaled along beside Friardale Woods. "With Mr. Renfrew busy riding all day and teaching, Cripps, the groom, must be up to his eyes in it. All the saddles and bridles to take off; horses to be watered, loose boxes to be prepared for these horses staying in for the night, and the others to be taken down to the fields—to say nothing of saddles and bridles to be cleaned, and the stalls swept up. But that last job, of course," she added, with a wink round at her chums, "is old Bessie's job!"

Bessie glowered. "I'm jolly well not going to do that again!" she protested indignantly. "I ought to have the clever things to do, like—like brushing in wild horses and things, you know, or riding the big mare. I'm jolly sure I could handle her better than that old Connie Jackson does!"

There was another chuckle, but Babs frowned a little. Connie Jackson was a Cliff House Sixth Former and prefect—and a particularly unpleasant prefect at that. Recently she had gone in for riding—firmly convinced she had the makings of a dashing horsewoman—and rode quite a good deal at Pillar Reins.

There was nothing wrong with that, of course, but Babs knew enough about horses and riding to know that Connie didn't handle horses properly.

Sturdy little Cripps, the groom, had already warned Connie about her handling of Betty, the rather high-spirited mare to which Bessie had referred, and Connie had not taken that warning well. Connie imagined she was an

expert on horses, and considered the advice of the groom to be mere "cheek."

"Some people," said Babs aloud, very firmly, "ought not to be allowed to ride. Girls like Connie—"

"My giddy aunt!" burst in Clara Trevlyn suddenly. "Talk of angels! Look! Connie—on the mare, too!"

The little party instinctively slowed down, their gazes following the direction of the Tomboy's pointing finger. Along a lane to their right, which joined the main road some fifty yards ahead of them, a mounted figure was cantering rather swiftly. They could see her over the top of the hedge.

"Connie all right," murmured Mabs. "Done up to the nines, too!"

"Pity her riding's not as good as her rig-out," sniffed Clara, staring contemptuously towards the swiftly moving figure.

Certainly Connie—in perfectly cut breeches and hacking jacket, dazzling tie, and shining boots—looked smart. But the way she hit the saddle hard at the canter certainly didn't. Down the side lane swept the spirited mare, throwing her head a little and pulling at the tight-drawn reins.

Babs looked anxious suddenly and whipped up her hand.

"Steady, girls!" she called. "If Connie's going to dash out into the main road at that speed we'd better keep well back— My hat! The cat!" she added heatedly. "Look at that!"

The chums' faces flushed angrily as they braked. Coming fast out of the lane, Connie had tugged really viciously on the left-hand rein, setting the mare rearing, so that it came down the road towards them in a series of quick jumps. They all knew the mare had a sensitive mouth, and Connie was treating it as if it was made of iron.

As they slipped off their machines, the prefect saw them and scowled. She had never had any love for the Fourth Form chums.

"Get out of the road, can't you!" she cried, dragging on the reins. She looked a little flustered and hot, for, truth to tell, Connie wasn't finding the high-spirited mare easy to handle. "Can't you see this mare's fidgety?"

Babs stared at her contemptuously as the mare came level, slowing, yet still dancing restlessly.

"So would any horse be if someone was sawing away at the bit like that!" she said cuttingly.

The prefect flushed crimson and showed her teeth.

"Are you telling me how to ride, Barbara Redfern?" she cried furiously, sitting her restless mount with difficulty. "You kids are getting a bit above yourselves, just because you happen to be fooling around at the stables! Like that little idiot, Dolores! Any more cheek, and I'll jolly well line the lot of you. This mare is bad-tempered," she panted, tugging again on the reins. "And I'm showing her who's master— Whoa, steady, you brute—"

"Look out!" screamed Clara. "Connie, you idiot, look out!"

But that last tug on the reins had set the mare dancing again, backing straight at the chums. Clara tried to jump clear, but one of the mare's hoofs hit her rear wheel hard.

Back reeled the Tomboy, clutching her bike—and smack! into plump Bessie she went. Bessie promptly howled, and, off her balance, sent Mabs and her machine flying.

In a moment there was a wild mix-up of bikes and girls, and by the time they had sorted themselves out, the mare

## By HILDA RICHARDS

Illustrated by T. LAIDLER

had set off down the road at a smart trot, Connie's sneering: "Serves you jolly well right!" floating back to their ears.

Breathlessly the chums righted themselves and their bikes.

"My—my giddy aunt!" gasped quick-tempered Clara furiously. "Of all the careless—of all the dangerous—of—of—" She trailed off in impotent rage.

They glared after the prefect. Babs' eyes gleamed.

"Jolly good thing for Connie that Mr. Renfrew didn't see that!" she said.

"But what did she mean when she mentioned little Dolores?" asked Marjorie Hazeldene. That girl's sweet face was clouded anxiously; for Dolores Essendon, the elfin Second Former and youngest girl in the school, was adored by Marjorie. "If Connie has been bullying Dolores—"

Babs started and frowned. She, as all the chums, was very, very fond of Dolores. Such a sweet kid, such a baby somehow, and Dolores had recently been down to the stables quite a bit.



**Snowey, the lovely white pony, meant everything in the world to Dolores Essendon, tiniest and youngest girl at Cliff House School. Dolores just adored him. And if she rode him well in the local gymkhana—he'd be her very own! But someone else at the school was fiercely resolved that Dolores shouldn't ride him at all, and so vindictively did she scheme that it seemed even Babs & Co. could not make Dolores' dream come true.**

In fact, they all knew that she had fallen in love with a sturdy little white pony, Snowey, which Mr. Renfrew owned.

"Rather sounds," opined Janet, a smile touching her lips, "as if young Dolores has been giving Connie some advice about riding!"

"And she's entitled to," said Mabs warmly. "Cripps was saying yesterday that Dolores manages that spirited little pony wonderfully for her age. He thinks she ought to collect a prize in the gymkhana."

"All the same," said Babs, rather grimly, as she mounted her cycle again, "I think we'll keep an eye on Connie, kidlets!"

And the "kidlets," with quick nods, showed their approval of that suggestion.

They cycled on. Only five minutes, and they passed into the entrance to Pillar Reins, to find the yard deserted for the moment, save for the sturdy little groom, Cripps, who was watering a horse at the trough.

"What-ho, Mr. Cripps!" Clara hailed cheerily. "Here we are again, and aching for work!"

He crinkled his weather-beaten face at them.

"Afternoon, Miss Clara—afternoon, Miss Barbara—afternoon!" He beamed. "Plenty to do, young ladies. Mr. Renfrew's out with a ride at the moment, but there's all the stalls to bed down with straw, an' the rest of the horses to be watered."

"Consider it done!" beamed Babs, rolling up her sleeves. "Are there any more rides to-night, Mr. Cripps?"

A slight frown touched the groom's face.

"Well, Miss Jackson's out on the big mare now," he said. "An' I hope she's handling her better than she usually does," he added bluntly. At which the chums exchanged meaning glances. Still, it wasn't their business to sneak on a prefect. "And Snowey's goin' out in a minute," he added. Suddenly he was beaming once again. "Little Miss Dolores is riding him!"

The chums smiled. It was plain to see that the school's youngest scholar had completely won the groom's heart.

"Well, right-ho!" said Babs briskly. "Marjorie, will you help me water the horses in the little stable? Clara, you and the others take the big stables—eh? All O.K.? Come on, then, Marjie!"

She crossed the yard into the smaller of the two stables. Once inside, Babs almost immediately paused. She touched Marjorie's arm.

"Listen!" she breathed.

They stood stockstill, and a tender smile crept over Marjorie's lips. From one of the stalls which stretched away before them, a childish voice was issuing.

"Dolores!" breathed Babs. "She's talking to Snowey."

They felt oddly touched as Dolores' eager, confiding voice came to them.

"Now you must be friends with Peggy, you know, Snowey, 'cos I'm very fond of Peggy. No, no, you musn't nudge Peggy like that," Dolores scolded gently. "You might break her—"

Babs and Marjorie glanced at each other. Marjorie smiled mistily. Peggy was Dolores' doll, and apparently she had it in the stall with her. They tipped forward.

"Now, please, Snowey, be good!" continued that childish treble. "You really musn't nose for more sugar. Mr. Cripps said—isn't he a nice man, Snowey?—that too much sugar is bad for horses. Did you know that? But if you're very, very good an' make friends with Peggy, I'll give you a knob. There! Take it gently, please!"

At that moment Babs and Marjorie reached the end of the stall, and immediately Marjorie gave a faint gasp of alarm.

For there was little, dark-haired, big-eyed Dolores standing by the head of a stocky white pony. In one hand the kiddie held her doll, but what caused Marjorie's alarm was the fact that Dolores, a piece of sugar between her small lips, was stretching up towards the pony's muzzle.

If the pony snapped at that sugar, it—



But Marjorie's fears were groundless. While she and Babs watched spellbound, Snowey, with the uttermost care, gently nibbled the knob away from Dolores' mouth and contentedly crunched it.

"Say thank you, Snowey," commanded Dolores gravely, and then beamed with delight as the pony shook his head up and down. "Thank you, Snowey—oh, Barbara and Marjorie!" she broke off, seeing the chums for the first time. Hugging her doll, she looked shyly at them. "Hallo!"

Babs and Marjorie smiled back, both thinking what an adorable little picture Dolores made in her tiny jodhpurs and sweater, her sleeves rolled up in a very businesslike way.

"Hallo, Dolores!" said Babs gently. "Did you teach Snowey that trick?"

Dolores flushed proudly. She pressed her little head against the pony's flowing mane.

"Yes, Barbara. He likes me, you know," she confided frankly. "And, Barbara—" Suddenly she was all big-eyed and eager, almost breathless with the telling of momentous news. "Snowey—dear Snowey"—she gulped, and whispered—"is really and truly going to be my very, very own. There!"; she cried delightedly. "What do you think of that?"

Babs raised her eyebrows. "Going to be yours, dear?" echoed Marjorie. "Why, how do you mean?"

Dolores gulped and looked at them with starry eyes.

"Cos daddy has spoken to Mr. Renfrew, you know," she said breathlessly. "Mr. Renfrew said then that Snowey was rather—rather spirited for me, an' daddy said that if I could show Mr. Renfrew that I could really and properly ride Snowey, he would buy him for me. Mr. Renfrew," she rushed on thrillingly, "is going to let me ride Snowey in the Copse Cottage gymkhana on Saturday, an'—an' if I do well—" She drew a deep, deep breath. "Then Mr. Renfrew is going to tell daddy that me and Snowey are perfectly s-suited!"

"And, oh—oh," she cried, hurling her arms about the pony's neck and squeezing so hard that she nearly crushed inoffensive Peggy in the process. "I—I shall just die, you know, if I don't have Snowey!"

They gazed at her flushed, animated face, alight with childish earnestness, and could almost persuade themselves in that moment that Dolores meant what she said. Babs laughed gaily.

"Why, Dolores, that's simply ripping!" she declared. "And I'm sure Snowey wants to be with you, too!"

"Of course he does," said Marjorie gently. "But you're going out now, aren't you, dear? Shall I put on Snowey's bridle for you?"

"No, please, Marjorie," said the little one quickly. "Just hold Peggy, would you?" And as Marjorie smilingly did so, Dolores took the pony's bridle and reins from the hook at the entrance to the stall. "Now, head down, Snowey," she ordered firmly. "Keep still, please."

As she raised the bridle Snowey lowered his head. Standing on tiptoe, quite red-faced with the effort, Dolores deftly slipped it on, and then her tiny fingers gently eased the bit into his mouth. Then Dolores put the saddle on, just as swiftly and well.

Babs and Marjorie looked at each other meaningly. Dolores certainly knew what she was doing, and, above all things, she hadn't the slightest fear of Snowey.

While they watched, and Snowey stood stock-still, Dolores just managed to grasp the back of the saddle in one

hand, and, twining her fingers in his thick mane, swung herself up.

"There!" she beamed at them. "Bye-bye for now!"

She walked Snowey out into the yard. There Cripps made sure her girth was tight and gave her some smiling advice, then off she went at a smart trot. From the door of the stables Marjorie and Babs watched her admiringly.

"Dear kiddie!" sighed gentle Marjorie. "And, Babs, that pony means a lot to her. I do hope—"

"Don't worry, Marjie," smiled Babs. "Dolores is coming along wonderfully. I bet you she does jolly well in the gymkhana, and her father—" But there Babs broke off rather guiltily as Clara & Co. at that moment appeared from the big stables, leading horses behind them. "Come on, Marjie!" she warned hastily. "Get these horses out quickly or we'll be accused of slacking."

And, dismissing Dolores and her ambitions from her mind for the moment, she led Marjorie in untying horses and leading them out to the water-trough, while little Dolores herself trotted happily along the Friardale road.

As she went she carried on a long conversation with Snowey. In actual fact it was rather one-sided, of course; but the way the pony's ears pricked and moved backwards and forwards at the different inflexions in her voice constituted his remarks and answers so far as Dolores was concerned.

"And when you're really and truly mine, Snowey," she said contentedly, "we'll have such fun together, you know. And I'll give you lots an' lots of sugar—but not too much, Snowey," she corrected herself hastily, "cos that would make you sick—very sick, I s'pect—and you might die. And oh, Snowey," she burst out, conscious suddenly of what she had said, and reacting in her very youthful way, "you must never, never, never die!"

Tears touched her big, dark eyes at that awful thought.

"Never, never, never, please," she gulped, leaning forward and pressing her round little face in Snowey's mane. "But that's silly, Snowey!" she scolded abruptly. She jerked herself upright in the saddle again, and the warm, evening sun shone once more on a happy beam. "And we musn't ever be silly like that again, must we, Snowey?"

Snowey trotted on contentedly. Approaching the fringe of Friardale Woods, Dolores carefully turned the pony on to a broad bridle-track. Then, with a word and a pressure of her knees, sent it off at a quick canter.

How Dolores gleed then. It was lovely to feel that wind blowing like that in one's face—lovely to feel Snowey moving along so easily.

Dolores sat the saddle well, hardly bumping at all. Then they approached the junction of three paths, and Dolores, remembering all that Mr. Cripps had said and taught her, gently pulled on the reins, and, with a soft-breathed "Steady, please, dear Snowey—steady!" brought the pony down to a trot, and finally a walk.

Round into a narrower, winding track they turned. They had traversed this some fifty yards when Dolores cocked her little head. From ahead came the distant pounding of hoofs—coming fast. Then, around the bend ahead, appeared the big mare belonging to Pillar Reins! It was going hard, head flecked with foam. And in the saddle a white-faced Connie Jackson was dragging furiously on the reins.

She obviously had no real control over the mare. The mare was bolting!

It all happened in a few seconds. Dolores screamed. The mare saw the way was blocked and tried to slow down, rearing and dancing. With a wild yell, Connie was thrown from the saddle. Down into a ditch at the side of the track she hurtled. That ditch held plenty of muddy water—and it broke the prefect's fall.

Up went a shower of mud, and a moment later up struggled Connie, panting, her immaculate rig-out simply smothered with clinging ooze. She floundered, she gasped, and then, glaring at wide-eyed, frightened Dolores, started to vent her blazing temper.

"You—your little wretch!" she spluttered. "You—you made me come off!" Her voice rose to a screech. "Getting in the way with that silly pony! Oh, I'll make you sorry for this!"

But Dolores heard no more. The mare had come to a standstill, but was still dancing a little, and Snowey became jumpy, too, whirling and heading back the way he had come. Dolores did not attempt to stop him; she had been badly startled by the incident, and Connie's blinding rage had really scared her.

White-faced, she trotted hurriedly back to Pillar Reins.

Babs & Co. were standing in the yard when she arrived, watching plump Bessie, who, having taken a bridle to pieces to clean it thoroughly, was now getting in a frightful mess in her endeavours to put it together again.

"I can't understand why they make the silly things like this!" gasped the duffer, blinking in dismay at the tangled mass of leather in her plump hands. "Th—there seem to be a lot of odd bits over, you know!"

"Well, I shouldn't worry, old Bess!" chuckled Clara. "Just throw the odd bits away—the horse probably won't know the difference."

"But Cripps will!" grinned Babs. "Here he comes now, Bess! And here's Dolores, too!" she added, in surprise, as Snowey came trotting in. "That's a short ride, Dolores," she laughed, stepping forward.

Dolores kicked her feet free of the stirrups and swung off.

"Y—yes, Barbara," she gulped, holding Snowey's reins. "You see—Oh dear!" She paused in dismay as another horse was heard, and into the yard came the big mare. "It—it's Connie, you know!"

Cripps and the chums simply gaped at the newcomer.

"M—my giddy aunt!" gasped Clara, staring. "What on earth's Connie been doing with herself—taking a mud bath?"

"Taken a fall, I should say!" chortled Janet Jordan.

But Cripps, a heavy frown on his brows, was looking at the mare rather than at the mud-coated prefect. He noted the sweat-marked coat, the foam-flecked muzzle, and as Connie swung tempestuously to the ground he strode angrily forward, catching at the reins.

"Miss Jackson!" he barked. "I told you not to race the mare—and not to saw at her mouth! Look at it!"

"Shut up!" broke in the prefect with blazing fury. "I was thrown off into a ditch, and it was that little wretch's fault!" she spat out, pointing a quivering finger at Dolores.

Astounded gazes turned on Dolores then, and that white-faced youngster hurriedly drew close to Snowey's side, as if for protection.

"Yes, her fault!" flamed Connie. "I—I was just cantering along when she suddenly appeared, racing madly, and frightened the mare. She ought not to be allowed to ride that pony!" she ranted on. "It's too fresh for her, and



I'm jolly well going to tell Miss Primrose so. You—your little wretch!"

She took a step towards Dolores, but in a flash Babs was before her.

"Just a minute, Connie," she said angrily. "This doesn't sound like Dolores and Snowey to me!"

Connie glared. "Are you accusing me of lying, Barbara?" she hissed.

"No," said Babs coolly. "But I think it's only fair—don't you, Mr. Cripps?—that we hear what Dolores has to say first. Now, kiddie"—she turned to Dolores and gently drew her forward—"look here!"

"Look here!" mouthed Connie. "If you think—"

"Please, Miss Jackson," cut in Cripps brusquely, "I'm answerable for these horses to Mr. Renfrew, and I want to hear all the facts." He turned to the nervous kiddie. "Just tell me," he smiled.

And while Babs & Co. meaningly stood between her and the anxious, fuming prefect, Dolores stumbled out with her story. The groom heard her out, and then walked quickly to Snowey. He ran expert hands over her. He looked again at the panting mare and nodded grimly.

"You say that that pony was being galloped madly not ten minutes from here," he said then, staring full at Connie. "Well, that's not true, miss, because his coat's as cool as a cucumber. And that mare isn't!" he barked. "I'm not holding the kiddie to blame. You can say what you like to Mr. Renfrew, but if I have my way you won't ride that mare again! Good-day, Miss Jackson!"

For a moment Connie stood there, glaring, quivering. Her gaze roved over the scornful faces of the chums, alighted a moment in bitter hate on little Dolores, travelled back to the groom's steady gaze, then dropped.

Without a word, she stamped over to her bike, squelching mud at every step. A moment later she was cycling out of the yard.

"The cat!" growled Clara.

But Dolores was almost tearful. "She—she won't make a fuss with Miss Primrose, will she?" she pleaded.

"C-Connie doesn't like me, and if she tries to stop me riding Snowey I—I—"

She gulped, and the tears were very close then.

Marjorie, her face flushed, slipped an arm about the kiddie's shoulders.

"Don't worry, Dolores," she whispered. "There's no danger of that. Mr. Cripps here would tell Miss Primrose the truth if Connie reported you."

And the others nodded. Thus, much comforted, and after having put Snowey in his stall and bidden him an affectionate "good-night!" Dolores hurried towards Cliff House on her bike to get in before gates were closed.

Babs & Co. were going to see the horses down to the field on their bikes, and then follow on, but as they watched Dolores leave, Babs was thoughtful and a little grim.

"You know, girls," she said slowly, "I don't like it. That kiddie's whole heart is bound up in Snowey—and you know what Connie is."

"You mean she'll probably try to take it out of Dolores?" asked Mabs.

Babs nodded slowly.

"Yes; and if she gets at Dolores—makes trouble for her—the kiddie's chances of owning Snowey are in danger." She glanced at her chums.

"Dolores loves that pony," she said quietly, "and for her sake we're going to keep a dashed close eye on Miss Connie Jackson. Are you with me?"

"We are!" came the fervent answer, almost as one.

Cunning Connie!



**D**OLORES ESSEN-DON sighed contentedly.

"Isn't Snowey lovely, Peggy?" she murmured, hugging her big doll tightly. "And you're not jealous, are you?"

Peggy gazed mutely at her mistress. Dolores was trotting down from the Second Form Dormitory at Cliff House School, where she had just changed from her riding rig-out into the regulation school uniform. In good time she had returned for "gates," and now, had it not been for the thought of Connie Jackson—she could not completely expel the vision of the prefect's furious face from her childish mind—she would have been most exquisitely happy.

Connie Jackson—she could not completely expel the vision of the prefect's furious face from her childish mind—she would have been most exquisitely happy.

"Rather!" smiled Babs. "How would you like to come along to Study No. 4 after we've changed and have a chat about riding? Mr. Cripps told me he's giving you a lesson early in the morning, and I thought a chat about the more technical side of it might help you. You know?"

Dolores was starry-eyed instantly. "Oh, Barbara," she breathed delightedly, "I—I'd love to!"

"Then we'll see you in the study in a ticklet," smiled Babs. "You can wait for us there."

"On the contrary, Barbara," cut in a smooth, sneering voice, "that is just what Dolores can't do. Dolores is coming with me to my study!"

The chums whirled. Dolores gave a little shiver.

Up the passage behind them, sneaking quietly, had come Connie Jackson. Hands on hips, she now regarded them



**BLIND** with fury, ignoring the fact that it was her own fault she had been thrown, Connie Jackson struggled up, soaked and dishevelled. "You—you little wretch!" she raved at the wide-eyed, frightened Dolores. "You made me come off! You got in the way. Oh, I—I'll make you sorry for this!"

Snowey—Snowey! That beautiful, clever white pony! Oh, how she loved him! And he would be hers! That was the glorious, almost unbelievable, wonder of it all. She just had to do well in the gymkhana on Saturday—wouldn't that be just lovely fun, too!—and then daddy would buy him for her.

Her clasp on Peggy became tight with the wonderful thrill of it. To have such a pet—no, no, such a friend! Because, oddly enough, Dolores had only one real friend of about her own age—that was Letty Green.

The other girls in the Second Form stood too much in awe of bullying Eunice Hunter—who disliked Dolores intensely—to show friendship to the youngest girl in the school.

Down the stairs trotted Dolores. As she reached the bottom she heard a buzz of cheery voices. She beamed. It was those lovely girls Babs & Co. returning. Trotting up to get changed from their jodhpurs, they saw Dolores.

"What-ho!" called Babs. Dolores trotted up to them.

"Did you want me, please, Barbara?" she asked shyly.

with an unpleasant smile. Once again she was in school rig, all traces of her fall vanished.

"Come along, Dolores!" she snapped. Wide-eyed and fearful, Dolores stared at her.

"Oh, Connie—" she started to falter, when Clara, who had been glaring at the prefect, flared out in that impulsive way of hers.

"And what do you want Dolores for?"

"That's my business!" snapped Connie. Her narrowed eyes rested on Dolores' white little face. "Do you hear, Dolores?" she barked. "Come along!"

"You stay where you are, Dolores!" cried Clara. "Connie, if you think you're going to bully the kiddie because of that fall of yours, have another think!"

Defiantly she placed herself in front of Dolores. The chums, convinced that the Tomboy had correctly guessed Connie's reason for wishing to take Dolores away, instantly ranged up alongside her. They expected fireworks. But Connie, instead, gave a twisted grin.



"So," she said slowly, "you refuse to obey my orders as a prefect—eh? Then I think I'll take the lot of you to Miss Primrose! And in that case— Ah!" She paused, and turned as a quick step rounded in the corridor. Miss Bullivant, the extremely strict mathematics mistress, appeared. While the chums looked a little startled, Connie raised her hand, and called: "Oh, Miss Bullivant, could I speak to you a moment?"

The thin-faced mistress came up, glancing sharply at the group.

"Well, Connie?"

"A case of insubordination and impertinence, I'm afraid, Miss Bullivant!" said Connie silkily. "Merely because I asked Dolores to come to my study with me, these girls were frankly rude, and refused to let Dolores go!"

Miss Bullivant's eyebrows shot up.

"What—what! Is this true, Barbara?"

Babs flushed. Truth to tell, she had the uncomfortable feeling now that Connie had something up her sleeve. Before she could answer, Clara took the floor.

"We objected because we jolly well know why Connie wants Dolores!" she said bluntly.

"Indeed!" said Miss Bullivant acidly. "You appear to be well informed, Clara!" She glanced pleasantly at Connie. "I gather, Connie, since I heard you ask Miss Gilbey if you could help her, that you wished to run through Dolores' school work with her?"

Connie's mocking gaze flickered over the startled face of the chums.

"Precisely, Miss Bullivant!" she murmured. "When I came in from riding I heard that Miss Gilbey was very busy, and so offered to aid her in correcting the Second Form's preparation. As a prefect," she continued virtuously, "I considered that I should offer my assistance."

"Very worthy, Connie!" Miss Bullivant approved. "But as for you girls"—she whirled, with a daunting frown, on Babs & Co., who were looking extremely sick—"what have you to say for yourselves?"

Babs groaned.

"Well, you see, Miss Bullivant, we thought—we thought—"

"We thought that Connie—" stuttered Clara feebly, gulped, and trailed away.

Obviously, there was no excuse to offer.

Miss Bullivant's features became very grim indeed.

"As, apparently, you have no excuse," she said icily, "and you have obstructed a prefect in her duty and been rude to her, you will each write fifty lines! Now go and take off those—those things! Dolores, run along with Connie, and I trust she will find your work satisfactory!"

"I hope so, indeed!" murmured Connie. "Come along, Dolores!"

The kiddie, with much trepidation and a forlorn but grateful look at the chums, trailed in her footsteps. Sniffing, Miss Bullivant whisked away, leaving Babs & Co. in possession of the corridor.

"Well"—Babs took a deep, rueful breath—"Connie was one too clever for us that time! Fifty lines each! Oh golly!"

"Cunning cat!" growled Clara. "But what's this idea of hers—helping Miss Gilbey? That doesn't sound like Connie. And, as a matter of fact," she added, frowning, "I heard Miss Gilbey ask Connie for assistance before we left to go to the stables. Connie buzzed off hurriedly, saying she had to ride, and

would be busy all the evening. Why this sudden change?"

That's what the Tomboy wanted to know. But to quicker-thinking Babs, and Marjorie, too, the answer was clear enough.

"Because," said Babs, "she's hoping to catch Dolores out—hoping there are mistakes in her work, so that she can rag the kiddie!" Her eyes glinted angrily. "I was right, girls! We've got to watch Connie. And the rotten part is, we can't do anything about this!"

"Except hope that Dolores' work is good," added Marjorie, whose gentle face was quite worried and strained. "And thank goodness she's a real little worker! I don't think Connie will be able to find much wrong."

"True enough," nodded Babs, in relief. "That's a good point."

And, with that consoling reflection, they hurried up to the dormitory to change.

### Gentle Marjorie Makes a Move.



"STAND there a moment, Dolores!"

With the rapped order, Connie Jackson closed the door of her study and crossed to her desk.

"Yes, Connie," said

Dolores meekly.

Her wide blue eyes watched Connie's every movement. Fear was in their depths. Tightly she hugged Peggy to herself, as if to extract comfort from the embrace—as perhaps she did.

Standing in front of the desk, she waited.

Without another glance at her, Connie had taken her seat and lifted a sheaf of papers. She skimmed through them swiftly. They were the Second Form's efforts at composition.

Little Dolores' heart began to pound. Hard and earnest worker though she was, her extreme youth put her behind her fellows in some subjects, and her worst subject of all was perhaps composition. Dolores' spelling and phrasing were decidedly faulty.

Half-scared, she looked at Connie with misty eyes. There was a touch of horror in them. So sweet-natured herself, it was beyond the kiddie to understand the reason for Connie's hatred. It frightened her.

Actually, the workings of Connie's mind were most involved. Her spite against Dolores had been raised for two reasons. First, her fall; the humiliation of having taken one; her muddy appearance at the stables; the damage to the riding rig-out of which she had been so vain.

Secondly, Connie had firmly decided to ride the mare, Betty, in the gymkhana on Saturday. That gymkhana was to be a big affair. And Connie had seen herself on the splendid-looking mare, prancing before a big, fashionable crowd, earning their admiring looks and plaudits.

Now it was pretty obvious that she wouldn't be allowed to ride the mare. All the other horses were booked, some by Babs & Co. And Dolores was on Snowey!

That's what galled Connie—that little brat trying to teach her about riding; that little wretch compared favourably to her by Cripps; that awful baby to win admiration at the gymkhana, own a horse of her own, while she—she—

Connie had seethed, Connie sought revenge, and now Connie meant to take it.

Several minutes ticked by. Suddenly, conscious of the restless, anxious fidgetings of Dolores, Connie singled a sheet of paper from the sheaf in her hands.

"Ah!" she exclaimed grimly.

Dolores' heart almost stopped then. She had been watching that sheaf of papers with hypnotised eyes. All had blue pencil correction marks on them, but the corrections were few, and Dolores knew a feeling of relief.

If Connie had found little wrong with the other girls' work, then she knew that hers should be all right.

Now Connie lifted this particular sheet. Instantly Dolores saw that it was her own. But what made her eyes widen with horror, what made her catch her breath, was sight of the great blue pencil marks of correction which defaced the writing.

Connie did not look up for some seconds. She stared at the paper grimly, "cut-tutting" and giving other exclamations of disapproval. Finally she looked up and stared at the kiddie's white face.

"And what, Dolores," she demanded, holding up the sheet, "do these blue pencil marks I have made mean?"

"Thu they mean I—I have made mistakes, please, Connie."

"And are you supposed to make mistakes, Dolores?" asked the prefect very, very gently.

The kiddie's lips began to tremble.

"No, Connie," she said faintly.

"Then why," flashed Connie, her voice rising, "did you make these? Why did you make that—and that—and that—and that? Why, Dolores—why?"

And her finger darted to the blue pencil marks. Truth to tell, they were tiny slips at the worst—not calling for more than a few small corrections. But that wasn't Connie's way!

With tears in her eyes, bewildered, frightened, Dolores clasped and unclasped her hands.

"I—I don't know!" she choked tearfully.

Connie smiled.

"So you don't know—you don't know?" she jeered. "Well, I do, Dolores. Carelessness, that's what it is—utter carelessness!" She brandished the sheet of paper. "And I shall make it my business— And there Connie paused and swiftly dropped her voice as a tap came at the door.

It opened. Miss Gilbey, the Second Form-mistress, looked in with a smile.

"Oh, Connie," she started, "have you finished with those papers? Why, Dolores," she exclaimed, "what is this?"

Gulping, Dolores turned to the mistress with something like relief. She liked Miss Gilbey, and had always done her best to please her.

But Connie stepped in first. With a grave expression on her face, she exposed Dolores' composition sheet.

"I think you should see this, Miss Gilbey," she said quietly, forcing regret to her voice. "I had always thought Dolores a good little worker, but this—" She sighed.

Wonderingly Miss Gilbey took the sheet, glancing first at Dolores, who was hastily rubbing away her tears and bravely fighting back the urge to burst out again. The mistress' eyes fell on the blue pencil correction marks. She started.

"My goodness! Why, Connie, this certainly looks extremely bad!"

"I'm afraid so," sighed Connie. "I won't trouble you to run through it as I have already done so with Dolores. She didn't take it very well."

Miss Gilbey turned to Dolores. She was frowning slightly.



"Dolores, this is extremely poor work for you, my dear," she said quietly. "I am disappointed. You can do much better than this."

Poor Dolores! Gulping, she gazed first at Connie, then Miss Gilbey, and back again to Connie. Bewildered and frightened by Connie's bullying, she was almost convinced that her composition was very poor.

"I—I'm sorry, Miss Gilbey!" she mumbled.

"Please, Miss Gilbey," Connie cut in, her eyes glinting, "I think I can give an explanation."

"You, Connie?"

"Yes, Miss Gilbey. You see, just recently Dolores has become interested in riding. As you may know, she has been going down to Pillar Reins stables quite a lot." Connie laughed tolerantly. "She imagines in her childish way that she is going to make a wonderful rider!"

At that Dolores flushed crimson. Miss Gilbey looked at her curiously.

"I have heard something about that," she said slowly. "You mean you think, Connie—"

"Well, it's pretty obvious," said Connie smoothly, "that with nothing but horses on the brain Dolores can't attend properly to her school work. I heard at the stables that Dolores intended going down there early in the morning, before rising-bell. Of course, it's none of my business, but—"

Connie shrugged.

"If she's going to curtail her sleeping hours that won't help either, will it?" she suggested.

Miss Gilbey looked at Dolores, and Dolores, with dawning apprehension of what Connie was implying showing in her eyes, gazed pleadingly back.

"H'm!" murmured the mistress. "I think I begin to see. Thank you, Connie! Now, Dolores—"

"Yes, Miss Gilbey!"

The mistress' voice was a trifle stern as she continued.

"You must understand that your health and your school work come first, Dolores. I can appreciate that you like riding, but I cannot allow it to interfere with more important things. I think it better that you do not go down to the stables in the morning. If you wish to rise a little earlier, I think it would be a good plan to re-write this composition, which—"

She got no further. With a choky cry, Dolores had seized her arm.

"Oh, please—please," she pleaded, "let me go to-morrow morning, Miss Gilbey! I'm to have a lesson, don't you see?" Tears started to her eyes then. "I'm to see Snowey, and—and oh, I simply must have the lesson!"

Miss Gilbey took her hands, shaking her head.

"Dolores, no fuss, please!" she said. "You must understand that this is partly a punishment for bad work. I cannot favour you. Now, dry your eyes, child, and run along."

Dolores blinked at her through wet lashes. Yet in her childish way she saw the justice of that remark. She had done bad work. Connie had said it was disgraceful.

But not to see Snowey! Not to have her lesson from Mr. Cripps, the lesson that might be so important in her ambition to do well at the gymkhana, and thus have Snowey for her very, very own! Oh, that was what mattered so terribly. Snowey—Snowey!

With quivering lips, hugging Peggy tightly, she stumbled blindly from the study. She did not see Miss Gilbey's rather anxious regard. She did not see Connie's contemptuous sneer. She saw nothing clearly until,

at the end of the passage, a cry rang out, and next second Marjorie Hazeldene's arm was about her shoulder.

"Dolores—Dolores, what is it?"

"Oh—oh, Marjorie!" she choked.

"They—they won't let me ride Snowey!"

Marjorie started. She looked up. With her were Babs, Mabs, and Clara. Dashing off their lines swiftly, the chums had come along to hang about for Dolores. They didn't trust Connie.

"Leave her to me, Babs," whispered Marjorie. "I'll join you in Study No. 4 later."

Babs, her face grim, nodded. Marjorie was the best one to be left with Dolores. They marched back to Study No. 4, and spent the time before Marjorie arrived in striving to guess exactly what Connie had been up to to affect Dolores so pitifully.

They soon knew. Marjorie came back five minutes later with flushed cheeks and very unusual anger on her face. It had not been difficult for her to arrive at the real truth from Dolores' sad little story.

"It's Connie," she flashed. "Connie has been cruelly, spitefully clever—"

She told the story then, and the chums began to seethe.

"Well, for one," exploded Clara furiously when Marjorie had finished, "I'm going to see Connie and jolly well—"

But Babs put a restraining hand on the Tomboy's arm.

"Hold on, Clara!" she exclaimed. "That'll only make things worse."

"Worse for Connie by the time I've given her a piece of my mind!" Clara snorted. "I'll tell her—"

"No good, you chump!" cut in Babs impatiently. "Connie has Miss Gilbey on her side. Oh, Connie's been clever!" she added bitterly. "What on earth can we do?"

There was silence for a moment. It was broken by Marjorie, and Marjorie spoke with a sort of grim fierceness which made the others eye her quickly.

"Listen," she said. "That pony Snowey means everything to Dolores—everything, I tell you, girls. And she feels that if she doesn't get this lesson to-morrow morning her chances of owning him are in danger."

"Well?" Babs started.

"Well, we've got to do something!" cried Marjorie, her face quite flushed and earnest. "I'm going to do something. If Connie can be clever—so can we. If Connie wants war," she cried in a way that made them all blink, "she shall have it!"

She turned determinedly to the door.

"But, Marjie—" Clara caught at her arm. "What are you going to do?"

Marjorie smiled.

"I'm not sure if my plan will work yet," she replied. "So I won't say anything. I'll see you later."

And leaving them gaping, she hurried off. She went straight to the prefects' room, and using the phone there got through to the Pillar Reins stables. She was just in time to catch Cripps the groom before he left. Swiftly, urgently, Marjorie started to speak.

And in Study No. 4 Babs looked at the others.

"Connie hitting at Dolores has roused old Marjie," she said slowly. "And Marjorie's right, girls! If Connie wants war over Dolores—well, she'll jolly well get it! And the first thing is—just hope that Marjie's idea, whatever it is, is a good one!"

## Fun and Drama at the Stables!



"I SUS-SAY, you girls, just look at this horse!"

Plump Bessie Bunter spoke with pride.

There was no answer. Truth to tell, the Fourth Form chums did not even consciously hear Bessie, so intent were they on their work. Hard work it was, too.

Five unbridled and unsaddled horses were tethered to various rings about the stable yard in Pillar Reins. It was the following morning, long before normal rising-bell at Cliff House, and those horses had only just been brought in from the fields by Babs & Co. Cripps was bringing in the remainder.

At the moment grooming was the order of the day. Dust was rising in fine clouds as they strenuously wielded their brushes, getting rid of the mud which had collected during the horses' night in the fields.

Bessie had a horse to groom, too, but that horse—not yet tied up—was standing behind the plump one, its nose against her back in a most affectionate manner. It was that affection which was now making Bessie swell with pride.

"I say," she repeated peevishly, "can't you girls stop a minute, you know. Look how this horse is following me round."

Babs looked up then, her face rosy with exertion. The others paused, too, brushes in hand.

Babs, who had been working next to Marjorie, glanced at the girl before she paid attention to Bessie. Babs had been wondering for some time about Marjorie—and Dolores. For since last night, when Marjorie had vowed she had a plan, they had all been hoping against hope that Dolores would be at the stables that morning. But the kiddie hadn't arrived, and Marjorie, quietly getting on with her work, had said nothing beyond a "Wait and see!"

Marjorie had seemed to be hugging a secret.

"Babs!" Bessie was getting annoyed. The plump duffer wanted attention. "Just lul-look! He jolly well loves me, you know!"

All eyes on Bessie then. Swelling with importance, she strolled across the yard towards them. Sure enough, the stocky piebald it had been her task to groom followed her step for step, gently nosing her back.

"Come along, then, old mare!" beamed Bessie delightedly. "Just a knock, you know," she loftily announced. "We Bunters all have it."

She strutted round, and faithfully the piebald trotted behind.

But as the plump duffer turned, Clara started, gaped, and then burst into a yell of mirth.

"Oh, my giddy aunt! Jovver see anything like it? Ha, ha, ha!"

Bessie turned her head and sniffed.

"You can cackle, Clara!" she said disdainfully. "You're just jealous! There's something about me, you know. I've got something th-that makes horses want to be with me."

Clara doubled up.

"You sure have, old Bessikins! Oh! Ha, ha, ha!" She almost wept.

"You've got something all right—"

For Clara had seen first what all the chums spotted now as Bessie turned. Instantly a howl of mirth went up.

"Oh, my hat!" gurgled Babs.



"Oh golly! Bess, you certainly have got something about you!"

"But she won't have it long!" Mabs sobbed weakly.

"Hold me up, Marjie!" wailed Janet, her eyes streaming with mirth. "Ha, ha, ha!"

They rocked, they shrieked, and their mirth grew more uproarious than ever as they saw that piebald horse contentedly nibbling away at Bessie's back—or, rather, at a large slab of chocolate which ever-hungry Bessie had slipped into her hip-pocket and which was now projecting therefrom.

"It's going—it's going—" choked Clara weakly.

"Gone!" howled Mabs.

And in fact the piebald had jerked up the last bit of the bar at that moment!

Bessie simply glowered at her rocking chums.

"All right!" she said warmly. "Cackle—cackle, jealous cats! But I'm going to reward him!" roared Bessie. "You—you sillies!" She slipped her plump hand towards her hip-pocket. "I'm gu-going to give him a piece—a piece—" And there Bessie stuttered, groping wildly at her pocket. The expression of blank consternation which spread over her shiny face then sent the chums off into a fresh burst of hilarious laughter. "Where—where—" gasped Bessie. "Mum—mum—my chocolate—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" The piebald, apparently realising that the supply was ended, ambled away. As he went the silver paper which had been about the slab of chocolate dropped from his mouth.

Bessie saw it. Bessie stared unbelievably.

"Why—why—" she stuttered feebly. "He's jolly well eaten my chocolate! He—he—" Bessie's indignation knew no bounds then. "Why, I believe," she roared wrathfully, "th—that that was why he was following me about, you know!"

"Not really?" cried Clara merrily. "Nothing escapes you, Bess!"

Bessie fumed. She almost looked about to leap at the piebald. If there was one thing Bessie hated losing it was grubblings. But the chocolate obviously wasn't to be wrested back from the horse! Bessie's glowering attention turned to her shrieking chums.

"You—you," she bawled. "Y-you let him eat my chocolate. You—"

Bessie made a furious rush. Chuckling, the chums scattered back into the harness room.

"Pax, old Bess," gasped Mabs weakly. "I've got a slab of choc myself. You can have that, you old horse-tamer—"

Like magic Bessie's wrath began to disperse, but Mabs, on the point of crossing to her hacking jacket, suddenly paused. She stared out of the harness-room doorway, and her eyes danced excitedly.

"Dolores!" she exclaimed. "She's here!"

"What?"

The rest of the chums whirled eagerly, Marjorie smiling quietly. Sure enough, there was little Dolores just getting off her bicycle. Even as they watched she trotted, beaming all over her face, into the small stable.

"My hat—that's grand!" Like a flash Mabs confronted Marjorie, her eyes dancing. "Come on, Marjie!" she challenged. "Own up!"

"Just a sec.," laughed Marjorie. "Listen!"

Came the tinkling of a bicycle bell, and suddenly another rider swept in.

It was Connie Jackson. She saw the chums instantly. Off she jumped and marched grimly up to them.

"Where's Dolores?" she rapped. "I know she's here! I saw her ahead of me. She was forbidden to come down this morning by Miss Gilbey. Right!" Her eyes gleamed. "She's going back with me!"

Mabs looked anxiously at Marjorie, but her gentle-natured chum seemed quite unperturbed.

"You mustn't take Dolores," Marjorie said mildly.

Connie glared in stupefaction.

"W-what?" she stuttered. "How dare you, Marjorie!"

"Because if you try to," continued Marjorie calmly, "I shall phone Miss Primrose!"

Dead silence then. Connie seemed to doubt her hearing.

"You—you'll phone Miss Primrose?" she repeated dazedly.

"Certainly," nodded Marjorie.

Connie struggled for breath. She, like the chums, regarded Marjorie as if that cool, confident girl had suddenly taken leave of her senses.

"You see," continued Marjorie gravely, "I don't think Miss Primrose would like you to contradict her own special orders. If I let you take Dolores you'd get into trouble. You wouldn't like me to get you into trouble would you, Connie?"

"Gu—get me into trouble," whispered Connie feebly. "Marjorie, what are you babbling about?"

Marjorie gazed at her in apparent surprise.

"Didn't you know?" she asked innocently. "Why, it was all arranged about Dolores last night. Mr. Cripps here phoned to Miss Primrose and asked if Dolores could specially come this morning, as he would probably want to clip Snowey." Marjorie's eyes began to twinkle. "Snowey doesn't like being clipped, but he's very docile with Dolores, and so as a special concession Miss Primrose deferred Dolores' punishment. Wasn't that nice, Connie?" she asked sweetly.

It was apparent by the extraordinary expression which dawned upon Connie's face then that she considered it anything but nice. For a long minute she stared at Marjorie, as if trying to convince herself that Marjorie might be lying.

She tried to speak; she stuttered. And then, black and bitter of face, she abruptly turned. Mounting her cycle she drove at the pedals with a force which spoke eloquently of her inward rage.

Her back receded from the chums' gaze.

Silence.

Clara broke it. She broke it with a fierce, ringing whoop of glee, and flushed of face, simply leapt on her gentle study-mate.

"Marjie—Marjie. You—you wizard!" she gasped. "You worked it! You got in touch with Cripps—asked him to phone Primmy! Oh, Marjie—Marjie!"

"Connie's face!" breathed Janet Jordan. She gazed almost reverently at smiling Marjorie. "You old wonder!"

"Wonder!" exclaimed Mabs. "She's a jolly marvel. Up with her, girls!"

And in sheer joyous admiration, they grabbed hold of their laughingly protesting chum, and would have indeed swung her up in triumph had not a startled cry in a childish treble made them pause and turn.

Little Dolores had appeared on the scene, leading a saddled and bridled Snowey. And Dolores, seeing the

girls grasping Marjorie, jumped to a false conclusion. She hurried anxiously forward.

"Oh, no—no," she cried quiveringly. "Please—Barbara, Clara—don't hurt Marjorie! Oh, please!"

The chums paused, staring. Then Clara burst into a laugh.

"Hurt Marjorie!" she whooped. "Hurt our dear old miracle-worker? Young chump, Dolores! Look out! I'm after you!"

And boisterously the sturdy tomboy leaped forward and swung the startled Dolores into the air. "She's saved the day for you, young Dolores!" she whooped, plomping the kiddo down on her feet again. "Thank her nicely!"

"Oh, be quiet, Clara," laughed Marjorie. She smiled at wide-eyed Dolores. "Just a little scheme, dear," she explained softly, "so that you could get down here this morning and practise on Snowey. Miss Primrose deferred your punishment?"

Dolores nodded eagerly.

"Oh, yes, Marjorie! She said I could do twenty five lines instead. And—and—" She looked adoringly at Marjorie. "You did it for me 'cos of Snowey? For—for us. Oh, thank you, Marjorie," she said breathlessly. "You—you're lovely."

Marjorie flushed and the chums beamed.

"Just what we think," chuckled Mabs. She paused, turning at the sound of trotting hoofs. "And here comes Mr. Cripps now, Dolores. Come on, girls," she added briskly. "Get those horses inside. We've been slack-ing a bit."

They got busy. The horses they had been grooming were swiftly put in their stalls and then the chums turned their attention to the animals the groom had fetched from the fields. While they were thus engaged, Cripps swung up on to the chestnut he usually rode, nodded appreciation of Dolores' quick mount on to Snowey, and led the way from the stables.

"You're coming on, young 'un," he said crisply. "You'll make good in the gymkhana yet. Only one thing— he twinkled down at Dolores' earnest little face—"you mustn't ride with a block of wood between your hands. The judges on Saturday won't like it."

Dolores' small chin dropped. Wide-eyes, she regarded her hands.

"Please, there isn't any wood, Mr. Cripps."

He chuckled at the kiddie's perplexity.

"No, young 'un; but your hands are wide enough apart for there to be a block there," he explained. "Hands together, please—hands together!"

Dolores' doubt vanished. Huggerly she moved her hands together, and then, with a shy glance at Mr. Cripps, rode off beside him.

Back at the stables, Mabs & Co. were saddling the horses needed for the first ride. They were completing the job when Mr. Simon Renfrew himself entered the stables.

A middle-aged, rather stern-visaged man, he watched the chums critically, then approached with a smile.

"Good work, girls!" he said heartily. "Excellent! But, Janet, the cheek-strap on the piebald a little looser, please. And, Bessie, you'll never get that bridle on upside down. Show her, will you, Barbara?"

Mabs went to the rescue, and turned with a beam.

"All correct now, Mr. Renfrew!"

"Thank you, Barbara. Thank you all, girls! You really have been invaluable, and it will give me great pleasure to tell my cousin so." As the



chums flushed with pleasure, he glanced towards the little stable. "Cripps and little Dolores out?" "Yes, Mr. Renfrew," nodded Marjorie. "And—and don't you think she's coming along wonderfully?" He nodded, but a little doubtfully. "Y-yes."

Perhaps he might have said more, but just then a car drew into the yard, and he hurried to the occupants, who were clearly off for an early morning ride. Marjorie looked anxious.

"He didn't sound very enthusiastic about Dolores, Babs."

Babs pursed her lips. "Well, Cripps was telling me that Mr. Renfrew thinks Dolores is awfully young to be handling Snowey. Snowey certainly is spirited, and Mr. Renfrew's a bit anxious—especially as Dolores is one of his cousin's scholars."

Marjorie bit her lip. "Oh, Babs, you don't think he would—"

"Now, now, Marjie!" reproved Babs smilingly. "After Mr. Renfrew has seen Dolores on Snowey once or twice, he'll jolly well change his mind. And I bet Cripps has a good report on Dolores this morning."

Babs spoke correctly. When the Second Former and the groom returned some fifteen minutes later, Cripps was beaming. Dolores, conscious that she had done well, was bubbling with glee. The chums were ready then to return to Cliff House for breakfast, but they waited while Dolores put away Snowey in his stall. That was a task which the kiddie firmly insisted on doing herself.

Then away to Cliff House went a cheery little party, indeed. Dolores chattered excitedly all the while, recounting what Cripps had said, how Snowey had acted, how she loved Snowey, how Snowey loved her, and what she would do when the pony was her very, very own.

Cripps had promised to give Dolores another ride before tea, and Dolores bubbled gleefully about that, too. Babs & Co. would not be down on this occasion, for they had an important cricket practice.

At breakfast Dolores was on top of the world, talking away to her Second Form chum, Letty Green. It was true that there were sneers and jibes across the table from Eunice Hunter, the self-appointed leader of the Second Form, but Dolores paid no heed.

Eunice, the biggest and oldest girl in the Form, and a spiteful bully into the bargain, hated Dolores. She had always tried to make things unpleasant for the kiddie, and usually made the rest of the Second back her up in this. As she was so much bigger than they, they were afraid to defy her.

This riding craze of Dolores' was a fresh cause for jealousy on the part of Eunice. Scared of horses herself, Eunice writhed at Dolores' success in that direction. Quite apart from that, Connie Jackson had dropped a hint to Eunice that if she could make things awkward for Dolores, she, Connie, would forget the fifty lines Eunice owed her. So Eunice taunted and jeered.

But it was in vain. Dolores either ignored or answered spiritedly back. Eunice could not worry her this morning—not with the thought of Snowey in her mind, and with Snowey still occupying her thoughts.

Dolores worked hard at both morning and afternoon lessons. Immediately she was free she trotted away.

Her dark hair flying, she bounded away to the dormitory. Swiftly out of her school tunic and blouse and into

riding costume! Away down to the cycle-sheds, seeing as she rushed those nice girls, Barbara and her friends, making their way towards the playing fields. Out with her bike, and away—away, as fast as her little legs could pedal, towards Pillar Reins!

The stable yard was deserted when she entered. Cripps was out with a ride, and Mr. Renfrew was in his office, booking a ride for three customers. Dolores waved shyly, and sped for the small stable. In her arms was Peggy, for the kiddie seldom went anywhere without her doll.

She paused breathlessly in the doorway. Most of the horses were out, but not Snowey. And soon Mr. Cripps would be back to give her her lesson. Hugging Peggy, Dolores trotted down the stone floor.

"Snowey!" she called. "Snowey!"

The pony's head came round in a flash, ears pricked forward, as the kiddie halted at the opening of the stall. Without a word of command from Dolores, he moved over to the right, giving her room to come in.

Dolores gurgled in delight. In she trotted.

"Oh, Snowey, you know me, don't you? You do like me, don't you?"—gazing earnestly up into his big, intelligent eyes. "Say yes—please!"

Snowey's head came down, soft nose nudging Dolores' tiny chest. No doubting his affection. Carefully Dolores placed Peggy on top of Snowey's oats and bran. Next moment her dark head was pressed against his flowing mane, her little arms hugged tightly about his neck.

"Snowey," she whispered, "jus—just us."

The kiddie was lost to the world. That was why she did not notice someone come and look at that little scene—someone who had been in the small stables when Dolores entered. That someone was Connie Jackson.

Connie, still cherishing a hope of riding the mare in the gymkhana, had been in its stall. By petting her and continually expressing her admiration

of her, Connie was endeavouring to get Mr. Renfrew to give his consent to her riding that high-spirited animal.

Dolores' call to Snowey had brought Connie, scowling, from the stall. Now her thin features twisted to a spasm of bitter jealousy. To think that that little brat could do that with Snowey, while she—she couldn't even lay her hand on the mare without the animal throwing its head and flinching!

"Dolores!" she barked. Startled, the pony threw up its head. Dolores, her arms torn free, nearly hit against the side of the stall.

"There, you see, you little fool!" Connie cried furiously. "Come out of there before you get hurt!"

Dolores stared indignantly at her. "You scared Snowey!" she reproved. "It's wrong to shout like that behind a horse, you know! Mr. Cripps says—"

"Shut up, you—you baby!" snarled Connie. "I don't care a jot what Cripps thinks! Come out of there, I say! Here—" And, seething with blind rage because she knew she was in the wrong, she strode into the stall, spitefully pushed Dolores out, then glared at Peggy, the doll. "And take this—this thing with you!" she ranted, grabbing at the doll.

From right under Snowey's nose she whisked it, and, with cruel carelessness, hurled it towards Dolores. The doll hit Snowey's hind quarters, and the pony, already restive, jumped and kicked out just as Dolores made a desperate dart forward to prevent Peggy smashing on the ground.

Connie screamed. The flying hoofs grazed Dolores' leg, but one hock struck her shoulder, sending her sprawling back.

Dolores clasped her shoulder. She was more frightened than hurt, for, fortunately, the blow had been a glancing one. But, clutching Peggy to her, she stared up with tearful indignation.

"You mean thing, Connie! You made Snowey—"

"Hey, what's this!" burst in an alarmed voice. Mr. Renfrew stood in



"MY goodness!" the Second Form mistress exclaimed as she saw the numerous corrections Connie had made to Dolores' composition. "This certainly looks extremely bad!" It did—Connie had seen to that. And little Dolores, though not realising the full depths of the prefect's cruel scheme, was almost too scared even to protest,



## 10 "Little Dolores' Greatest Ambition!"

the doorway. He paled, and hurried forward. "My stars! Miss Jackson, was Dolores kicked?"

How swiftly Connie thought then! How quick and glib her answer!

"She was fooling about right behind Snowey's hoofs, Mr. Renfrew!" she exclaimed. "The pony was restive, and kicked out. Fortunately," she added, without a blush, "I managed to push Dolores clear, and she was only struck a glancing blow!"

Mr. Renfrew nodded in appreciation. "Good work, Miss Jackson! I've always been afraid this might happen, and—"

A horrified exclamation from Dolores made him pause. Almost in fear, the kiddie was staring at Connie.

"Connie!" she whispered. "Oh, Connie, you know that's a fib! Dear Snowey wouldn't kick at me! It wasn't his fault, Mr. Renfrew!" she protested quiveringly. "Snowey was frightened when Connie—"

"It's no good, Dolores!" cut in Connie swiftly. "Excuses won't help matters!" She looked meaningly at Mr. Renfrew, who was running expert fingers over the kiddie's shoulder. "She thinks so much of that pony that she imagines she can do anything with him!" She shrugged. "It's not my affair, of course, Mr. Renfrew, but I've always felt that it's dangerous for such a kid to handle Snowey! If he kicked her badly—"

"But he wouldn't—he wouldn't!" burst out Dolores sobbingly. She struggled up, only wincing the merest bit as she placed her weight upon the injured leg. "Don't you see, Mr. Renfrew? Snowey loves me—he loves me!" she pleaded tremulously. "And I love him, and—and it was Connie— Oh, you're wicked, Connie!" she choked.

Connie gave a little grimace at Mr. Renfrew.

"You see," she sighed, "the poor kid will say anything!"

Mr. Renfrew nodded and frowned. "Now, look here, Dolores," he said gently, "you must understand that that pony is very, very high-spirited, and needs a much older person to handle him. I've felt that all along, but now I can't allow you to be in danger with my horses, Dolores. You're too young, child, to realise the risks you take with Snowey. Now come back with me to Cliff House, and I'll have a word about you with my cousin, Miss Primrose. If you'd be good enough to stay here, Miss Jackson, and take any bookings until Cripps returns—"

"Why, certainly—certainly!" smirked Connie. "Only too glad to do anything for you, Mr. Renfrew!"

"Thank you!" he said gruffly, and turned to Dolores. "Come along, kiddie!"

Dolores stared at him.

"Snowey—" she choked.

"Please!" said Mr. Renfrew, and, gently but firmly, he led her stumblingly from the stables.

Connie moved to the doorway. She saw the car drive off, and, careless of the fact that there was straw and hay about, contentedly lit a cigarette. A long sigh of triumph left her lips.

"And that, Baby Dolores," she murmured, "just about settles your hash! Nosey Barbara & Co. won't get you out of this mess! And Connie, my girl," she mused thoughtfully, "with Mr. Renfrew grateful, you've only to play your cards right, and I think you'll ride the mare on Saturday, after all!"

And Connie, not caring a jot for the heartbreak of little Dolores, but rather gloating over it, felt eminently satisfied with herself.

## Wanted—a Wheeze!



"ONE hundred per cent sizzling good practice!" chortled Clara contentedly. "Who says an iced drink at the tuckshop? My treat!"

There was a unanimous chorus of approval from the chums. In a body they were tramping up the Fourth Form corridor, having just finished a keen half-hour at the cricket nets.

A good practice, that! They were all feeling pleased—and thirsty!

"Let's drop our bats in first," said Babs, stopping outside Study No. 4. "Clara, old thing, you might like to look at my new pads."

"Rather!" nodded the Tomboy keenly. "Marjie"—she held out her cricket bat and gloves—"be a dear and drop those into our study, will you?"

Laughing, that good-natured girl took bat and gloves. While she trotted along to Study No. 7, Babs, Mabs, Clara, and Janet turned into Study No. 4. Plump Bessie had not practised with them. She was probably now in the tuckshop.

Babs crossed to her locker, but before she could open it a sudden cry along the passage made them start.

"That's Marjie!" exclaimed Clara. "What on earth—"

She jumped to the door. With the others hot-foot behind her, she sped along to her own study. The door was slightly ajar. She swept it open.

"My hat!" she gasped. Her voice dropped. "Oh, I say, Marjie—"

For Marjorie was on her knees by the armchair, her arm about the shoulders of Dolores Essendon, and that kiddie's form was shaking with great sobs. Marjorie looked up as the chums entered.

"I found her here," she whispered anxiously. "Crying her heart out. What on earth's happened?"

Dumbly they shook their heads.

"Dolores—look at me, dear!" Gently Marjorie raised the downbent head. "Tell me—"

With one last, choking sob, Dolores hastily fumbled for her handkerchief. She blew into it fiercely, dabbed at her eyes, and then looked up.

"I—I'm not crying really," she whispered brokenly. "Hon'tly. But I couldn't help it when Miss Primrose said—said—" Her lower lip quivered ominously again.

They glanced quickly at each other. So Dolores had been with Miss Primrose, eh? That sounded like serious trouble. Babs stepped forward.

"Dolores," she said softly, "you know we're all your friends, don't you? Then," as the kiddie dumbly nodded, "you tell us what's wrong, and you can jolly well be sure we'll do our best to put it right again!"

"You bet!" declared Clara.

The kiddie looked at them with misty eyes.

"It—it's Snowey—"

And so the whole little story came tumbling out. Connie's treachery, her spiteful lies; what Mr. Renfrew had said; what Miss Primrose had said when her cousin had brought Dolores to her and explained.

The chums gathered that Miss Primrose had been deeply disturbed by what her cousin had told her, and for some fifteen minutes had talked very seriously, if kindly, to Dolores.

First she had pointed out that she had received several bad reports of Dolores lately, and the general impression was that this apparent

slackness on the kiddie's part was due solely to her interest in riding—and Snowey.

Now had come this accident.

Piecing together the main facts from Dolores' stumbling little story, the chums realised that Primmy had been extremely concerned. Primmy believed, like her cousin, that Dolores was far too young to handle Snowey completely on her own.

Primmy had been kind, but very, very firm. She had forbidden Dolores to go down to the stables for a whole day! In the meantime Snowey would be exercised by an experienced rider, thus ensuring that he was not too fresh.

Then, if no more bad reports came in about Dolores by the end of the following day, she would be allowed at the stables again. But—and this Miss Primrose had strongly emphasised—one more bad report and she would curtail the kiddie's activities there altogether.

"And—and then she sent me away," gulped Dolores. "But I was to have a lesson at lunch-time to-morrow, you know, and—and now—"

Babs frowned. She could understand Miss Primrose's attitude perfectly. But how was Primmy to know that riding Snowey, finally possessing Snowey, meant the world to Dolores? And how—most important—was Primmy to know of Connie's spiteful hand in the matter?

"Connie!" she muttered aloud, and her eyes blazed. "Always Connie, girls—and we can't bowl her out this time." She turned to Dolores, and gently took her little shoulders. "Listen to me, will you, Dolores?"

Dolores blinked up and smiled bravely.

"Yes, Barbara?"

"You've got to believe what I'm going to say now, Dolores," Babs went on steadily. "It's this; Mr. Cripps told me that with about two more rides he was confident you'd be good enough for the gymkhana."

Dolores' eyes widened.

"Yes, Barbara?"

"Yes, kiddie. Now, there are two more days before the gymkhana. You are forbidden to ride to-morrow, but that leaves you the next day, and I honestly believe that if you have a couple of rides on that day you'll be good enough to win Snowey. Why, when everyone sees you on Snowey in the gymkhana—Miss Primrose, your daddy and mummy—they just can't help knowing that you're capable of handling him!"

Dolores drew a deep breath. Tears had all gone. A smile touched her lips, grew, and finally she leapt up, her eyes dancing.

"Oh, yes, Barbara—yes, yes!" she cried gleefully. "Oh, I was a silly. But do you know, everybody," she added quaintly, "I was so frightened when Miss Primrose spoke 'bout me not going to the stables—never seeing Snowey again!"

They smiled.

"Don't worry about that," said Clara firmly. "Snowey's going to be yours all right. Aunty Clara says so! And Aunty Clara says: what about that iced drink?" she added boisterously. "That means you, too, young Dolores! Come on! Are we down-hearted?" she demanded.

"No!" roared the chums, and whirled laughing Dolores away in their midst.

Light-hearted and cheery was the little snack and drink they had in the tuckshop, with the chums finally watching Dolores trot happily off to join Letty Green as tea-bell rang.

"You know," remarked Babs, as they left the tuckshop in a body, "what I said to Dolores I honestly meant,





"OH, it's just a knack, you know—making horses fond of you," Bessie said loftily, as she strutted round. "I've something other people haven't gig-got." Babs & Co. roared. "You sure have, old Bessiekins!" chortled Clara. For the chums had noticed the reason for the horse's devotion to Bessie—it was neatly removing some chocolate from her hip-pocket.

girls. But it's not so easy as I made it sound. Connie's such a danger! If she gets Dolores into one more spot of trouble—then I'm afraid it means no Snowey for Dolores! Primmy won't go back on her word. And so—

"It's Connie we've got to deal with!" said Marjorie sternly.

"Connie!" nodded Babs grimly. "And after tea we start the war!"

So it was planned and decided. Connie was to be watched. Connie wasn't to have a chance to be tricky.

Over tea in Study No. 4 Babs discussed the matter earnestly with Mabs and Bessie.

"We'll arrange to do our prep in shifts," she explained, "working in with Clara & Co., of course. But don't," she added meaningly, "forget Eunice Hunter!"

Bessie sniffed. "I'll watch that nasty little th-thing, Babs," she said importantly. "Lul-leave it to me, you know."

"All right, Bess," smiled Babs. "I only hope—yes, come in, chump," she called at a gentle tap on the door. And the next second she came to her feet with a cry. "Letty! Do you want me?"

It was Letty Green who stood in the doorway.

The chums each knew a sudden apprehension as they gazed at the face of Dolores' chum—the youngster who had come to Cliff House in rather curious circumstances not many weeks ago.

"Barbara—" Letty's rather thin face twitched. She seemed to be holding some strong emotion in check. "It—it's about the sugar—"

"Su-sugar," stammered Babs blankly. "What on earth do you mean, Letty? I thought that you had come about Dolores—"

"So I ave—have," Letty hastily corrected herself. "Dolores has been taking sugar down to Snowey, and at tea-time just now Connie—"

"Connie!" cried Babs sharply. "Quick, Letty! What has Connie to do with the sugar Dolores takes to Snowey?"

"Because Dolores takes it from the table," said Letty simply. "But it's honest," she rushed on loyally, "cos she goes wivout—without in her tea and cocoa to make up."

Babs and Bessie and Mabs stared at her. Perhaps each felt impatient, but there was something in the flush on Letty's thin cheeks, the unusual sparkle of her eyes, that made Babs just say: "Go on, Letty."

Letty pressed her lips firmly together before continuing.

"Connie came round to our table when we was—were—having tea," she said then. "She suddenly caught Dolores slipping two knobs of sugar into her pocket. Dolores said it was fair, 'cos she had none in her tea; but that little cat Eunice," flared Letty suddenly, "she jumps up and—and says it's a fib, an—an' that Dolores has sugar in her tea and cocoa as well."

"And then?" prompted Babs, her teeth gritted.

"The other girls—all 'cept me—backed Eunice up," said Letty, her eyes sparkling more than ever. "Cos they're afraid of her! An' Miss Gilbey had left the table, so Connie said she'd report Dolores for—for stealing to the duty mistress—Miss Bullivant. And it's all unfair and mean, 'cos I believe Eunice told Connie beforehand that Dolores took sugar."

She gulped, pausing while the chums stared at each other with flushed and angry expressions. Then little Letty, who loved Dolores so much, could hold her emotions in check no longer.

"And Dolores has gone off all white and sort of funny," she choked, tears trickling down her cheeks. "Cos now Connie will report her, and Miss Primrose won't let her go to the stables, and she won't get Snowey— And, oh," she wailed, "I s'pect she'll break her heart!"

Babs gulped. There was a lump in her own throat.

"Letty—Letty, go and find Dolores," she breathed. "Tell her," she added fiercely, "that we'll do something; that she mustn't worry. Tell her that, Letty, quickly!"

"Oh, Barbara, yes!" Almost in awe

Letty regarded her, and then scuttled away.

Babs flashed round on Mabs and Bessie.

"Bessie," she cried, "get Clara and the others!" Away dashed Bessie. "Mabs, we've got to act fast—fast as lightning. Connie," gritted the Form captain furiously, "that scheming, spiteful cat!"

Mabs eyed her in dismay. "But what can we do, Babs? Connie's got the word of the whole Second Form behind her, thanks to that little wretch Eunice!" she said bitterly.

The door crashed open. Clara, Janet, and Marjorie came in with a rush, Bessie panting behind.

"Babs," cried Marjorie anxiously, "what's happened? Bessie says—"

"Tell them, please, Mabs," jerked Babs. "Oh golly! I've got to think of something—something—"

Swiftly Mabs told the trio from Study No. 7.

"And Miss Bullivant will be in her study now," she ended. "And Connie will be with her in five minutes or so. She's duty prefect for to-morrow, and Primmy's probably having the usual chunter with her now. Once that's through—"

She shrugged eloquently, glumly. Marjorie was looking horrified. Clara—that impulsive Tomboy—nearly tore her hair in her rage and dismay.

"I sus-say, girls," stammered Bessie feebly, "can't we go and complain to Miss Bullivant first—about Connie, you know—"

"Chump—idiot!" raged Clara. "Connie's backed up by the whole Second Form. We'd just get slung out—"

"Clara, wait!" Babs had abruptly halted in her pacing. Her face was alight. "Bessie's hit something!"

"What?"

"Listen!" jerked Babs. "There's a chance. It'll probably mean trouble for us, but it may save Dolores. Listen!"

And they listened breathlessly as Babs began to speak.

(Continued on page 14)



# OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS

All schoolgirls look forward to PATRICIA'S letter each week. It is so friendly, cheery and gay—yet so helpful and informative, too. No wonder you all feel that Patricia is your very own friend.

ARE you one of those people whom midges and other summer insects simply love?

This Patricia of yours most certainly is. It's nice to be popular, I know—but not with these "biting" pests!

At the moment I have a monstrous mosquito bite on my leg just below my knee. It's a colossal size, and not at all beautiful!

It irritated at first, too. But very firmly I wouldn't allow myself to scratch or even rub it. For once you break the skin of a "bite," you know, the thing takes ages to go away.

I have found that a dab of household ammonia applied to a "bite" is very soothing. So is ordinary soda, rubbed over it. (Both these should not be used if the skin is broken, of course. That's pretty obvious, but I must just remind you.) Vinegar also, is very soothing.

Should the skin be broken then iodine is what you must use. And I think you know, don't you, that colourless iodine can be obtained for the same price as the more usual kind. This colourless iodine is a boon—especially when you're applying it to face or arms, where a brown stain on the skin might look rather odd.

## ● Garden Days

I wonder what you like doing best in the garden. You do help father these lovely summer evenings, and at weekends, don't you?

In the winter this Patricia of yours used to like wheel-barrowing best.

But this weather my favourite occupation in the garden is watering—with a hose for preference.

"You like the easy jobs, young woman," my father says to me. And I'm afraid he's right.

So I thought I'd tackle my small brother, whose full name is Heatherington, but who is called Heath for short, on the subject. "What do you like doing best in the garden, Heath?" I said lightly, thinking he'd probably say digging or picking raspberries.

"Oh, best I like havin' tea in the garden," was his casual reply.

No mention of work, you'll notice!

## ● Long or Short

Long slacks—or short shorts? Which is your favourite holiday garment for high jinks on the beach?

Personally, I like both.

Shorts for the very hottest days, and slacks for those days when there's a breeze

blowing, and you don't feel in a short-y mood, anyway.

But I think we'd all plump for slacks if we looked as nice in them as this young girl in the picture does, don't you?

They look as if they've come straight from Hollywood, don't they?

But actually, it's just another idea for lengthening slacks that have grown too short while they've been stored away during the winter.

All you want is half a yard or so of checked or tartan material.

Bind the legs of the slacks with this, giving them the required extra length. Then—just to make sure that they won't look as if they've been altered—they wear a sash of the same material around your waist.

This ties—oh, so casually—and not only looks sporty and young, but also helps to keep the slacks where they should be—round your waist, not slipping down over your hips.

(I'm going to try this idea out on my own slacks, by the way. It isn't that I've grown out of them since last year, but mine have mysteriously shrunk since I sent them to the cleaners!)

## ● A Royal Gift

Wouldn't you have loved to be present when the Dionne Quintuplets (I nearly said the "five quintuplets"—which would have turned them into twenty-five young ladies!) were presented to the King and Queen on their visit to Canada?

They must have made a pretty picture! And I expect they are feeling very proud of the English-made coats that the Queen presented to them.

They are sure to keep them for best. But I wonder what will happen to them when they are too small for the five famous little girls?

Oh, and by the way, in Canada they abbreviate quintuplets to quints (with a t)! We say quins, of course.

## ● The Latest

Have you seen the latest fashion in handbags that the grown-ups have adopted?

The bags are rather large and have a very long strap to them—which is not swung in the hand, but carried over the shoulder.

Just like the satchels we carried as school-kids!

And now I must tell you the latest

decoration for hats—and coat lapels too, for that matter. Not for you to get yourself, unless you're growing up very quickly, but to tell mother about, or to notice in the shops.

Fruit decorations have rather taken the place of flowers. You can buy artificial cherries, grapes, bananas, apples, peaches, apricots—every fruit imaginable—to wear as a buttonhole, or hat trimming. And some of them have their appropriate blossom with them.

One that my rather rich friend, Eamee, has is a rosy apple, with a twig and apple blossom behind it. It really is very pretty.

Knowing how I like schoolgirls, Eamee made me a present of an unusual "fob" to wear on my summer coat.

I expect it would amuse you if you saw it. It's a tiny blackboard—with some frightfully difficult sums worked out on it! (Sums like 2 and 2 making 4, and 2 from 3 leaving 1.)

Then attached by three tiny chains to the bottom of the board are a thick pencil (which doesn't write) a piece of chalk, and a bottle of ink!

It makes me feel rather like a school-teacher when I wear it. But it's been admired quite a lot.

## ● Good News for the Pets

You must often have heard that dogs should not lie too close to the fire.

I know I've heard it, and have seen many a dog dragged away from his comfy snooze on the hearth-rug, being told that the fire's bad for him.

But now, apparently, a whole body of coal experts say that it is not bad for either cats or dogs to lie close to the fire. The bio-vitric rays, they say, that are thrown out by the blazing coal are doing them good.

So when we tell our pets that they'll all be looking forward to winter, won't they?

## ● Rick-Rack

Next time you and mother are "talking clothes," ask her about "rick-rack braid." This is an old favourite in the dress-making world, which has just come back into favour again.

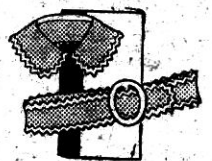
You can buy it quite cheaply by the yard, and it's very easy to sew. It makes such a dainty, summery trimming for dresses.

You could completely transform a favourite frock by sewing white rick-rack braid around the collar and belt.

Bye-bye now, my pets, until next week. Expect you're beginning to wish breaking-up time would hurry along, aren't you?

Your friend,

PATRICIA.





# BEAUTY FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Patricia is writing a special series of Good Looks articles to help you look your very best in time for the holidays.

## No. 3. Hair Problems.



**D**ID you know that when you are happy and in sparkling good health, your hair looks glossier and lovelier?

Well, it is so. Which means that the girl whose hair is not at its best these days must first try to make herself fitter in every way. (By eating wisely, having lots of exercise and fresh air, and by sleeping for nine hours at night—with all windows open.)

### TOO OILY

But even girls who are in splendid good health sometimes have hair problems.

The three most general are greasy hair, too-dry hair, and—scurf or dandruff.

Greasy hair should be washed every week in the summer and you should use a soapless shampoo or green soft soap, being sure to rinse very thoroughly.

A teaspoonful of ammonia or the juice of half a lemon should be added to the final rinsing water. This will help to reduce that too-greasy condition.

In addition, the scalp may require a tonic. Ask the chemist for one containing bay rum. A few drops of this should be brushed into the hair regularly and rubbed into the scalp as well.

Go without a hat as much as possible and avoid hats with tight-fitting brims.

You'll soon notice an improvement in your hair if you take all this advice.

### TOO DRY

The girl whose hair is too dry should not wash her hair oftener than every fortnight or three weeks. For a shampoo, she should choose one with an oil base. (There are heaps of good varieties on sale.)

It will improve this type of hair if rain water can be used for shampooing, instead of ordinary tap water. And it is also better to avoid lemon-juice in the final water, for this tends to be a little drying.

Instead, pour an extra jug of water over the hair (making as many as four rinses!), just to make sure that every single particle of soap has been dissolved.

The hair may be brushed over every day with any good hair oil or olive oil. (Please don't use any sticky preparations, but pure oil only.) A little of this should also be rubbed well into the roots, particularly the day before the hair is to be shampooed.

Avoid sitting around, hatless, in the very hot sun if you want to prevent dryness, and never, never go swimming without a bathing cap—or even two!

### A COMMON PROBLEM

Dandruff is one of the most common hair problems for grown-ups as well as for schoolgirls.

The hair and scalp must be kept very, very clean if this is to be cured. You can shampoo the hair more frequently, if you like, or you can cleanse it by combing through a special hair tonic. (Your chemist will advise you which to buy for this complaint.)

Brush and comb your hair frequently, using the small teeth of the comb, and do be sure that both brush and comb are always very, very clean. (They should be washed every single day, if you can possibly spare the time. But never, for goodness sake, leave them without a washing for longer than a week. Oh, and don't borrow or lend combs if dandruff is your trouble.)

### MORE ATTRACTIVE

I wish I could tell you straight-haired girls how to make your hair grow curly. But I just can't.

If your hair is really poker straight and just won't get a kink into it, then I can only suggest that you curl up the ends at night.

Use pipe-cleaners or those curlers that

look like shoelaces with lead inside. These will not harm the hair in any way and do make the most natural-looking curls.

The girl who has a slight wave, without being curly, can improve her hair enormously by remembering always to press in her waves after washing, when the hair is still damp. It should always be brushed in an upward direction, to encourage the wave.

For the girl who's past the Second Form, I do think a visit to the hairdresser just for a very special treat helps.

You can wash your hair at home, if you like, dry it, and then go off to have it "set" expertly in its natural waves. This will cost about one-and-six. (And you have to make an appointment, of course.)

It really is marvellous what waves a hairdresser's fingers can find in your hair—all natural, of course.

It'll probably look a bit formal just after the "setting," but will soon comb out most attractively. And once you know where the waves are to be found, by encouraging them yourself you will find they grow deeper and stronger.

But above all—in spite of hair washing, hair tonics, and hair settings—do remember that brushing is one of the finest hair-beautifiers yet discovered.

Even hairdressers, with all their magic, have to admit that!

## How Do You Hold Your Pen?

We all know there is character in handwriting. The way you hold your pen can also tell quite a lot about you.

### Diagram No. 1—

Do you hold your pen like this? With your forefinger crooked high, pressing heavily, rather near the nib? If so, you are probably a very hard-working young person. If you start a thing, you finish it. You are painstaking and reliable. But perhaps you worry too much over trifles, and sometimes miss fun by being over-cautious.

### Diagram No. 2—

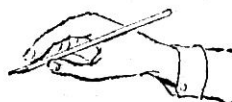
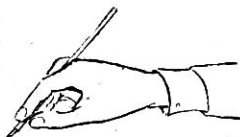
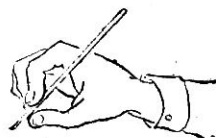
You love beautiful things if you hold your pen this way. Good pictures, good music, and beautiful scenery. You can make friends easily if you try, and are fond of animals. You must be careful, though, not to lose your friends by thinking that your opinions are always the only right ones. Above all, do not be afraid of criticism. Welcome it, and learn by it.

### Diagram No. 3—

This shows an artistic nature—one that is gentle and kind. Perhaps you are a bit of a dreamer, and not as much of a go-getter as you might be. But that is chiefly because you are always thinking of other people first. Don't rely too much on others, but strike out for yourself a little more. If you do this, you should succeed, and make many friends on the way.

### Diagram No. 4—

It is a happy-go-lucky hand that holds the pen this way. The owner likes work, sometimes; and games and good times, always! She is vivacious and generous, but inclined to be tactless. She must learn to concentrate if she means to do well, and think always before she speaks, otherwise she may "put her foot in it."



(Continued from page 11)

A LONELY little figure sat huddled on a box in the bicycle sheds at Cliff House School. Occasionally a tiny shiver struck the small frame. Once a broken whisper "Snowy!" sounded.

Dolores Essendon felt the world had ended.

She had fled from everybody, even Letty. Beside her own cycle she sat, her dark head bowed. Her eyes were dry, but they held almost inexpressible misery.

It was all over now. One more bad report, Miss Primrose had said. That report would soon be made—by Connie Jackson. Connie! Dolores stirred. Connie had done all this to her. Because of Connie she would never ride Snowy again. Because of Connie that dear, wonderful pony would not be hers. Miss Primrose had said so—

Connie! Dolores' chest began to heave. The whiteness went from her round cheeks. The flush of rebellion and anger came. It wasn't fair—it wasn't fair!

Abruptly Dolores jumped to her feet. She had made a great and momentous decision. With hands that trembled slightly she reached for her cycle, wheeled it out of the stand, and slipped up to the saddle.

A minute later Dolores cycled out through the gates of the school.

### The Wheeze Works, But—!



**T**AP-TAP! Miss Bullivant looked up from her desk, with a sigh. As the pile of papers before her indicated, she was very busy.

"Come in!" The door opened and Marjorie Hazeldene entered rather timidly.

"Please, Miss Bullivant—"

"Yes, Marjorie?"

"Please I've a complaint to make about Dolores Essendon."

Miss Bullivant raised her eyebrows.

"Dolores, Marjorie?" she asked in surprise. "I should hardly have thought—"

"Yes, Miss Bullivant," continued Marjorie meekly, "Dolores took one of my books to read without asking me first."

"She took—?" Miss Bullivant stared. "Do you mean to tell me, Marjorie," she demanded perplexedly, "that you are worrying me with a trivial complaint like that?"

Demurely Marjorie nodded. Miss Bullivant placed down her pen.

"Good gracious me!" she exclaimed. "Marjorie, I am surprised! That you, of all girls, should tell tales about a mite like Dolores over a borrowed book—well, well!" She spoke very warmly indeed. "Go—instantly!"

"Y—yes, Miss Bullivant," faltered Marjorie, and as meekly as ever opened the door and passed through.

But once outside, with the door closed behind her, she jumped into surprising action. Away down the passage she sped and round the bend, to where three girls—Babs, Clara, and Mabs—eagerly awaited her.

"How did it go, Marjie?" breathed Babs.

"Just right, I think," panted Marjorie, and could not help smiling slightly. "But quick! Connie will soon be here!"

"Right!" jerked Babs. "You next, Mabs!"

Her golden-haired chum nodded. Away she darted. Outside Miss Bulli-

vant's study she smoothed her frock, tapped, waited for the answering "Come in!" which was spoken rather testily, and entered.

Miss Bullivant put down her pen with a sigh.

"What is it, Mabel? I am rather busy, and—"

"I'm sorry, Miss Bullivant"—Mabs, the best actress in the Lower School, put on a fine expression of indignation—

"but I've a complaint to make against Dolores Essendon."

Miss Bullivant started.

"Dolores, Mabel! That is curious. But what is this complaint?"

"Well, Miss Bullivant," Mabs resumed, in angry tones, "I missed my comb in the cloak-room to-day. I couldn't find it anywhere. And then, looking round, I actually saw Dolores was using it. She'd taken"—Mabs faltered then at the expression dawning upon Miss Bullivant's face—"taken it, and—and was using it," she finished hurriedly. "I—"

"Mabel!"

Miss Bullivant had shot to her feet like a jack-in-the-box. She fixed Mabs with a gimlet-like stare.

"Mabel Lynn," she cried grimly, "I will not be bothered by such a frivolous complaint! If you consider the mere borrowing of a comb worthy of report, then make your complaint to Miss Gilbey. I am extremely busy. Please go!"

"Y—yes!" stuttered Mabs, and hurriedly retreated from the study.

Off at speed she went to rejoin her waiting chums.

"Phew!" she breathed. "It's getting hot, girls!"

Babs nodded.

"It's what we want. Ready, Clara, old thing?"

"But, Babs," protested the Tomboy, "let me be last?"

"Nothing doing, Clara. It's my wheeze, and I don't mind standing the racket. But hurry," Babs urged.

Clara waited no longer. With a nod she hurried up the passage to the mistress' study. They saw her knock and enter. Two seconds later they heard Miss Bullivant's voice raised in anger, and two seconds after that the Tomboy swiftly reappeared. She joined them, looking very flushed and flustered, but there was a grin on her lips.

"Golly!" she gasped. "I nearly copped it. I started to say Dolores had taken my brush when I was grooming a horse, and she nearly bit my head off!"

"Is she very wild?" asked Babs keenly.

"Seething!" Clara grinned. "Babs," she added anxiously, "can't we leave it like that? If you go in now you'll jolly well catch it!"

But Babs shook her head.

"We're doing this for Dolores, and we can't take any risks—"

She broke off as a whistle sounded from somewhere below. "Listen! That's Janet's whistle. Connie's coming. I'm off, girls!"

Babs vanished up the passage. Her heart was beating fast as she knocked on the door of Miss Bullivant's study, and it almost jumped into her throat as, instead of an answering "Come in!" the door was whisked open, and she found herself staring up into the mistress' flushed and angry face.

"Well, Barbara?"

Babs steeled herself. There was a quiet, deadly ominous note in the Bull's voice, and her breath was coming quickly. Babs gulped, and then, summoning all her courage:

"Oh, Mum-Miss Bullivant, I've a complaint to make about Dolores—"

She got no farther. Miss Bullivant's eyes simply blazed.

"So," she choked—"so, Barbara, you have the impudence—you—you—"

She gasped and panted, while Babs felt a shiver. "Very well," ground out the mistress furiously. "This, as I suspected, is a—joke, is it? In that case, three hundred lines, Barbara!" she simply shot out then. "Do you hear? Now, go, girl—go immediately! And if any one of you dares to continue this—this joke," she hissed, "she shall rue it! Go—go!"

Babs did not need telling twice. She fled, thankful perhaps that her punishment had not been worse. Bang! went Miss Bullivant's door behind her.

Gasp! Babs rejoined her chums. Before they could ask a question, however, quick steps sounded. Connie Jackson appeared. She scowled unpleasantly at them as she passed. Meekly they looked back at her.

On up to Miss Bullivant's study trod Connie.

"Now," breathed Babs.

"Oh, my giddy aunt!" gurgled Clara, almost hugging herself in glee.

"Listen, girls!" breathed Marjorie. Connie tapped and quickly entered.

Before she closed the door behind her they heard her start.

"Miss Bullivant, I have a complaint to make against Dolores Essendon." Followed a momentary, death-like silence, then Connie's voice, a little startled, continuing: "She took two lumps of sugar—"

The storm burst. There was a sound, almost like a screech, from Miss Bullivant, then a scuffle of quick movement. The study door burst violently open. Out came Connie, literally staggering, and following her shrilled Miss Bullivant's vibrant, raging accents.

"You—a prefect, Connie! You would dare! Go, girl! And one more syllable, a breath of the name Dolores, and I shall take you before Miss Primrose!"

The study door crashed to with a force the chums almost felt. And Connie—Connie just looked dazedly about her, such an extraordinary expression upon her face that Babs & Co. hurriedly fled lest they could contain no longer the mirth which bubbled within them.

Not till they were down in Big Hall did they pause. Then they let go. They rocked, they yelled, they shrieked. The tears streamed down their faces. They clung to each other for support. At last—

"Oh, pack it, please!" sobbed Babs weakly. "I can't bear any more!"

"Connie's face—!" howled Clara.

"Oh, Babs—Babs, what a wheeze!"

"Oh, oh!" panted Marjorie and Mabs, rocking.

No doubt about the success of Babs' plan. Dolores was saved!

"Come on, girls!" cried Babs, wiping her eyes. "Let's find Dolores!"

Still weak from laughing, but glowing now at the way Connie had been foiled, they trotted off. Babs led the way into the quadrangle, and almost the first thing they saw there was Miss Primrose's car, bowling in at the gates.

"Now, I wonder where—" began Clara, looking about her. She paused, stiffening, as Miss Primrose's car swept up, slowing. It stopped, and Miss Primrose alighted. She was looking extremely angry, and she led by the hand—"Dolores!" exclaimed Clara.

They stood and stared. Up the school steps marched the Head. White-faced, wretched-looking, Dolores trailed behind her. Such unhappiness was on her small face that Marjorie could not help leaping forward.



"Dolores—"

"Do not speak to Dolores, please, Marjorie," Miss Primrose snapped. "I am extremely annoyed with her!"

They blinked.

"But—but, Miss Primrose," stammered Babs in dismay. "What has she done?"

"Done, Barbara?" rumbled the Head. "She has disobeyed my strictest orders! I forbade her to visit the stables for one day. I was lenient in making it but that one day. And now—" She frowned down upon the mute kiddie. "I was visiting my cousin at Pillar Reins stables when I encountered Dolores just cycling in!"

"Oh, golly!" gasped Clara.

"From this moment, therefore," continued the Head angrily, "Dolores is definitely barred from visiting the stables or having anything to do with the horses whatsoever. Come, child!"

They moved on.

"If only Dolores had waited!" said Marjorie miserably.

### Well Done, Snowey!



THAT evening was one fraught with anxiety for Babs & Co. They had but one thought—to try to do something for heart-broken Dolores.

Dolores had been sent to bed.

Babs and Marjorie decided to see Miss Primrose, with the desperate hope of making her change her mind. But as the Head was out for the evening, that became a dead end.

What could they do now?

Babs and the chums racked their brains for an answer, but bed-time came without a solution. Sleep was not easy that night, and very early Babs awakened, to find Marjorie shaking her gently.

At once she knew that something was wrong, for Marjorie was fully dressed, and looking terribly agitated.

"Oh, Babs—quick!" she cried.

"Dolores—she's not in the dormitory. She's gone to the stables, I'm sure. Her riding clothes are missing!"

"The stables?" cried Babs, starting up. "Oh, good gracious, no! Why, if Primmy finds out it'll mean expulsion. We've got to get her back—before anyone discovers where she is. Rouse the others!"

In a very short time the chums, frantically dressing, were rushing away. All realised the need of swift action—the only thing that could save Dolores. Their hearts ached for her. Poor kiddie! They could imagine the night she had spent, thinking, thinking of Snowey. They could imagine her awakening, her desperate decision to have one last moment with the white pony which meant so much to her. No, they couldn't blame her; but they must get her back before anyone discovered her absence.

Thus they had resolved—but it was too late!

One girl had thought a move ahead of them. One girl, spiteful to the end, had guessed that they might visit Dolores in the early morning. That girl had been in the Second Form dormitory before them, had seen the empty bed, had seen, through the window, Dolores hurrying from the school grounds.

And now Connie Jackson was cycling along the road to Pillar Reins Riding Stables, hot on Dolores' trail.

"SNOWEY! OH, SNOWEY!"

A hot little face pressed against the pony's mane; the long,

white hairs were damped with tears. Small arms clutched almost desperately about his neck.

"Snowey, they—they're taking you from me."

The pony's ears were pricked, big eyes alert. Despite the halter rope, his head came down, gently to nuzzle tiny, quivering shoulders. Snowey blew softly through flaring nostrils, shifting restlessly.

And Dolores Essendon cried her heart out.

She had had to come. After that terrible, despairing night, to be with Snowey once more—for the last time—had been the only thing left for her. So Dolores had come. The stables were empty. Mr. Renfrew had not yet arrived, and Cripps must be down in the fields. But of this Dolores did not know—she did not care.

She was blind and deaf to everything save Snowey and the aching misery in her heart, because she would now never, never see him again.

"If—if you could speak, you know," she gulped, raising her wet face. Little hands were placed on each side of the pony's mouth, misty eyes gazed up longingly. "You—you could tell them, Snowey, couldn't you, th—that we are most suited?"

Again Snowey blew softly. Perhaps he understood a little.

"Snowey, look—some sugar from me!" With trembling hands Dolores fumbled in her jodphur pocket. Two knobs of sugar—the fateful knobs—were there. She held them out on her palm—a palm that quivered so much in her grief that they rolled from it to the stall floor. Blindly she groped for them, could not find them. "They've gone, Snowey!" she choked.

Snowey pawed the ground, jerked his head. His halter was a fraction loose. Dolores saw, and suddenly she was straining on tiptoe, fumbling with it, drawing it from his head. She knew then what she would do—what she must do. One last ride on Snowey!

The halter came free. Dolores stumbled to the stall's opening. "Snowey!" she breathed. "Please come—"

The pony turned and walked from the stall. Dolores' little hand tugged at his mane. But Snowey had stopped. Snowey was looking towards the door of the stables. Then Dolores looked. Through wet lashes she saw a blurred figure lounging in the entrance, saw a wreath of smoke curling up lazily. She rubbed her eyes clear.

"So I've caught you, Dolores!"

And Connie Jackson straightened, with a slow, cruel smile. She flicked her cigarette away. Many seconds she had been there, smoking, waiting, anticipating this second.

Now she moved down the stables.

"Well, Dolores?"

Dolores stared back, one hand still entwined in Snowey's mane. And somehow in that moment her fear of Connie evaporated.

"Go away," she said dully.

Connie came nearer.

"Oh, no, Dolores!" she sneered. "It's you who must go away—away from the stables and that horse. Get out, Dolores—get out! You'll never see that pony again!"

"No—no! Let me, Connie—Oh, please! Just a little ride—please!"

Such pleading, such anguish in her childish treble then that Connie hesitated. Perhaps she saw more clearly for a second exactly what Snowey meant to Dolores; perhaps there came a twinge of remorse; perhaps pity might have grown—who knows? But it never bore fruit.

For suddenly Dolores screamed; suddenly there was a roar, and a great sheet of flame flashed up at the entrance of the stables! Bales of hay and straw which had been placed just inside were blazing madly!

Connie whirled and went white. Her cigarette! She had tossed it carelessly away—it had fallen on to those bales.

"Oh!" she gasped, and made a dash.

But the entrance was barred by a solid sheet of flame, flames which were licking now at the woodwork, and she was beaten back.

"Connie!" screamed Dolores.

Connie panted. There was but one exit from the stables, and nothing could pass alive through that. Water? There was none here. And then—Thud-thud! came a pounding from the stalls, the pounding of hoofs. The horses had smelt the smoke. Shrill whinnies of fear then!

Trembling, wide-eyed, Connie retreated to where Dolores stood in stricken fear beside Snowey. Snowey knew fear, too, but oddly enough he made no move away from Dolores.

Crash—crash! The animals were rearing and plunging, fear-crazed, fighting to free their heads. And suddenly the big mare's halter went, and she came plunging backwards from her stall.

Connie screamed. Madly she lashed out with her fist. It struck the terrified animal on the hindquarters, and instinctively the mare kicked. Steel hoofs missed Connie, but she was sent reeling to the stone floor. Her head hit the side of the stall.

In horror Dolores saw the prefect slump limply. She darted from Snowey's side.

"Connie—Connie!" she screamed.

"Get up!"

Connie lay unconscious.

Wildly Dolores stared down at her, choking as thick smoke wretched about them. The mare was plunging in terror near the blazing doorway. Wood was crackling now. The heat was increasing, the noise of the kicking, plunging horses almost deafening. The mare jumped away from the doorway, snorting. Another halter snapped—a big grey whirled from its stall.

Dolores was down on one knee. Sobbing, her hands clutching at Connie's collar, she tugged desperately, striving to get the limp, unconscious girl into Snowey's empty stall. Those fear-crazed horses were clattering wildly down towards her, dense smoke wreathing them.

Choking, Dolores tugged. And just above her stood Snowey, prancing restlessly. An inch—two—her head swam. Connie's face was suddenly a blur and with the flames' roar and that awful pounding in her ears, Dolores collapsed across the prefect.

IT WAS Barbara Redfern who saw the smoke first, and that was at the very moment that she and the chums, cycling swiftly up to the stables, encountered Cripps, the groom, about to enter with a string of horses. "Have you seen Dolores, Mr. Cripps?" was the question which hovered on Babs' lips.

It was never uttered. The haze of smoke drifting across the stable yard made her cry in alarm.

"Look—look!" she screamed. "The little stables—on fire!"

They all saw, they all whitened. With a tense exclamation: "The

horses!" Cripps jerked his lead-ropes round the gatepost, whipped it into a knot, and rushed.

Babs & Co. almost hurled themselves off their bicycles.

They rushed into the yard. Already Cripps had grabbed for a pitchfork. White-faced, he yelled at them:

"The strongest of you get pitchforks! The rest of you fill buckets of water! My stars, listen to those horses! Quick—quick! We've got to get them out before they go crazy and kick each other to pieces!"

And then Babs and Clara and Janet were at his side, pitchforks in their hands.

"Dolores—" gulped Babs. "I—I believe she's in there!"

He flashed her a horrified stare. "Dolores! In there—quick, then!" he roared. "Follow me!"

He dashed at the blazing doorway. The woodwork was alight, but the fire had not yet gained a very firm hold. It was the great flaming bales of hay and straw which was the danger.

His head averted, Cripps lunged out with his pitchfork. He impaled a roaring mass of straw and whisked it out. In a flash the chums played their part. Panting and choking, they used their pitchforks to drag the flaming mass clear from the stable.

His hair singeing under the terrific heat, Cripps lunged at another bale. Mightily he wrenched it out.

"You girls with the water!" he gasped. "Fling it on the woodwork!"

Up dashed Marjorie, Mabs, and Bessie with buckets filled from the trough. The fire hissed and roared again as they hurled the water.

"More, girls!" jerked Mabs. "Oh, quickly!"

Desperately, feverishly, the work went on. Most of the flaming bales were clear and the flames on the woodwork itself seemed to be abating, when a car drew into the yard. Out leapt Mr. Renfrew. Grim-faced, without a word, he hurled himself into the fray.

At last the doorway was nearly clear. Cripps hurled down his pitchfork and dived through the smoke. Hot on his heels, black-faced, choking, went Babs and Clara—and then Marjorie.

Inside it was clearer, and only by a fraction of a second were they able to leap aside as a snorting grey plunged madly past them, followed by the big mare.

"The only ones free!" choked Cripps. "Thank goodness! But where—"

They saw then, and despite the crackle of flames behind them, the plunging of the horses in the stalls, they all stopped dead for a second.

On the floor sprawled Connie, actually stirring at that moment. By her side lay Dolores, her little hands still firmly clenched on the prefect's collar. And above them both stood Snowey. From the pony's flanks blood dripped. There were cuts there—deep cuts.

"My stars!" breathed Cripps, in wonder. "Snowey—that pony protected them both from those crazy horses. Did—did it for Dolores!"

But Babs and Marjorie were rushing forward. Their amazement at seeing Connie there was forgotten in their fear for the kiddie. As they came, Snowey moved aside, almost conscious, it seemed, that his work was done.

"Quick!" choked Marjorie. "Get Dolores out!"

She herself gathered the limp little form up, while Babs, Clara, and Cripps lifted Connie. The prefect was mumbling, obviously on the point of recovery.

At the doorway the flames, attacked by the rest of the chums and Mr. Renfrew, were sizzling out. The bales flared without damage in the yard. Mr. Renfrew entered. He hurried to Marjorie and helped her with her burden.

"Into my office!" he jerked. "Janet, phone for a doctor!"

Out they went, and Snowey walked behind.

Babs, Clara, and Cripps brought Connie out into the yard. They were barely cleared of the stable doorway when the prefect opened her eyes.

"Where—what—" she gasped, as they carefully eased her down on to the mounting block. Memory flooded back. Her eyes filled with horror.

"Are you all right?" jerked Cripps. She nodded dazedly.

"I—I banged my head. I'm all right now. But—but—" She struggled up, staring. "Dolores! Is—"

Babs looked at her strangely. A cigarette-case was lying on the ground. It had dropped from Connie's jacket. Perhaps Babs could guess how the fire had started. She knew Connie's little habits—and Babs more than guessed why Connie had been in the stables.

"We got Dolores out, Connie," she said quietly. "We found her still holding your collar. She had been trying to drag you to safety."

Connie stared at her. Her hand passed over her eyes.

"Dolores," she muttered. "Dolores was—was— But the horses, Barbara. They were getting free—going mad!"

"You can thank Dolores again—and Snowey," cut in Cripps gruffly. "For love of that kiddie, Snowey stood over her when the horses started kicking. Snowey took the kicks—an' that saved you, too!"

Connie slowly sat back.

"Dolores must have been overcome by the fumes," continued Babs quietly. "They've sent for a doctor. I—I hope she's all right—"

"Doctor, Barbara?" Connie repeated the words dully. She rose. "A doctor?"

At that moment another car drew into the yard.

"In there, Dr. Hibbs!" Cripps pointed to the office. "A—a kiddie!"

The doctor swiftly alighted. He sped into the office, and the chums anxiously followed. Behind them Connie walked slowly. She moved like a girl sleep-walking.

Dragging steps took her through the doorway. She stared. The chums, Mr. Renfrew, and Cripps were standing a little back from a big chair. The doctor knelt beside it.

Dolores lay there, still, white.

Everybody seemed to be holding their breath—waiting. The doctor suddenly looked up. He nodded his head.

And Dolores' eyes fluttered. They were wide.

"Snowey?" she whispered.

Perhaps each waited for the other to reply, so for a moment nothing was said, and in that moment an amazing thing happened. Connie Jackson fell to her knees beside the chair. She buried her face against Dolores' chest and burst into a storm of tears.

Dolores' hands came up wonderingly. They rested on Connie's heaving shoulders.

As quickly as she had dropped, the prefect leapt upright. Without a word she pushed through them, her face set and determined. Out from the office

she went, straight to her bicycle, mounting, and racing away.

Babs looked at Marjorie wonderingly. Marjorie nodded.

"I—I think, Babs," she said softly, her eyes shining, "everything's going to be all right!"

TWENTY MINUTES later Miss Primrose arrived at the stables. By then Dolores was sitting up. Snowey was with her, for Mr. Renfrew himself had brought the pony into the office, while Cripps swiftly attended to his cuts.

And the chums sat. The chums wondered.

Miss Primrose entered swiftly. She went straight to Dolores and gathered her into her arms.

"My child—my dear child—" She looked up at the chums, at her cousin. "Connie has told me everything," she stated quietly. "She—"

Dolores gently touched her arm. "Please, Miss Primrose," she whispered.

"You're—you're not going to hurt her? 'Cos I did wrong things, too, you know," she added quietly. "I dis'beyed 'cos of Snowey, an'—"

Miss Primrose gently laid her fingers on the kiddie's mouth. Her grey eyes were moist.

"Connie has confessed everything," she said softly. "It is all ended. I—I understand now, my child—perfectly. And—and this is Snowey?"

Dolores drew the pony's head down. She nodded shyly.

"Snowey, Miss Primrose," she said proudly. "And Miss Primrose, please! You see, Snowey and me—you see— Her whole heart was in her eyes then, pleading. "If—if you—"

Miss Primrose smiled mistily.

"Dolores, dear, if any word of mine can persuade your father to buy Snowey for you, you may be sure I will give it!"

The chums cheered then. They had to! And that cheer swelled as Mr. Renfrew gruffly put in:

"They won't buy Snowey, anyway. I'm giving him to Dolores!"

But as it turned out, Miss Primrose's persuasion was not necessary. Even an account of the episode at the stables—to which Dolores' parents listened with pride—was not necessary.

For on the day of the gymkhana Dolores and Snowey spoke for themselves. A wonderful day that, with Clara and Janet taking prizes in the trotting race and obstacle race respectively.

But the biggest moment was when the Class Under Twelve was announced, when Dolores rode out on Snowey.

Practically the whole of Cliff House had gathered. All Cliff House knew the story of Dolores and Snowey. A cheer began as Dolores trotted, cantered, and galloped Snowey round the ring, a cheer which swelled into thunderous applause, and kept on!

Dolores rode well that day, her chin up, her little face flushed, and under her Snowey moved daintily, surely, and understandingly.

And perhaps this is the best moment to leave Dolores and Snowey—as they pause after the ride, as the whole crowd acclaims them, as Mr. and Mrs. Essendon move proudly forward, with Babs & Co. behind, and Babs saying:

"I—I don't know whether to cry or cheer!" And Marjorie happily answering: "I think I'm doing both, Babs."

END OF THIS WEEK'S 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.

But Veronica discovers that Brenda has a mysterious boy friend. She and a friend of her own, a certain Mr. Jones, for their own reasons, set out to thwart Brenda and Ronald.

One day, when Veronica and Mr. Jones are talking together in the grounds of Fernbank, little Dickie overhears their conversation. He hears Veronica refer to Brenda as a "menace." Intrigued by the word, Dickie runs and asks Brenda what it means. Brenda is staggered by the news Dickie brings.

(Now read on.)

Benson, Brenda could have understood it. But for the young mistress of the house, heiress to a considerable legacy in a few days' time, to state that her own companion, so recently a humble orphanage girl, was a menace to her—why, it seemed just too fantastic for words!

And yet—

With furrowed brows, Brenda stared across the sunlit garden in the direction where Dickie had seen Veronica and her secret friend.

And yet, it wasn't any more fantastic than the startling interest shown by Veronica and her friend in the efforts she and Ronald were making on behalf of her future happiness.

"Please, Aunty Brenda, you isn't angry with me?" Dickie asked, breaking into her thoughts.

Dickie nodded solemnly, and happily trotted off. Once alone, Brenda swiftly turned. She had the idea of making her way through the shrubbery, getting within carshot of Veronica and the man, and trying to learn something more.

But next second she saw that there would be no chance. For Veronica suddenly appeared, making towards the house. She did not see Brenda as she hurried indoors.

Brenda bit her lip. Oh, how she wondered what it all meant! If only Ronald would tell her what he knew! But Ronald—for her own sake, he said—wouldn't. What part were Veronica and the strange man playing? Why should they be concerned about her—Brenda?

She gave it up. Veronica herself, when she saw her next, gave her no clue. Veronica was very affable. But Brenda knew that meant nothing; she knew her young mistress was a hypocrite.

In the evening, however, when she had put little Dickie to bed, and gone along to her own room, Brenda's thoughts left Veronica. They turned to Ronald.

Suspense and excitement seethed up within her. The time was drawing near for her to slip out of the house and meet Ronald, so that they could search the old mill for that picture-book—once one of Veronica's own childish treasures—which, according to Ronald, could clear up the whole mystery and ensure lasting happiness for her.

The evening seemed to drag. In the darkness of her room Brenda waited, listening at the door. Presently Mrs. Scholes retired; five minutes later her husband came up; almost immediately afterwards Veronica went into her room, farther down the passage.

In growing suspense, Brenda went on waiting. Ten—twenty—thirty minutes she suffered to pass, and then decided to make sure that the coast was clear.

Mr. and Mrs. Scholes were invariably soon asleep, but Veronica was the problem, so along to that girl's room Brenda crept. Cautiously she opened

**TRAPPED IN THE OLD MILL.**

**And while she and Ronald are prisoners there, Brenda learns the amazing truth about herself.**

**More Baffling Still!**

**"A**ND—and you isn't going to steal V'ron'ca's motie-car, or— or anything, Aunty Brenda?" asked Dickie Scholes.

Brenda slowly shook her head as she knelt beside him on the lawn.

"Of course not, dear," she said, in rather a far-away voice.

"Then why did she call you men-men—you-know-what?" Dickie went on, in childish wonderment.

"Oh, I expect she was just—just joking, Dickie!" Brenda said, and gave him a little hug.

But she knew in her heart that what Veronica had just said to her mysterious friend was anything but a joke, for her strange young mistress had referred to her as "a menace"!

No wonder. Brenda felt utterly amazed at that moment. No wonder she thrilled to the instinctive knowledge that this was a new aspect of the extraordinary puzzle related to her early life in which she had become involved ever since her arrival at Fernbank!

If Veronica had admitted that she was a menace to Brenda and Ronald

Brenda looked down at his pleading little face, and then, laughing, caught him up in her arms.

"Silly darling!" she soothed him. "Of course Aunty Brenda isn't angry with you. Why should she be?"

"Cos—cos of what I've told you 'bout you being a men—you-know-what," Dickie gulped. "You looked awfu' mad."

"Oh, I was only thinking, that's all!" Brenda said.

"Does I look as mad as mad when I've thinking?" Dickie wanted to know. "Look, Aunty Brenda—thoughts!"

He beetled his brows, puffed out his cheeks, pursed his lips, and generally pulled such an atrocious grimace that Brenda roared with laughter.

"Oh, no, Dickie!" she chuckled. "You look—awfully clever. But trot along now, will you, dear? I—I've got something to do."

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When they were approaching the doorway of the mill Ronald looked at her inquiringly.

"Bring a torch, Brenda? Well, never mind. I've brought two. Here you are!"

He slipped a large torch into her hand, and then, flashing on another, stepped into the gloomy interior of the ancient building.

Keenly Brenda gazed about her, using her torch, too.

The interior of the old mill was a mixture of strange contrasts, of pale moonlight, filtering through cracks and broken windows, and pitch-black shadow, and of mingled romance and desolation.

A jumble of rubbish littered the floor—boxes, tins, pieces of broken wood-work from the rickety structure itself, and the abandoned refuse of campers and picnickers.

Against one wall, lying lengthwise from the floor, rested a long wooden ladder, used for mounting to the upper story through a trapdoor, now closed.

"Well, where do we begin?" Brenda asked, in a low, excited voice. "Upstairs or down?"

"Both," was Ronald's swift reply. He strode over to the ladder, and, hoisting it on to his shoulder, marched with it to a spot beneath the trapdoor. "I'll take the upstairs," he announced. "You search down here."

"All right," Brenda agreed. Ronald, swiftly mounting the ladder, thrust up the trapdoor with his shoulders, and, almost before it had clattered back on to the floor above in a perfect smother of dust, went clambering through.

A little wave of her hand Brenda gave him, and then, veins tingling, she looked about her, flashing her torch in all directions.

Where to begin her search? That was the problem.

Now, she tried to reason things out, where would a child hide something? What sort of place would attract a youngster? Take Dickie, for instance. Where would he have concealed a book?

The collection of junk strewn over the floor she dismissed, for the moment. Most of it had only too obviously been deposited there long after the concealment of the book.

Slowly moving about, while sounds from above told her that Ronald had already set to work on his own account, she gave a keen study to everything of a permanent nature in the dusty, cobwebby place.

It was the floor which finally held her attention. In several places the boards were not covered by refuse, and she had already noticed that more than one was broken or loose.

Could the book be there, hidden beneath one of them? What more likely place to appeal to a child?

Dropping on to her knees beside the nearest board, she took hold of one end and, to the accompaniment of a rather startling creak, lifted it up. Her torch blazed into the cavity underneath. Empty, save for dust and grime, and thick, matted cobwebs.

But undismayed, she tried another, one broken in several places. Again only dirt and cobwebs.

Covered with dust herself now, her back aching, but unquenchable hope and determination beating in her heart, Brenda knelt there, to recover her breath and rest her arms.

"Hallo!" came Ronald's voice from the trapdoor, "No slacking! Getting hot?"

"I think so," Brenda said, twisting round to look up at him. "Under the

the door, and then, in a guarded voice, low enough not to disturb Veronica if she were asleep, but loud enough for her to hear if she were awake, Brenda said:

"Veronica!"  
No reply. Brenda tried again, heart throbbing:

"Veronica! I'm awfully sorry to bother you, but could I borrow your aspirin?"

Again no reply. Eyes gleaming, Brenda gently closed the door, slipped back to her own room, and, locking the door there, hastily put on hat and coat and let herself over the veranda to the garden.

An instant later, thrilling with excitement, congratulating herself on her good fortune, she was streaking through the moonlit garden.

### The Searchers Discovered!

"RONALD!"  
"Brenda! Oh, good girl!" Ronald Benson's face crinkled into a delighted smile as he caught her hand. "You made it all right!"

Brenda chuckled.  
"Had to wait until everybody was snoring, of course," she said, "but it was quite easy after that. And you— you weren't trailed by that man?"

"Not this time, old thing. I was a wee bit too canny—hopped out by the back way of my house. I expect that bird's still watching the front."

At the moment they stood close to one side of the old, tumbledown shack, almost within the very shadow of the mill, which, surmounting a hill only a hundred yards or so away, seemed to be beckoning them with its one outflung sail.

Impelled by the same urge, they started towards it over the uneven field, talking excitedly all the while.

It was Brenda who opened the conversation on more serious lines by referring to Veronica's description of her.

Ronald started, then whistled softly. "By jingo!" he exclaimed, frowning. "I wonder if they know—"

He broke off then, and when Brenda asked him what he meant, shook his head.

"Oh, just—just something, that's all," he said. "You'll understand soon. If we find that book you'll

understand to-night. And, Brenda," he went on, a resolute ring in his voice, "we've got to find that book. If those two are half as suspicious as I fancy they are we're skating on mighty thin ice. So Veronica knows you're a menace, does she?" he mused, half to himself, and a troubled frown marred his forehead.

Almost beseechingly, Brenda looked at him.

"But Ronald, how can I be a menace to her?" she asked.

"Listen, old thing!" he said quietly. "All I can say without giving the whole game away is that you're a menace to Veronica because you're helping me!"

"And you are a menace to her?"

Brenda said, eyeing him intently.

"Yes," was Ronald's surprising reply.

"Oh!" Brenda looked ahead, up the slope, and so to the old mill. Frowningly she stared at it. The more Ronald said, the more her perplexity increased. "And you won't say what 'the game' is, Ronald?"

Ronald halted in his tracks, took hold of her arm, and regarded her with mingled sympathy and admiration.

"You've certainly got some patience, Brenda," he declared. "A jolly sight more than I have. I can't—or, rather, I daren't, for your own sake—tell you the whole story before I've got absolute proof that can convince everybody who wants convincing. That proof, Brenda, is there—I hope!"

He pointed to the mill.

"The story-book," Brenda murmured, looking at the mill and nodding.

"The story-book, Brenda. To-night I've got a hunch we're going to find it. If we do, I give you my solemn word I'll tell you everything I know. On one condition," he added, lapsing into less serious vein.

"And that?" Brenda prompted, holding her breath.

"That you won't throw a faint, or do anything equally girlish," said Ronald, a twinkle in his eyes.

"I'm more likely to throw something at your head!" Brenda retorted.

"O.K. I'm good at dodging things. But—come on! Beat you to it!"

And, as Ronald broke into a sprint Brenda tore after him, filled with the most delicious sense of anticipation she had ever known, spurred on by the feeling that she stood on the threshold of a sensational discovery!



boards is just the place a kid would hide a story-book."

"I believe you've hit it, Brenda! It's not up here. Look out! I'm coming down!"

And Ronald did come down, sliding from top to bottom of the ladder like a freeman, legs outstretched on either side. A neat landing he made; then, brushing the dust from his hands, strode towards one of the loose boards, kicking a box out of his way as he went.

"Back to work, like a couple of galley-slaves!" he cried. "We're not leaving here until we've found it!"

**B**UT IF Brenda and Ronald could have seen outside the old mill at that moment they would not have been so cheerful.

Two people were approaching it; the very last persons they would want to encounter; the persons who, more than any others, stood in the way of their hopes and plans.

Veronica and Mr. Jones! Determined-looking, stealthy, alert, the two schemers stole towards the mill. For they had seen a light; they had suspected what it meant.

"Ssssh!" Mr. Jones hissed. "Listen! They're talking. Thank goodness you didn't let Brenda know you were awake when she looked into your room! Thank goodness you suspected she was up to something! But listen!"

From inside the mill came Brenda's voice—thrilled, hopeful.

"Just the place a kid would hide a story-book—"

The boy's voice replied, but the two listeners paid no heed to it. Mr. Jones, frankly puzzled, was muttering:

"A story-book—a kid's story-book?" But Veronica was white with wild alarm.

"A story-book! Oh goodness! I believe they've found out! They know about me! We're done for!"

Mr. Jones started. He, too, looked horrified, but he recovered himself, his eyes narrowing.

"My girl, I believe you're right," he muttered. "I know what's in your mind. Now, look here," he went on tensely, "those two must be scotched. The boy you can safely leave to me; and as for the girl—well—"

He stepped away from the door, gesturing Veronica to stand well back. Puzzled, she moved as directed and—

It was the slight scraping of Veronica's foot against a stone that shattered the silence which had now fallen between Brenda and Ronald, startled them both inside the mill.

"Ronald, what was that?" Brenda looked up, a broken board in her hands. "Did you hear something outside?"

Ronald had. With a warning gesture, he straightened up, and on tiptoe stole towards the entrance; but before he could reach it an even more startling thing happened.

The great door clanged shut, came the sound of the wooden bar dropping into place, and then—silence!

With a bound Ronald reached the door. Furiously he charged it again and again, but it was no use. Panting, dismayed, he turned, while Brenda stared at him in consternation.

They were trapped!

**Ronald Explains!**

**R**ONALD. Brenda breathed shakily, "who could it have been? You don't think—"

There was an unspoken answer in her eyes to that question;

and Ronald, grim-jawed, nodded as he thrust himself away from the door.

"If you mean that sneaking man Veronica's going about with—yes! He's done this!" Ronald spoke bitterly, fiercely. "And that means," he added, a troubled frown on his brow, "he's probably guessed what we're doing here."

He picked up his torch from where he had left it propped up by a broken board and flashed it about the walls.

"We've got to get out, Brenda! We might be cooped-up here for days, for all the chance there is of anyone coming near. If only those holes were lower!" he muttered, staring at some gaping rents in the wall, through which the moonlight was faintly streaming.

"Get out?" Brenda said, and her heart went cold. "Oh, Ronald, we must! If the Scholes know I've been out of Fernbank there'll be an awful row. I haven't lived down that other trouble yet. It'd mean the sack this time. Do you think," she added anxiously—"do you think Veronica was with him?"

Ronald looked at her sharply. "Veronica? Gosh, I'd almost forgotten her! Soon see!" he rapped, and, momentarily dismissing his quest for a way of escape, he started to scramble up the ladder.

Before he was half-way to the trap-door Brenda began following, and when he darted across the apartment above to one of the windows she was only just behind him.

In the moonlight they had a clear view of a great expanse of moonlit countryside. Two figures, hurrying away from the mill caught their eyes at once, a man and a girl. The man was Mr. Jones; the girl—

"Veronica!" Brenda breathed. She watched with fascinated horror the swift departure of the girl who could, by a few words to her aunt or uncle, end her days at Fernbank—ruin everything she and Ronald were striving to achieve!

And that was clearly what Veronica meant to do. That was why she and Ronald had been imprisoned here!

In dismay she turned; she looked at Ronald. And then she started at the extraordinary expression on his face.

"Why, Ronald, what's the matter? Why are you looking at me like that?" she cried.

"Brenda," he said in a low, odd voice—"Brenda, I'm going to tell you everything. I meant to hold out until we'd got that book, but after this—well, I guess I haven't the heart. The reason I want that book is that I'm almost certain it will prove that that girl there"—and he flung an arm through the glassless window—"is no more Veronica Scholes than I am!"

Brenda caught in her breath; her eyes widened, and for a moment she stood like one transfixed.

"Not—not Veronica!" she burst out. "Why—why— Oh goodness! Ronald, she—she—"

Helplessly she broke off, too staggered and incredulous to continue, for her mind seemed to be in a whirl. Prepared she had naturally been for some sensational revelation to-night, but this—this was fantastic, unbelievable.

"You—you're not joking, Ronald? You really mean that the girl everyone knows as Veronica is just a—just a sham?"

"Yes." "An impostor, pretending to be the real Veronica?"

"Just that." Brenda gave an unsteady little laugh. "I—I can hardly credit it, Ronald. It's so amazing. Veronica—an impostor," she slowly mused, and frowningly shook her head.

But there could be no doubting Ronald's sincerity, his conviction. As she saw the grim, resolute set of his face she knew that, staggering though it undoubtedly was, his statement was true.

The girl she knew as Veronica, whom she served as companion, whom everyone in the district, including Mr. and Mrs. Scholes—why, and little Dickie, too, her supposed brother—believed to be Veronica, was playing an audacious masquerade. No wonder Veronica had acted so queerly, and been so suspicious of her and Ronald!

Still amazed, but convinced by now, Brenda raised inquiring brows.

"Then that man she's always with, Ronald—I suppose he's her father?"



"RONALD—come back!" cried Brenda in fear. But her friend was determined to take the desperate chance which might mean freedom for them both.

"Oh, yes! No doubt about that."  
 "But—Oh, I don't know!" Brenda said, with a helpless little shrug. "It's all so bewildering. What's their idea? Why should Veronica—I mean, that girl who's pretending to be Veronica—do such an amazing thing, run such a risk, deceive everybody—"  
 "That's about the only thing that's got me beat," Ronald admitted, frowning.

"The only thing?" Brenda caught him up quietly. "Why, do you know where the real Veronica is? Does she know what's happening?"

"Oh, yes—now!" Ronald said, in such a peculiar tone that Brenda eyed him sharply. "But I'd better explain further. I told you, you know," he added, almost regretfully, "that I didn't want to tell you everything until we'd got that book, but after what's happened to-night—our being shut up here, in danger of losing the whole game—perhaps it's only fair to you that I should."

"Fair to me?" Brenda exclaimed.

"Goodness, I don't see—"

"You soon will, Brenda. It's like this. The real Veronica was lost in an accident years ago. She was quite a kid then, and was never heard of again until about three years ago, when the person now posing as Veronica suddenly turned up with apparent proof of her identity."

"Then it wasn't the impostor who hid that book, after all?"

"Oh, no!" Ronald shook his head, and now there was an excited ring in his voice. "And that's just what I'm banking on to bowl her out. The genuine Veronica hid it. You know what kids' books are like, don't you—smothered with finger-marks?"

"Yes. Well—"

"Well, it only needs one finger-mark—one finger-print—of the real girl to be on that book, and by producing both the book and her, I can convince everyone who she is. No two finger-prints have ever been found alike, you know. The only difference in this case will be that those on the book will be smaller, naturally, as Veronica's grown up since then."

Brenda nodded, beginning to understand at last—but only to understand a few of the many baffling mysteries of the affair. Not yet could she determine where she fitted into all this. And another thing—

"You say you know where Veronica is, Ronald? Well, where is she? In Featheridge? Oh, but she wouldn't be so near as that, surely?"  
 "She's even nearer, Brenda," Ronald said.

His hand settled over her arm then, and a look came into his eyes that made Brenda's heart beat queerly.

"Who is she, Ronald?" she said.  
 "We—we know her. I know we do. I can tell by the way you're looking. Who is she?"

Back came the answer, very softly:

"You, Brenda—you!"

And Ronald's grip became tighter than ever, as if to steady her.

Brenda felt she needed steady. Her legs were weak and trembly; her head swam. She shook herself. Oh, she was dreaming—dreaming! She must be!

"Me?" she said, in a far-away voice.  
 "Oh, don't be silly, Ronald! You're teasing—"

But she knew he wasn't even before he gave emphatic denial.

She relaxed against the wall, breathing heavily, while her mind became a riot of fleeting thoughts.

She thought of Fernbank, all its wealth and luxury. Her home—hers, hers! She thought of Mr. and Mrs. Scholes, her very own uncle and aunt. And—why, goodness—dear, adorable little Dickie! Her brother—she his sister! And those people in Canada—her parents. Why, she couldn't even recall what they were like.

What a shock for them when they knew the truth! What a shock for everyone; for the whole district!

"Oh, Ronald!" she breathed, her face radiant. "It's all so wonderful! I'm afraid I'll wake up and find it gone! How—how did you find out?"

"Well, you see, I'm an old playmate of—of yours, Brenda." And Ronald grinned. "Veronica gave herself away once or twice without realising it. In fact, I was the only one who would have realised it. Then I heard you were coming, that you'd been taken in by the orphanage after being found abandoned. It was a crazy idea, I know, to imagine for one moment that you could be the real Veronica, but I sort of had a hunch. And I knew I was right the moment I saw you!"

"When you shoved that china ornament in my face?" Brenda said, with a smile.

Ronald nodded. Yes, he agreed, when he had done that. The china ornament had been one of Brenda's own toys, and when she admitted that it brought back vague memories, Ronald's suspicions were confirmed. She must be Veronica. Everything else, the visit to the photographer's and to the dancing academy, had been for the purpose of trying to get on the track of definite proof, and at the latter establishment Ronald had met with success.

"Miss Allen told me the story of how you hid one of your books here and then forgot where it was. I knew then it was the last, vital link; the one thing I needed to clear everything up."

"Ronald," Brenda said anxiously, "we must find it! There's nothing else that can prove who I am, is there?"

Oh, we must get hold of it. If it was destroyed, or never found—"

"I know," Ronald agreed seriously. "But there's something even more urgent at the moment—getting out of here! We can hunt for the book another time—to-morrow, or later to-night, I can do it alone. But you've simply got to fly back to Fernbank! Remember, until I find this definite proof, Veronica still holds the whip-hand."

"Oh!" Brenda cried, and her heart went cold. "Oh, golly, Ronald, yes! I'm still in disgrace. If they find out about to-night it's almost sure to mean the sack. Veronica'll be half-way back by now. She'll make all the trouble she can, naturally, just to get rid of me—"

In gathering alarm, she broke off. Dismissal would mean disaster. She'd be packed back to the orphanage; no longer be able to help Ronald. He would have to engage the two plotters alone.

"Oh, there must be some way of escape, Ronald!" she burst out, looking wildly about her.

Ronald had already been considering that point, for he beckoned her over to the one remaining sail of the windmill which jutted out immediately above the window and almost within reach.

"There is a way!" he agreed.

"That!"

"No, no! Oh, you mustn't! Ronald, come back!" Brenda cried, as he hoisted himself on to the window-ledge, and, drawing up to his full height, ran keen, resolute eyes over the old sail.

She would have tried to drag him back, but was afraid she might send him crashing to the ground, thirty feet below. And as her frantic pleas only met with a shake of the head, she had to stand there, helpless, torn with anxiety, while he prepared to jump and catch at the sail.

"Think I've got the measure of it now," he said at last. "Cheer up, old thing!" he grinned round at her. "It's not a big jump. You see, I'll have the door open downwards in a brace of jiffies. See you later!"

He sprang outward and upwards, clutching with both hands. Brenda held her breath; wanted to close her eyes, but could not; and then, to her trembling relief, saw him catch the side of the sail, and, hanging on, swing to and fro.

Swiftly controlling himself, he went hand-over-hand towards the end of the sail. His idea was perfectly clear. He was relying on his weight to send the sail slowly sweeping downwards until he reached a spot where he could safely drop to the ground.

As Brenda watched, the sail began to move. It was going downward, taking Ronald towards the ground.

Brenda clasped her hands. And then, in sheer horror, she clutched at the window.

It wasn't the whole sail which was moving; it was the end portion to which Ronald was clinging. It was snapping off! She could see pieces breaking away.

Her voice tore from her lips in a frenzied scream:

"Ronald—Ronald! It's breaking off!"

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# KIT OF RED RANCH



## The Wanted Man!

**G**EE, isn't this mountain air dandy, Redwing? It's like wine. It tonics you up just to take it in!"

And Kit Hartley, breathing in deeply the pine-laden air of the High Blue Mountains, dropped the reins over her horse's neck.

Redwing, her Redskin friend, rode bare-backed behind, chanting a song to herself.

"Certainly good," she agreed. "Like much."

Kit smilingly congratulated herself that she had thought of this trip. They were twenty miles from Red Ranch, where she lived, and had taken camping kit with them so that they could spend the night on the mountain ranges.

For miles they had ridden without seeing another living person, but as Kit turned the bend at the top of the rise she heard the clomp of a horse's hoofs ahead.

There was a rough bridge flung across a divide just twenty yards away, but before Kit could reach it the rider from the opposite direction came into view, and it was obvious that unless he eased up they would meet on the bridge.

Kit waved amiably. She did not know him, but in these parts everyone met was hailed as a friend.

No friendly response came from the other rider, however; he waved, but shouted angrily.

"Wait back, you gels!" he called.

Kit did not draw rein; the smile went from her eyes and became a gleam, for she had an idea that the golden rule of politeness was "ladies first"—and that it went for "gels," too.

"Come on, Redwing," she said.

Kit rode harder for the bridge, and, reaching it, pulled up broadside on; so did Redwing. Between them they completely blocked it now.

The rider, tearing over the bridge, suddenly reined, standing in the stirrups, his face black as thunder. He had a swarthy skin, long side-whiskers, and black-glittering eyes.

"Gettin' tough for a couple of gels, ain't yuh?" he asked in a soft voice, showing gleaming white teeth.

"Yeh, Mexican," said Kit. "This end of the world the rule's ladies first. I'll get some of the boys a little way back to explain it. They spell it with their fingers on triggers. C'mon, Redwing!"

Over the bridge they went and cantered non-stop to the next bend before drawing rein; then Kit laughed.

"Well, I can laugh now, Redwing. But was I mad at the time—huh? He jes' rode on like we were dirt."

"Man come long way—rode quick," said Redwing, whose keen eyes had studied the man and the horse: "Plenty hurry all time."

"Then perhaps he was rude to someone farther back," said Kit. "It wouldn't surprise—"

But before she could say more Redwing excitedly pointed to the undergrowth amongst the trees.

"How do?" he said.

"Fine! How's yourself?" asked Kit, unable to stop smiling. "That's a swell pet you've got there, stranger."

The man—sunburned, in the middle thirties—smiled in return, and looked down at the cub.

"Rather jolly little chap, eh?" he agreed.

"Were you whistling to him?" asked Kit.

"Oh, yes! He'll come from miles to answer it—well, almost, y'know."

"How cute!" Kit said.

She walked up to him and held out her hands for the cub, which he handed over. Kit hugged it to her, fondled its woolly head, flipped its tiny paws, and chuckled.

"The mother is in a small cave at the top, and I don't think she has quite finished its education yet," said

**There was only one way of saving the English dude from arrest—by making friends with a wounded bear. But Kit and Redwing found that was about the most difficult thing in the world!**

"See!" she cried. "Bear cub."

"By golly, so it is!" exclaimed Kit.

"I didn't know they came down so far."

She saw the clumsy cub waddling up the steep side until it was lost to sight in the thick undergrowth.

"Gee! What a cute wee thing!" said Kit, her eyes dancing, and she flung herself from her horse. "Let's find it, Redwing."

Redwing tethered her horse and moved swiftly forward.

"Follow' trail," she said, and led them up the slope.

But when they reached a clearing they had a shock; for the bear was in the arms of a man—a man who was well worth looking at.

He wore a light drill suit, a panama hat, a coloured scarf at his throat—and an eyeglass that glistened and gleamed in the sun. Moreover, he began whistling a trilling, bird-like note that was quite amazing.

"Hey, there!" called Kit, and went forward, smiling.

The man ceased whistling, turned, screwed his eyeglass home, and then, seeing the two girls, raised his hat,

the stranger. "Besides, she's wounded. Some rascal shot her!"

"Oh, poor thing! We couldn't see her, I suppose?" Kit asked.

"Well, it's a goodish way up, and she's in a cave. I'm looking after her. Frankly, I'd prefer her not to have visitors yet; she might get excited, and she's got to keep quiet. You'll forgive me if I appear to hurry away," he added gravely.

"If I don't take the cub back, she may strain the wound moving to find it. Good-morning! Perhaps I shall see you again."

Kit stood looking after him, head on one side.

"That's a swell guy," she said. "Taking care of that she-bear. And that accent! Slick, eh?"

She descended the slope, and remounted just as a rider came into view, showing through the trees the blazing colour of a red jacket.

"Mountie!" she murmured. "Hurrah for the North-West Mounted Police!"

By

**Elizabeth Chester**

Hurrah, hurrah! Reckon I'll tip him off about that greaser's manners!"

Kit gave the Mountie a cheery salute as he reined up and flicked a white-gloved hand to his wide-brimmed hat. "Seen anyone going hard along here?" asked the Mountie.

"Certainly have," said Kit briskly. "A nasty Mexican greaser, was it, with a yellow—"

But the Mountie shook his head. "Not this time," he said. "Whistling Dick's my man. Slick as you like, dressed like a City gent, and sporting an eyeglass!"

Kit did not move and hardly breathed. Redwing looked thoughtful.

"Dressed like a City gent, wearing an eyeglass?" Kit echoed, after a minute or two's pause.

It was one of the biggest shocks she had had in weeks. The ill-mannered

greaser was not wanted—the good-mannered gent was.

"Waal," she murmured, "sounds a mighty queer get-up to me. Haven't seen anyone riding along here looking like that, have we, Redwing?"

The Mountie nodded. "That's his description, and I'm all ears for his whistle. That's what'll give him away."

"What's he wanted for?" asked Kit lightly.

"Lifting five hundred from a bank and dropping the cashier," said the Mountie crisply, and, with a friendly warning, rode on.

"Mountie mighty cross if find not tell," said Redwing worriedly.

"You've said it," Kit murmured, resting an elbow on her saddle pommel and cupping her chin in her hand.

"And Mounties don't like being crossed. And yet, Redwing, I don't

reckon a guy like that would steal an' shoot a man."

She wheeled her horse, and, returning it to where she had tethered it before, dismounted and secured it again.

"Go where?" asked Redwing, puzzled.

"Way up," said Kit. "I'm going to put it to that white man, straight from the shoulder."

They climbed to the top slowly, Redwing leading the way, and it was not long before they reached the rocky summit. The ground was tortured there with rocks in profusion, with twisted trees, scrub, and caves.

Kit walked forward and sang softly. Almost at once the man in white rose into view, dusting his trousers.

"Ah, we meet again!" he said.

"One good turn deserves another," Kit said quietly. "You showed us your bear, and in case you've never seen one, we can show you a Mountie. But I've an idea he knows you—that is, if you happen to be Whistling Dick."

The man's eyes darkened. "That was uncommonly decent of you!" he said in a tone of warm appreciation.

Kit smiled grimly, then faced him in her deliberate way.

"Say, listen! I want to get this straight! Did you stick up a bank?"

The stranger removed his monocle and polished it.

"Between ourselves, I did not," he said.

"Thanks!" said Kit in relief. "Gosh, if you'd said 'yes' the world would have turned a somersault for me. Now, that dirty greaser—"

"Greaser—Mexican Jack?" the stranger cried.

"I don't know his name, but he was a Mexican all right—side-whiskers, evil-looking," said Kit.

"That's the fellow, or his double," said the stranger. "Which way was he heading?"

Kit pointed, and he stared beyond, nodding his head slowly.

"There's one thing," said Kit, "if you should have to vamoose—leave that she-bear. We'll take the job on if you show us where."

He smiled at her, and then dropped a hand on her shoulder.

"You're white all right," he said. "I'm glad you said that. If you mean it, then come on."

A minute or two later he reached a cave, and Kit and Redwing, following, stopped as the bear cub came lopping clumsily out, its fat tummy touching the ground, its bright eyes winking. It ran to the man and squatted on its haunches, looking up at him.

From the cave came a growl as Kit approached.

"Steady, steady!" said the man softly. "She may not be friendly."

He moved into the cave, and whistled in a soft, endearing way. Presently there was a dragging in the cave, and from it came a shaggy, enormous she-bear. She moved on three legs; the fourth, one of the front, was bandaged and cleverly hitched with plaited creeper in a neat sling.

"All right, old lady," said the man, and passed Kit a small tin. "Open that for her."

Kit opened the tin of honey, and the she-bear eyed her. The mighty paws had the strength to crush Kit, but she had long since learned that the secret of handling animals is to show no fear at all.

"Honey! Come along! Try some!" she said gently.

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

## BETWEEN OURSELVES



**MY DEAR READERS,**—Claudine has done it again! That over-confident, imperturbable, but most likeable niece of mine has brought off yet another of her exploits involving your Editor, this time on an afternoon's river outing.

When Claudine, dressed in her summery best, and complete with picnic hamper, presented herself at my house one beautiful week-end and informed me that we were leaving immediately for the nearest river, I was too dumbfounded to protest.

"Oh," I said. "Oh—are—are we? How—how splendid!"

An hour later we had arrived. We arrived at a boathouse, your Editor wearily and perspiring dropping the hamper at his feet and twirling his aching right arm while Claudine blithely hired a boat. She gestured me to get in, laughingly scorned my offer to row, and seized the oars herself.

Well, I must confess—Claudine can row! Efficiently and energetically, she pulled upstream. By the time we reached an island I was in excellent spirits, so that when Claudine, pulling in to the bank, twinklingly said, "Out you get, uncle!" I did not frown suspiciously, but merely raised an inquiring eye.

"This where we're picnicking, Claudine?"

"Rather, uncle. Gorgeous little place," Claudine enthused. "And with some thrilling old ruins, too—just over there. You trot off and inspect them. I'll see to the boat and bring the hamper."

I went off, inspected the ruins—some old mansion now crumbling to pieces—and leisurely turned to retrace my steps. I found Claudine, beaming happily.

"See them, uncle? Aren't they lovely? And now we'll have a snack, I think. I could just do with a—oh, botheration!" she ended vexedly.

"I've left the hamper in the boat!"

"I'll get it, Claudine," I offered, and set off.

I'm afraid I didn't get it. I didn't get within fifty yards of it—for that was the distance of our boat from the shore. And it was swiftly drifting farther and farther away!

From Claudine, behind me, came a gasp. I breathed rather heavily.

"Oh dud-dear," Claudine stammered. "I forgot to tie it up! What—whatever are we going to do? Supposing nobody comes by? Oh goodness!"

It wasn't exactly a pleasing position to be in. For all we knew we might be there for hours and hours. It was a lonely part of the river, and—

But we were lucky; exceedingly lucky. For presently a punt, containing four girls, came leisurely by. We hailed them. At once they came to our rescue. And—whatever do you think? They proved to be readers of the SCHOOLGIRL!

Well, we were friends at once, and with the contents of our own hamper—rescued after a brief chase—and what those cheery schoolgirls had with them, the six of us set to and had the merriest picnic imaginable.

"Jolly good thing I did let the boat drift off," Claudine whispered during a lull. "You ought to be glad. In—in fact," she ended, staring intently at a fruit flan. "I might have done it on purpose, just—just so that you could meet these topping girls."

And now, very briefly, let me deal with next Saturday's magnificent story programme. First of all we have

### "CLARA'S CLASH WITH THE CHAMPION!"

—the superb Long Complete Cliff House School story, which deals with athletics, and tells what happens when Gwen Cook's cousin, a famous International athlete, comes to coach the girls for the big Sports Day events against their Whitechester School rivals.

Gwen's cousin soon wins admiration and respect, and yet—Clara, first of all, and then the rest of the famous Co.—have strange doubts about him. The result is that Cliff House's chances in the great sports contest are seriously endangered. This is one of Hilda Richards' very finest stories. Don't miss it.

Next week's number will also contain another instalment of Margery Marriott's superb serial, another enthralling COMPLETE Kit story, and more of Patricia's Useful and Interesting articles.

So until then—very best wishes,

YOUR EDITOR.



The she-bear suffered Kit to upend the tin of honey into her pink mouth, and it went down well.

"Enough," said Whistling Dick. "But, remember, if I should not return—honey, not too much, and buns from the steel box. Don't be too interested in the cub when the mother's watching, but win its confidence; then, if the cub trusts you, she may do. If the cub shows fear of you, she'll strike."

He soothed the she-bear, asked the girls to move out of sight, and then lured her back to the cave. A minute later he approached them with the soft, cuddly cub.

"Play with it. Here's honey and milk," he said.

When they looked up again he had gone, leaving no sign of his going!

### Kit Takes Over!

**K**IT crouched down with the cub, let it bite at her fingers, dipped them in honey for it to lick, and taught it to trust her, while Redwing sat silent, watching the she-bear's cave.

Creeping forward to the bear's cave, the Mexican tossed it in, and then, turning swiftly away at the bear's deep growl, went down the slope.

Kit and Redwing listened until his crashing steps were no longer heard, and then, sitting up, exchanged looks.

"The money—he put it in the cave!" exclaimed Kit. "So he is th' robber, after all! But if it's found there—"

Redwing's shrewd mind gave her the answer, and she nodded her sleek, shiny head, the little red feather by her forehead bobbing.

"Mountie t'ink Whis'ling Dick rob and hide money."

"You bet!" said Kit grimly. "And I reckon it's just enough of the money to fix the blame, but not enough to make that greaser much poorer."

She stood up, looking about her. "What?" asked Redwing.

"This is where we pitch camp," said Kit. "You pitch the tent just near by, and I'll go to trail Whistling Dick. Something tells me that gun-play wasn't just to warm the gun."

Kit had a soft spot for Whistling Dick, so polite, so kind to animals, and the thought that he might have been

two steps she reached it and picked it off. In pencil Whistling Dick had written a message:

"I guessed you'd come to look for me, white girl, after hearing the shots. I'm all right. But look out for the Mexican. I've put an automatic in the grass. You needn't use it, but it looks as dangerous as it is. He doesn't like the other side of an argument to have a gun. Please look after the bear."

"Sincerely,

"WHISTLING DICK."

That was the message, and Kit read it three times before tucking it into her pocket; then, in grim mood, she returned to the bear's cave, which Redwing reached a moment later, with the wigwam that was their tent.

"Good for you, Redwing!" said Kit. "We've got to camp here, because we've got to get those notes from the she-bear's cave without worrying her or hurting her, and that may take a few hours."

Just beyond the ridge, in a clear space out of sight from the road below, they pitched the wigwam, and, as it was noon, Redwing found sticks and lit a fire. There was cooking to be done, water to be found and fetched, and she busied herself happily.

Kit, meanwhile, returned to the bear's cave.

Thought was needed now, a plan of campaign. Mexican Jack had not planted the notes there for fun; he would in some way give the Mountie

**AGAIN** and again Kit tried to reach the stolen notes with the stick. But every time the bear brushed the stick to one side with a massive paw!



But all at once Kit sprang up. From the distance came the ringing report of a revolver-shot, followed by another and the whine of two bullets.

Cheeks pale, Kit moved forward, while the cub, sensing her alarm, scurried back to the cave and waddled in. Redwing edged forward a short distance, then turned back, signalling Kit frantically.

"Mexican come, gun in hand!" she hissed.

Together they dropped down in the grass.

From hiding, Kit and Redwing watched as the Mexican approached, looking about him as though searching for something, glancing at the earth and muttering.

Moving forward, he whistled softly, and at the first note the bear cub moved from the cave. The shuffling of the she-bear sounded, and her snout appeared and her bright, keen, watchful eyes.

The Mexican drew back, a smile on his face—the smile of triumph.

Presently, after a brief pause, he moved forward, and, diving into his yellow-and-red jacket, took out a neat roll. At sight of it, Kit had a hard job to stifle a gasp.

It was a roll of dollar bills, fixed with a rubber band.

wounded tightened her heart. Going the way the Mexican had come, she looked ahead now and then to where the path wound below, hoping to catch sight of his tethered horse.

Then suddenly she came upon a patch of grass that had been crushed flat, but which now slowly rose to the vertical. Recently something bulky had sprawled there—a man. There was a stain of red on the ground, and dragging marks near by.

"Hit, and crawled away!" murmured Kit anxiously.

Cupping her hands, she whistled, but no response came; and then in the distance on the road she saw the Mexican's horse.

But the Mexican was not riding it; a man dressed in white was—a man with a stain of red on his left sleeve.

Kit swung back, her eyes brightening. "He's got away, but, by golly, he'll ride up to the Mountie!"

Moving back, she stumbled on something in the grass, recovered, and stooped to pick it up—a gun, an automatic.

Kit fingered it with revulsion, put it down, and then, making sure that the safety catch was on, put it into her haversack. About to move on, she paused. There was something white fastened to a tree—a slip of paper. In

a hint where the cave could be found, and who had looked after the bears. The Mountie would go there, find the notes, and believe he had conclusive evidence of Whistling Dick's guilt.

"Somehow I've got to take them out," mused Kit worriedly. "But that means getting the she-bear out."

The Mountie, if there were no other way of getting the bear out, might use his carbine. But Kit's way entailed subtlety and kindness, winning the bear's trust.

In front of the cave Kit sat down with a tin of honey, dipping in her fingers, and presently the cub came out. He licked her fingers, and contentedly sat there, watched by the she-bear, to whom Kit presently rolled the remainder of the tin.

"All pals together, old girl," she said. "I'll swap the tin for that bundle just behind you."

The she-bear was not quite sure of Kit's intentions yet; she still had fears that Kit might take her cub away, and Kit resigned herself to be patient.

Leaving the bears for a while, she helped Redwing prepare the meal, and, singing softly together, they made the work into pleasure.

"What we need," said Kit, as they settled down to the meal, "is a long stick to rake with in the cave."



## 24 "Kit of Red Ranch!"

When the simple meal was over, Redwing got busy cutting a suitable switch from a tree, and Kit returned to the cave to continue her task of winning round the she-bear. But that wise old thing was more wary and cunning than Kit had supposed.

Twice Kit put in the switch, only for the she-bear to paw it aside with angry rumblings.

While Kit sat in musing thought, Redwing finished drying the things they had used, but of a sudden she paused; alert.

"Hallo! What's wrong?" Kit asked sharply, noting the Redskin girl's sudden, keen attention.

"Hear someone?"

Kit leaned forward, and fancied that she, too, heard a slight rustling sound. "Scout and see," she murmured.

Redwing crept forward, hardly making a rustle, and when she was out of sight Kit found that she could not trace her movements. No disturbed grass or foliage revealed the course she had taken.

"Mighty cute!" murmured Kit admiringly.

A moment later Redwing returned, greatly agitated.

"Mexican Jack!" she whispered, in awe. "Bring gun! Go to cave!"

## When Kit Aimed Wide!

**K**IT went swiftly forward, crawling with Redwing over the uneven ground, taking care not to give warning of her coming by disturbing loose rocks. Reaching the crest, she peered over.

Mexican Jack, a carbine in his hand, was moving towards the cave. He was crouching; and presently he stopped to raise the carbine, press it against his shoulder, and take aim.

The cub moved from the cave, and Mexican Jack lowered his carbine. With a snarling noise he sent the cub scuttling back, and now the she-bear, having heard the sound, and being alarmed for her babe's safety, shuffled forward to the cave mouth.

"He'll shoot it!" said Kit, through her teeth.

There came a flash to her eyes, and, crawling back to the tent, she snatched the automatic pistol from her haversack. Redwing's eyes were wide. She crouched still, afraid, trembling a little.

"I was taught to fire a gun when I was ten," muttered Kit softly. "I hate the things; but if I can hit that gun-barrel of his—"

Kit levelled the automatic, her lips set, her face pale.

As the Mexican aimed, so did Kit. Her hand was steady, and she held her breath. Redwing, plaiting creeper, crouched near by.

"One, two," murmured Kit.

Then she saw him steady to fire.

Crack! It was the automatic that barked. The carbine quivered. But the shot had gone wide. Kit had missed her aim.

With a snarl the Mexican wheeled. He did not pull his trigger at the bear, but, turning to the spot whence the shot had come, covered it, his dark eyes searching for a trace of movement that would give him a target.

Kit, lying still, hoped and prayed that he would not fire blindly where she lay.

Creeping forward, carbine at the

ready, the Mexican switched his cunning eyes left and right for them.

Kit's hat top showed above the grass as she crept on; and now she halted. But Kit, trained by her dad to a hundred tricks, schooled by Old Bill, had the hat in shaking fingers, held clear of her head. Still holding it thus, she pressed her face to the ground.

"Got you—got you!" muttered the Mexican.

At that same moment a snarl came from behind him, and shaggy paws swung round his neck. The she-bear had him in her grasp!

Hearing his yell of terror, and the bear's growl, Kit peered through the grass, in time to see the Mexican swinging up his arms to beat away the bear's strong, crushing paws.

Kit sprang up and ran forward. The Mexican had dropped the carbine to use his hands; but the bear was too strong, and too angry for half-measures.

Kit knew in a flash that her strength could avail him nothing. But there was the cub.

As it came forward to watch, she seized it, and, clutching it gently, held it out to the bear, at the same time uttering a shrill squeal.



## "CLARA'S CLASH

With The  
CHAMPION!"

What a fine chap Arthur Warwick was! That was the general opinion at Cliff House School when Gwen Cook's cousin, a champion athlete, came to train the girls for an important sports contest. But—Clara Trevlyn was not so sure. She had her doubts. And so had the rest of Babs & Co. after a while. Was Arthur Warwick such a fine chap as he seemed, or—

But read this enthralling Hilda Richards story for yourselves next Saturday. Order your SCHOOL-GIRL without delay.

The she-bear's eyes turned to her. For only a fleeting moment did the animal hesitate, and then, releasing her victim, who staggered forward, she turned on Kit.

Placing the cub on the ground at her feet, Kit dodged back. And such was the tense excitement of the moment that she had not noticed the red jacket showing through the trees on the hill.

"Hey, there! Hold hard!" barked the Mountie.

His carbine was on his back, not easily swung round in a moment; but Mexican Jack's was on the grass.

Seeing it, sizing up the situation, Kit kicked it from his grasp as he stooped. With an angry snarl, he swung round and jumped forward, to escape over the ridge.

And escape he might have done with all the cover there was to hide him, had he not made for the obvious gap through the rock ridge, and there caught his foot in trailing creeper cunningly laid across it by Redwing.

Down he went, over and over, half a

dozen times, to lie half-stunned and gasping as many yards away. Before he could rise, the Mountie, carbine in hand, was over the ridge. The game was up!

"Hold him!" cried Kit. "We saw him fling notes into the bear's cave."

And Kit raced to the cave, easily beating the poor injured bear. In she darted, to seize the roll, and come bursting out again.

It needed but a glance at that roll to tell her why Mexican Jack had returned to shoot the bear—to shoot the bear, and regain that roll. For in the centre of it, curled up, held by the rubber band, was an envelope addressed to him. Evidently he had placed it there in a moment of haste, and forgotten it until some minutes after the roll had been put in the cave.

"Here, Red-Jacket! Here's the evidence," said Kit excitedly. "Two witnesses that he planted it in the cave!"

"Good enough!" said the Mountie crisply. "I've got Whistling Dick below."

"Then," urged Kit anxiously, "set him free at once; for this she-bear's collapsed, poor thing! I need his help to dress the wound."

Five minutes later, having bandaged Whistling Dick's arm, which had been numbed, but only slightly nicked by Mexican Jack's shot, Kit helped him to dress the she-bear's wound.

His magic touch and soft whistle calmed and stilled her. Experience had taught her that he was her friend. And while he and Kit redressed the wound, the she-bear hugged her tiny cub.

In handcuffs, Mexican Jack went down the hill with the Mountie.

"All right," said the Mexican thickly. "I did the job—but not alone. That giuk's weak, washy pard was in on it. He borrowed Whistling Dick's kit to help."

Kit looked at Whistling Dick.

"So you were covering a pal?" she asked softly. "Your pal borrowed your togs to get you blamed—eh? But you weren't going to get him fixed for it? That's mighty swell, Whistling Dick. It goes with the eyeglass and the manners, I reckon."

Whistling Dick smiled.

"I'm just a remittance man—a waster," he said. "But he's a younger fellow. I could have got him out of this scrape, and the scare would have kept him straight. It will, too; for now the Mountie's out of earshot, I'll admit he's got right away."

Kit petted the she-bear and smiled.

"We kind of like this little spot and the bears," she said. "If you haven't staked a lone claim here, mebbe we could just sort of hang around a day or two, camping, and being sick nurses to the bears?"

"I should be honoured," said Whistling Dick.

"You mean, it's O.K. by you!" smiled Kit. "Why don't you learn to talk proper?"

"Aw, shucks!" laughed Whistling Dick. "Reckon you're the dandiest kid here around, so here's the mitt! Shake on it, kid!"

"Redskin tink same ting, too—yes," said Redwing, twining creeper absently.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

ARE your friends enjoying these lovely COMPLETE stories? They'd like Kit and Redwing just as much as you do, so tell them about Elizabeth Chester's grand series, won't you?