

MEET VALERIE DREW

the famous girl detective and  
her clever Alsatian dog

FLASH

in this  
issue

# THE SCHOOLGIRL

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EVERY 2<sup>D</sup> SATURDAY

Incorporating  
"SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN"



**RIVALS OF THE  
HOLIDAY CAMP—WITH  
JANET AS THE QUARRY!**

A delightful incident from this  
week's splendid story of the  
Cliff House chums.



Magnificent LONG COMPLETE holiday story featuring Barbara Redfern & Co. of Cliff



# She Had to LET DOWN HER CHUMS!

Out of the Blue!



"WHO'RE top dogs of Pinebay Holiday Camp?" demanded Barbara Redfern.

And from the rest of the girls gathered about the leader of the famous chums of Cliff House School there came a vigorous:

"We are!"

"The Blues, of course!"

"Little us!"

"Exactly," Babs went on. "And that being so we're jolly well not going to

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let the Greens try and steal that honour!"

Which was precisely what was in the minds of them all at that moment.

Between them, representing the Blue Chalets at the camp, and another party of girls who belonged to the Green Chalets, there existed a friendly but ruthless rivalry.

At the moment the Greens were undoubtedly one up on the Blues for they held the emblem of honour, a flag.

"We've got to get that flag back before dinner-time," Clara Trevlyn declared, her eyes gleaming to a tomboyish light of determination. "If we don't—"

They all exchanged looks then.

"If we don't," said Marjorie Hazel-

dene quietly, "the Greens hold it all day and they'll have scored off us again."

"Which is the reason I've called this little confab," Babs said. "You see this? It's a plan of the camp. And it's going to help us get that flag in the half an hour or so that's remaining before dinner."

Instantly, nine serious faces pored over the plan Babs spread out on the table in Chalet No. 13, which, shared by Babs, Mabel Lynn, her closest chum, Clara and Marjorie, was the headquarters of the "Blues," as New H was called.

Having twice been foiled in their efforts to hold the flag this week, they

## House School and telling what happened to Janet Jordan when—



were most anxious to turn the tables on their rivals this time.

Except for one girl they all belonged to Cliff House School. And as at Cliff House, so it was here, in the lovely holiday camp—Babs was their leader, with Mabs her very able and expert lieutenant, and Tomboy Clara her most loyal and lusty backer-up.

Janet Jordan, the champion swimmer of the Cliff House junior school, wore a look which suggested she might have been taking part in a real war. Marjorie Hazeldene was smiling her usual gentle smile; Bessie Bunter, plump, ponderous and a little dense at times, blinked through her thick round spectacles, while that strange and often puzzling girl Jemima Carstairs thoughtfully polished her monocle as she smiled gently at the American girl, Leila Carroll. The ninth member of the party—pretty, fair-haired Lorna Bayford, who was a fresh friend they had made in the camp—was a quiver with the prospect of the fun to come.

"Well, here we are," Babs said. "There's Chalet No. 32—our objective. The camp flag, at the moment, is flying from Chalet No. 32, and it's our job to get hold of it. Now here's the plan—Bessie, you're in this."

"Oh, yes, of course!" Bessie said importantly.

"We want," Babs went on "a girl with ventriloquism for this, Bessie. Now listen. Presently we shall be creeping up on Chalet No. 32. As you know, Chrissie Longmore & Co. will be there, and we've got to lure them away first. Well, what you have to do is to use your ventriloquism to get them out of the chalet into the store shed."

"Oh, easy!" said Bessie.

"Janet, now you. Here's the key of the store shed. Once they're all in, lock the door and wait till we've erected the flag in our own lines. You'd better go off now, hiding yourself near the store shed until we're ready. Once we've grabbed the flag let them out, of course. We don't want them to miss dinner."

"Done!" grinned Janet. "Go now?" "Now," Babs said. "Everybody else, follow me."

"Ay, ay, skipper!"

"Then let's go. Janet first. Got the key, Janet?"

"Have I!" Janet chuckled.

She was the first to depart from Chalet No. 13. Full of fun, her eyes dancing with pleasure this adventure afforded her, Janet was a reliable trooper, and Babs had no fear that she

would fail to fulfil her role. A moment later Babs followed, keeping Bessie, who was the one most likely to let the party down, in close tow.

Row F, the home of their rivals, with its green roofs, was separated from Row H by Row G. Just in case Chrissie Longmore & Co. had flung out a scout, Babs sent Leila Carroll on ahead to reconnoitre the ground. In a few moments Leila returned, chuckling.

"O.K.," she said. "Chrissie & Co. are all sitting on the veranda of their own chalets eating ices, I guess." "Topping!" Babs enthused. "And when we've grabbed the flags we'll have as many ices as we like."

Once more she crept forward, the chums following her in single file. Many of the other holiday-makers in

**Tremendous excitement at Pinebay Holiday Camp! For Babs & Co., representing the Blue Chalets, are engaged in rivalry with girls from the Green Chalets to decide who are champions of the Camp. It's all very friendly, too—until Janet Jordan, of all people, begins to cheat. Again and again Janet deliberately scores off the Greens in a mean, unsporting fashion. Why? Simply because she dare not do anything else!**

the camp, knowing exactly what was afoot, chuckled and followed the group at a distance. Soon Babs, leading, came within sight of Chalet No. 32, which was shared by the leaders of the Greens—Chrissie Longmore, Peggy Aldridge, Anne Marchant, and Edda Shortt. As Leila had said, they were, on the verandas of their chalets dressed in sun-suits or swimming costumes. And above them, floating proudly in its socket, was the coveted black flag with its single white diagonal stripe.

The chums' eyes gleamed at the sight of that flag. They could not forget the clever trick by which the Greens had captured it this morning—how saucy Chrissie, disguised as a gypsy, had come along offering to tell their fortunes free, and how, when they were all interested, a sudden swift raid by her henchmen had resulted in the flag being lost.

Twice since that they had made an attempt to re-capture the flag—once by a bold attack which had failed, once by challenging the leaders of the Greens to a race round the camp with the flag as the prize. That, too, by the merest few inches, Cliff House had lost.

Those defeats, at all costs, must be avenged!

Babs stopped, holding up her hand as a signal to the others. Anxiously she peered ahead. Twenty yards across the

lawns was the store shed. Now she saw for a moment a hand appear from the side of the shed, and knew by the signal that Janet was in position. She nodded to Bessie.

"Go on, Bessie, do your stuff."

Bessie, however, was already forming her lips in that little round "O" which was her usual preliminary to any ventriloquial performance. Bessie had few accomplishments, but among them the gift of ventriloquism was certainly her greatest. With such reality that even the chums were startled for a moment, a sudden terrific uproar sounded in the store shed. There came the noise of spitting and fighting, followed by a human voice.

"Oh, my goodness, get away, you cats! Help, help! Somebody, help!" "Good work, Bess!" Babs gleed.

"Keep it up."

Splutter, hiss! Splutter, howl! Then the human voice sounded again.

"Quick, help!"

"Say, they're biting it!" Leila chuckled.

The Greens were "biting" it. They had all started to their feet, and Chrissie made a step forward.

Janet, hidden on the blind side of the shed, chuckled. Her heart glowed for the success of old Bess. Now, drawn away by the sounds from the shed, the

Greens were advancing swiftly. Janet dodged back, slipping the key into her hand. With a rush Edda Shortt flung open the door, peering into the interior of the shed.

"Come on!" she cried.

She darted into the shed. Without hesitation, her chums followed. That was Janet's cue. In a moment she had leapt forward. With a laugh, she caught the door, slamming it to just as Peggy Aldridge, with a shriek, looked round. For a moment Peggy saw Janet—but only for a moment. The next the door had closed, the key clicked smartly in the lock, and Janet gave a yell.

"Go it, Blues!"

"Hurrah!" cheered Cliff House.

"Over the top with the best of luck!" chirruped Jemima. "On, Stanley, on!"

In a body they broke cover. The spectators cheered. Babs, reaching the Greens' chalet, grabbed a chair and climbed towards the roof. From the store shed, came a furious banging and shouting.

"Let us out!"

"Open this door!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Janet. "Go it, Babs!"

Babs at that moment was grabbing the flag. Not until it was back in position on Chalet No. 13 would Janet let

her prisoners free. With delight she watched as Babs jerked the flag from its holder, the rest of the Blues standing in a cheering group. Then suddenly something happened.

Behind her a husky voice called Janet's name.

Janet wheeled. Then, as she saw the face which peered out at her from behind a pile of boxes at the other end of the store shed, she jumped.

"Len!" she breathed.

Len Jordan, her cousin, it was.

"Janet, please!" he said. "I—I must talk to you."

At once Janet was filled with concern. At once she sensed from the uneasy expression on his white face that Len Jordan was in some sort of trouble. Very, very fond indeed was Janet of Len, a fondness which was by no means minimised by the fact that Len Jordan was not a physically strong boy.

At once she hastened to him, forgetting all about the recapture of the flag. And, anyway, Babs had the flag now, and waving it on high the triumphant Cliff House party were marching away.

Rather uneasily the boy drew her behind the wall of the shed.

"Janet, I—I'm sorry. I—I don't want to bother you—"

"Oh, stuff!" Janet said. "Len, what's the matter?"

"I—I'm in trouble, Janet—big trouble."

She looked at him sharply.

"You—you mean, Len—"

"I mean," he said, and a bitter smile twisted his pale features—"I mean, Janet, old thing, I'm wanted by the police!"

### Unpleasant for Everyone!



FOR a moment Janet's heart seemed to turn over. For a moment she blinked, not able to digest that startlingly dramatic piece of information.

Len—her cousin! Len—this careful soul of honour and chivalry—wanted by the police!

"Oh, it's true!" He nodded.

"That's why I'm here. Because— with another bitter smile—"I'm running away, a fugitive from the law, Janet old thing—that's the latest role your cousin Len is playing. Give me a day or two, and I think I can prove my innocence. But at the moment I'm in a jam—"

"Len, tell me about it!" Janet said anxiously.

"I will, but—not here," the boy said. "My—my photograph was in one of the papers this morning. Somebody might recognise me. Look here, let's get down to the beach," he added.

"There's a path in the cliff here, and at the bottom is a little place where we can talk. You don't mind?"

"Lead on," Janet said.

Her face was alight then, her heart beating faster. In the unexpectedness of this little drama she had forgotten all about her prisoners in the store-shed—had forgotten, indeed, everything.

With a cautious blink to right and left the boy led the way. He reached the path, peering along the beach before he descended. There were many holiday-makers frolicking on the sands, but in the little cave where the beach was rock-strewn and shingly not a soul was to be seen. Briskly he nodded.

"Good enough," he said. "Funny nobody ever seems to come to this part of the beach. Careful, Janet, old thing. This path is slippery. Can I give you a hand?"

"Thanks, I can manage," Janet said, smiling a little in spite of herself—for though Len was a boy she was at least twice as strong as he.

Still, it was so characteristic of Len to worry about other people first.

Poor Len! Ever since that horrible experience five years ago, when he had been trapped in a burning building and had jumped from a second-story window, injuring his spine, he had been a mere travesty of the fine, upstanding, athletic lad who had been Janet's favourite playmate in the days of her infancy!

But he had courage, and now, sliding and slipping, grasping at grass and weeds, he went ahead of her. Breathing heavily, he at last reached bottom, stretching up a hand to help Janet negotiate the last step.

Near at hand was a cave—a mere fissure less than a yard wide in the face of the cliff, its entrance banked by sun-dried weeds and a shelf of shingle which had been deposited there during a storm of last week. With a nod he hurried across to it and entered, Janet following.

"My home!" he said, with a smile.

"Home?" Janet repeated, staring around.

"And office," Len Jordan laughed shortly. "I've brought the office books with me."

Janet began to understand as she took things in. Three great ledgers were piled on top of a stone. On that stone was also a fountain-pen and several sheets of paper. Near it Len's coat was laid on the sandy floor, and a little way from that was a bed of dried seaweed which had obviously been used as a resting-place. There was also the remains of a fire and an empty salmon-tin which suggested the remnants of a meal. Janet stared at him quickly.

"Len, how long have you been here?"

"Since last night," the boy said.

"You mean—you—you slept here?"

"Yes."

"But, Len— Oh, my hat!" Janet cried. "Suppose you'd been caught by the tide?"

"Well?" He shrugged. "Supposing?" he said. "The tide's all right as long as there's no wind. I should think it never comes into this cave except in storm times. Anyway, I just had to risk that," he added, "and I reckon I'll have to go on risking it until I'm through."

"What have you had to eat?" Janet asked.

"Oh, some salmon! And—and a sandwich."

"In twenty-four hours?"

"Well, what else could I do? I've got a little money, but I daren't openly show my face in town or camp, and so I've had to diet. That, as a matter of fact, was why I wanted your help," he declared. "I don't want to make myself a nuisance—"

"You've not to talk like that, Len!" Janet said sternly. "Let's hear how all this happened. Is it—is it really very serious?"

Serious enough it was in all truth. She was quick to realise that when the details were explained. Back in London, Len was a junior secretary handling large sums of money and valuable bonds for English people abroad. Very clever and conscientious

at his work, Len's position was rather an important one for a lad of eighteen.

Janet knew all that, of course. One of the things she had most admired about her uncomplaining cousin was the way in which, forced to give up the athletic career he had dreamed about in his early youth, he had completely taken to the desk work which must have been so jolly irksome and boring.

A few days ago, with notice that the usual audit was shortly to be held, Len had steeped himself in his books. To his horror he had discovered several false withdrawal entries, and on comparing the bank balance with those entries found that some unknown person had taken the money and deliberately altered the books—to make it appear, of course, that Len was the thief. Not so easily did Janet follow all that, but she saw the gist all right.

"And so," Len went on, "the night before the audit was due to take place I resolved to take the books home and go through them there. I knew, of course, that as soon as those false entries were spotted I should be accused of having made them, and when the cash balances were weighed up I should also be accused of having taken the several hundred pounds which were missing. It was obviously up to me—and still is—to find the faker."

Janet nodded.

"Well, I worked. I worked so dashed hard that I fell asleep about dawn over the blessed books. When I came to myself I found that I should be an hour or more late for the office, and the auditor would be there. By that time I thought, they'd surely have discovered what was wrong, and the fact that I had apparently done the disappearing act with my books would tell against me."

That was enough for Len. Realising the utter helplessness of his position, he had hastily packed a bag and taken the first train out of town.

By the sheerest chance the train last night had halted at Pinebay Station. He had remembered suddenly that Janet was there.

"And so, here I am," he said. "You see the position? I've been hanging around the camp for hours waiting to get in touch with you. And now, Janet, if you wouldn't mind doing something for me—"

"Len, you know whatever it is you're only to ask," Janet replied earnestly. "But—oh, my hat, what a mess! You—you're sure everything will come out all right?"

"Given time—yes," he said. "But there are hours and hours of work in front of me. You see, I've got to make sure of my facts. The only clues to those facts are in the books themselves. But I want food, and I daren't go and get it openly. Would you get me some grub?"

"I'm going—now," Janet said decidedly. "No, Len, don't give me the money—I've got plenty. And when I come back," she added, "you'd better pack up. We've got to find another and safer hide-out than this!"

She did not wait to listen to what he had to say, but went out at once.

Len—Len—what a horrible muddle and mix-up this was! What a caddish trick to play upon a boy like him! Her heart burnt with resentment against the unknown forger who had landed him in this dreadful disaster; but thank goodness he had thought of asking her for help! Thank goodness, given time, he could prove his innocence! Meantime, of course, it was just impossible for him to remain in that cave. Got to do something about that.



But where, Janet puzzled, could she find him a hiding-place?

Practical minded at all times, Janet had solved that problem before she reached the half-mile away village of Pinebay. She recalled a place called No Man's Manor—a rambling old place whose most curious feature was a turret containing a belfry which, local legend had it, was haunted. It lay about three miles from the camp, nestling in a little copse, and before the War had belonged to a German who had never returned to claim it. Thus its name.

An ideal place for a hide-out. Its ghostly legend—people did say that the old bell tolled of its own accord on the anniversary of the day its former owner was supposed to have been killed on the Western Front—caused it to be avoided. Those who knew of it rarely visited it, and those who did not know of it never saw it, because of the thick copse which surrounded it. That was the spot. That was where she'd take Len upon her return. Meantime, what of Babs & Co?

Should she tell them?

Janet debated that point for some time.

Babs, she knew, would only be too eager and anxious to help. But Len wouldn't like that. Len wouldn't want all her friends to become involved in his affairs, and it would rather spoil their own enjoyment. They could hardly be the same happy, care-free girls whose one and only ambition now was to capture and hold the camp flag. With Len to be thought about, looked after, and helped, things were bound to happen which would considerably curtail their style.

No, Janet resolved, her cousin's secret should be her secret. Time enough to tell Babs & Co. when it was all over.

"HA, HA, HA! Do we smile?" Barbara Redfern laughed. "I say, kiddlets, I've got an idea—lovely idea! What about marching the flag in to dinner?"

"Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ripping!"

"Sure will make the Greens look boiled!" Leila Carroll chuckled. "Here we are, Babs. You're the old standard-bearer, I guess. Fall in, the Blues! But say, where's Janet?"

It wasn't the first time the victorious Blues had asked that question since the recapture of the camp flag.

### TRIUMPHANTLY

Babs waved the flag of honour, and Janet, on guard over the chums' imprisoned rivals, made to join in the cheers. Then she paused. A figure had bobbed up from behind a heap of boxes near by and was urgently beckoning her. It was her cousin, Len, who should have been miles away in London!

That flag was there now, for the dinner gong had rung, and the rules governing this extremely energetic and exhilarating game said that whoever was in possession of the flag when dinner-time came was to be regarded as victors for the day. The Greens must be feeling pretty sick at having been pipped on the post.

Nobody knew that the infuriated winners were still cooped up in the store-shed, for it had never occurred to any of them that Janet would not carry out her part of the plan.

Still, it was funny where Janet had got to.

Not, as a matter of fact, that anyone was unusually worrying about that. Janet, obviously, was somewhere about, and she'd turn in to dinner.

Now, with Babs at their head, the grinning chums and Lorna Bayford lined up. As Babs gaily sang out "Quick march!" they started forward. There was a cheer as they reached the great restaurant, and Mr. Mackenzie, the manager of the camp, smiled at them with pleasure, for certainly Babs & Co. had helped to liven things up at the camp since they had been in it. Still smartly marching, they stepped into the hall.

From the diners there went up a roar and a cheer. Everybody, of course, knew about the great rivalry between the Blues and Greens for the camp flag, and everybody was keenly interested in the changing fortunes of war.

But when they reached the table usually occupied by the Greens they paused.

For of Chrissie Longmore & Co. there was never a sign.

"Oh!" Babs said a little disconcertedly.

"Can't face it—what?" Jemima asked. "Tut, tut, my children, how bitter is the brew made from the ashes of defeat! Still, tie the flag to your chair, Babs, old Spartan. 'Twill be the first sight to gladden their faded old eyes when they do appear."

Babs laughed. The flag was tied to the chair. The chums sat down and

the first course was served. Still the Greens had not turned up—nor, oddly enough, Janet Jordan.

On came the fish. Still no Chrissie & Co. The main course followed it, and the Cliff House chums looked in surprise. It did seem, after all, that the Greens, feeling the humiliation of their defeat, were keeping away.

The sweet followed. The coffee. Still no Greens.

"Well, they're chumps!" Babs said. "They've missed dinner. If they do come in now there'll be nothing but scraps for them. Hallo!" she added. "Here's Janet."

Janet it was, hurrying towards them. She looked a little flushed and breathless, and for a moment Babs thought she was worried, too.

But her smile flashed out as she came up.

"Sorry I'm late," she said. "I—I had something to do. Oh, I say, is dinner over?" she added. "I suppose that means I must have what can be scraped up. See you've got the flag." She chuckled, grinning at the emblem tied to Babs' chair-back. "And—Oh, my hat!" She paused, stricken. "The Greens!"

"You mean, where are they?" Babs laughed. "They haven't shown up."

Janet's face turned a fiery and embarrassed red. For the first time she had just remembered her hapless rivals. Quickly she spun round.

"Janet," Babs cried, "where—"

But Janet, pantingly, had bolted. The chums blinked.

"What the dickens—" Leila murmured.

"What's bitten her?" Clara asked.

"And where the dud-dickens has she been, you know?" Bessie asked.

They all frowned a little. Funny, that. Not like Janet to turn up so late for a meal and then, without a word of explanation, fly off again. But even as they argued the question among themselves Janet re-appeared. And this time there was a yell all round the room. With her, looking decidedly angry, were Chrissie Long-



more & Co. Chrissie was arguing freely with Janet.

"I'm sorry—" Janet was saying.  
"Sorry, my foot!" Chrissie cried scornfully. "I think it was mean and beastly of you, Janet Jordan!"  
"Janet who?" inquired a voice near Babs.

Babs turned. It was a man who had spoken—a young, good-looking man who had only arrived at the camp that day. Babs had noticed him before, mainly because he dressed in the most expensive clothes, and she had seen him flinging money about as though his object was to get through as much as possible in the shortest space of time. She smiled.

"Our friend—Janet Jordan," she said. "You know her, Mr—"

"Ron," he said. "Ron Eversleigh, that's my name. No, I don't know her. I thought you said Gordon at first. I do know a young lady named Janet Gordon. Your friend looks upset," he added.

Janet certainly did look upset. But she looked less so than the Greens, who, having found they had completely missed dinner, were furious. Apart from that, a minor accident had befallen one of their number—a girl named Ada Chance, who, in trying to reach the skylight of the store shed which had formed their prison, had fallen off a tier of packing-cases, badly grazing her heel.

"I think it was a shabby trick!" Peggy Aldridge sniffed. "We don't mind you carrying off the flag, but to shut us up for an hour and a half—"

"Wa-what?" Babs stared. "I say, what's this?"

"Oh, dear! I—I'm sorry!" Janet stammered, crimson with confusion. "It's my fault! I—I forgot to let them out of the shed."

"Oh, my giddy aunt!" Clara cried in consternation.

"And in consequence," Edda Shortt said bitterly, "we've missed our dinner. And not only have we missed our dinner, but poor old Ada's crooked her foot in trying to force the skylight open so that we could escape. I suppose you Cliff House girls think it's fun, but—"

"Now, wait a minute." Babs quickly stood up. "I'm sorry," she said. "We had no intention of playing a trick like that. At the same time"—she gazed oddly at Janet—"I can't quite make it out. How did you come to forget, Janet?"

"Yes, that would be rather interesting, Miss Jordan," Ron Eversleigh murmured.

"Well, I—I," Janet stammered—"I had to go somewhere."

"Where?" asked Clara.  
"Oh, just—just somewhere," Janet stammered.

"To meet someone, perhaps, eh?" Eversleigh asked, with a penetrating stare.

Janet blinked at him, on her guard at once.

"Well, never mind. I—I'm sorry—frightfully sorry, you girls. I—I wouldn't have had it happen for worlds. Look here, just to show there's no ill-feeling, what about letting me stand treat for some tuck after dinner?"

The Greens looked a little mollified at that, though they were still inclined, very humbly, to be grumpy.

"Well, that's an offer," Chrissie Longmore admitted. "All right. We'll forgive you this once, but I warn you, you'll be broke by the time we've finished with you in the restaurant. And you needn't jolly well think," she added to Babs, "that you're going to

stick to that flag, even if you have got it now. We've having it back to-morrow."

"You're welcome, if you can get it," Babs returned.

"Right! Then here's a challenge," Chrissie said. "You know No Man's Manor?"

Janet started.  
"But—but—"

"Oh, nothing!" Janet muttered.

But Babs was struck by the sudden anxiety on her face. "What were you saying, Chrissie?"

"I'm flinging down the gauntlet," Chrissie said. "You all know the manor, you all know the haunted bell. Well, there are two roads to the manor—one through the woods, the other over the river, and they're both a dead three miles long. You'll take one road, we take the other, and the first to get to the manor and toll the haunted bell holds the flag without any further arguments for the day."

"Done!" cried Babs at once. "And we'll take the river road," she added.

"Oh, no, you jolly well won't! We'll talk about that after Janet's treat. We'll meet in the recreation-room, and settle the question on the tennis-table. Whoever wins most games has the choice of road."

"My hat," Clara chuckled, "don't you Greens like asking for lickings! Janet, bag you for partner in the doubles."

Janet, however, was biting her lip.

"Yes, all right. But—but—"  
She shook her head. "I say, couldn't we have some other challenge?" she asked uneasily. "I mean, not running to the haunted manor?"

"Afraid of the ghost?" Chrissie sniffed.

"No; but—"  
"Oh, stuff! I think it's a jolly good suggestion," Clara said. "Who's afraid to toll the haunted bell?"

"That's on. And we'll settle which roads we have after din-dins."

They trotted off. Janet and the Greens, the latter still looking a trifle peeved, sat down at the table. A full course dinner such as had just been served was impossible at that late stage, but a fairly substantial make-shift meal was substituted. And that same meal was also shared by Janet.

But Janet, strangely enough, had little appetite for that meal. Now that Babs & Co. had departed, and she was alone, she was looking strangely worried.

With cause.  
For less than an hour ago she had installed her cousin in the self-same ruins which were to be the scene of the new challenge between the Blues and the Greens to-morrow. And there, unsuspecting of the noisy crowd which would suddenly descend upon him, Len was working on his books.

She'd got to warn him. She must. If Len were caught now—

### She Couldn't Do Her Best!



**S**HUDDERING a little, Janet hurried over her food. But she could not forget how bad it was of her to have left the Greens prisoners, and particularly rotten that Ada Chance should have had that accident. After the meal she went over to her. "Ada, how's the heel?" she asked anxiously. "I'm sorry—"  
"Oh, it doesn't matter!" Ada said,

but with just the tiniest touch of diffidence. "It's hurting a bit, but I hope it'll be all right to-morrow because I don't want to miss the haunted bell race. But what on earth made you leave us like that?"

"I was called away," Janet said.  
"Indeed!" And Janet flushed red to see the thoughtful eyes of Ron Eversleigh regarding her. "And by whom, Miss Jordan? Jordan is the name, isn't it?"

"It is," Janet retorted, a little shortly.

"But who called you away?"

"Just a—a friend of mine," Janet said, and turned to Ada again. "Well, I hope it's all right," she said sincerely. "I'll never forgive myself if you have to miss it. Anyway, we'll fix that," she added confidently. "If you can't run, perhaps you can cycle or something? We'll see, shall we? Come on now, and let me stand treat."

She went out friendly, tucking her arm in Ada's in order to help that limping girl along. How to warn Len, though—that was the question at the back of her mind.

They went to the restaurant. There Babs & Co. were already waiting. After the dinner they had just finished, no one was feeling very hungry, but everybody had either an ice or a cooling drink, and by the time the treat was finished the Blues and the Greens were on their old friendly, though still fiercely keen, terms of rivalry.

Teams for the table-tennis competition were arranged. Bessie, of course, was out of that, though she really believed herself to be a first-class player. Ada, because of her injured foot, was also out of it, a decision which brought a pout of disappointment to Ada's lips, for if there was one game she was really fond of, it was table tennis.

They decided it should take the form of four doubles matches, with a fifth as decider, if necessary. Whoever won would be entitled to the choice of route for to-morrow's race.

To win the right to the river road was now a point of honour. It was true that both roads were about the same distance, but the river road was much the easier of the two, because it cut out the rather stiff hill which lay between the camp and the copse. If Ada's heel was not well enough, they decided, Ada should accompany her team on a cycle, though she would not be included in the race.

And now, keyed up to a pitch of excitement, they repaired to the great, glass-roofed recreation-room, where half a dozen games were already in progress. Clara chuckled.

"We go off first, and mind you play up!" she said. "Make it hot for them!"

Janet smiled a little. Back at Cliff House she and Clara were adjudged undisputed champions at table tennis, their only rivals in junior school, indeed, being Barbara Redfern and Christine Wilmer—and was Christine a walk-over for them.

As it was, Janet, though to be sure still worried, opened none too steadily. But Clara, in top form, simply smashed her way through the game, and first point was to the Blues. In the next game, however, Babs, playing with Mabs as her partner, was up against a tough proposition in Chrissie Longmore, and another girl named Lucy Day. By an odd point they lost.



"One—one," chortled Chrissie. "Next players, please! Marjorie and Lorna on your side, is it, Babs? Peggy and Anne on ours."

They all gathered round as the game commenced. Other guests in the camp, seeing the Greens and the Blues at their rivalry again, came to watch. And again Cliff House went down.

"Two—one!" Chrissie cried. "Phew! This is getting exciting. Forward the next pair!"

The next pair were Leila and Jemina—and Leila was brilliant. Cliff House won that, making the score two all.

"Right! Then we have the decider!" Chrissie cried. "Whoops girlies, the match of the holiday! Clara, you and Janet are your champions, aren't you? You play Lucy and me. Now watch!" she said.

"And get ready to cheer the Blues!" Clara laughed.

For a moment Janet's face wore a hunted expression.

"Janet, we want you for the deciding game," Babs said.

"Oh goodness! Can—can't somebody else play?" Janet asked.

"But, Janet, you're Clara's partner!" Babs said in astonishment.

"I know. But—but couldn't you take my place?" Janet urged. "I—I've got to go out."

"Important?" Babs asked.

"Well, yes, in a way."

"But, Janet, old thing, can't you cancel it?" Babs asked. "You know Clara wants you. She'll be awfully cross."

And then she paused again, noticing the almost harassed expression on her chum's face, reflecting all at once that Janet had not been her usual cheery self all the evening. "Janet, old girl, there's nothing wrong, is there?"

"Good gracious! What should be wrong?" Janet asked in surprise.

"Well, you don't seem yourself, you know," Babs said keenly. "Anything I can do, old thing?"

"No, Babs, no!" Janet said, but she gulped, and for a moment Babs had a distinct impression that she had been about to blurt something out to her. "N-no, of course not," she said hurriedly.

"Then won't you come and play this game? If you don't," Babs said, "everybody will want to know where you've gone, you know. It won't take long," she urged. "Go on, Janet—take your things off."

Janet hesitated. Well, she was in for it. The one thing she did not want to do now was to excite comment or curiosity.

There was quite a large and excited crowd round the table now; everybody was excitedly discussing the result of the fifth and final game.

Clara, however, was supremely confident, for having marked the skill of her opponents she reckoned that if Janet was in good form it would be certain victory for the Blues.

"Here we are, Janet—and remember—game of your life!" she chuckled.

"Watch me!" Janet said, and going to her place felt rather uneasy as she saw the smile Ron Eversligh gave her. Why, she wondered for a vague moment, was that fellow so interested in her?

Then Chrissie called service. She saw the white ball flash in front of her. Now, Janet, pull yourself together! She went into it.

No doubt, in Chrissie and Lucy, Janet and Clara had met foes worthy of their steel. First point to the

Greens; next to the Blues; next to the Greens, and so on, ding-dong.

But Janet was warming up now. Helped on by the cries of the crowd, by the knowledge that Clara was trusting to her, she played as if she were in competition on the tables at Cliff House. First game 21—16 in Cliff House's favour. Second game 21—19 in favour of the Greens. Excitement was at fever-pitch then.

"Last game!" Chrissie cried, swinging her bat in the air.

"No quarter," sang Clara Trevlyn. "Make the pace hot, Janet."

Janet breathlessly laughed. She was enjoying herself now. Fond of a keen contest such as this, the game had

paper, she turned towards Ron Eversligh. And then suddenly her blood seemed to fire. For Eversligh now was standing reading a paper, and that paper, folded, showed her a photograph.

It was the photograph of Len. On top of it was a line:

"Vanished Secretary Now Wanted by Police."

For an instant the paper seemed to dissolve in mist before Janet's feverish eyes. Came Clara's voice:

"Janet, you chump, look out!"

Janet looked, but she had not even seen the ball which beat her. In front of her the photograph seemed to be swelling to enormous proportions, the

"Thank You So Much," says

## HILDA RICHARDS

to ALL her correspondents. And here our popular author replies to just a few of them.



**JEAN WIGGINS (Eynsham, Oxford).**—Your very charming little letter reached me quite safely, Jean. But if you're writing again, here's my address in full: THE SCHOOLGIRL Office, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. You'd be in the Second Form if you went to Cliff House. Now, you won't be too shy to write to me again, will you, my dear?

**JEANNE ANGELA COOPER (Pitsmoor, Sheffield).**—Thank you so much for a very sweet "first letter," Jeanne. I do hope it won't have been your last one! You'd be in the Upper Third if you went to Cliff House. If you'd like to write to Patricia, her address is the same as my own. (It's in the little letter above.) I know she'll be delighted to hear from you. I've passed on your suggestion to our Editor, and he is going to make a large note of it.

**ENID GEORGE (Bristol).**—I was delighted to hear from you again, my dear. Thank you so much, Enid, for your good wishes to my dog, Juno. The darling is keeping very fit just now. I hope your own pet, Chum, is very well, too!

**SHELLA FREESTONE (Worthing, Sussex).**—Hope you received my letter safely, Shella! Here's the printed reply to which you were looking forward. I think I've answered all your C.H. questions in my letter, so here I'll just say I hope you are keeping well—and all your pet

budgerigars, too. Write again some time, won't you?

**BESSIE GEORGE (Victoria, Australia).**—Many thanks for writing again, Bessie. I was delighted to get your very nice letter! Evidently the concert your Form gave in aid of the Bush Fire Relief Fund was a great success, and I think you've every reason to congratulate yourselves. Tell me your latest news next time you write, won't you?

**CHRISTINA AND SHEILA HORNBY (South Shields, Co. Durham).**—So you would like to know which Forms you'd be in at C.H.? Well, Christina, you would be in the Upper Third, and you, Sheila, in the Second. Do write again, both of you, and tell me all about yourselves.

**PAULINE BRUCE (Northampton).**—When are you going to send me another of your nicely typed little letters, Pauline? I'm afraid it isn't possible to buy portraits of the C.H. chums to paste in your scrapbook, my dear. But you could cut out Mr. Laidler's excellent drawings, couldn't you? Very best wishes!

**BARBARA GOODE (Luton, Beds.).**—Thank you so much for a very sweet letter, Barbara. You'd be in the Second Form if you went to Cliff House. Babs is just 14 years and 6 months old—so you weren't far out in guessing her age, were you?

**JOSE JUKES (Birmingham).**—Delighted to hear from you once again, Jose. I wonder if you've heard from your Grammar School yet? Do let me know if you've passed your exam. Yes, I'm hoping to feature Faith Ashton from time to time in future stories.

**VIOLET HALL (Simla, India).**—So glad to hear from you, Violet. Patricia's address is the same as my own, c/o THE SCHOOLGIRL. The oldest girl at C.H. is unpopular Sarah Harrigan. She is 18 years and 9 months. The youngest is little Dolores Essendon, who is only 8 years and 4 months. Bye-bye for just now!

worked into her blood, momentarily banishing the cares and the worries which had descended upon her with the arrival of cousin Len. Again she saw Ron Eversligh regarding her; again she wondered vaguely why he smiled as he did. But now—

At it again! For the honour of Cliff House! For the honour of the Blues!

Whiz! came the ball from Chrissie—a difficult shot. But Janet, with a flying leap, smashed it back well beyond the Greens' reach. A joyful crow came from Cliff House.

"Topping, Janet! First point to us."

Janet laughed again. Oh, this was fun! But once again her eyes attracted to him by the movement of a

lettering above it taking on poster-type size. If anybody else should see that—if anybody—

"What the dickens is the matter with you?" Clara said crossly.

"Oh dear!" Janet said. "I—I'm sorry—"

She bit her lip. Oh goodness! She must concentrate, concentrate—and she tried to.

The next shot she did not miff, but again the photograph was hypnotising her. She couldn't play—she couldn't!

"Mr. Eversligh—" she broke out at last. "Oh dear! Would—would you mind putting that paper away?"

"Why, no," he said pleasantly, but again regarded her. "Anything offensive in it, Miss Jordan?" And while

Janet trembled, he puzzledly turned it over. "There," he said easily, "I'll put it in my pocket, shall I?"

And, folding it, he slipped it into the outside pocket of the linen jacket he wore. It may have been an accident that the photograph of Len Jordan, however, still stared at Janet from over the edge of the pocket.

She was shaking now. But she must—must pull herself together.

For some minutes she tried to, but the effort was a weak one. In the middle of it Ron Eversleigh, with a curious stare toward her, walked out, the paper still in his pocket.

Desperately Jane rallied herself, and for a time played really well, if not at her best.

But it was too late. The game ended with Chrissie and Lucy easy winners by a large margin of points.

"And so," Chrissie whooped, "that settles the route. The river road for us, girls! Ha, ha! Thought you could play table-tennis, Cliff House?"

"Oh rats!" Clara retorted.

"Janet—"

"I—I'm sorry!" the scarlet Janet muttered.

"You jolly well ought to be!" Clara said. "You played like a kid from the Second Form!"

"Yes, rather, you know! You jolly well let us down!"

Janet turned away. She felt that if anybody said anything else to her she would cry out, so great was her disappointment and her mortification.

### Even Her Chums Were Angry!



IT seemed that the most perverse of fates was dogging the footsteps of Janet Jordan.

She left the tennis table with a sense of mortification for her own haphazard play, with the sure knowledge that she had let down her side, and with the impression that, though they tried not to show it, her chums were all resentfully disappointed in her. She was also worrying about that paper which she had seen in Ron Eversleigh's pocket. Supposing that got about?

In no mood to be calm at the table, she forced herself to be calm then. Well, what if it did? she asked herself. None of her friends knew Len Jordan—not even Clara. Jordan, after all, was not such an unusual name, and though the coincidence of names might create idle comment in some, nobody was really going to associate her with an absconding secretary. Silly, those fears, as she saw now.

All the same, the most vital thing now was to see Len and warn him of to-morrow's adventure.

As soon as she could, she set out to do that. She was just on her way out when Mr. Mackenzie called to her. With Mr. Mackenzie was Anne Marchant, the champion swimmer among the Greens, and Anne, who knew that Janet was Cliff House's junior champion, was smiling. Janet smiled back, though she had to force it.

"Miss Jordan," the manager said, "could we have a word with you? I think you'll be interested."

There was no help for it. Janet, most dreadfully afraid of exciting comment or suspicion, stepped into the office, and with his face a-beam, Mr. Mackenzie unleashed the news.

On Saturday, he said, there was going to be a kiddies' swimming gala in the camp, and as Anne and Janet

were the respective champions of their blocks, would they get together and think up some novel stunt calculated to amuse the kiddies?

That, of course, meant bringing Babs in—Babs was always jolly good at those ideas.

So Babs was sent for, and Chrissie was sent for. By the time all the suggested schemes had been talked over, it was bed-time—and Janet had no real reason for excusing herself to her chums. Only thing for it was to sneak out during the night.

But there she was disappointed. For it was madcap Clara's idea that the Blues should raid the Greens in the middle of the night.

Janet had to take part in that, of course. The raid itself was a whooping success. Armed with pillows, the Blues not only succeeded in completely surprising the sleeping Greens—they chased them out of their chalets and half round the block before, cornering them against the fence, they forced them to cry surrender.

A great and gallant victory, that—and one which, Bessie Bunter suggested, was worthy of a celebration. Recklessly they celebrated, all crowding into Janet Jordan's chalet for the purpose, where Bessie had a secret hoard of ginger-pop, cakes, chocolates, and fruit. A merry meal that was in truth—except that Janet's heart was secretly burning to have it done with so that she could get away.

But alas for the Cliff House lack of caution! In the middle of it the Greens, determined on reprisals, crept up and locked them in.

And nine not-so-victorious girls were forced to share the cramped quarters of one chalet for the rest of the night.

All good fun, of course. All fair and above board. And because they felt they had had the lion's share of the day's fortunes, in spite of that reverse, the chums accepted it all in good humour. But Len still remained unwarned when daylight broke at last, and the Cliff House party were released, and there was time to do just absolutely nothing before the great race to No Man's Manor commenced.

Rather desperate was Janet then. And rather desperate now was the plan she had in mind. Perhaps it was just as well for Babs & Co. that they did not guess her intention.

In high feather they changed after breakfast into shorts and jerseys for the run. All of them, except Bessie, were taking part—for Bessie, in a stern chase as this was going to be, would have been more than useless. Flushed, smiling, and eager, they certainly made an attractive picture when they were all dressed for the fray. At the appointed meeting place—which was the courtyard not far from the camp—they made their way, and with them went Mr. Mackenzie, who was to start the race. Early as they were, Chrissie Longmore & Co. were there before them. With Chrissie was Ada—and Ada had her cycle.

"Well, here we are," Chrissie said. "All ready, eh? Not," she added, with a sniff, "that it will be much of a scrap. Blessed if I see why you don't hand the flag over now."

"Bow-wow!" Clara said good-humouredly. "Get on with the washing. This is our road. That's yours."

"And no short-cutting, mind," Chrissie warned.

"Stuff! We don't belong to the Greens."

"Look here—"

"Whoa, steady!" Mr. Mackenzie said. "Save your breath, girls! You'll need it. Now, just before you

start, let's repeat the rules of the race. The race is to No Man's Manor—the Blues taking the hill road, and the Greens, the river. Right?"

"Right it is," Jemima chirruped. "And the first girl to ring the haunted bell, wins the flag for her party!"

"That's it," Babs laughed. "Right—ho! Then line up!"

They lined up, watched by a grinning crowd which had deserted the camp to watch the start. Tense, on tiptoes, Cliff House stood, grinning at each other.

Then Mr. Mackenzie raised his pistol. Bang!

"We're off! Go it!" shrieked Chrissie.

"Up the Blues!" cheered Jemima. "Tally-ho! Whoa-hoa! Steady, the Buffs! Look at Janet!"

"Janet—" yelled Clara.

For Janet had shot away like a streak of light.

She ran, not as if she were starting a race, but as if she were putting on the last tremendous do-or-die spurt which meant to win it. And as Janet was reckoned among the best four athletes in junior school at Cliff House, that pace was terrific.

She reached the end of the road a good hundred yards ahead of her chums. Her face was pale as she ran, her hands fiercely clenched. But once out of sight she broke away from the road, cutting swiftly through a little strip of woodland. That, she knew, would reduce her distance by a quarter of a mile, at least.

And when Clara & Co. rounded that bend, they gasped. For in front of them was a three hundred yards stretch of clear road. Janet was not even visible.

"My hat, she must have sprouted wings!" Clara gasped.

Babs nodded. But she looked a little uneasy. Had Janet taken a short cut through the woodland?

But Babs, if she guessed that, said nothing, though she felt just a little concerned. Definitely, Janet Jordan was behaving very queerly these days!

They went on. Now Janet, well away, had slackened down. Even she, energetic as she was, could not maintain her own cracking pace for long. Now she had reached the fields, with beyond them the river and the road which was the Greens' route. A hundred yards away, running steadily, she saw them.

On, on. Janet did not look round. A good two miles she ran, her breath rasping in her throat, her chest heaving in the stress of her efforts. Then at last she reached the green trees of the copse which surrounded No Man's Manor. Dodging through those trees, she presently swung in through the forlornly rusting bronze gates which had once been the manor's chief pride. As she did so, there came a hail behind her.

"Come on, girls!" Janet gasped. That voice belonged to Chrissie Longmore. The Greens were on her heels!

Janet set her teeth as she started up the drive. Now she had reached the outer door of the manor. One desperate push, and it gave before her fingers. Not fifty yards behind her the first of the Greens were bursting through the trees.

What to do? Len was upstairs—in the room next to the belfry.

In a moment of crisis the human mind works fast. So Janet's did now. Almost at once she had her campaign of action cut and dried, and fortun-



ately she was aided in that plan by having visited the manor before. In front of her was a room, with an inner door leading to the belfry. Both outer and inner doors were fitted with a key, and Janet, diving into the room, locked the inner door, removed the key, and darted out.

Then, just as footsteps sounded on the weed-grown drive, she dived behind a tattered curtain.

Not a moment too soon.

Chrissie, with a whoop, came in, her followers strung out behind her. After them cycled the injured Ada, descending from her machine now to join in the chase.

Straight to the room which led to the belfry Chrissie rushed, and the next moment the last of the Greens had followed.

Janet leapt from her hiding-place. In a moment she had caught the door, and bang! it went as she slammed it to. Click! went the key, as feverishly she turned it in the lock. From the other side came a shrill cry in Anne Marchant's voice.

"My hat, did you see that? Janet Jordan again! And she's locked us in!"

Janet took no notice. Desperately she raced to the stairs and scrambled up them, pausing only for an instant to glance through the landing window to gulp again as she saw Babs & Co. emerging from the trees. Then up again, bursting into the room on her right.

Len Jordan, his face white and startled, jumped up.

"Janet!"  
"Len—quickly!" Janet cried.  
"You've got to get out of this! Hide those books—quickly! Now lock the door and keep the key. The place is swarming with girls. You've got to get out of here!"

"But—but, Janet—"

"Down the back stairs!" Janet hissed urgently. "Outside you'll find a bike. Grab it. Get to the woods as quickly as you can. Make for the old well—over there." She pointed through the window. "Wait there for me."

She fairly threw him out of the room, twisting him towards the back stairs, just as Clara, with a boisterous shout, led the Cliff House party through the front door.

Meanwhile, Janet and Len were desperately running down the back stairs to slip out and round to the front of the house, where Janet seized up Ada Chance's bicycle.

"Now, Len, quickly!" she panted.

He nodded. With a leap he was on his way. Janet watched until, slightly wobbling—for Len and a cycle had parted company on the day of his accident—he plunged into the wood and disappeared. She felt almost faint with relief then.

Meantime, Babs and Clara, racing ahead of the others, had reached the belfry by a different route down the hall. Clara's face was red with exultation as she unfastened the bell-rope.

"Done them!" she cried. "My hat, won't the Greens look sick! Stand back, everybody! Here speaks the voice of the ghost."

She tugged, and from above them in the belfry came a sonorous clanging sound that made the walls shiver.

"Again!" Babs cheered.

Clang!

"And again!" hooted Babs. "I say, let's have a pull! Come on, Blues!"

Clang, clang, clang!

Merrily the bell tolled, awakening the echoes. Semina had to have a pull, then Lettie, then Marjorie, until the room was full of clanging echoes, and

the air for yards around was vibrating in the aftermath of the peals. Then, rosy and laughing, they desisted.

"Who says the Blues aren't cocks of the walk now?" crowed Lorna Bayford.

"But, say, where are the Greens?" Leila Carroll grinned. "Not still toddling, surely?"

And then, as they all paused, struck by the prolonged absence of their rivals, there came a furious thumping from below, followed by shouts.

"Let us out! Let us out!"

Babs jumped.

"My hat, that's Chrissie! Hallo!" she shouted. "Where are you?"

"Here, in a room!" Chrissie's muffled voice came back. "Your beastly friend Janet locked us in!"

"Janet!" Clara cried, with a jerk.

"My hat, yes—where is she?"

"Come on!" Babs cried.

She was pelting away to reach the locked door, just as Chrissie again furiously thumped. One swift turn of the key and the door flew back. Chrissie & Co.'s glowering faces, bitter and angry, stared at them.

"A nice trick!" Chrissie choked.

"I must say, if this is your idea of sportsmanship—" Peggy Cartwright said bitterly.

"Hold on! We know nothing about this!" Babs said.

"But your treacherous pal Janet Jordan does. She locked us in!" Edda Shortt glowered.

The Cliff House chums exchanged dumbfounded looks.

"A nice way of winning, I must say!" Anne Marchant cried.

"But—but—" Babs began. "Oh rats! Janet wouldn't do it!"

"But Janet did do it!" Chrissie's eyes glowed. "We saw her."

"Then," Clara said, "Janet got here first, anyway. That makes us winners. All the same, it's not like Janet," she said, with a frown, "and she must have put on a heck of a spurt—"

"She must have taken a short cut, you mean!" Edda Shortt said. "Anyway, it isn't fair to grab the flag like this!"

The Cliff House chums looked at each other. No doubt now that Janet had locked their rivals up, and there was little room for doubt, either, that Janet had not raced strictly according to the agreed rules in getting here first. She must have taken that short cut through the woodland.

"Well," Babs shook her head. "I—I'm sorry!" she said sincerely. "Honestly we had no intention of playing a trick on you. But, tell you what," she offered generously, "just to call it square you can keep the flag for the day."

Chrissie flushed.

"Oh stuff!" she said. "Dash it, we're not complaining because you've won; we're complaining because of what Janet did. No, you keep the flag. You'll need to before we've finished. At the same time," she added, with a flash of resentment, "we still don't think much of Janet Jordan. That's the second time she's played us an un-sporting trick."

"Well, I'm blessed if I can understand it!" Clara said. "Anyway, let's find her. We haven't seen her here, you know. Janet!" she cried.

They went outside, all feeling a little annoyed. And suddenly there came a hail from Ada.

"My bike—"

"Your bike!"

"It's gone! Look, I left it there! Somebody's stolen it!"

Faces, resentful before, became angry then.

"Janet again," Chrissie said furiously. "Oh, stuff! Hold on," Clara said. "Give Janet a chance to speak for herself. She—hallo," she added, starting, for a figure, wheeling a bicycle, had appeared from the woods. "That is Janet—"

"And my bike!" Ada cried. "With a buckled front wheel!"

Babs & Co. stared again, feeling as if they had been suddenly doused with cold water. For Janet it was, and Ada's bicycle had a badly damaged front wheel. Poor Len, alas, unused to cycling and spurred on to a reckless speed, had collided with a tree.

In a rather grim group they all waited until Janet came up. Her face was scarlet.

"I—I—I—" she said.

"You—you cat, Janet!" choked Ada.

"I—I'm sorry," Janet mumbled.

"I—I had—that is to say, there's been an accident—"

"And it was an accident, I suppose, that you locked us in the room downstairs?" Chrissie asked.

"W-well—" Janet said hesitantly.

"And an accident, I suppose, that you got here before anybody else?" Peggy Cartwright asked contemptuously.

Janet's face became as red as a brick.

"Well—well, you see—"

"Well, we don't see!" Chrissie said. "We think you're tricky and mean, Janet Jordan. And," she added bitterly, "if this is the spirit in which you're going to carry on, you can keep the rotten flag for good! We don't mind fun and we don't mind playing jokes, but we draw the line at the sort of stunts you're playing, Janet Jordan. Come on, kids; let's get back," she added.

"But—but—" Janet stuttered. "Oh, I'm sorry, girls. I'm sorry about your bike, too, Ada. Let me run back and get you mine?"

Ada glowered. Janet turned beseechingly to her chums. But for once they were not looking at her. It seemed, for the moment, that the disgust of her own chums was as great as that of their rivals.

## Not Safe, After All!



**B**Y lunch-time, however, the faint atmosphere of hostility which had been evident between the Blues and the Greens had disappeared.

No doubt, now the mischief was done, that Janet was frightfully sorry. No doubt that the Greens were sporting in refusing to accept the surrender of the flag.

It was when Janet, taking the law into her own hands, went over to the Greens and made a whole-hearted apology, followed afterwards by ices and drinks all round, that the atmosphere melted once again. So utterly sincere was Janet in that apology that the Greens, having recovered from their disappointment then, could do nothing but graciously accept it.

"But," warned Chrissie, "no more funny business, Janet."

"No," Janet promised.

And so that was that, and rivals were friends again, though the Cliff House chums could not altogether rid themselves of the feeling that they were not really entitled to hold the flag.

To aid in the smoothing over of matters, both the Greens and the Blues were invited into Mr. Mackenzie's office just before lunch. Again the talk was all of some stunt to help the lighter swimming gala day, and it was Janet

restoring herself fully to favour by that means, who suggested the big idea.

A human otter hunt.

It sounded fun even before she embarked on the details. But the details themselves were so full of the promise of further fun that Greens' and Blues' imaginations were captured like wild-fire.

Briefly the idea was that Janet should be the otter. The hunt would take place in the swimming pool, with the Blues protecting her from the Greens, who were to be the otter hunters. Janet, as the otter, was allowed to do anything to avoid capture, providing that anything was confined to the bounds of the swimming bath. And if, at the end of a quarter of an hour, she had not been captured, then she had won.

"And that means," Babs cried with a sudden burst of inspiration, "that the winners keep the flag for the day."

"Good wheeze!" Chrissie said. "Yes, rather! But what about some sort of practice or rehearsal?"

"Right-ho," Babs agreed. "This afternoon?"

But Mr. Mackenzie shook his head at that.

"To-morrow," he said; "the pool is free then. This afternoon we're running off the heats of the various races so that we can stage the finals for the kiddies' gala. Make it to-morrow."

So made to-morrow the date was, both parties breaking up in great jubilation.

Janet herself was happy then. Things, after all, would not be so bad. That morning she had had a talk to Len, who was thrilling with the success he felt within his grasp. Len, by this time, would be back in No Man's Manor, and it was unlikely that he would be disturbed again. Meantime Janet had promised to take him some much-needed food this afternoon.

A bit of a problem getting away from her chums, for Bessie Bunter, always thinking up appetising schemes, had suggested a picnic and baths on the seashore that afternoon. But Janet got out of it on a plea that she was going to get Ada's bicycle repaired, and when finally the Blues and the Greens, in perfect harmony, went off together to rag and picnic by the sea, it was Janet who stayed alone in the Blues' lines.

So far, so good.

As soon as the others had vanished, Janet dressed herself. A very pretty floral-design print dress she put on, with a wide-brimmed, cool-looking straw hat as a contrast, and having taken possession of Ada's cycle, marched off to the village of Pinebay, where she could get the machine repaired and buy food for Len at the same time. It was while she was in the cycle repairing shop that Mr. Venables came in with his wife and son.

Mr. Venables was a popular figure in the camp and a man who took his pleasures seriously. Among other things, he had a passion for archaeology, particularly for old buildings.

"Ah, Miss Jordan." He smiled at her. "Just the girl I wanted to see. I heard you and your friends went over No Man's Manor this morning?"

Janet looked at him quickly.

"Yes, we did."

"Got a fancy for looking over it myself," Mr. Venables nodded. "Had an idea, you know, of making up a party from the camp to motor over and explore it. Might find some interesting things there, eh? Do you think the river road is best?"

He could never have guessed the alarm which filled Janet as she replied:

"Oh, quite! But—but it's haunted, you know."

He laughed heartily.

"Thanks; we'll have the ghost!" he chuckled. "It will be fun trying to hunt him, though, of course, we shan't find anything—one never does. Care to join the party, Miss Jordan?"

But Janet, her heart filled with sudden alarm, declined that invitation. Oh, goodness, what a blow! With a horde of interested amateur archaeologists exploring every nook and cranny of No Man's Manor, Len's position, to say the least, would be precarious. Obviously now, since No Man's Manor had become such a sudden centre of attraction, a new hideout must be found.

Where?

Janet pondered. Some place away from the crowd—some place where people did not go. And it was as she was riding back to the manor on Ada's newly repaired machine that, glancing out to sea, she got the idea.

A mile out, rather grim-looking, bare, and barren except for a few trees and an old hut, was Albatross Island—a bleak and desolate spot in truth, utterly deserted and uninhabited. Not long ago Janet had explored it with her chums.

There it stood now—a great, smooth rock jutting out of the sea like a missile carelessly dropped from some giant hand.

Janet, seeing it, smiled. Her quest was at an end. That should be Len's future hiding-place until his self-imposed task was finished.

Happily she rode on, and presently she was in No Man's Manor, talking to Len, who greeted her with enthusiasm.

"Given twenty-four hours—perhaps less," he told her—"I think I've got him, Janet. In fact, I think I've got him now, but there are one or two details I want to verify. No names, no pack-drill, until that happens."

"Oh, good!" Janet laughed. "Jolly good! I—I'm so glad, Len. But now let me tell you something. You've got to move from here—and move right away! The place is getting too popular since we put it on the map this morning."

The boy listened in silence to what she had to say and the alternative hiding-place she suggested. Then he nodded.

"Right-ho, old girl, I'm in your hands! But when does the event take place?"

"No time," Janet said, "like the present. We can hire a boat down at Silver's Cove. Better put my sunglasses on just as a bit of disguise," she added, "and pack your books in the bag. Let's go."

They went. In Silver's Cove they had no difficulty in hiring a boat, and, having deposited Len on the island, Janet rowed back, returning by way of the headland. She handed the boat back to its owner, allowing him to understand that she had dropped her friend at some point on the other side of the headland.

Well, that was all right, though it was getting late. The chums would be back now and would want to know where she had been. Still, Janet did not mind that. Len was safe. Len would remain safe now until he was in a position to prove his innocence. Retrieving Ada's bike, which she had hidden in the bushes near Silver's Cove, she finally made camp.

And almost the first person she saw when she reached there was Ron Everslight.

He stood at the door of the chalet he

occupied, facing the sea, and had a long telescope glued to his eye. As she approached him he lowered it, and again Janet's heart knew a faster beat as his eyes fastened upon her.

Just for a moment she wondered if he had seen anything on that island—for at the island the telescope had been directed.

"Hallo, Miss Jordan!" he said. "Had a good afternoon?"

"Topping, thank you," Janet said. "Have you?"

"Oh, quite interesting!" He smiled again. "Just having a look at the scenery through Long Tom here. Pretty powerful instrument, and pretty interesting some of the things it shows." He looked at her intently, and again Janet's heart knew that uneasy leap. "That island, for instance," he added thoughtfully. "You know, a few moments ago I could have sworn I saw someone moving about on it."

Janet tried to control the fluttering of her pulses.

"But—but there's no one on there, is there?" she asked.

"Not officially—no." Again he looked at her—thoughtfully, penetratingly; a trifle mockingly, too, Janet thought. "Anyway, see what you can see," he invited.

Janet steeled herself. How much had Everslight seen? Then, peering through the telescope, she jumped. The island seemed to leap at her.

She saw it clearly; saw the hut, fortunately half hidden in a little dell. Len was in that now. Len, if he obeyed her instructions, would remain in it, and there was little fear of his being detected, even with the telescope, during the daytime. But she still had an uneasy idea that Everslight's suspicions were aroused.

"It is—rather wonderful, isn't it?" she said lightly. "Still, I don't see anything unusual, and—Hallo, that's Babs calling me!" she added, as Babs, suddenly spotting her, let out a pealing holler.

Janet hurried off, leaving Everslight staring after her. Conscious, though she did not look round, that his eyes followed her every step, she reached Chalet No. 13, to find Babs & Co. and Chrissie & Co. still together and all in a state of great excitement.

"Hallo!" Babs said. "See you've got the bike. Looks good, too. But where have you been?"

"Oh, just cycling!" Janet replied. "I felt like trying the old bike out, you know. But what's the excitement?" she added, smiling from one to the other.

"We've been challenged, again," Babs said.

"Oh!" Janet cried.

"To-morrow. We've fixed everything," Babs said. "Mr. Mackenzie says we can have the two camp boats from nine till ten, and the Blues and Greens are going to have a race to decide who shall hold the flag for the sixth day. Chrissie's suggestion."

"And," Chrissie said eagerly, "won't we make you bite the dust—or the salt, in this case!"

"And after that," Marjorie said, "we're going to have the rehearsal!"

"Topping!" Janet beamed. "But wait a minute, don't rush on from one thing to another. Where are you going to race to?"

"Oh, yes—that!" Babs laughed. "We've got a ripping idea. We're going to race to Albatross Island," she said, and then jumped in alarm. "Janet!" she cried. "Janet, old thing, what's the matter? You've gone as white as a sheet!"



But Janet could only stare. She knew she was white, and in that moment she was incapable of speech. It seemed she had dragged Len out of the frying-pan only to land him completely in the fire.

least, seemed to be viewing events in a quietly satisfied way.

"Janet," Babs cried, "what's the matter?"

Chrissie glowered bitterly.

"Matter?" she cried. "Your precious friend's only scuttled both our boats!"

"What?"

Babs & Co. looked so utterly thunderstruck that the Greens, from that moment, could hardly believe that this was a concerted scheme of their rivals.

"Well, we've caught Janet," Chrissie said. "We caught her deliberately sinking the boats. She'd taken the bung out of each of them. The race can't take place now, and I think it's downright mean the way you Blues try to wriggle out of everything by these sort of tricks. Yesterday you got the flag under false pretences—"

"Chrissie, please!" Babs interjected. "That's wrong! We know nothing about this. We were just as

could she tell them that, as a last desperate resort to prevent them visiting the island on which her hunted cousin was working out his innocence, she had taken this extreme measure? She turned away.

"Janet!" Babs called.

"Oh, rats! Let her go!" crossly grumbled Clara.

"But—"

"No, Babs, perhaps it is better," gentle Marjorie suggested hesitantly; and Babs, seeing the wisdom of that, did not call again.

Janet had reached the cliff path, when Ron Eversleigh overtook her.

"Miss Jordan," he said softly.

Janet paused.

"Miss Jordan, please!" His tone was urgent. "Just a minute, I'm rather serious!"

And Janet, feeling she had to face the hidden challenge which was in his tone, if not his words, stopped. "You didn't want your friends to go to the island, did you?" he asked slyly.

Janet felt her face drain of colour.

### How Much Did He Know?



"FALL in, the Blues!" called Barbara Redfern cheerily. "Hey, where's Janet?"

Nobody, however, had seen Janet Jordan since breakfast.

The time was the following morning, and the chums, hurrying back from their meal, had changed into their swim-suits for the all-important race to Albatross Island. Down in the cove the two boats—brand new—stood awaiting them, as each boat could only accommodate six persons three of the



"QUICK! Down the back staircase! You've got to get out of here!" Janet panted, but even as she gave her startled cousin a push along the corridor, Clara led the rest of the Cliff House party through the front door.

party had to play the role of spectators. The Greens had departed a minute or two ago.

"Where is Janet?" Babs cried exasperatedly.

"Dunno," Clara said. "Blessed if I know where that giddy eel gets to these days. Perhaps she's gone down to the beach already, and, anyway, if she doesn't turn up, Lorna can take her place. Let's get off."

"And mind," Babs warned, "you pull every ounce out of yourself."

But when they reached the beach—what a change in their enthusiasm; what a different spectacle from the one they anticipated! In place of the cheery crowd of Greens, they found their rivals bitterly antagonistic. And those glorious boats—there they were, completely waterlogged about fifteen feet from the shore.

"Why, what the merry dickens—" Clara began, and then stopped. "Janet!" she cried.

For Janet, too, was there. Janet, in fact, was the central figure of the scene upon which they had burst. She was facing Mr. Mackenzie, who looked furious. And near Mr. Mackenzie, gazing on with a quiet smile, was Ron Eversleigh. He, at

least, seemed to be viewing events in a quietly satisfied way. "Janet," Babs cried, "what's the matter?" Chrissie glowered bitterly. "Matter?" she cried. "Your precious friend's only scuttled both our boats!"

"Well, we've caught Janet," Chrissie said. "We caught her deliberately sinking the boats. She'd taken the bung out of each of them. The race can't take place now, and I think it's downright mean the way you Blues try to wriggle out of everything by these sort of tricks. Yesterday you got the flag under false pretences—"

"Chrissie, please!" Babs interjected. "That's wrong! We know nothing about this. We were just as

keen as you were to race. But—but, seeing that everything wasn't so satisfactory yesterday, we're willing to let you claim the flag to-day."

Chrissie hesitated. She looked at her followers. Keen they were to have the flag—especially as having it for the sixth day would bring them on level terms with Babs & Co.

"Well"—and Chrissie smiled—"well, that—that's decent of you—jolly decent! Right-ho! Just to level things up then, we accept the surrender of the flag. At the same time," she added darkly, "we aren't satisfied about Janet Jordan."

Neither, apparently, was Mr. Mackenzie. He was raging.

"And this, Miss Jordan, is the very last time," he was saying. "I have been very tolerant of your rivalry with Miss Longmors and her friends, but when it gets to the stage where camp property is not safe, I must protest. If there is any more of this sort of thing—well, I shall have to ask you to leave the camp."

Janet's face whitened. Babs flushed. Her chums flushed too, resentful, and being judged for Janet's action. Janet herself, for the moment, dared not look them in the face. How

Again she experienced that trembling stab of dread.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

He shrugged.

"Isn't it evident? Miss Jordan, why didn't you want your friends and your rivals to go to the island?"

Janet's heart was racing; but she boldly faced him.

"Must I answer to you for my actions, Mr. Eversleigh?"

"No. Of course not." He smiled again—a smile that was tigerish somehow, yet soft and gentle at the same time. "Not at all," he said soothingly. "One likes to speculate upon these things, that's all. For instance, I have been reading in the paper lately about a namesake of yours—a fellow named Leonard Jordan."

A quiver she could not conceal went through Janet's frame. He saw it, and she hated herself for having betrayed her feelings.

"I thought, perhaps he might be some relation," he said lightly.

"Rather a queer thought struck me. Absurd, of course—but absurd things do strike one. This fellow, Len Jordan has been traced by the police to Waterloo Station. They have

(Continued on page 14)

# OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS



*PATRICIA is your very own friend who writes to you each week. To-day she tells you about her holiday, and lots of other "tit-bits" of news—all in that chummy way so typical of her. No wonder you all look forward to her letters so much.*

**I** THINK we all know that it's sheer folly to bathe directly after a biggish meal, don't we?

In fact, it's positively dangerous, so mind none of you do it this holiday, says your Patricia, very sternly.

I expect you all have a favourite time for a bathe during the day when you are away at the sea.

This Patricia of yours likes to swim best about half-past eleven. By that time I am all toasted up by the sun, and am just ready to plunge in without any squeaks because the water's cold—as it most certainly is.

Then out I come again, have a good rub down, change into a dry bathing suit or shorts, and lie in the sun for a little. And then back to the farm we go for lunch. And, my goodness, does that before-lunch bathe make me hungry!

There are other people on the beach, who say they like their after-tea bathe the best.

The water's positively hot then, they insist.

And I must confess that it does always seem warmer about six o'clock or so, especially if the day has been fine.

But "tough" folks, of course, say there's nothing to be compared with the exhilaration of that early-morning dip before breakfast.

I'm quite sure they're right, too—but oh, how I do love my holiday snooze in bed!

## ● Two Bathing Caps

Much as I love bathing, I do hate getting my hair really wet. It looks such a sight afterwards.

As a schoolgirl I never used to mind, somehow—but perhaps that was because I didn't realise then, as I do now, how important hair is to one's precious good looks.

So these days I wear TWO bathing caps in order to protect my locks.

The first bathing cap is one of those really old-fashioned ones—with elastic through the edge. (But like a good many old-fashioned things, it does its job really well.) I look rather like one of those ladies in the comic postcards at this stage—but that cap certainly does keep the water out.

Then I swiftly pull my trim helmet over the "mob" cap—and am ready to face the people on the beach—and the sea!

My own is naturally wavy—thank goodness—as I think I've told you before, so I don't have to have any expensive perms, or anything like that.

But certainly the sea breezes have straightened out some of the ends.

So I've just not bothered or worried. That's the fun of a holiday, after all—to look all casual and carefree!

## ● For Play

Now for another holiday subject—holiday clothes, in fact.

Some of you, of course, still have your holidays in store, and are even now busy gathering all your precious dresses together.

At the sea what to wear isn't much of a problem—nor at a Holiday Camp. You just want swimsuits, play togs, and more play-togs.

You can have play-dresses, play-shorts, play suits, and play-skirts—the bigger variety the better.

You see this play-skirt in the picture? It could be run up in no time from a yard or so of material, gathered into a band to fit your waist, with straight shoulder-straps to fasten over your shoulders.

Or, of course, it could be made very easily from a last-year's summer frock that has grown too short, and too tight in the bodice. You snip the bodice right off, and use the material to make the straps. The skirt can be left open down the front, or joined—just as you like.

It can be worn over a bathing suit, over a plain dress, or over a blouse—and it would look just right any way!

## ● The Twins

At one school I was at, we had twins in my Form named Ethel and Doris.

These two were the funniest pair I've ever met. They'd quarrel with each other like anything. Yet if anyone else said something a bit critical to Doris, say, Ethel would defend her twin most furiously. And if one saw the other crying—well, she'd have a little weep, too!

What made me think of Ethel and Doris

to-day was that I have just been reading about a school in New York where TWO pupils came top in the exams.

That's unusual enough—for two to be bracketed first together.

But what makes it stranger still is that the two prize pupils are twins. And boy and girl twins at that!

## ● Poor Pa!

I also picked up a box of my father's matches this morning, and being keen to read anything, turned them over, seeing type on the back.

There was a joke there—which I pass on to you.

"Which is the longest river in the world, dad?" young Willie asked.

"Oh, I'm sure I don't know, son," replied father.

Willie groaned.

"And to think that to-morrow I may be punished for your ignorance!" he exclaimed.

Not bad, is it? A bit school-y, perhaps; but then, it won't hurt you to be reminded that school does exist—even if you are all busy trying to forget the fact!

## ● Nimble Toes

Here's a foot-beautifying exercise you should try out on the beach when you've got nothing to do.

Just lie back in your deck-chair, and hurl your hankie on to the sand at your feet. Now try picking it up with your toes, lifting it right into your lap.

This makes your toes nimble and exercises the arch of your foot at the same time. It's particularly good for the girl who has to admit (though in secret, perhaps!) that she's a bit flat-footed.

## ● Butterflies Gay

Now what about making these dainty little butterfly ornaments to go on a dress.

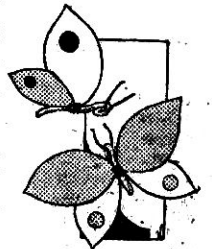
The wings are cut out of coloured felt—which requires no sewing. And the body part is made from some short pieces of pipe-cleaner, sewn to the "wings" with wool. Wool also makes the "feelers," and the spots can be made of contrasting coloured stitches.

A novel little "something to make" for you who like to be busy.

Happy days, my pets!

Your friend,

PATRICIA.





# FUN ON THE BEACH

Some games to play beside the sea when you're in a "what-shall-we-do-now?" mood.



**W**HEN your swims are over, and you've had your sun-bath, it's then that you start to think: "Now what shall I play?"

If there's a jolly crowd of young people to join in, of course, this question is soon settled.

But it's nice to be able to suggest a newish-sounding game occasionally, isn't it?

So what about "Clock Golf"?

This is good fun if you have a firm stretch of sand.

You should dig about twelve holes in a large circle and place twelve buckets—if you have them—in these, and give each a number, 1 to 12.

Each player takes it in turn to stand in the middle with a miniature golf club and a rubber golf ball—or spade and ordinary ball. The object is to see how many strokes you take to "putt" the ball into all of the buckets.

This game can be made much more "sophisticated" if you make a sort of miniature golf course along the beach—sandy bunkers, hillocks, rivulets of seawater, and obstacles of sea-weed. A spade or stick should mark each "hole," and the players go round one at a time, just as you would on the "Tom Thumb" course on the prom.

Aiming balls into buckets that are placed in a row is good fun, too—and not too strenuous, if you have someone behind the buckets to send the balls back again.

This is a game that looks so easy—but just isn't, when you come to try it.

Marks should be awarded to the players, and the one who loses be given the job of preparing the next game!

Hopscotch is fun, too, if the sand is smooth. You mark the pitch out with a stick, and hop a flat pebble along. The only trouble is that the sand-markings are so quickly hopped out.

But then, you can always make another "hop" if there's plenty of sand still before the tide comes in.

"Broken Bottles"—why it's called that I just don't know—is one of those ball games that's always a success on the sands. You stand the players in a wide circle and one girl in the middle, with a ball.

She must throw the ball to any girl she chooses—in no particular order.

If the ball is missed, then the "misser" must catch next time with only one hand.

If she misses again, she must kneel on one knee to catch with one hand. Then for each catch she makes, she is allowed to forget one of her punishments—unless she's very bad, and may eventually be trying to catch with her left hand, kneeling on both knees and with her back to the thrower.

But it seldom gets as bad as that!

"Hot Rice" is an old favourite, but it always seems new played on sands instead of in the school playground.

You require one large rubber ball and a spade—a wooden one.

One girl is the thrower, and she takes the ball. Another takes the spade; she is the "defender."

The object is for the girl with the ball to try to hit the girl with the spade—

anywhere between the knee and the shoulder. While the girl with the spade fends off the ball with her spade.

All the other players may run about as much as they like. The only person who must stand still is the "thrower"—when she is aiming the ball.

Anyone may rush to pick it up after this throw, and one who gets it is the next to throw. A player takes over the spade and is "defender" if she hits the present "defender."

For two players, "noughts and crosses" in the sand, or sand "Draughts" are other games that are good fun.

You just need a stick for playing noughts and crosses. But for "Draughts" you'll need twelve light coloured pebbles and twelve dark ones after you have marked out the board.

And, of course, you won't forget those old favourites:—

Rounders; cricket, tennis, catches, French cricket, etc.



## AS COOL AS A POOL

Some helpful  
suggestions by Patricia  
for when it's  
**REALLY hot!**

**I** HOPE we're having a really grilling heat-wave as you read this. But if not, perhaps it's worth keeping for when one does come along.

It's lovely to be warm. But the girl we envy when the thermometer is trembling in the eighties, and small boys attempt to fry eggs on the pavement, is the girl who manages to look cool.

The first thing to remember is not to fuss.

If you puff and blow and wheeze and groan you'll make yourself much hotter, for you see, you're using up your energy that way.

Of course, you can go and sit in the sea if you're away—but that isn't possible for all of us.

### FRESH AND FRAGRANT

The next best thing is to take a luke-warm bath. You'll be astounded how refreshing this is—even more so than a quite cold one.

Dry yourself gently and dust yourself with a little boracic powder afterwards. It'll make you feel so fragrant.

If your hands get very hot and sticky hold the wrists—the

back particularly—under the cold water tap. It makes you cooler all over.

Dab a spot of eau-de-Cologne or lavender water behind your ears, on your eyebrows, and a spot just below your nose (yes, really) if you are going a journey on a very hot day.

### LOTS OF AIR

Make sure that you have no tight tapes or elastic round your waist during a heat-wave. All garments should be loose, so that the fresh air can do its cooling work.

I don't need to tell you to have your windows wide open at night during heat-wave weather; do I?

But remember that a sprinkling of eau-de-Cologne—the cheap variety will do—on your pillow is very soothing and restful.

Sprinkle boracic powder—or ordinary starch—on the insides of your shoes, and socks, if you're wearing them. This is particularly comforting if you have plenty of walking or games on your list of "must-do's" in the hot weather.

Don't take any notice of people who say you shouldn't drink cold water when you're feeling pretty warm. You most certainly should. (The only time when it's not very good for you is when you're panting, after much exertion. But if you're wise, you won't be too energetic in a heat-wave.)

### WISE COOLTH

Keep your head cool, too, by wearing a shady hat, or scarf, if the sun is at its fiercest—particularly if you've got some thinking to do. A hot head most certainly isn't a very clear-thinking one.

But one word of warning. However hot you are, don't sit or rest in a draught. Fresh air—as much as you like—but never a draught. For there's a difference between keeping cool—and catching a summer cold.

(Continued from page 11)

found out he caught the 10.15 to Axminster."

"Well," Janet said, "that's far enough away from here."

"Quite!" He smiled again. "But the 10.15 to Axminster just happens to stop at this station en route," he added. "Easy enough for the fellow to have dropped off, don't you think? Miss Jordan, don't run away," he added.

But Janet was running desperately, shaken by a deadly distrust of Ron Eversleigh. Who was this man? What did he know? And, above all, why was he so watchfully concerned by her own actions?

### At the Height of the Fun



"IT'S funny. There's something definitely wrong with Janet," Babs said.

"What can the old chump have on her mind?"

Nobody replied, except Clara. And she only

gave a little grunt.

It was mid-morning, and the chums were stretched out on the lawns of the holiday camp in pretty sun-suits. Janet was not among them. Since the episode of the scuttled boats, indeed, nobody had seen Janet again.

"Pretty extraordinary thing to do, I guess," Leila Carroll opined after a pause.

Everybody nodded agreement. Extraordinary the thing certainly was. Why had Janet scuttled both boats—deliberately? Why, yesterday, had she taken the short cut to the manor in order to imprison the Greenites, and then forgotten to ring the bell?

"There's a reason for it, of course," Babs said.

Another grunt from Clara, whose tone plainly said: "Don't let's talk about it."

Still, Babs & Co. were not going to be downcast—or regretful. If they felt resentful against their chum, they were still on good terms with the Greens—those girls greatly mollified now that they had the flag. Babs rose and stretched herself.

"Say, time to be getting along to the pool," she said. "I wonder where that chump is? Look here, you trot along, will you? I'll go and dig her out."

"As you please," Babs said.

Babs rose. Phew, it was warm! It would be a real treat to splash in the cool waters of the pool. Without any real hope of finding Janet there, she went to her chalet, and was surprised to find her missing chum in the act of changing into her swim suit.

Janet flushed as Babs came in.

"Oh!" she said.

"Getting ready for the rehearsal?" Babs asked cheerily.

"Well, yes if—if you still want me?" Janet muttered.

"Janet, don't be an old goose! You know we're absolutely depending on you. Haven't seen anything of you since breakfast," she added.

"No. I—I'm sorry," Janet mumbled. "I—I didn't think you'd want to, after the beastly way I behaved—"

Babs looked at her.

"Janet, what made you do that?"

Janet shook her head.

"But you must have had a reason."

"Yes, I had a reason all right." Janet looked away. "But—but—Oh, Babs, I can't tell you now! To-

morrow, perhaps, I shall be able to. And—and I'll be jolly glad then. But—you don't mind if I keep my secret a day longer?"

Babs looked at her shrewdly.

"So there is a secret, eh?" she asked. "I guessed as much. Janet, old thing, you remember what I said. Can I help?"

"No, Babs—thanks all the same," Janet replied; but her eyes moistened with gratitude. "It—it's probably all right now," she added, "and I only hope you and the others will understand when I tell you things. But here I am—ready," she laughed, returning once more to her old gaiety. "Eleven o'clock, too. We shall have to hurry, Babs."

Babs laughed. Somehow she felt happier and more light-hearted for that little exchange of vague confidences. She opened the door, and into the sunshine they stepped, almost colliding with a resplendent young man who at that moment came sauntering along.

At sight of him Janet drew back, catching her breath in a sharp hiss of fear.

For the resplendent one was Ron Eversleigh.

Very debonair, very dashing Eversleigh looked, dressed from head to foot in yachting white. White trousers, white sweater, with his old school scarf carelessly thrown round his neck, and his hair brushed back, he looked as if he might just have stepped out of an outfitter's window. Under one arm he carried his telescope, and in the other hand a rope mooring line which suggested he was off on some sort of boating trip.

"Hallo!" he said, and looked at Janet through half-closed eyes. "Nice morning for a row," he said.

"And for a swim," Babs laughed. "We're just off to the pool. Come and join us?"

"Sorry. Something frightfully important to do!" And again he looked at Janet in that odd way which set her heart thumping. "Frightfully important," he repeated, with peculiar emphasis. "See you later."

With a nod he sauntered off, leaving Janet staring after him. Babs saw that she was trembling slightly.

"Why, what's the matter, Janet?" "Matter? Oh, nothing!" Janet said, but her face expressed the emotions she felt. "That man—I mean—Oh, come on," she added almost roughly, "let's get going!"

Babs followed, frowning a little. Odd! What was the link between Janet and Ron Eversleigh?

They reached the swimming pool, in the waters of which half the Greens, and Clara, Leila, and Jemima were already disporting themselves. Mr. Mackenzie, looking a little happier than when they had last seen him, was there, too, in company with the camp's matron, obviously keenly interested to see how things would work out. He nodded rather briefly to Janet, but the Greens, who had ceased to worry about things, accepted her friendly enough. By common consent no reference was made to the fracas of the morning.

"Well, here we are, all ready," Chrissie Longmore said excitedly. "Janet, you're going to be otter, and I warn you—from the word 'Go!' we're doing our best to catch you. Now what are the rules of the game?"

The rules of the game were explained. There were to be two teams of six girls each—and the otter herself. The Blues, of course, would act as protectors of the otter, endeavouring to

hamper the Greens in their chase of the otter. Two of each team would function from the sides of the bath, the remainder in the water. Janet, as the otter, could dodge in and out of the bath as she pleased.

"Good!" Chrissie said. "Right-ho! We'll take off from this side of the bath. You from the other, Babs. The otter dives in from the middle at the same time, I take it. Mr. Mackenzie, will you give us the off?"

They lined up, tensing now, eyes alight with fun, cheeks rosy with excitement. Mr. Mackenzie, watch in hand, nodded.

"Right! Off you go!"

As one, nine bodies hit the water, Janet immediately making towards Babs, Clara, Lelia, and Lorna, who formed the Blues team. Anne Marchant, easily the best swimmer among the Greens, came along the bath with flashing overarm strokes, easily outdistancing her team-mates from the minute she hit the water.

"Janet, look out!" Babs cried. But Janet also was an expert. Now, with Anne breaking through the Blue lines, it was skill against skill.

Three swift strokes she gave; then, turning like an eel, dived right at Anne, nudging her as she swam past. Anne, with a splutter, rolled over.

Fun! Now the game was getting exciting. Janet, all fear banished by action, was enjoying it as she set out to get the measure of each opponent. Now Chrissie was Janet's opponent, and as she darted for her, Janet turned and almost allowed her opponent to grab her. Then, as Chrissie's hand came out, she sank like a stone, and when her bewildered rival looked round again, there was Janet breaking water at the far end of the bath.

"Crumbs!" Chrissie gasped. "Who said this was an otter hunt? The girl swims like a fish!"

But Janet had yet another trick up her sleeve.

Again she offered herself as a tempting bait, and Anne and Chrissie swam towards her. Anne flung herself within a yard of Janet, who dived beneath her, and, coming up by the side of the bath, heaved herself out of the water, giving the Greens on the bank the opportunity to catch her. As one they ran forward. Janet, with a laugh, skipped to the diving-board and clambered up.

"Oh, my hat! Look at this!" Babs breathed, treading water.

The first high diving-board Janet passed, and the second. Now she was standing on the rigging which led to the fifty-foot board. Was she going to dive from there? After her scrambled the furious Greens.

Janet mounted to the top board, and they saw her pause. Chrissie, with a grin, came swarming up after her. For just a moment Janet chanced to look out to sea.

Like a vast lake she saw it spread out beneath her. She saw Albatross Island, a grey lump in its midst, and rowing towards Albatross Island a white figure in a boat. Even from that distance she recognised it.

Ron Eversleigh! Eversleigh was going to Albatross Island!

Blind fear gripped Janet then. Eversleigh knew her wanted cousin was on that island! Eversleigh was going to hound him down!

"Janet!" yelled Babs, scrambling out of the pool. "Look out! They're after you!"

Janet turned with a start to see the foremost Green only three rungs below the diving-board on which she stood.



Not a moment did she hesitate, but let herself fall outwards and downwards.

At once the other Greens jumped into the pool, while Babs & Co., divining their intention, did the same. They were all pushing at each other in the bath, when—crash! Janet hit the water, dived beneath the struggling captors and protectors, and, carried by her dive to the edge of the bath, caught at the rail. From Mr. Mackenzie came a cheer.

"Oh, fine—fine! Well done, Miss Jordan, well—Hey!" he cried.

For Janet, this time, did not stand to receive the challenge of the Greens. Instead, she darted, wet as she was, for the exit, and disappeared through it into the open.

"Well, mum-my hat!" stammered Clara. "What's she done that for?"

Chrissie, breathing heavily, glared.

"She's gone!" she announced. "She would spoil the fun!"

"Oh stuff! She'll come back," Mabs said.

But though they waited, wondering if this was some new stunt, no Janet reappeared.

wards the diving-board. The time had come when Janet's secret must no longer be allowed to jeopardize the happiness of the camp.

With or without Janet's consent, Babs was going to take a hand. Up the rigging she flew; past the first platform, on to the second. From there, with the sea spread below in a watery panorama, she gazed out.

Then she saw Janet—in a boat, rowing desperately towards the island. On the island, in the act of mooring up, was another boat, and Babs recognised Ron Eversligh. So that was it, eh? Janet, afraid of Eversligh, had seen him rowing to that island, and was following him.

She thought she could see now why Janet had scuttled the boats that morning. Janet had been afraid of the Blues and the Greens going to the island. For the same reason she was afraid of Eversligh visiting it now—Eversligh, whose faint mockery where Janet was concerned had puzzled Babs quite a lot.

Swiftly Babs turned, racing back to the ground.

a neat pile. Then he looked round for his case. As he did so a stealthy figure rose from a tall-growing clump of shrubs a few yards away, a figure the whiteness of whose desperate face was only equalled by the whiteness of his clothes. In three quick steps he had reached those books, and Jordan, warned by the sound, started round. His eyes goggled.

"Eversligh! You—here! What—what are you going to do with those books?"

"Burn them!" Eversligh snarled. "Clever, aren't you, Mr. Len Jordan? You never guessed I'd spotted your hide-out. Still, here we are"—and he snatched the books up.

Without a word Len hurled himself forward, and Eversligh gave a gasp as the lad's fist landed on his nose. Then, wielding the books as a missile, he brought them down upon Len Jordan's head. With a weak, stricken cry, Jordan collapsed, to fall in a heap. Eversligh, darting him one look, flew.

For about two minutes Jordan remained where he had fallen. His books—his precious books—



"WHY—Janet!" Babs cried. "What ever's the matter?" "Matter?" cried the leader of the rival girls in furious tones. "Your precious friend's only scuttled both boats so that we can't go to Albatross Island." Babs & Co. were dumbfounded, for Janet's manner clearly proved her guilt.

Chrissie's face became bitter. "We might," she said, "have expected something like this. And if Janet will do this sort of thing at rehearsal, what's she going to do tomorrow? I'm fed-up! How can we have confidence in a girl who's always acting like that? Babs, I'm sorry, but we're through. As long as Janet Jordan is in your team this stunt is off!"

Was She Too Late?



**B**UT Babs, at least, was not listening to that.

Astounded and bemused as she was by Janet Jordan's actions, her brain was working rapidly. She was remembering that pause of Janet's on the high diving-board. She was remembering that her face had been turned towards the sea. Out at sea Janet had seen something—something which had disturbed her.

What? Babs did not wait to answer that question. Instead, she swerved off to-

"Janet!" she gasped to her chums. "She's going to Albatross Island. Come on! We've got to follow her—at once!"

"EVERSLIGH!" MUTTERED Len Jordan. "Eversligh! By Jove, the boss' own son!"

Almost in stupefaction he stared at the figures, the letters, and the carefully taken finger-prints on which he had been working. The name of the traitor who had forged his books was there, undoubtedly proven before him.

All he had to do now was to show those books to the firm and he was cleared.

But Eversligh— He could hardly believe it even now, for Ron Eversligh was the son of his employer. Still, he should have been warned. He should have guessed by the tremendous interest which young Eversligh had been showing in his work lately that something was wrong.

Rather grimly Len Jordan's lips set then; rather scornful the flash in his eyes. Well, son of the boss or not, Ron Eversligh was not going to get away with this.

He sighed as he placed the books in-

valiantly he made an effort to rise, but with strength deserting him, fell back again. That villain—that scoundrel—to thwart him in the moment of his success!

If Eversligh burned those books—what hope, then, of proving his innocence?

He struggled up, only to reel and fall again. But as he fell he saw Eversligh two or three hundred yards away, feverishly collecting dry brushwood.

Then—what was that? A sound on the beach below. A sudden cry in a girl's voice—Janet's voice.

"Len!" "Janet!" he croaked. "Janet—quickly!"

A precious moment's pause. In that moment Len heard the crackle of Eversligh's bonfire as it burst into flame. Then Janet rushed up to him!

"Eversligh!" he gasped. "He's got the books! He's burning them. Janet, stop him, for goodness' sake! Don't—don't worry about me!"

Janet swung round. Then her face flamed. Two hundred yards away she saw the white-clothed figure stooping over the fire. Without another word she tore away.

Eversleigh, stooping over the fire on which he had just placed the books in pyramid fashion so that they would catch and burn more easily, jumped round with a cry as he heard her footsteps.

"You!" he cried. "Get back!"

But Janet ran on, straight for the fire. As Eversleigh, with a furious exclamation, rushed at her, she twisted with that same adroitness with which she had so easily defeated her Green pursuers in the swimming bath. One lunge of her foot had kicked the books to safety, and she dived at them.

Eversleigh, just as desperate as she was, made a plunge at the same time. The books had fallen on the very edge of the cliff, which was about thirty feet above the level of the swirling sea, notorious for its strong-pulling under-currents. Desperately Janet jumped.

Then—what happened? Janet could never remember. But as they both plunged for the books, they crashed together. Caught off his balance, Eversleigh went reeling, and Janet gave a hoarse cry as she saw him stagger on the edge of the cliff.

Too late Eversleigh made an effort to right himself. For one giddy split second he poised on the edge of the cliff. Then, with a cry, he went over. Shaking in every limb, Janet darted to the edge of the cliff. She saw the fear-crazed Eversleigh strike water. She saw, by the way he immediately sank, that he could not swim. Just for one more second she paused; then, as she spotted his horror-stricken face swirling beneath the surface, she took a header.

Splash!  
Babs & Co., rowing furiously towards the island, let out a shriek.

"Janet!"  
Janet, oblivious of her chums' approach, struck water, instantly feeling herself sucked under. Down, down, down she went. Something vague, shapeless, and inert was floating by her side. It was Eversleigh.

Almost by instinct she snatched out a hand, grabbing his collar.

With a sudden swift arm's thrust she dived downwards so as to get beneath the current. Something was pounding in her ears, knocking at her brain.

To a gasp and splutter she broke the surface, desperately treading water.

But the current carried her along; her strength ebbed away.

One more minute—

"Janet; hold on!" shouted a voice. And opening her eyes for the last time before coma overtook her, she saw a boat approaching, and in that boat were Babs, Mabs, Leila, and Clara Trevlyn.

Only just in time!

"OH, JANET, Janet, you silly old goose, why didn't you tell us all this before?" Barbara Redfern cried in a choking voice.

It was three hours later. The scene once again was the holiday camp, and Janet, with her friends and Chrissie Longmore and Anne Marchant gathered around her, was seated in her chalet, sipping hot milk. Near her was her pale-faced cousin Len, while at the sanatorium, whither he had been hastily taken, Ron Eversleigh lay, interviewing his father, who had been summoned in haste from London.

Janet smiled.  
"I didn't tell you," she said, "because neither Len nor I wanted to spoil the holiday. But there's the story now, and I really don't feel any worse for what's happened. Wonder how Eversleigh is?" she added.

"That rotter!" Clara said. "Janet, you saved his life!"

"And," Len said, "my books." Then he started up as a figure appeared at the door, his pale face crimsoning. "Oh, Mr. Eversleigh—" he cried.

Mr. Eversleigh, Ron Eversleigh's father and Len's employer, it was. His face was grave.

"Jordan, sit down," he said. "I had to come to see you before I left. I have been talking to Ron, and—and—well, he wants to see you and your sister to express his sorrow to you, Jordan, and his gratitude to her. I am sorry that—that I have misjudged you, but I will try, my boy, to make it up to you. Meantime, Miss Jordan," he said, "how can I ever thank you?"

Janet laughed.  
"By just," she said, "saying nothing else about it."

"You saved his life—"  
"Well, he couldn't swim, could he?" Janet said. "A very poor fish I should have been not to make some attempt when I could. I'm glad, though, that he's told you everything. But the gala—I suppose," she added hesitatingly, "I'm still in it?"

"Janet, you duffer, of course," Babs said.

"Chrissie—"  
Chrissie Longmore flushed.  
"If you're not in it, I'm not going to be in it," she said. "We're sorry, Janet, for what we've said, but you must admit we had some reason. But what's the idea?" she added.

"It's about the otter hunt," Janet said. "It strikes me that as this is chiefly intended to amuse the kiddies we might improve upon it. You know those rubber animals we've got in the camp?"

"Oh, my hat!" Babs cried, catching on at once. "You mean—"

"I mean," Janet laughed, "that instead of just diving and jumping at each other as we did this afternoon, both hunters and protectors ride on those."

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Clara, her eyes shining.

"And the rules, of course, to be the same, and the prize the flag; whichever side winning it holding it this time for keeps. Is it a go?"

Was it a go? Faces were glowing, eyes shining. Certainly that was a good scheme—and one likely to be appreciated by the kiddies. And that afternoon, just to put it to the test,

they carried out a rehearsal—a rehearsal, this time, in which Janet was captured within eleven minutes, but which, as it happened, was not a forecast of the result on the morrow. For on the morrow—

What fun that was! What uproarious and delicious excitement those kiddies enjoyed!

The most thrilling and the most gruelling quarter of an hour the Greens and the Blues—clad in costumes of appropriate colours—had ever spent was that never-to-be-forgotten otter hunt, and nobody in Pinebay Holiday Camp, grown-ups and kiddies included, had ever laughed so much in all their lives. From the first blast of Mr. Mackenzie's whistle the whole pool was a riot.

And Janet—was she splendid!  
More than that, she was superb!  
Marvellous to watch her diving and swimming in her suit.

Breathless kiddies watched her swinging up the rigging and without hesitation leap the fifty feet into the bath below. What a scream of laughter when she dived beneath Chrissie & Co.—who, like the Cliff House chums, were seated on gigantic rubber animals—and sent Anne Marchant, mounted on a spotted whale, toppling over!

And what a roar when Clara, on a white swan, and Peggy Aldridge, on a brown horse, gave battle in the middle of the bath with mops, until finally Peggy was sent tumbling into the water.

Great fun, marvellous fun!  
Not once did the Greens even look like capturing that slippery and merry eel that Janet became. And when at last, exhausted, spent, blown, but happy, Greens and Blues together clambered out of the water, it was Chrissie who, seizing up the flag, came forward.

She bowed before Janet.  
"You," she said, "keep it. You've earned it. And now, girls," she called to her followers, "three cheers for our jolly good sporting rivals, the Blues!"

"And three cheers," said a voice, as Ron Eversleigh stood up from the deck-chair in which he had been seated between his father and Len Jordan, "for Janet Jordan, the girl who saved my life and repaid all my dirty tricks by risking her own! Hip, hip—"

"Hurrah!" thundered everybody.  
END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.



Such a puzzling girl is Jemima Carstairs that even her own chums, Barbara Redfern & Co., have often been baffled by her.

But never have Babs & Co. been so baffled by Jemima—and so indignant, too;—as when that strange girl deliberately sets out to thwart them during their thrilling quest for treasure on an island near Pinebay Holiday Camp. There seems no reason for Jemima's behaviour. And yet she thwarts them again and again; as you will see when you read next Saturday's magnificent COMPLETE Hilda Richards' story.



Early chapters of our Thrilling Girl Detective serial—



# Valerie Drew's HOLIDAY MYSTERY

FOR NEW READERS.

VALERIE DREW, the famous girl detective, and her clever Alsatian dog, FLASH, are spending a holiday at Sunnylands Farm, which is run as an hotel by a hard-working, likeable young girl.

DOROTHY DEAN. Dorothy seems to have a secret enemy who is trying to drive guests from the farm. Mysterious things happen and suspicion falls upon one of the guests.

JOHNNY JEVONS, a boisterous young fellow who is a confirmed practical joker. Valerie likes him, nevertheless. It is Johnny who brings her a note he says he has found. The note, which is unsigned, refers to some mysterious activity which is to take place at ten that night!

(Now read on.)

By  
**ISABEL NORTON**

Johnny tantalisingly shook his head. "I hadn't. Just shows you what a careless reader I am," he responded. "I wouldn't get taken on as a detective, would I?"

Valerie was thinking hard. She still had an odd conviction that Johnny could tell her more if he chose.

"Where did you find it, Johnny?" she asked.

Johnny did not reply immediately. "You're a cool one!" Johnny declared.

"Cool?" ejaculated Valerie, in amazement.

"Surely you haven't forgotten already," chaffed Johnny, meaningly.

A tiny spot of colour dawned in Valerie's cheeks as she realised what he was driving at.

"You cuckoo, Johnny!" she exploded. "Are you actually trying to make out that I wrote this note myself?"

Johnny chuckled happily.

Unless, of course, he was a far better actor than anyone as yet gave him credit for being!

"I still wonder," mused Valerie, uncomfortably, "whether I'm taking the whole business too seriously, and looking for a mystery where there isn't one at all."

With perplexed violet eyes she studied the note again.

It was printed in bold capitals, evidently leaving no clue to the writer. Several scratchy outlines told Valerie that a borrowed, or unfamiliar pen had probably been employed. The colour of the ink was between dark blue and purple, an unusual hue which suggested two kinds had been mixed.

Deciding at last that she could discover no more about it then, Valerie slipped the note into her handbag and went to the front door where Johnny professed to have found it. She immediately noticed that there was a strong breeze blowing across the front of the house.

"Johnny suggested," she reflected,

## Who Had Telephoned!

VALERIE DREW read the amazing message a second time, a slight raising of her eyebrows being the only outward sign she gave of her deep perplexity.

Was she to take it seriously? Was she to believe that something of a serious nature, possibly affecting the happiness of all the cheerful holiday makers at the farm, was planned to occur at ten o'clock to-night?

Folding the paper carefully, she looked inquiringly at Johnny Jevons.

The same cheerful grin still lit his decidedly good-looking face, but the twinkle in his eyes now appeared faintly mocking.

"Did you read it yourself?" asked Valerie coolly.

"Managed to understand it first time!" Johnny brightly agreed. "There weren't any long words to make it too difficult for me. But why pick on ten to-night? I've always understood ghosts walk at midnight."

Valerie laughed. Johnny couldn't be serious even if he tried. Then, all at once, a fresh thought struck her. Was he as light-hearted as he seemed, or was he being flippant for his own purpose?

"The note doesn't make any mention of a ghost, Johnny," Valerie rather dryly pointed out.

"Gosh! Looks as if I've made a bad slip there!" Johnny answered, suddenly pursing his lips. "Shall I be arrested?"

Valerie met his gaze steadily.

"Now come on, Johnny!" she urged, with her friendliest smile. "Surely you had some reason for speaking about a ghost!"

## WHEN VALERIE LAID A TRAP FOR THE UNKNOWN SCHEMER AT SUNNYLANDS FARM, SHE MERELY CAUGHT—HERSELF!

"Madame, you are ze thought-readaire!" he answered, giving her a flattering bow. "Per'aps ze note is dropped somewhere else when ze weend go pouf!—and blow 'im right outside ze front door. I tank I am vairy 'appy zat you come to stay on ze farm and keep us all full of ze life!"

And, before Valerie could make any reply at all, he had sauntered away, still obviously highly amused.

Valerie frowned.

Though Johnny had so unexpectedly turned the tables on her, she couldn't blame him entirely.

Last night he had stuck confidently to his theory that it was Valerie herself who had played the trick with the wailing "squeaker" which might have resulted in a serious alarm amongst the guests. Being a confirmed japer himself, he was likely to be on the lookout for a kindred spirit, and might really, believe he had found one in Valerie.

"that the note might have been dropped somewhere else, and the wind blew it here. Now what on earth made him say that, I wonder?"

Though still greatly puzzled by the cheerful boy, she meant to miss nothing where he was concerned.

Tearing a page from the back of a small diary, she folded it to the dimensions of the note in question and dropped it to the ground. The breeze soon picked it up and carried it lightly away.

With a "Whoof!" of excitement Flash appeared at that moment as though from nowhere, and went racing in pursuit. Triumphantly waving his tail, he brought the folded paper back to his mistress.

"Thanks, old boy," said Valerie, taking it as though it was really important. "Don't run away again for a moment, old son. I want to think this over."

She gazed in the direction from which

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No. 692

Here are details of the others :

**No. 693.** "Study Against Study," in which Marjorie Stanton tells of one of the earlier exploits of Betty Barton & Co.

**No. 694.** "On Secret Service at School," specially written for this month's issues by Joan Inglesant.

**No. 695.** "Their Thrilling Riviera Holiday," an enthralling holiday mystery story by—Hilda Richards!

the wind was blowing. In addition to the domestic quarters, which were situated at that end of the farmhouse proper, there were two outbuildings which had been attractively converted for use by table-tennis and darts fans.

Seeing nobody about them at the moment, Valerie sauntered along the side of the building with Flash trotting ahead of her.

Suddenly, as he turned the corner, she heard him give a short, inquiring bark. Immediately there was a scuffle of movement and a hasty, metallic clang. Following her pet quickly, Valerie saw a maid standing by one of the dustbins, holding its lid rather fearfully in front of her as if to ward off Flash. Valerie immediately recognised her as the obliging girl who had brought her first cup of tea.

"Why what's the matter, Emily?" she exclaimed sympathetically.

The dark-haired girl replaced the dustbin lid with a rather sheepish smile.

"I'm glad you've come along," she answered, "I don't think your dog likes me."

"What makes you think that?"

"I offered him a nice piece of meat this morning, miss," Emily explained, "and—and he wouldn't even look at it."

"That's because I've trained Flash that way," Valerie explained, with a smile.

Emily remained staring at the bright-eyed Alsatian.

"How funny, miss! I didn't know dogs could be queer like that. But I don't like a dog that doesn't trust me. Everyone else does."

Valerie laughed.

"Then if you like to fetch a piece of Flash's meat from the kitchen," she offered, "I'll let you feed him now."

"Really? Oh, thank you, miss," said Emily, gratefully. "He looks such a nice, friendly old fellow. I'll fetch some at once."

She returned quickly, and timidly proffered the meat to Flash. With a

bristling of his fur he turned inquiringly to Valerie.

"All right, boy," Valerie assured him. And Flash, immediately reassured, heartily appreciated that sample of his forthcoming lunch.

The maid returned to her duties, while Valerie completed a survey which proved most disappointing. The domestic staff and farmhouse guests used this corner of the building equally for different reasons. If the note had really been blown from somewhere in the vicinity there was still nothing to tell Valerie who had dropped it, or where.

A few minutes later Valerie was forced to banish her problem for the time being. There was a scunch of rushing wheels on the gravelled drive leading from the road, and two merry carloads of people swept into the farmyard. Some of her fellow guests had returned from their outing to the sea.

"Had a good time, all?" Valerie cried, going to meet them as they struggled laughingly out from the seats of the packed vehicles.

"Topping!"

"Sea was gorgeous!" a tall young man with a very red face assured her. "You were a slacker to stay here!"

"Yes, Valerie. Why on earth didn't you come as well?" asked an attractive girl with freckles, swinging her costume and towel teasingly around Flash to make him jump. "We're going to take surf-boards down to-morrow!"

Valerie smiled at them really enviously. They all looked so happy and full of the joy of life. She realised she had come for just this kind of carefree holiday herself. The thought shot through her mind that she might be missing a whole lot of fun through getting so preoccupied over this odd "mystery."

"You can count me in to-morrow!" she decided enthusiastically.

The friendly freckled girl clasped a bronzed arm warmly around Valerie's shoulders.

"Goody! I've heard how you can

swim," she said, as they walked together towards the farmhouse, with Flash playfully worrying the trailing costume. "There's a topping little island we can swim out to, but I don't like going alone. Will you come with me?"

"Love to!" promised Valerie, her eyes shining at the prospect.

They parted in the raftered entrance hall, gleaming with its brass ornaments, and so full of cosy, inviting chairs. A glance at the clock told Valerie that it was nearly lunch-time, and she suddenly had a pang of conscience as she realised that she had still found no opportunity to have a further chat with her attractive young hostess, Dorothy Dean, the girl who was at present running the holiday farm practically on her own.

"Perhaps she'll be free for a few minutes now," Valerie wondered, as she made her way in the direction of the little office at the far end of the hall.

Reaching the spot where the turn of the stairs made a sharp angle, Valerie stopped apologetically. She had come unexpectedly on two figures who had been standing just out of sight. One was Dorothy herself—a rather pale, worried, defensive-looking Dorothy at this moment. The other was the quarrelsome Mrs. Croby.

"Oh, sorry!" said Valerie tactfully. "I'll come along later—"

"You needn't!" said Mrs. Croby tartly. "There's no secret about what I've been saying to Dorothy. I've never been to such a holiday place. You advertise that you're giving a film show and then you cancel it!"

"I'm terribly sorry, Mrs. Croby," Dorothy answered sincerely. "Honestly I can't understand the mistake. The films for this evening's show should have arrived this morning. I telephoned to London as soon as they didn't come. I can't understand who ever can have cancelled the order—and in my name, too—"

"Tut, tut! It's always the same here!" Mrs. Croby broke in acridly. "No promises are ever carried out. It may be done to save money, now you've got us safely here. Or if it's someone's idea of a joke to upset a cinema show the little ones have been looking forward to, then that's even worse. Jokers? Hooligans is a better word!" And Mrs. Croby swept indignantly away.

There was a brief, embarrassed silence as Valerie stood facing the discomfited girl hostess.

"Dorothy, I didn't mean to butt in," Valerie told her sympathetically. "Poor old you! Some people seem to love raising a dust—"

"But I'm to blame, Val—at least, I must take responsibility!" Dorothy interposed. She smiled as though it was something to which she was quite accustomed, yet she couldn't entirely hide the worried look still lurking in her eyes. "You see, if it's only stupid old Johnnie again—"

Valerie's eyes opened wider.

"Would Johnny go as far as this—telephone to London using your name, Dorothy?" she asked, rather horrified at the possibility.

Dorothy laughed uneasily.

"Not to try to ruin things, Val," she said loyally. "But he might, you see, have some better stunt up his sleeve which he means to work to-night. Anyway, I'm quite sure it'll all come right. So sorry you always seem to catch me looking such a misery—"

The cheerful voices of a dozen fellows



and girls came from the hall in unison.

"We want our lunch, Dorothy! We want lunch!"

Valerie laughed. Dorothy blew out her cheeks in an amusing show of despair. Somebody was always wanting something!

"Must fly!" Dorothy said—and promptly fled to see that all was ready.

### Conflicting Evidence

"ALL right, Penny—I'll be Charlie Chaplin!" promised Johnny Jevons cheerfully. "What's that, Fay? You want me to be Tom Mix as well? I'll have to have a pony for that act. Uncle!" he called loudly along the table.

Valerie smiled. Others smiled as well.

Operations on lunch were momentarily suspended as Johnny addressed Dorothy's spectacled Uncle Nathan, who was earnestly applying himself to salmon mayonnaise without, as usual, saying a word to anyone unless they spoke first. He blinked up mildly as he heard Johnny's hail.

"Er—want the pepper, Johnny?" he asked, in his absent-minded way.

"Will you be my pony to-night, Uncle Nathan?" asked Johnny blandly.

Several people laughed at the very idea of the quiet little man doing anything so boisterous. But little Penelope Croby clapped her hands excitedly.

"Oh, please, Uncle Nathan!" she entreated. "You'd look so funny! Do say you'll be Tom Mix's pony to-night as we can't have the real films!"

Uncle Nathan dabbed his lips nervously with his serviette.

"My dear, how could I possibly resemble a pony?" he asked.

"Easily!" said Johnny, expertly pouring water from a considerable height into his glass. "Spend the afternoon shouting, and by this evening you'll be a 'little hoarse.'"

Everyone laughed; banter flew from table to table under the warm encouragement of the irrepressible Johnny. It was the jolliest atmosphere imaginable.

Certainly, Valerie saw no sign of little "Penny" grieving, as her mother had more than once predicted, because the film show promised for to-night was unexpectedly off. But they had Johnny, as usual, to thank for saving the situation.

Yet someone, using Dorothy's name, had countermanded the order for the films—someone still unknown!

Was it Johnny? Valerie didn't think so. She had tackled him on the subject—not point-blank, of course, but watching shrewdly as she referred to what had happened, to see whether he would show some sign of guilt or confusion.

Johnny had exhibited none at all. For the moment he had looked genuinely disappointed. Then, being Johnny, he had volunteered to fill the breach. He would be a film show himself!

Valerie's thoughts, as lunch proceeded, returned to the still unsolved mystery of the note Johnny himself had given her.

In view of the latest development she liked less than ever to think about it.

She had a growing conviction that someone was, in secret, unkindly disposed towards Dorothy, anxious to

make life as hard for her as possible. Though Dorothy herself made light of her troubles, Valerie had not been deceived. She knew she was more worried at the moment than she worried anyone to guess.

Valerie's thoughts ran quickly on. If her theory was correct, the note definitely meant that some new kind of mischief had been planned for ten o'clock to-night!

So far it was unlikely that the writer would be aware that the note had gone astray. Valerie might, consequently, still be able to find out who had used that unsuitable pen with ink of a very distinctive colour.

Suddenly, her eyes gleamed. She had had a brain-wave at last.

Joining the others in the sunny winter-garden, where tuscious bunches of grapes hung ripening on the vines under the glass roof, she took her cup of coffee and sought out Johnny, who was dispensing sugar.

"How long are you going to keep your show going to-night, Johnny?" Valerie whispered. "Will it last the whole evening?"

Johnny pulled a face. "Have a heart! I'm not Ruth Draper!" he answered. "Half an hour of those kids will reduce me to a wet rag!"

"Then can I make a suggestion?" Valerie exclaimed, raising her voice sufficiently to attract general attention.

"How about a real, good, old-fashioned game of blind man's buff?"

The proposition was received with acclamation.

"Rather!" "Topping idea!" several enthusiastically agreed.

Thrilled to realise that her little wheeze was likely to be successful, Valerie picked up a writing-pad.

"Let me be useful and plan it," she eagerly suggested. "I'll take your names straight away." She knew she was perfectly safe in approaching the jolly, freckled girl first. "Set a good example and print your name," Valerie whispered, handing her the pad.

The freckled girl laughingly produced a fountain-pen, and with a cheery "O.K., sister!" printed "Marjorie" boldly in black at the top of the list.

Others followed her example, printing their names without question. As Valerie passed from one to the other she thrilled at the ease with which she was getting a specimen of everyone's printing style without arousing the slightest suspicion of her real motive.

Would she, on closer examination, find the one she sought?

Last of all in the winter garden she came to Johnny. And then she had a shock. During the last few minutes Johnny had acquired a sling, in which rested his right arm.

"Bad injury—writer's cramp from drawing faces on the farmyard wall," he blithely explained. "Put me down for two-pennyworth of blind man's buff, all the same. You know the name now, Valerie. It's Williams-broth."

Valerie hesitated. Had Johnny really hurt his arm?

"Don't be a chump!" she said at last, with a light laugh. "I shall wait until you've recovered. I want the promise in black-and-white from you!"

Johnny's twinkling eyes met the challenge of her own without winking.

"Be a pal and forge it for me, Val," he urged. "Don't be so hard on a sick man."

Valerie became uncomfortably aware that several people were watching, while Johnny was evidently determined to keep up his joke at all costs. There was only one thing to be done.

"Oh, all right, idiot!" she laughingly agreed.

Taking out her pen, she started to print "JOH—"

"Christopher Columbus!" ejaculated Johnny—and Valerie, stopping in the middle of the word, gasped audibly.

As their eyes met, it would have been impossible to say which of them was the more astonished.

For the ink flowing from Valerie's pen was exactly the same colour as the



"SIGN, please!" Valerie cried merrily. "This way for blind man's buff!" None of the guests realised as they wrote their names on Valerie's pad that this was her clever trick to discover who had written the mysterious note.

ink that had been on the mystery note!

**W**ANDERING once more in the woods adjoining the gardens of the farmhouse later that afternoon, with Flash scampering happily through the bracken in excited search of rabbits, Valerie Drew anxiously reviewed her unusual problem.

She had quickly solved the mystery of her pen. On reflection, she remembered leaving it for a few minutes on the visitors' book, after signing it that morning, when someone called her away. The pen at the time had been half empty; now it was practically full.

It meant that someone near at hand had borrowed the pen, filled it with ink of a different colour, dashed off the mystery note, then returned the pen to the spot where Valerie had left it.

Whether Johnny believed Valerie's explanation, however, seemed quite another matter. The twinkle in his eyes as he listened to her had suggested that he was now fully convinced that she was really a super leg-puller who had made just one unfortunate mistake.

"Bother Johnny!" Valerie crossly reflected. "He must think I'm a very odd kind of detective. If he's really the person I'm after, he can't be very much afraid of me by now."

Valerie was now casting her mind back to the mystery as it had first presented itself to her.

She recalled the glimmering light she had seen in the ruins, and her vague glimpse of an escaping woman just before the moaning sound had so eerily disturbed the silence.

The woman had got away, but Flash had returned with a gilt bracelet which she had very likely dropped in taking to flight.

Once more Johnny came into the mystery again at that point.

Only this morning Valerie had surprised him in conversation with a woman of gipsylike appearance, wearing a gilt bracelet which, seen from a distance, appeared identical with the one Flash had found.

Johnny, tackled at the time, had been cheerfully evasive.

Scarcely half an hour had elapsed when, as she topped a slight rise, Valerie gave a little smile of satisfaction.

Standing at one side of a small glade which lay beyond was a brightly painted caravan, with a well-fed horse tethered close at hand. And seated at an easel in the centre of the clearing, a paint-brush poised in one hand, was the very woman Valerie sought!

Flash, at a gesture from his mistress, froze instantly at her side. Unaware she was being watched, the woman went on painting industriously.

Valerie knew it was more than likely that the woman, if questioned point-blank, would indignantly deny she had ever been near the farm under cover of darkness.

If Valerie wanted to find out anything at all, she would have to be more clever than that.

Suddenly, as an idea came into her mind, her eyes lit with satisfaction. Opening her handbag, she took something out, then stooped to whisper to Flash.

The first indication the gipsy painter had of the presence of anyone else was a soft nudge against her knee.

Turning from her work, she saw a bright-eyed, alert-eared Alsatian standing there, offering her a gilt bracelet held delicately between his teeth.

The woman stared harder as Valerie Drew came hastening after her pet a moment later.

"So sorry! I hope my dog didn't startle you!" she said apologetically. "He picked the bangle up, and seemed to be so sure it was yours that I let him bring it to you himself. Is he right?"

She spoke lightly, but her keen eyes were watching every changing expression on the dark-skinned woman's face as she took the bracelet from Flash and slowly examined it.

To her surprise and dismay, the woman merely gave a soft laugh, and, with a disdainful gesture, tossed the bracelet aside. Then, looking up at Valerie with bright, intent eyes, she exclaimed:

"Just trash! Look! These I wear are real Burmese gold, and all of the same design. Examine them yourself, if you like!"

She had pulled back the flowing sleeve of her gown as she spoke, to reveal three glittering bracelets lying side by side on her left wrist. And at a glance Valerie realised that they bore no resemblance to the one her pet had picked up in the ruins.

If the evidence before her at this moment was really to be believed, there was no connection whatever between this woman and the strange mystery at the farmhouse. And yet—

Could she believe it, after all?

## Ten O'clock!

"SILENCE, please!"

"Yes, rather! Give poor old uncle a chance!"

"Ha, ha!"

The raftered drawing-room at the farmhouse echoed again and again with sounds of merry laughter as the old-fashioned game of blind man's buff warmed up that evening.

For Valerie Drew, who had originally suggested the idea, it was a very happy experience.

The greatest pleasure of all, however, was for Valerie to see Dorothy Dean, the hard-worked young hostess at the farmhouse, actually sitting with her guests to-night and enjoying the fun as much as anyone.

Johnny—now without his sling, thereby proving he hadn't needed it at all—had started the ball rolling after dinner, as promised, by giving his own laughable impressions of film stars.

By the time he was through with his cheerful foolery everyone had been ready to join in a round game. So far, nobody had mentioned being disappointed about the film show. Even Mrs. Croby was looking cheerful, for a change.

Valerie could see how relieved Dorothy felt on account of that.

And she could not help reflecting, with inward amusement, on the contrast between this alert, quick-witted Dorothy and her pottering Uncle Nathan, who was staying at the farm ostensibly to help her while her mother was ill.

He had been immediately recognised by his squeaks when the last player sat on his lap, and was consequently the next "blind man" in the game. His clumsy, groping movements as he started to fumble around the room brought peals of laughter from the younger members.

"His trouble, Val," whispered merry, freckle-faced Marjorie, "is that he's got two left feet, and five thumbs on each hand. Golly!" she ejaculated, with a sudden gasp of surprise. "Look at old Flash!"

Valerie's eyes turned at once to her pet, who had naturally been very

puzzled from the start to see adults smiling such a strange game. She smiled with mingled amusement and pride as she watched him now.

At last, it seemed, Flash had made up his mind about it!

Amongst his many accomplishments Flash had learnt to be a very efficient guide to a blind man.

Evidently Uncle Nathan, similarly afflicted, was in need of his skilled guidance now!

With a little whimper of concern Flash went trotting across the room, deliberately took the turn-up of Uncle Nathan's trousers between his teeth and tugged gently but firmly in an endeavour to lead him to the nearest vacant chair.

Shrieks of delighted laughter, mingled with hand-clapping, greeted Flash's unexpected intervention in the game.

"Come here, old boy, it's only a bit of fun!" Valerie laughingly called to her pet. "Come and sit beside me now, and don't worry your funny old head any more about it. Hallo, Uncle's got someone at last!"

Uncle Nathan had. It was Johnnie! Moving too daringly near to give his relative a teasing prod in the ribs, the lad had been caught in an unexpectedly sharp clutch.

"Johnny as blind man! Now for some fun!" giggled talkative little Mrs. Peek as Johnny cheerfully put the bandage across his own eyes and made skirmishing movements around the room.

Valerie watched him with lively interest and amusement. For though Johnny was making an elaborate pretence of being completely confused there was no doubt that he was getting nearer all the time to the spot where Mrs. Croby sat by one of the open windows.

Then, moved all at once by an impulse for which she couldn't account, Valerie glanced at her watch.

It was just one minute to ten.

Her pulses gave an uneasy throb. Just one minute to the time mentioned so definitely in the still unsolved note which Johnny had given her!

Did the note really mean anything?

Johnny's hand, suddenly groping forward, touched Mrs. Croby's sleeve before she could draw away. In an instant, sinking down with a triumphant "plump," he was sitting on her lap, his hand softly stroking her face.

"The mouth of Cleopatra!" Johnny declared mischievously. "The nose of Helen of Troy!" He waited for the merry gurgles of laughter to subside. "Now I'm touching the hair of some goddess—"

At that moment a clock in the hall started to strike the hour of ten.

Valerie sat up sharply.

As though it was the signal for which someone had waited all evening, every light in the drawing-room went out immediately.

Cries of surprise rose around the room. Above them all, suddenly cutting through the buzz of inquiry as sharply as a knife, came a shrill scream.

It was a scream of terror and dismay ringing through the darkness, in Mrs. Croby's tones.

"Help—help! Leave go!" she cried at the top of her voice. "My pearls! Oh, my goodness! Help! Someone has snatched my pearls!"

**WHAT** a thrilling and unexpected development! Will Valerie be able to get to grips with the unknown person behind it all? Don't miss next week's fine chapters.



Another delightful COMPLETE Canadian story featuring—

# KIT OF RED RANCH



## For the French Girl's Sake!

**S**AY, Redwing, what's that gal running for? Gee, but she's running mighty hard! Seems like there's someone after her."

And Kit Hartley, of Red Ranch, as she spoke to her Redskin friend, Redwing, wheeled her horse, and stared at the frightened-looking girl who was running pell-mell along the dusty road. As she ran the girl glanced now and then over her shoulder, just as though she expected to see someone pursuing her.

"Hey!" called Kit.

Suddenly noticing Kit, the girl quickened her steps, pounding along as though carried only by urgent fear, her store of energy being gone.

"Au secours!" she panted.

Kit heard, but did not immediately understand, for she did not expect to hear French spoken in this part of Canada. Before she had time to weigh the words she had forgotten them.

But she understood clearly enough that the girl wanted help, and there was no one readier to help those in need than Kit Hartley.

"All right; you're safe," she said, swinging from her horse. "No one is going to hurt you while I'm around."

The girl reached her, gasping and panting, and made to mount Kit's horse. But she was not a riding expert, and, missing the stirrup with her foot, nearly fell over.

"Wait a bit!" urged Kit gently, steadying her. "Who's after you?"

"Comment?" said the girl shakily.

Kit had learned French at her boarding school, and she faltered out a few shaky phrases, asking what the trouble was, and who was chasing the girl.

"Les garçons!" said the girl.

"The boys!" Kit exclaimed indignantly.

She turned back to the road along which the girl had been running, but before she could take more than a step a group of runners came into view. They were boys from the school, much younger than Kit, and with them were some of the schoolgirls, laughing and joking.

But at sight of Kit the group slowed, and the chase ended.

"What's going on?" asked Kit briskly. "Reckon you may figure it's a joke, but this French gal's mighty scared. Anything pertickler funny in scaring a gal?" she asked the leading boy, in scorn.

He looked at her, and grinned somewhat sheepishly. Then, after a glance at the others, he held out something for Kit's inspection.

Kit took it, giving them all a searching glance; for there was some joke on, she guessed, with the French girl as victim of it.

**Because Josephine was French and understood little English, her schoolmates cruelly teased her. And when, through a terrible mistake, they stayed away from a party Kit had arranged to put things right it seemed she would never be happy again. But Kit wasn't beaten even then.**

Glancing down at the thing the boy had given her, she jumped as she saw what it was—a snail.

"A snail!" she exclaimed.

Came chuckles of mirth, and then one of the girls, Beth Green, spoke up.

"Just a joke, Kit," she said. "We want to see that French gal eat it. Didn't you know that French gals eat snails?"

Kit looked back at the French girl, and then at the others, and frowned.

"Why, you kids must be crazy!" she said witheringly. "It's a special kind of snail they eat, and then only cooked. Some of you kids don't seem to know anything at all."

The laughter died, just as Kit had intended it to.

"Aw, shucks, she's only a Frenchie!"

said one of the boys. "Can't even speak English."

"Then I guess there's all the more reason you should act kind to her," retorted Kit. "Take this snail, someone, and put it in the grass way over there. And if I catch any of you chasing that French mam'selle again, there'll be a row like a storm."

She gave the snail to one of the boys, and then returned to the French girl.

"All right, mam'selle," said Kit, as the girl, breathing hard, clutched at the saddle of the horse. "They have gone. Er—ils—er—sont alles."

And she smiled encouragingly.

"Zank you!" the girl said.

"And listen!" added Kit. "Don't you worry about them. They don't mean any real harm. Just their fun. Vous savez—er—leur—whatever the French is for fun."

Unfortunately, Kit's French was very rusty, and the French girl's English apparently limited to a few simple words.

"Reckon I'd better take you to Judith Cairns," decided Kit, after a moment of silence, during which she and the French girl each strove to falter words in the other's language.

Judith Cairns was the school marm, with whom the French girl was staying, so Kit had heard. Making the French girl understand that she wanted her to ride behind, Kit mounted her horse.

Redwing, her Indian friend, who had stood silently by, helped the little French girl to mount behind Kit. And there was deep sympathy in her dark eyes. She, too, had suffered teasing because she was different from the others, so she had a fellow feeling.

"Off we go to the school. A l'ecole," said Kit, "to see Miss Cairns."

But that suggestion alarmed the French girl.

"Non, non!" she protested, in dismay.

"You don't want to go back there?" Kit asked, surprised.

"Mais non. No—nevaire. Zey do not like me. Zey mockey me—make fun. And now zey make chase of me wiz ze snail."

Kit squeezed her arm.

"I wouldn't take those kids too much to heart. Don't you get on with them at all? Why, what is your name?" she asked, smiling.

"Josephine my name is—Josephine Le Puy," said the girl shyly.

By

**Elizabeth Chester**

"O.K. Then, Josephine, come right back with me," said Kit. "It's a long step back to the school marm's house, and I'll give you a lift there."

Josephine, flashing Kit a quick, shy smile, eagerly accepted.

"Ah, eef on'y all was as ami-able as you," she sighed.

The school was not far away, and a few minutes later Kit reined up at the white-painted shack, set in a pretty garden, where the schoolmistress had her home.

Judith Cairns was setting her table for lunch when Kit looked in.

"Why, Kit, this is a surprise," she remarked.

"I've brought Josephine back." Kit said. "What's been happening, Judith? That kid's plumb scared. A whole gang was chasing her with a snail."

"Chasing her?" cried the young schoolmistress, shocked. "Oh, poor Josephine!"

And she turned to the French girl, who had entered behind Kit.

Kit stood aside then as Josephine spoke rapidly in French to the schoolmistress. Her voice rose, and tears came to her eyes.

"What is she saying?" Kit asked.

not being able to follow the rapidly spoken phrases.

"Oh dear! Poor girl. She says she must go away. She will not stay here," said Judith Cairns in dismay. "But she cannot go. Her people have gone back to France, you see. She has been sent out here for her health, and she must stay at least three months."

"I am on'appy," cried Josephine. "Plis I mos aller—go—oh, yiss, yiss, pliss. Zey 'ates moi."

"Hate you? Oh, no! They don't understand you, that's all, Josephine."

Then, looking a little disappointed, Kit shook her head.

"I allus thought the French didn't take defeat easy," she said. "Some-how I got the idea that Joan of Arc was a French girl, and she sure had plenty of fight, didn't she? The English didn't understand what she meant when she said 'Get out of France,' but they kinder got her meaning all right later."

It was the right line to take, for love of France and pride in French achievement were deeply rooted in Josephine. She frowned in doubt for a moment, and then Kit was delighted to see a warlike sparkle come to her eyes. She

was on her mettle. At once she saw that she was being given not only a personal challenge, but one to La Belle France.

"Oui! I come," she said with a proud uplift of her head and a sparkle in her dark eyes. "Vive la France!"

"Vive la France!" smiled Kit.

A minute or so later, with Judith Cairns waving them good-bye, Kit and Josephine set out for Red Ranch. Already there was a change in Josephine; the little English she knew came through her shyness, and her head was proudly carried.

"I'm gonna make those kids mighty proud to know you," Kit said, in her determined, resolute way.

"Oui, oui! 'Ow I 'ope it," said Josephine, with a sigh.

It sounded a grand idea, but Kit knew that it might not work out instantly with ease. As they rode to Red Ranch, however, she thought busily.

"A party," she mused. "A grand party, with a few of the best young 'uns from the school. A sing-song with Josephine singing in French, and dancing. That's the idea, I guess!"

Once Kit Hartley had made up her mind to do a thing, she did not rest until it was done; nor did she do things by halves.

In her view a party had to be a real party, with fancy cakes, fruit, music, balloons from the store, paper streamers, flags, sweets—in fact, a treat on a small scale.

Instead of telling Josephine what she was planning, however, she kept it secret.

### All in Vain

"ASSISTEZ moi, Josephine," called Kit. "To fix up les balloons."

She stood at the top of a pair of steps in the living-room of Red Ranch, a string of balloons in one hand, and a hammer in the other.

Already the room was looking gay. Josephine, having been told that a party had been arranged for that afternoon, was eager to do everything possible to help. Kit's dad had made her welcome; she had been shown round the ranch, had petted the calves and colts, had admired the horses, and been given a ride on the gentlest of them.

Gay and vivacious, she was now hard to recognise as the sad girl who had run away from her tormentors that morning; and Kit had no doubt that after this party, she would be henceforth as happy as any of the other girls.

"Oui, oui!" cried Josephine. "I do ze flowers—zen I 'elp."

She arranged flowers most tastefully on the long table that had been brought in from the boys' quarters, then went to Kit's aid. The balloons were strung up, and looked very effective and bright. Redwing, at the other end of the room, was fixing streamers and a line of small flags.

"Looks like Christmas, eh?" said Kit. "And golly, I've got that same kind of feeling. This will sure be a grand party."

Kit rubbed her hands, and then looked at the clock.

"You sent the invitations all right, Redwing?" she asked.

"Sented them," said Redwing. "Yes, Miss Kit. Took all every shack of girls and boys."

"Goody-goody!" Josephine, looking at the clock, gave a start.

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

## BETWEEN OURSELVES



**MY DEAR READERS.**—More lovely letters—from you to me, I mean. And that is the reason so much of this week's chat is occupied by Replies in Brief.

I simply had to devote that space to correspondents because the pile of unanswered letters on my desk was getting higher and higher, and an Editor doesn't like that, you know. It rather suggests he's shirking—even if he isn't!

So please excuse me for rushing straight on to next week's superb story-programme. First of all, we have the delightful Cliff House holiday story:

### "JEMIMA VERSUS THE TREASURE-HUNTERS!"

An extra-special treat, this, for not only does it "star" Jemima Carstairs, of the monocle and very puzzling ways, but it brings back an old favourite, Susan Tempest, a great friend of the Cliff House chums.

As you know, Jemima is a law unto herself. She never does what she's expected to do and very often does the very last thing she ought to do. Often have Babs & Co. been completely baffled by Jemima.

But never have they been so baffled and indignant as when Jemima deliberately sets herself against them while they are engaged on the most exciting treasure-hunt on an island near Pinebay Holiday Camp.

There just seems to be no possible reason for Jemima to thwart their plans. And yet thwart them she does, again and again.

You'll revel in this grand Hilda Richards story.

As usual, of course, next Saturday's number will contain another delightful COMPLETE "Kit of Red Ranch" story, further thrilling chapters of our dramatic Valerie Drew and Flash serial, and more of Patricia's Bright and Useful Pages, so make sure you order your copy well in advance.

And now—those

### LITTLE LETTERS.

**DILYS HEATHERSON** (Cardiff, Wales).—Many thanks for all the nice things you said about our paper. Yes, you would be in the Fourth Form with Babs & Co. if you went to Cliff House. Write again whenever you like, won't you?

**CONNIE THORPE** (Sydney, Australia).—Since you wrote your letter Bessie has been specially featured in a story, Connie. I do hope you liked it. And the dear old "duffer" is certain to be "starred" again in the near future.

**IRIS MASSEY** (Ilfracombe, Devon).—By all means write to Hilda Richards. If you address your letter to her, care of this office, I will see that Miss Richards receives it. And I know she'll reply with pleasure.

**MILLCENT FISHER** (Dundee).—Most of the Fourth Form studies at Cliff House contain three girls, Millicent. Those in Study No. 3, besides Jemima Carstairs, are Leila Carroll, of America, and petite little Marcelle Biguet, of France. And very happy they all are.

**JOAN CARRADINE** (Capetown, South Africa).—Oh, yes, Joan, Cliff House girls are allowed to have pets; in fact, there is a special Pets' House for boarding them—quite a miniature zoo, I might add. I should love to hear from you again, you know. Bye-bye!

And that means bye-bye to you all until next week.

With best wishes,

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.



"Il faut changer la robe," she exclaimed.

"You've got to change your frock?" asked Kit "What's wrong with that one?"

Josephine explained at length, far too quickly for Kit's knowledge of French, but she made it clear that she had a real party dress, a pale blue blouse and navy skirt.

"O.K. If you want it, I'll get it," Kit promised. "I'll go right along to Miss Cairns now."

Josephine wrote a little note for Kit to take, explaining the shoes and stockings she required to go with the dress, and Kit a moment or two later rode to the school.

She went to the school-marm's house, opened the door, and called. But there came no reply.

"H'm! In the school, I dessay," Kit mused.

When she crossed to the school-house and opened the door she paused, amazed.

Despite the fact that it was a half-holiday a dozen girls and boys sat at their desks writing!

"Lo! What's the idea on a sunny afternoon?" she exclaimed. "You kids must like schoolwork, I guess."

"Ss-s-s!" came a hiss from the back row, and others joined in.

Kit was taken aback. It was the first hint she had had that she had done anything to offend them.

"Hissing me? Waal, waal," she murmured, "if it amuses you to play snakes, it's O.K. by me! I really dropped in to ask you to come to the party."

She saw how their expressions changed, and she chuckled.

"Kinder different, eh?" she asked. "Come on! Reckon Miss Cairns won't mind your giving the work a rest."

The girls and boys hardly knew how to take it. As she guessed, they weren't sure that they could leave their desks without Miss Cairns' permission.

"Shall I locate the school-marm and get her to say the word?" Kit asked.

Young Billy, nephew of Bill, the foreman at Red Ranch, stood up.

"Aw, c'mon, fellers," he said. "Reckon we can overlook it. Miss Kit's sorry she squealed to the school-marm, and this sure is a mighty handsome way of making up."

Others followed suit, and Kit smiled in relief.

"That's the way," she nodded. "Guess I don't know what I've done to deserve the hisses—"

"You sneaked to Miss Cairns," said one of the girls sullenly. "You told her about the snail."

Kit's puzzlement vanished at that, and she laughed.

"Gee! That wasn't why I went to her. Forget it. If that's why you're kept in, then I guess I'll square matters, and get you freed for the party. Hang on—I'll find Miss Cairns."

Kit hurried back to the school-marm's house, called again, and then sought her in the garden. She found her at the end of it in a hammock under the trees.

"Say, Judith, I've fixed a party for Josephine. I've asked the others, and they're kept in. Be a good sport and let them at large. This party will bring them all together."

Judith, at first reluctant, was finally persuaded by Kit that it was the best way.

"All right then, Kit," she nodded. Leaving Judith to take the news,



"CAKE," said one lad, pointing. "Lemonade," said another. While others of Kit's little party tried to make the "French" picnickers understand that they were hungry. But the "French" folk merely shrugged and looked blank—which was just what Kit, hiding a smile, had arranged!

Kit found Josephine's dress, stockings, and shoes, and returned to the ranch.

She did not mention the fact that the others had been kept in, but impressed upon Josephine that she must be as friendly as she could and forget all about the snail.

The table was set, the cook brought in the cakes, the sweets were tastefully arranged, and soon all was ready. No feast had ever looked more delectable or appetising.

At five minutes to four Josephine was ready, and Kit thought her entrancingly pretty.

She had true French chic and charm, and it was certain that the girls would be deeply interested in her pretty blouse and skirt. They would also admire her sleek hairdressing, which, although so attractive, was not too old for her age.

"Reckon they're late," said Kit. "But being late's a habit with most of them."

She went to the door and looked out—just in time to see half a dozen girls and boys dodge from sight amongst the trees that lined the road. But one remained in view—the red-haired boy, Bud Frazer.

"Lo, Bud! Jest in time!" smiled Kit.

Bud, with solemn face, walked forward, and Kit saw that he had a note in his hand.

"The gang axed me to give you this, Miss Kit," he said.

And as Kit took it from him, Bud turned and ran.

Kit looked at the note, her heart sinking. Without reading it, she knew that it was a refusal; for as Bud joined the others, they all came from hiding and hurried down the road—away from the party.

She slit the envelope and took out the note it contained.

"Dear Miss Kit,—It was sure kind of you to ask us to the party, but we don't eat snails. And we don't like

French sneaks either. Reckon we don't want ever to speak to one."

With the note clenched in her hand, her mind a turmoil of anxious thoughts, of explanations, apologies, Kit walked into the room, to find Josephine, white-faced, staring at her.

"Zey not come?" she asked tremulously.

"I reckon—well, I reckon they were kept in, and—jes' too bad," said Kit awkwardly. "Looks like we'll have to have the party without 'em."

Josephine did not answer.

Suddenly, as Kit put her arms about her, she covered her face with her hands, and cried as though her heart would break.

### They Were Simply Helpless!

Kit smoothed Josephine's hair. The only thing to do was to let the French girl have her cry, and to comfort her meanwhile with handclaps and an arm about her shoulder.

The gay room was now a mockery; the streamers, the balloons, the flags—the mere sight of them only emphasized the bitterness of Josephine's disappointment.

"If zey would not come to such 'appy party, zen—zen 'ow much zey must 'ate me!" she said through her sobs. "Oh, I will run 'way—go far off! Ne jamais come back nevaire!"

"Poor Josephine!" said Kit. "But it's not as bad as that. It's a mistake, that's all. Jes' a mistake. Reckon those numskulls thought you sneaked about the snail. Honest, that's all it is. And they're wrong."

But she knew as well as Josephine did that, although that was true, no explanation could put matters right. The gang would not believe that the French girl hadn't sneaked.



## 24 "Kit of Red Ranch!"

"A pity they can't all go to France and try for themselves how it feels not to be able to speak the lingo," she mused. "But I guess France is a mighty long way off—"

And then, quite suddenly, Kit jumped up.

"My golly!" she exclaimed. "I think I've got it! An idea—and it may work."

"Quoi?" asked Josephine. "What does it mean?"

But Kit decided to keep this idea to herself.

"Wait!" she said. "It'll be time enough to talk about it when I've got the scheme working."

It was not a plan that she could put into operation there and then, however, and for the rest of the afternoon she did her best to keep the French girl amused.

The next day, just as though nothing had happened, Kit spoke to the members of the gang when she met them.

"You wouldn't mind if we eat up those party goodies on a picnic?" she asked. "Just us alone, without Josephine?"

It struck Billy and the others as a grand idea. There would be time enough after school hours for a picnic on the hills.

"O.K., then," said Kit, when she had discussed it with one or two of them. "Tell all those who want to join to meet me at the foot of the hill, by the leaning tree. I'll have a good-sized hamper packed, and I reckon we'll have plenty of fun."

Arranging for the picnic to take place the following afternoon, Kit wrote a message for Redwing to take to some friends of hers in a small town ten miles away. They were themselves related to French Canadians, so that that alone would give them a fellow-feeling.

Nevertheless, Kit awaited the reply anxiously, and when, towards sundown, Redwing rode back, she ran to meet her.

"Good!" Kit cried as she read the reply. "All's well, I reckon! Thanks a whole lot, Redwing, you sure are a dandy little pal for a gal to have!"

In hopeful mood then, Kit took from the envelope in which the message had been sent another, addressed to Josephine.

Between the time of the arranged picnic and delivering her invitation Kit took care that she was not seen in Josephine's company, so that the gang did not suspect that there was a plot afoot.

Quite unsuspecting, they met her the next afternoon at the agreed place.

"All set?" asked Kit cheerily, when she arrived in the shay, on which the picnic hamper was loaded. "Guess we've got a mighty fine supply of goodies."

"Gee, I reckon it'll be swell!" said young Billy.

Two of the boys carried the hamper, and the whole party set out for the lovely hills on foot.

Kit's idea, she explained, was to picnic right at the top of the hill. It took them an hour to trudge to the summit, and she called halt there.

"Pretty soon," she said, "we can start in—"

But she got no further. Through the bushes sprang a man in chequered shirt, with a wide-brimmed hat, pulled down over his face, which was already well hidden by a folded handkerchief.

"Reckon I'll hev that hamper," he said gruffly, and held up a gun.

Kit fell back among the terrified youngsters.

"C'mon, get away!" she urged. "This guy's crazy. Go on, take it, you cheap bandit!" she snapped.

"I'm taking it," he answered, and, swinging the gun in a half-circle in a way that made them all skip back, took the hamper by the handle and hoisted it up.

Then, covering them until the last moment, he disappeared from sight.

Kit heaved a sigh and smiled wryly as she looked at the chagrined, disappointed faces.

"I'm mighty sorry," she said. "Reckon unless we care to eat the grass there's only one thing to do, and that's go all the way back. A mighty bad finish to a picnic."

Mighty bad just about expressed it. They were tired, hungry, and thirsty. To go all the way down again would take at least an hour, and even then no cheery picnic awaited them.

Kit looked about her worriedly, and then gave a shout.

"Hey!" she called. "Looky thar—another picnic party!"

The gang, crowding up to her, stood staring down the far side of the hill. On a small plateau a group of people sat, dividing the contents of a large hamper—larger even than the one they had been carrying.

"Strangers," said young Billy. "Gee, I'd like a bite of what they've got!" said one of the girls.

Kit hesitated only a moment. "C'mon then," she said. "Let's go. Reckon they've enough there to spare us a bite."

She led the way down, and half-way there her steps attracted the attention of the picnickers, who glanced up. They were a small party, four in number, but chattering and laughing enough for a dozen—and they had food enough for a dozen, too.

"And the candies—"

"And the cold chicken—"

The youngsters' throats now became completely parched; while the sight of the delicious food gave them hunger pains and made their mouths water.

"Er—er good-afternoon," smiled Kit. "Pardon?" asked a woman. "Qu'est ce que ca?"

One of the men spoke quickly without the gang's being able to understand one word he said. He just jabbered meaninglessly.

"Gee! They're French!" gasped Kit. "Say! Anyone here know French?"

But none of them did, and they stood silent, while the people, after jabbering away themselves, shrugged their shoulders and continued their meal.

"Reckon it's no good," said Kit dimly. "We're just wasting time!"

She led the way and reluctantly they followed; for there was nothing else to do.

"Well, kids, looks like we've got to go home empty," said Kit. "Looks—"

She paused, because she had just seen a figure moving amongst the trees over the crest of the hill.

"Say—," Kit gasped. "Josephine!"

"Josephine—gee!" She can talk French!" said Billy.

Kit laughed.

"She can talk French, but I don't reckon she'll come to our rescue after the way she's been treated. C'mon. Let's get going."

Celia, the smallest of the girls, tired and thirsty, suddenly started to cry.

"Oh, I'm so thirsty, and—and—"

"Shush!" said Kit sharply.

But by then Josephine had seen them and came hurrying up.

"Oh, lo, Josephine," Kit said in awkward tone.

Josephine bowed coldly, and then put her chin up, while the gang, avoiding her gaze, looked sheepish and embarrassed.

"Er—mebbe, you could tell us the—er—French for lemonade?" said Kit. "If you could it'd be a mighty kind act."

"Oh, please, Josephine?" begged Celia. "And I'll always be your friend."

"Lemonade—what am ze lemonade?" asked Josephine.

Kit took her arm briskly. "Come on—you'll know when you see," she said.

Kit fairly rushed her to the crest of the hill; and the gang followed in a crowd. No sooner were they seen than one of the picnickers jumped up and, speaking French, commanded them to be gone.

Josephine gave a wild, excited cry, and replied in French. In two minutes she was babbling excitedly with them, and they all laughed and hugged each other.

"Hey, just a minute! What do the people say?" asked Kit, and gave Josephine a wink.

"Eh—Oh, zey say if you are my fr-riends zey shall be 'appy you shall join zem, but—but—if you are not—"

She shrugged. "I'm your friend," said Celia.

Kit put a hand on Josephine's shoulder.

"Josephine, I reckon they've treated you badly, and haven't been friends. But now's the time to return good for evil, and I guess you'll never regret it—never! Unless" she added, turning to the gang, "there's anyone here doesn't want to be friends with Josephine."

The gang blinked; then followed Celia's lead, as she put out her hand to Josephine, who took it in great delight.

"Reckon everyone's sorry they were tough with you," said Kit. "You see—we all know now what it feels like not to know the foreign word for what you want. That so, gang?" she asked.

"Sure!"

And the gang sat down to the picnic, guests of the "French" party—really people from a near-by town, Kit's friends, pretending to be French Canadians.

The ice was broken; and soon the gang were all learning the French for the various cakes and goodies—and teaching Josephine the English in return. And when the meal was over, Kit arranged a ball-game in which Josephine proved herself as adept as the others.

Later Billy said to Kit: "Reckon she's a good sport for a girl—and a Frenchie at that, too!"

Kit knew then that there was no longer need to worry about Josephine's being lonely. She had found friends; and thereafter, whatever the 'gang' arranged, she was one of their number.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

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