

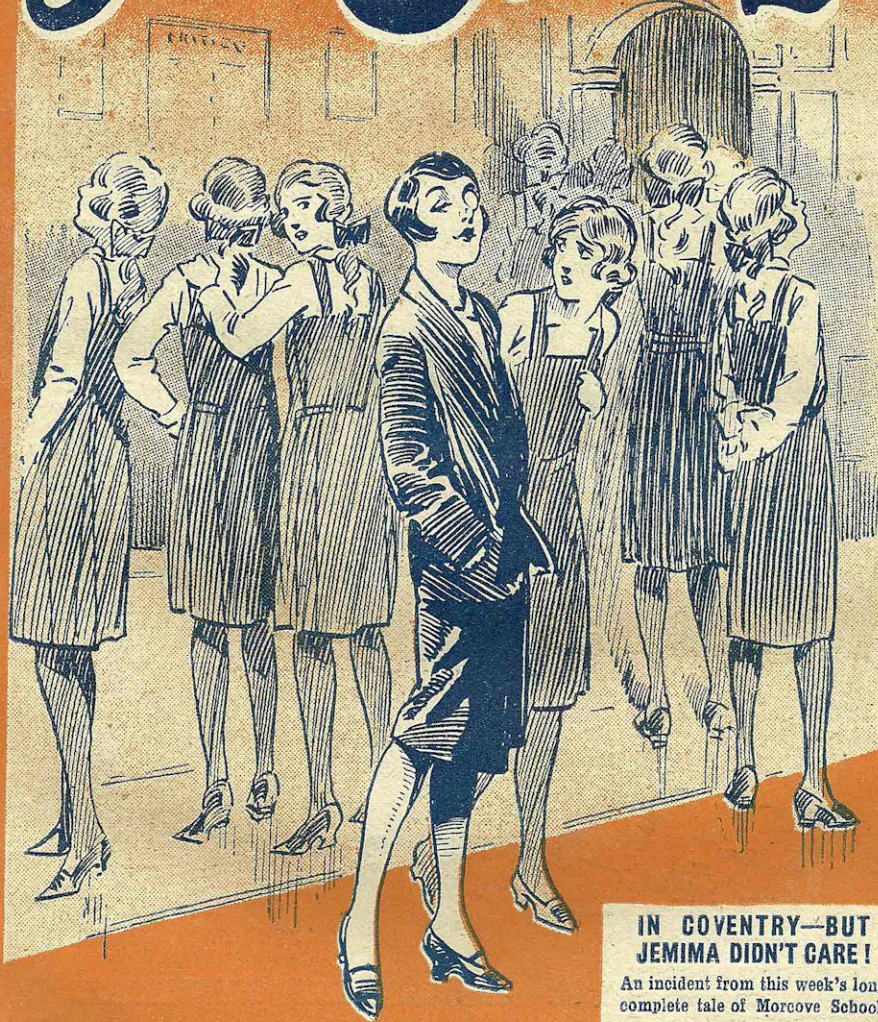
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**IN COVENTRY—BUT
JEMIMA DIDN'T CARE!**

An incident from this week's long
complete tale of Morcove School.

You Will Love Jemima Carstairs, Who is Featured in this Fine Story!

A FALSE FRIEND!

By MARJORIE STANTON.



The Girl Who was in Coventry.

"WE can't leave the man here!" said Betty Barton worriedly.

"And equally," agreed Madge Minden, "I don't see that we can go and tell Jemima and make ourselves ridiculous. You know what she is—"

"Yes, a cheat!" nodded Polly Linton. Polly spoke with an excess of grimness. It was unusual that Polly, the madcap of the Fourth Form at Morcove, should be at all out of temper, for her nature was sunniness itself.

"I didn't mean quite that," Madge explained, after a pause, "although she certainly is a cheat—and worse. What I mean is she has such a way of being amiable and friendly that one can't rebuff her. If we went into her study and said that a visitor had called for her, she'd take it as—well, as an overture of friendship."

"Yes, wather, deah geals. But pewwaps if I went—"

That interruption was hastily drowned by a chorus of dissent, and Paula Creel looked quite surprised.

"Weally," she lisped, "I fail to see the reason for that, you know. As a girl with plenty of tact and diplomacy—"

"Oh, my word—tact!" said Polly, and the heavy clouds waited from her brow as she chuckled in delight at her aristocratic friend's description of herself.

Paula might be several sorts of a darling, but she was anything but tactful.

"No," said Betty decidedly—and as Betty was captain of the Fourth Form she had to make whatever decision there might be—"no, girls, the solutions would be simple enough if a maid were about, or any of the servants. We've got to let Jemima know that her father's secretary has called to see her, and the only way is—"

Betty was interrupted then by Madge Minden's nudging her arm.

They were standing in a small group in the school hall, and girls of other Forms were passing and re-passing at every moment; but the girl who had caused Madge Minden to interrupt Betty's eloquence was a member of their own Form, a girl with thin face and close-set eyes.

Even though the whole of the Fourth Form at Morcove School is against her, Jemima Carstairs, the strange new girl, does not allow that to worry her. She goes on in the same old way—and it is Betty Barton & Co. who discover they have made a mistake, and misjudged her all along.

She was walking by, apparently engrossed in thoughts, but once she gave a quick glance aside at them—a glance that showed pretty clearly that she was listening to every word they were saying.

That was Ursula Wade all over, of course. She liked nothing better than to listen to other girls' conversation, even when they had no particular interest for her. But this conversation had interest.

So everyone was silent, and such was the attention Ursula received that she had the grace to blush and hurry on.

"Ursula would do," Polly Linton said. "Ursula and Jemima are birds of a feather, after all, aren't they? She's the only one in the Form who speaks to Jemima."

"And Jemima's the only one who speaks to Ursula," pointed out Madge. "They're six of one and half-a-dozen of the other. We shall have to write out the message on a strip of paper, and put it in at the door. That's all that one can do." "I suppose it is," Betty admitted. "Jemima will smile."

"Let her!" Polly exclaimed. "We don't mind her smiles."

"Well, it would be rather queer," Betty murmured, smiling to herself. "Yet, as Madge says, it is the only thing to do. Jemima can laugh, but it will sting, too."

"Yes, and a good job, too, really," concurred Madge Minden, with a curt nod of her head. "She wants to be taught a lesson she'll remember. Thanks to her personality, she can go through life flouting people as she pleases—doing wrong, and then winning her way back to favour. But she's got to learn that it won't do always."

There was ready agreement with that expressed on every face, and Betty Barton hurried away to get possession of a large piece of paper and a blue pencil that was one of Polly Linton's proudest possessions.

It was easy to mark out the message, and Betty and the others went up to the Fourth Form corridor.

It was easy to tell which study belonged to Jemima Carstairs, for there came from it the

regular ticking of a quickly-operated typewriter, and the group halted outside that door.

Betty arranged the placard for easy display, and tapped on the door panel.

Twice she had to tap, however, before she received attention. Then the typewriting ceased.

Betty turned the handle of the door, but it did not move. It clicked, however, and at that there came from the other side a pleasant, soft voice, a voice that was kindly and gently persuasive.

"Door's locked. Dash away—there's a good kid, Ursula. Rush up and down the corridor, and time yourself. I'm busy—"

Betty smiled faintly and shook the handle.

It seemed that their little trick would not work, for someone would have to talk to *Jemima* now, it seemed, otherwise how would she know that it wasn't *Ursula*?

That problem *Madge Minden* solved, though, by speaking to *Paula* in a loud tone of voice.

"Door's locked, *Paula*."

"Yes, wather—appawntly."

Then, as *Madge Minden* had surmised, there came the scrape of a chair, and the next moment *Jemima Carstairs* had the door open, and was standing staring at them.

Jemima's well-shaped oval face was flushed with the exertion of work, and her grey eyes regarded the girls with surprise. One hand was dived into the pocket of the blue "smoking-jacket," while the other groped for and found a horn-rimmed monocle.

"Oh, what cheer?" she observed amiably. "Quite a batch of visitors! Thought it was my 'at home' day, what? Quite understand. Come in, and make yourselves at home!"

The monocle was screwed into her right eye, and the ribbon dangled down gracefully. Behind her the light was silhouetting the outline of her reddish-brown, wavy hair, and shining full upon the faces of the girls who had brought her the message.

An unkindly light it was, for it made their confusion far too obvious for their liking, and they felt, on the whole, rather foolish.

But *Betty Barton* walked up the passage to *Jemima*, while *Madge*, *Polly*, and *Paula* discreetly walked away.

Betty would gladly have handed over the message into *Jemima's* keeping, but that girl had both hands in her jacket pockets now, and was eyeing the thing with interest.

"Mr. *Brownlee* waiting for me downstairs. I say," she exclaimed, "how perfectly stunning! And how bright, my very dear *Betty*, of you to have conceived this brilliant notion. Handwriting's a bit wobbly. But what of it?"

Betty Barton went crimson, and drew down her notice with as much dignity as she could muster.

"In the waiting-room—where's that?" added *Jemima* before *Betty* could walk off.

Betty Barton, compelled by natural politeness, halted. Girls had been sent to *Coventry* before now—*Ursula* had been sent to *Coventry*, and *Cora Grandways*—but when they were in *Coventry* they made no efforts to speak for fear of the rebuffs.

Jemima seemed oblivious of the fact that she was in *Coventry*.

Betty was sorely tempted to answer that question, but she groped for her pencil, and could not find it.

Jemima, with a quick smile, went back to her table, and handed over a black-lead.

"Or," she offered, "my machine is at your disposal. I've just finished typing my pater's play—a brilliant effort. The play, that is—not the

typing. Perhaps I'll give a reading to the Form, what?"

She handed *Betty* the pencil, and the captain of the Fourth did a hurried diagram of the lower part of the school showing the way to the waiting-room, where Mr. *Brownlee*, secretary of Captain *Carstairs*, the famous dramatist, awaited his employer's daughter's attendance.

Jemima, with an almost paternal solicitude, watched *Betty's* efforts, putting her head this way and that, stepping back and half closing her eyes, then nodding her head.

"Awfully nice of you," she commented, "to come along and amuse me like this. Shows a friendly spirit. I mean to say, to waste your time drawing puff-puffs and what not."

Betty's colour deepened, and she scribbled on top of the sketch:

"Way to waiting-room."

"I see," said *Jemima*, with a quick nod. Her eyeglass gleamed in the light, and she smiled upon *Betty*. "I just go up fork lightning, halt by the bit of broken lead, go along the concertina—"

"Stairs," *Betty* wrote by what *Jemima* had designated a concertina.

"Stairs, I mean," agreed *Jemima*. "Then so on and likewise so forth. Awfully kind and all that stuff, *Betty*. I'll just rush down at once. How do you like this frock? New one. Just arrived. Spartan cut, you know. No frills or nonsense. Like it?"

Betty looked at the frock and liked it. Terribly hard it was to look coldly into those friendly grey eyes, terribly hard to walk away deliberately; but *Betty* was captain of her Form, and as captain had to lead.

The Form had by common consent sent *Jemima* to *Coventry*, and the Form's decision was something of vast importance.

So *Betty* walked away, just as *Ursula* arrived. *Ursula's* arrival was the signal for *Jemima* to gather all her papers together in a great hurry.

"Don't bother. I'll do it," *Ursula* offered.

"No bother," smiled *Jemima*. "Quite a pleasure, I assure you." And she bowed. "You'll be delighted to hear that I've finished the pater's play. A single-handed effort that isn't bad—what?"

"I offered to help," *Ursula* pointed out, with an angry look. "You wouldn't let me. Anyone would think—"

"Yes?" queried *Jemima* as the other broke off.

"Anyone would think I was an enemy instead of a friend. My father is your father's closest friend," *Ursula* went on quickly. "You know your father said I could help. He wants us to be friends, and you—"

"I'm not, what?" sighed *Jemima*. "How sad life is! Didn't I take this long and arduous journey to *Coventry* with you?"

"It was your fault!" *Ursula* retorted, a red spot of colour in either cheek. "I know you took the blame. I'd have done it for you. If you hadn't taken the French crib back, nothing would have happened. I could have got away with it. Your griggishness was what was wrong. If you'd minded your own business—"

Jemima raised her hand.

"Sorry to dash away in the middle," she said. "I'm terribly absorbed in your pearls of wisdom, but I really must scoot now. There's the machine. Just type out all you have to say, *Ursula*, my very dear one, and we'll put it to music when I come back."

And off went *Jemima Carstairs*, with anything

but a boyish walk, despite her many queer masculine affectations. Not even closely-shingled hair made her look boyish. But she was queer—very queer—as everyone at Morcove agreed, and queerest of all she seemed to Ursula Wade, whom she had left in her study biting her lip vexatiously, conscious that she had been foiled.

Jemima is Adamant.

MR. BROWNLEE would have had every excuse for impatience. He had been waiting in the school waiting-room for more than twenty minutes, but he stood by the fireplace, looking round the room, and not betraying any signs of excitement or impatience. He was a good-looking young man, and he smiled as Jemima entered.

"Cheero, Brownie!" said Jemima.
 "Hallo, Jimmy!" said Mr. Brownlee. "You must have run all the way! I've never known you to be so quick before."

"Ah," said Jemima. "It's the toughness of school life, Brownie. How's the gov'nor?"

"Working hard," said Mr. Brownlee. "He sent me along to collect the play, you know. Hope you've finished it. Can't understand his leaving the typing to you."

Jemima screwed her monocle into her eye and smiled.

"Pater's sensitive about his stuff," she said.
 "Great brains, you know. Great gushes of sensitiveness coze over me often. Often and often. But I've finished, though. I didn't know he wanted it—"

"Wants to show it to Mr. Wade," explained the secretary.

His duties as secretary were very light indeed. He was employed chiefly, Jemima gathered, as a librarian, for her father's library was very extensive, and was in progress of being re-catalogued and re-conditioned. Also Mr. Brownlee had to sort out reference works in the British Museum when the playwright was engaged upon the serious task of writing long and heavy volumes upon the early years of art and civilisation.

"To Mr. Wade," Jemima murmured, and flicked the play with her hand. "Gov'nor there with him?"

"No; he's in town," said Mr. Brownlee. "I'm just packing the thing and going back to-morrow. I've been asked to see that the play is safely delivered to Mr. Wade. He's going to read it through and criticise it."

Jemima could not help smiling. She remembered Ursula's father, a portly gentleman with small, blinking eyes, and a face she did not trust.

"Do you know, Brownie," said Jemima seriously, "I don't find my heart yearning great years for the Wade gentleman."

"Not very nice, is he?" grinned Brownlee. "Don't like him myself. He can't do anything funny with the play, though, can he?"

"Not so sure," sighed Jemima.
 "He's your father's greatest friend. Your father would trust him anywhere. And I suppose he ought to know," added the secretary thoughtfully.

"H'm!" said Jemima reflectively. "Humph! as one might say. Gov'nor's so trusting. Awfully sweet and dear of him, of course. But there, you know what people are!"

Mr. Brownlee smiled and looked at his watch. "I can't wait long," he said. "Anything you can say against Mr. Wade meets with my approval, but not with your pater's. Got the play here?"

He picked up his hat, being obviously in a hurry. But Jemima rested on the table and frowned.

"I shan't send the play," she remarked.
 Mr. Brownlee, startled by that amazing decision, looked at her, then smiled.

"No; I shall take it."
 "Can't be done," decided Jemima. "Much too important, really. Mr. Wade might grub it all over with his little fingers and spoil my nice clean work."

"But your pater says he's to have it, and his word is—well, law," Mr. Brownlee remarked.

Jemima saw that clearly enough, but she also saw what she thought was the undesirability of letting the play get into the hands of Mr. Wade.

"He's too keen to set his small, little, bright eyes upon it," she sighed. "And so's that lovable light of his life, Ursula. Tell him I'm not sending it, Brownie. Give him my love, and say I have changed my mind—or rather, to be precise, the gov's."



JEMIMA IS ADAMANT! "Come along, Jimmy," said Mr. Brownlee. "Give me the play. I must hand it over to Ursula Wade's father." "You can tell him that I refused to hand it over to anyone but my father!" replied Jemima.

Mr. Brownlee looked at Jemima, smiled, and shook his head.

"Orders, Jimmy, are orders," he said kindly. "I sympathise with what you feel. But Mr. Wade has got to have the play. Hang it, it's your pater's to do with as he likes! He'll be frightfully annoyed if you don't hand it over. I really think you ought to."

Jemima tucked the play under her arm, and patted Mr. Brownlee's broad shoulders.

"Cheer up, Brownie," she said. "Troubles come not in single pies, as Wordsworth wittily remarks, but in whole eight-course dinners. I shall get into very tepid water, but I can bear it. Comes of being a Spartan, what?"

"But I say," Mr. Brownlee protested, "bc

sensible, Jimmy. You must hand it over, you know. It's got to be done sooner or later. Wade will report it to the gov'nor, then the fat will be in the fire."

"Let it sizzle if it is," said Jemima. "This play doesn't leave my hands except for the gov'nor's."

"Afraid I shall lose it?"

"Not that, Brownie; of course not. But when I see the gov'nor again, I shall give him a little lecture. I shall illustrate it with choice and allegory, you know, about the lion that trusted the mouse which bit his ear or something, and guide him away from the Wade man."

Mr. Brownlee was not impressed; he smiled, albeit with impatience.

"Oh, come on, Jimmy," he said. "Give me the play, and don't be a young fool. What am I to say to Wade? I can't tell him a whooper, and say it wasn't ready."

"Say that I refused to hand it over to you—to anyone but the gov'nor. Then, if the gov'nor wants to have his play, he'll come down and see me, and I'll put it to him like a Dutch aunt—whatever a Dutch aunt is, you know."

Mr. Brownlee was a capable young man. He reached forward to take the play by force, since he could not take it from its possessor by reasoning. Jemima, however, stepped out of his reach, darted to the door, and slammed it.

Before Mr. Brownlee had the door open she was out of sight down the corridor, and after a second's pause in the hall, he shrugged his shoulders and went. Then Jemima emerged from her hiding-place, and, still shaking her head sadly at her father's folly, mounted the stairs.

She passed Betty and Polly on the way, and gave them a cheery, though somewhat absent-minded, nod, apparently failing to notice that they did not look at her.

But she did notice, and she sighed heavily.

"And now," she told herself, "I shall have to do a few Spartan exercises to get into trim for a really good up-and-downer with the gov'nor. What with being cooped up in a small room with a girl like Ursula Wade, and being barred from chatting chippily with the only people worth knowing, I seem to have struck the thin ice near the danger board."

And she went sadly back to Ursula Wade's study, humming to herself, "I Ain't Nobody's Darling," with quite an amount of feeling, but complete absence of tune.

Beaten Despite All.

AT the moment when Jemima, returning to her study, opened the door, Ursula Wade was busy running through a heap of papers in a small steel case that usually was very securely locked.

Very quietly the door opened, and Jemima, although she smiled, said not a word. The rustle of the fiercely-shuffled papers prevented Ursula's hearing the door being swung close, and Jemima seated herself stealthily in a chair, and picked up one of the sheets on the table and commenced to read it—a sheet upon which she had made mistakes, and had therefore discarded.

She was sitting there, reading, when Ursula straightened herself.

"Bother!" said Ursula. "Where can it be? Daddy said—"

Jemima rustled the paper slightly, and Ursula, as though she had received a blow on the back, wheeled round.

She looked at Jemima, who did not even trouble to glance up. Ursula went pale, and her

heart seemed to stand still. Her jaw dropped, and she stood there, gaping at Jemima, while that girl dropped the paper on the ground, yawned, and leaned back to survey Ursula casually through her monocle.

"Hullo—ullo!" she said. "Don't say you've lost the use of your lower jaw, my much-beloved Ursula. Don't say that the flow of brilliant small talk has for ever been stilled, what?"

"How long have you been here?" panted Ursula.

"I didn't hear you come in. You—"

"Just strolled in," said Jemima lazily. "Hated to interrupt you when you were busy. Hope you found what you wanted."

Ursula bit her lip and said nothing. She never knew what to say to Jemima, who was always so calm, cool, and resourceful.

"Just ask Jimmy," said Jemima kindly, with an encouraging wave of the hand. "Any advice wanted, come to James the Ever Ready. Sorry I'm so frightfully careless. Paper so untidy that you can't find anything?"

"I—dropped something into the case, A—bit—of rubber," stammered Ursula, recovering her nerve. "That is all. I wasn't looking at your papers."

"Oh, my dear," protested Jemima, in pained tones, "what a horrid suggestion! Tush! Never let it be said that Ursula, the stickler for etiquette, the girl of honour, would do such a thing! No; no, a million times!"

Ursula turned her back, and closed the case with a snap.

"I'll leave it," she said shortly. "I can always get another piece."

She pulled a chair up to the table then, and stared at a crossword puzzle which was on the table. It was not really holding her attention, and not many minutes elapsed, therefore, before, her curiosity gaining the better of her, she looked at Jemima again.

"Did you give Brownlee the play?" she asked.

"He wanted it for your father," Jemima remarked carelessly. "Your father is going to bring his brains to bear upon it, to make suggestions and alterations, and all that sort of rot. Great brain, your father. A man, one might say, of deep resource."

"Yes," said Ursula, puzzled. "He is."

She tried to control her excitement, but was conscious of Jemima's gleaming monocle and the close scrutiny from the pleasant grey eyes.

"So nice to have helpful friends," Jemima said, "criticising one's jolly old work, and such like."

"Of course," agreed Ursula, uncomfortably. "My father usually makes—makes helpful suggestions."

"So," agreed Jemima, "I should say."

She got up from her chair then, and scooped together the loose pages that lay on the table. Whenever she made a mistake, she restarted the page, so that there should be no mark of soft rubbing out or deletion. It was an excellent plan where neatness was concerned, and the typescript, neatly pinned between brown-paper sheets, was something to regard with pleasure and admiration.

Ursula was regarding it with longing, however, rather than anything else.

"That isn't the thing?" she exclaimed before she could prevent the utterance of the incautious words.

"That?" said Jemima carelessly, and tossed it aside. "May as well burn these old pages, I suppose."

She looked at the fire, which was a good one, and

then stooped to gather the odd pages from the box. She took stock of everything with her keen eyes, and nodded her head in satisfaction.

"Better wrap them into a bundle," Ursula advised, "and take them down to the furnace. Much better to do that."

It was a good idea, and Jemima thanked her for it, and found a copy of an old newspaper. She tore the pages into strips, and put them into the open newspaper.

Ursula watched her, and on an occasion when Jemima's back was turned took the opportunity to open the brown paper covered typescript.

"You forgot to give your father's secretary the typescript, surely!" she exclaimed.

"Forgot? Oh, no!" said Jemima. "I didn't hand it over."

Ursula looked up at that, startled. She wanted to ask why, but she knew already, and bit her lip with annoyance. How much her father wanted to gain possession of that typescript she knew. Every artifice had been tried, and it seemed now that he really had succeeded.

Her orders were very clear indeed, although he had hinted only at first, and given her false clues as to what was his object.

From the first time she knew that Jemima had been suspicious, but now Jemima was taking action. She had definitely not sent the typescript apparently.

"I shall post it on to the gov'nor," Jemima explained lightly. "That will be all right."

She turned again to throw one or two papers on the fire, and Ursula, leaning forward, skilfully picked from the box a piece of paper, closely written upon in small handwriting.

For that she had searched in vain before Jemima had entered, but Jemima had turned it out from a secret bottom of the box, and Ursula's eyes gleamed.

What to do with that paper if ever she discovered it she knew well. It was to be destroyed—to be burnt, if possible. There in the grate burned the fire, and the manuscript was in her hand.

Perhaps, when Jemima was gone—

But there would be the ashes, and she might be caught in the act of burning it! Ursula was a blind helper in her father's scheme, but she did know that this blue paper, with its close handwriting, was to be destroyed, and her quick mind found a way out.

Under the heap of torn paper in the newspaper she pushed the manuscript just before Jemima turned again.

"I'll carry it for you," Ursula offered, and Jemima, in the act of picking it up, hesitated.

A flickering smile passed across her lips, and she nodded her head.

What Ursula hoped to do at this eleventh hour she did not know, and she was rather glad, too, that Ursula would be with her. In that case, she would not have to worry about the typescript she was leaving behind.

Smiling still, Jemima followed Ursula out of the room, and Ursula's heart beat quickly. She could even afford to smile, for how simple her scheme was, and yet how excellently it was working!

She would throw the bundle on to the fire, and then the manuscript would be lost.

That would not be the end, quite. For when it was half-burnt, when it would be too late to retrieve that paper, she would point it out to Jemima.

Flushed with excitement, she led the way to the furnace that heated the water for the central

heating system. A large furnace it was, and when the door was open the heat was intense. To stuff that bundle into the opening was not going to be easy, but Ursula managed it, just scorching her hands slightly.

"Now slam the door!" advised Jemima. "Hot-tish, isn't it?"

Ursula poked the bundle into the middle of the furnace, and it caught light. The newspaper cover soon flared, and so did the torn, thin strips of paper, but the manuscript paper at the bottom did not light so easily.

Ursula raked it over, and raked it, too, so that the blue paper showed clearly.

Quite casually, Jemima had been watching until then, but now her eyebrows went up, and the monocle dropped to the end of its ribbon, and she stared.

"Goodness! What's that?" she said in tones of greater seriousness than Ursula had ever heard her use.

"Why, that blue paper, with handwriting, you put in," said Ursula simply.

"Blue paper?"

Jemima whipped up the rake and pushed it inside. But the rake could not reach the paper now, for Ursula had cunningly pushed it well in, and her arm was longer than Jemima's.

The metal was red hot, and Jemima drew her hand back, all red and scorched. Her face, in marked contrast, was pale.

"That's the gov'nor's MS.!" she exclaimed. "I left it in the box. I know I did! I—"

"You put it in the bundle. I saw you," Ursula said innocently. "Didn't you mean to?"

"I'll put you in the bundle!" Jemima exclaimed. "Here, pass me that other poker thing—quickly! Hop out! Slip! Jump!"

She waved the red-hot rake, and Ursula handed the poker over quickly enough.

In vain Jemima frantically tried to tie the two together with the ribbon torn from her monocle. She tried to tear the rough material of her dress, and then she whipped off Ursula's hair-ribbon.

She could just reach the paper then, and was gradually dragging it out, but the paper was well alight, and practically doomed.

Then, of course, the ribbon caught alight, and Jemima swished out the flames and set her lips.

"Spartan or nothing!" she murmured, more in her old, casual tone. "Rush away, Ursula, and get me something to put on the burns I'm going to ask for. Slip!" she added as Ursula stood still.

Then, with lips compressed, she caught hold of the now terribly hot end of the rake, and pushed her arm inside. The rake gathered the paper and pulled it out. In another second all would have been over. What the pain was like only Jemima knew, but her jaw was locked grimly, and she did not flinch—not until her sleeve suddenly caught fire did she drag out her arm.

In a second the flame was smothered, and she might even then have succeeded but Ursula returned, and the matron was with Ursula.

"Miss Jemima," gasped the matron, "come away at once! Goodness, you're burned! Your dress! Oh, my goodness, child!"

She caught Jemima's shoulder, and Jemima wrenched herself free. But it was too late. Her left arm, preparing to dive into the furnace, was snatched away just as the paper really caught alight.

"No go; beaten," she said quietly, "at the post! Thanks, Ursula, my dear." She turned and looked at Ursula calmly. "For sheer resource in an emergency you would take beating. The bringing



CAUGHT IN THE ACT! "Bother! Where can it be?" Ursula was asking herself, when she heard the rustle of a paper and turned round. Jemima was in the room and had seen her searching through the papers! Yet Ursula had not known!

of the matron was a master stroke. I congratulate you on a marvellous brain."

"A good job she did bring me!" said the matron tartly. "Good gracious me! What are you girls coming to?"

But Jemima was not "coming to." She clutched the matron by the arm, and then, with a faint, half-heard murmur, fainted.

"Oh, goodness!" she said softly. "I must be Spartan, what?"

Where was the Typewriting?

IT was an awful position for the Fourth, of course. They were simply yearning to know just what had happened to Jemima—simply longing to know why she had her arm swathed in bandages, just as Ursula was longing to tell them.

But since Ursula was in Coventry, how could they speak to her or listen to her?

Jemima, rather pale, but smiling as though her arm did not throb a bit, walked by Ursula's side, with her monocle in her eye, minus a cord and minus a glass.

"What—no band?" said Jemima blithely as she saw the girls in the Fourth Form corridor. "This is a sad welcome, Ursula."

"Very!" said Ursula, who was feeling quite elated. "Does your arm hurt much, Jemima?"

Jemima shrugged her shoulder.

"Which arm?" she said.

"The burnt one," Ursula said. "It must have hurt!"

And she glanced at the other girls, hoping they had heard, and would break the silence. When Ursula had news to impart, it really was hard not to be able to talk.

So dramatically she could have told the story—with such exaggeration, too!

In silence, however, they walked to their study, and Ursula threw open the door. Jemima's arm was in a sling, and she walked straight into the study. Once inside, she halted.

For the study had an occupant, a gentleman whose face was stern and whose brow wore a heavy frown that served to keep his monocle in place.

"Why, gov'nor!" exclaimed Jemima.

Captain Carstairs rose from his chair and looked at her in amazement.

"What's this, Jimmy, old man? Broken arm, what, what?"

"Burns," said Jemima. "Nothing much. I looked upon the poker when it was red, you know. Hot things pokers. Never clutch the hot end of a poker, gov'nor, will you? Promise!" she asked flippantly.

Captain Carstairs was not in a flippant mood.

"How did it happen?" he asked, nodding to Ursula.

"Tried to rescue some paper from the furnace," explained Jemima, and became serious. "Matter of fact, gov'nor, I have some perfectly horrid news. You know your manuscript—blue paper? Well, it is no more. It has been cremated."

Captain Carstairs looked at his daughter in alarm.

"Burned—destroyed!" he said sharply. "What on earth—"

"Pure accident," said Jemima. "Just my carelessness. I could have sworn I left it in the box!"

"You must have put the paper on top of it, and gathered it by accident," said Ursula, with an air of kind friendliness. "It got mixed up with the paper you meant to burn."

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Captain Carstairs.

"But—but, good gracious!"

"She tried to rescue it," said Ursula eagerly. "That's how she got burned. Only she—"

"Only I didn't," finished Jemima. "That's about the most accurate description of the frightful scene, gov. Smoke, flame, and fun, you know. But I really am sorry about the manuscript."

And she was, too. But sorrow alone could not restore the manuscript, which her carelessness had been the means of losing. Jemima saw that, and her father saw it.

But, whatever he may have been feeling, he said nothing in the way of a rebuke. It was rather late in the day to do so, and it would have been of no avail whatever.

"It cannot be helped. But what could be helped is, Jemima—"

"Yes, gov'nor?"

"Your extraordinary refusal to send the copy of the play to Mr. Wade. I sent my specific instructions, and if Brownlee did not make himself clear—"

"Oh, he did; but—"

"But what?" said Captain Carstairs shortly. "Isn't it typed?"

"Yes, gov. Beautifully and artistically typed," Jemima said. She turned then to Ursula. "Ursula, you might run down to the Form-room, please, and look in my desk. You'll find a batch of papers there."

Ursula, although she longed to hear what was said, went. But she intended to remain outside the door, an intention that was frustrated by Jemima's opening the door and giving more instructions as to where the paper could be found. Madge Minden and Dolly Delane were talking in the corridor, and even Ursula had not the nerve to listen at a door with an audience.

She had to hurry away, and Jemima, returning at the study, closed the door rather ominously.

"Very mysterious," her father said, warming his hands, with his back to the fire.

"Yes, rather," agreed Jemima. "Fact is, one has to be mysterious. I'm really sorry about the manuscript, gov'nor, and you can't blame me. But as to the other—I don't like the idea of sending that play to Mr. Wade."

"Not like it—but why?" asked her father. "My dear Jimmy, I didn't ask your opinion, you know. What is your objection to his reading the play?"

Jemima puckered her brow, for the explanation was not going to be at all easy. This was not a moment to which she had looked forward at all.

"It's jolly awkward, criticising people," she decided, screwing the frame of her monocle into her eye. "Jolly awkward. But, to be honest and candid and above-board and such-like, I don't like Mr. Wade."

Captain Carstairs drew himself up stiffly. "He is my friend, Jemima. I trust him."

There was rebuke in his tone, and Jemima looked exceedingly ill at ease. She hated to criticise her father, and this must look uncommonly like criticism.

"But you see, gov'nor—" she murmured weakly, fighting for words to explain her meaning.

"Nonsense! You have some quarrel with Ursula, no doubt," said her father. "I cannot say I like the look of her very much—"

"Chip off the old block," smiled Jemima. "You wouldn't expect to get grapes from thorns or figs from thistles!"

Captain Carstairs look at her sharply.

"It is no proof that the father is like the daughter at all, Jemima. You are prejudiced without reason. I gather that you were being punished the other day for something that Ursula had done?"

Jemima started. She had not expected that to be seen through so clearly, but she could not deny it.

"Yes."

"I gathered as much from your manner and Ursula's," said Captain Carstairs. "I hold no brief for the daughter, but I'm glad that you were standing by her. She needs a friend and a friend's help. And that help could not come from one better than the daughter of her father's friend. I owe it to him—and you to me."

"Y-e-s," agreed Jemima. "I'm sticking by her like anything. We're never apart, in fact. Jolly old chums, you know. Tweedledum and Tweedledee. But—"

"But you don't like her," exclaimed her father. "Perhaps not, but I'm asking nothing more of you, Jemima, than to hand me the typescript of the play. All responsibility for it I take. That is all!"

He spoke quite sharply, and with strong disapproval in his tone. He was not really angry, but he was as near to being angry as Jemima cared to see him. He was the one person in the world for whom she really cared, and his displeasure was more to her than any amount of cruelty and punishment could have been.

"Oh! Right-ho!" she said rather lifelessly. "The word has gone forth. I'll get you the thing to hand over to him."

With worried face she searched the papers, and then handed him over a neatly-bound typescript, just as Ursula returned with a bunch of papers.

"Oh, thanks!" said Jemima. "I shan't need it, I find now. But never mind."

And she dropped the papers carelessly on to

the table, while her father tucked the typescript into the pocket of his coat. It was a heavy travelling-coat, and the pocket was exceedingly spacious.

That done, he prepared to go, looking first through the window down into the quadrangle, where his car awaited him. He kissed Jemima, and then said good-bye to Ursula, hurrying away with a quick smile at the two of them.

He had gone, perhaps, twenty yards when Ursula ran after him.

"Oh, are you going to see my father?" she asked.

"Your father? Yes. Now, if there is a message—"

Ursula nodded, and in the dark corridor gave some simple message she intended for her father. Jemima opened the door of the study at that moment.

She saw her father take out a small scribbling-pad that he always carried, and watched him jot down the message in the faint light available.

But her attention was focused mostly upon Ursula Wade; a flicker of a smile passed across her lips as she noted Ursula's every action. Then, before her father put the notebook back into his pocket, Jemima returned to the study, and was sitting down when Ursula reappeared. Ursula, however, did not reappear for some time, and when she did come back she flashed at Jemima a quick and somewhat anxious glance.

Jemima, however, just looked over the top of her book and smiled.

"All's well that ends well," she said, "and your pater will get the typescript after all."

"Yes, after all," said Ursula. "I can't understand why you didn't send it."



EXPOSED AT LAST! Jemima caught Ursula by the arm. "Speak up, Ursula!" she said. "Tell them how you picked my father's pocket and sent the play to your father!" But Ursula was too limp and frightened to speak.

"No; queer girl I am," said Jemima, in complete and easy agreement. "Thank goodness I've got my guv'nor to dash round and look after me, instead of my having to dash and look after him, what?"

"Yes, rather," Ursula said, and looked down at her crossword puzzle again.

She was hardly settled again, however, than there came hurried footsteps in the corridor outside, and to their ears came a masculine voice.

Ursula raised her head, and her eyes looked startled. Jemima dropped her book and leisurely rose.

"This room—here? Ah, yes, I remember."

And the door opened, to reveal Captain Carstairs, in his long travelling-coat, looking excited and perturbed.

"Back again?" murmured Jemima. "Anything wrong, guv'?"

"Wrong? Yes, the typescript," said Captain Carstairs, in agitation. "The thing has slipped out of my pocket. I could swear I had it!"

"You certainly put it in," said Jemima. "But, my word, it couldn't have dropped out of that large pocket, surely?"

Captain Carstairs searched the floor anxiously, moved a chair or two, and then scratched his chin.

"Must have done, if I put it in—and there doesn't seem any doubt of that."

Jemima stroked her hair and looked down at the floor. Then she looked across at Ursula.

"You didn't see it in the corridor? You followed the guv'nor down."

"I? No," said Ursula, with strange nervousness. "I didn't see it. It was—he put it into his pocket."

"Yes, yes! But where is it now?" said the playwright fretfully. "It is the only copy! Do you realise that?"

He looked at Jemima in despair, and she looked back at him, fully comprehending what the loss meant.

"It must be found!" he exclaimed. "We must organise a search! Where is the headmistress's room? I must see, her!"

Girls were in the corridor, and every word could be overheard distinctly. Captain Carstairs went out into the corridor and addressed the crowd.

"Now then, good Samaritans!" he said briskly. "I have lost a most important typescript—typed pages and brown-paper cover. Just gather round and search, will you, please? I shall be immensely indebted to you."

That was enough for the girls, and in a moment everyone was hunting.

Polly Linton took a box of matches into the darkest places, and all the doors were opened, to shine on to the dark corridor. Upstairs and downstairs they looked—a whole crowd of them. They even searched the drive.

Paula Creel found a magnifying-glass, although what she was going to do with that she was unable to say.

"Not a sign! Not a sign!" muttered the playwright. "The thing can't have vanished into thin air! It's most amazing—most amazing!"

"Well, no one's likely to have stolen it," said Jemima quietly. "I mean, no one would have picked your pocket. No one was near enough, except Ursula, and—well, one couldn't suspect her."

Her father looked at her sharply.

"There would not be a great deal of point in it," he said quickly, "since it was going to her

father, anyway. You seem to have some strange notions in your head, Jimmy."

He did not notice how Ursula hung back in the shadow—how she had searched furiously in the most unlikely places—and Jemima just smiled.

"Well, well," she said, "nothing for it but to reconstruct if the thing is lost, guv'nor."

"Reconstruct! Write it again? I couldn't—not in the same way?"

"I could type it in time," said Jemima easily—"every word!"

"Surely not!" he exclaimed. "Your memory isn't good enough."

But Jemima did not answer that. She had her own ideas on the subject, but she realised that to express them was hardly wise.

"Perhaps it will turn up," said Ursula hopefully. "Things do in the queerest way, of course. It might be in the lining of the coat—or in the car."

"I've searched everywhere," said the playwright, shrugging his shoulders. "The thing's gone, and I can't think where. There's no sense in hunting about any more. The probability is that someone has found it and taken it to the headmistress."

That certainly was an idea, and half a dozen girls offered to show him the way to Miss Somerfield's study. The headmistress, however, had heard nothing of any such discovery, although she promised to put a notice on the board. There was the faintest possibility that some girl had found it, and, not knowing of the hue-and-cry, had taken it to her room to read.

That, indeed, was the only feasible explanation, and one with which Captain Carstairs had to be content. On the morrow he would return for news, but until then all hope of finding the typescript had to be abandoned.

But for a long time it was discussed in studies, and many were the queer theories put forward. Something strange had happened to it, obviously; but that it must be inside the school seemed obvious to them all, unless—unless it had dropped on to the running-board of the car when the playwright had entered, and had subsequently dropped into the roadway, to be picked up by a passer-by before the loss had been discovered.

In that case there was small hope of finding it, and Captain Carstairs would have the weary work of writing his play all over again, for there was only a slender hope that Jemima could retype from memory.

"You couldn't really," said Ursula. "But if you'd sent it with the secretary this wouldn't have happened, and it would never have been lost!"

She said that with triumph, but Jemima looked up from her apparently absorbing book and smiled. "H'm!" said Jemima. "I wonder?"

And Ursula Wade's look of triumph vanished. For the rest of the evening she kept looking at Jemima in a queer, puzzled, and rather frightened way. What had Jemima meant by that remark?

More than once Ursula intended to speak, but refrained from fear. Eventually her curiosity overcame her fright.

"Meaning," she exclaimed suddenly, "that you think I stole the typescript?"

Jemima frowned reflectively. "Oh, I see!" she nodded. "Still worrying about that? My dear, beloved Ursula, surely the guv'nor put the complete kybosh on that? Why should you want to steal it?"

"No reason at all," Ursula answered quickly. "I didn't. But that's what you think. You're suspicious of me for some silly reason, and I don't like it. If I wanted to read the play, I could easily

get leave to go and see my father to-morrow, without risking unpleasantness by picking your father's pocket."

"Hear, hear," agreed Jemima enthusiastically. "Well thought of! And now, Ursula, worry away at the dear old crosswords, and bury the hatchet. This book is fascinating, and gripping me like anything! Shush!"

And there was nothing more to be had from Jemima that evening. But the book was not holding Jemima at all. Jemima was thinking hard, and smiling at something that was not in the book, although what she had to smile at it was a little difficult to see.

Completely in hot water, Jemima was—perhaps she would be in hotter water still later on! For the best laid schemes, the poet says, are apt to "gang a-gley."

A Shock for the School.

DESPITE the notice which Miss Somerfield had affixed to the board, no news was heard of the lost typescript. But the interest taken was amazing. It was the talk of the school, and Betty Barton & Co., in particular, felt a personal interest in it, since the loss had occurred in their own quarters.

"It's so queer!" Betty Barton said, for the hundredth time. "Who could possibly have taken the typescript, and not returned it?"

"Girl may be afraid," Madge Minden pointed out.

"Yes, wather—afraid to say that she picked it up and wead it."

"Though she could easily drop it in some place where it could easily be found," Madge remarked. "I don't see why she should keep the thing—really I don't!"

And there was, in point of fact, little reason for any girl's retaining the typescript, since its possession might incriminate her, and cause a great deal of awkwardness.

"It would be just plain theft," frowned Polly. "And we haven't any thieves."

It puzzled them, and it puzzled everyone else. Ursula, of course, they all agreed, would be capable of such a thing, but she was ruled out because the manuscript was going to her father anyway.

"I'm just wondering," Madge murmured, "if Jemima may be the cause of it all?"

"Jemima?"

"Yes. Jemima was very sure that she could re-type it from memory," Madge said, "and she's been proved deceitful. Suppose, for instance, she hadn't typed it at all! She is rather a slacker, you know. Suppose her father arrived in anger!"

"Phew!" said Betty.

They were in the Common-room, talking, for the afternoon was a "drencher," and there was nothing to do out-of-doors. Jemima was not there, but Ursula Wade had just come in, and had halted by the doorway.

Betty did not notice her, and the others were concentrating their interest on what Madge was saying, so Ursula managed to stand quietly and listen.

"You don't mean that he never had the typescript at all?" exclaimed Polly Linton. "I say, that would be playing rather low, you know."

Madge agreed that it would.

"But what we know of Jemima isn't against it," she said quietly. "And how do we know that Ursula wasn't working hand-in-glove with her?"

Then Ursula stole softly out of the door, closing it without anyone's being aware that she had entered the room.

"Something in that," concurred Betty Barton, startled though she was by the idea. "Jemima may have given her father just a few pages, the rest blank, and left Ursula to sneak it out of that big pocket. A child could have done it!"

The theory was startling, without a doubt, and yet it really did seem tremendously plausible to them. For now Jemima would start working over again, and, if she had already typed a little, her task would not be hard.

"One thing, though," murmured Tess Trelawncy—"don't forget that Captain Carstairs has lost the original as well. It got burnt; that's how Jemima got burned, trying to save it."

"Which shows that she didn't burn it on purpose," Polly exclaimed.

But there was, Madge Minden reasoned, no reason why Jemima should have wanted to burn the original; all she wanted to do was to keep from her father's knowledge the fact that she had not done the work in time. If it were half done, she would do the remaining half in apparently wonderful time, if he were under the impression that she had to start all over again.

"But what cunning!" murmured Betty. "What wonderful cunning—if it's right."

"Oh, well, it's only a theory," Madge admitted, with a faint flush. "Perhaps I oughtn't to have said anything, as it is merely guesswork. Anyhow, it isn't our business. But if it is true—"

"Then it shows we were right in cutting Jemima," Betty nodded. "I'm finished with the girl who does that sort of thing—a girl who hasn't the moral courage to admit a fault, and causes all that trouble!"

"But we don't know," Paula Creel sighed. "I wouldn't accuse any girl of doing that until I know."

"Nor I," agreed Madge readily. "The pity is that we shall never find out, of course—unless Jemima comes forward with half the play typed. But she wouldn't do that, I should imagine. It would give her away too completely."

So the discussion, since it could go no further, ended there. No proof, of course, and yet practically every girl was convinced that Madge Minden had astutely stumbled on the correct solution to the mystery.

Yet she was rather sorry that, without proof, she had said anything at all, for it seemed rather akin to talking scandal. More sorry still she would have been had she known that Ursula Wade had gone straight to her study, and there, alone, had composed a note in disguised handwriting, a note which she sealed in an envelope directed in the same writing to Captain Carstairs at the Holte, not so far away, where he was staying with her father.

She might have waited for him to appear at the school, and in some way let it fall into his hands then; but he had telephoned, as Ursula knew, to say that he would not arrive until the morrow.

That anonymous communication seemed to take a load off her mind, and Ursula went about the school with a more cheerful countenance than she had worn for many a day.

Nor did Jemima seem at all worried or perturbed. She made no effort to re-type the play from memory, nor did she make the slightest attempt to search again or to make inquiries.

That, Betty and the others, watching her, felt was a point in favour of Madge's theory. For would not Jemima, in other circumstances, have asked questions everywhere, and have given added publicity to the loss in the hope that at least a clue to the manuscript's whereabouts might be discovered?

It did not seem natural to them that she should take it so casually. Rather did it point to the fact that she must be perfectly well aware that the typescript was lost for ever.

Probably, as Polly said with a shrug, what she had typed of it had now been destroyed, since the possession of such half would mean her exposure.

It was inevitable, too, that Madge's theory should spread through the school; but the interest in that theory was nothing but the last flicker of a smouldering fire.

If the manuscript were lost for ever, then it was of no use worrying about it. How *Jemima* could be exposed they did not see, since there was no proof about it, and all that could happen now was that the manuscript would be rewritten.

"And retyped by someone else, if her father's wise," commented Madge Minden, in tones of finality.

Unfortunately, *Jemima* happened to be passing on her way down to breakfast. It was the second day after the loss, and by that time every girl in the school was fully aware of *Jemima's* position in her Form.

Every girl knew that she was in Coventry, and *Jemima* received all sorts of stares, and girls nudged each other in passing.

But if *Jemima* had heard Madge's murmur now, she took not the slightest notice of it. Yet she was aware of what Madge meant—and knew, too, of the meaning of the nudges.

"We don't seem to be getting any more popular, *Ursula*," she sighed. "Do we?"

"You don't," said *Ursula*. "Perhaps they've guessed what really happened that day—perhaps they've guessed the real reason for your not sending the typescript to my father."

"Ah, perhaps," said *Jemima* casually. "Who knows? They certainly saw him, if that's what you mean."

"That's not what I mean," retorted *Ursula*, going red.

There were half a dozen girls near them, half a dozen girls taking a deep interest in what was being said, yet *Jemima* did not seem to mind.

All the credit she got was the remark that she was "pretty hardened."

"If only she'd be ashamed!" murmured *Tess Trelawney*. "But she brazen it out, as though it were something really clever, you know."

It was surprising that *Ursula* too was willing to give publicity to it. *Ursula*, they decided, had played no part in the scheme.

"Which makes it all the worse, since *Jemima* tried to make out that *Ursula* might have taken it," Madge whispered to Betty. "I don't like that girl at all, Betty. She's not what she appears to be on the surface. On the surface one might like her, but she's deep!"

Then did *Jemima* look up and smile agreeably at Madge.

"We've dropped another ten points," she said to *Ursula*. "At least, I have. Shocking, isn't it? But your name, my dear child, is unsullied. They would not believe evil of you!"

Ursula shrugged her shoulders and sipped her coffee.

"Your father's coming to-day," she said. "A pity if he happens to hear it."

"Great pity," agreed *Jemima* cheerfully.

And it really did look as though she did not care; although, on occasions when she did not know that she was being watched, *Jemima* looked troubled indeed, and gave more than one anxious glance out of the window during the morning lessons.

Her father, however, did not arrive until just before dinner, when *Jemima* and *Ursula* were in their study, putting away the morning books and getting out those needed for the afternoon.

He came hurrying up the corridor, and entered the study in a state of excitement.

"Any news?" he exclaimed.

He raised his eyebrows, and jammed his monocle into his eye as he surveyed the two girls.

"No news, gov'nor," said *Jemima* simply. "Bad luck, isn't it?"

Her father groped in his pocket, and his face was very serious indeed. A whole heap of things he brought out, but selected one—a slip of paper—which he handed to his daughter, and *Ursula* looked at it and then looked away.

"From a friend," said *Jemima*, pursing her lips. "Nice to get charming billets-doux from absent friends, gov'nor."

"Read it," he said.

Jemima smoothed out the note and surveyed it. It ran:

"Your daughter never typed the play at all. She gave you blank paper, which she stole back and burned."

"This only arrive to-day?" asked *Jemima*, in some surprise. "Why, it's been the talk of the school for a long while, gov'nor," and she smiled at him in amusement. "Wet weather, you know. Girls must have something to talk about. Rather bright, I call it. The grammar could do with a little improvement, of course."

"Never mind the grammar, Jimmy. I want you to deny it."

"What-ho! I deny it," *Jemima* smiled. "Not a word of truth in it, gov'nor."

"Oh!"

He looked at her keenly.

"I confess I can't make head or tail of it," he said. "I'm not going to suspect you, first of deceit and then of telling a deliberate lie, Jimmy, but I want to get to the bottom of it all. Was that play that you gave me my play? I did just glance at one page. It was typed perfectly, but was it the right play?"

Jemima screwed the monocle into her eye, still smiling, and shook her head.

"No, gov'nor. To be honest, it wasn't."

"What!"

Captain Carstairs started, and his hand dropped away to his side. He fixed his daughter with wondering eyes. The door was open, and outside in the corridor one or two less scrupulous members of the Fourth were listening to every word.

Ursula Wade, though, was more amazed than any of them—more amazed than *Jemima's* father even, and he was shaken considerably.

"But, Jimmy, great Scott!" he exclaimed. "What are you saying? You can't mean you didn't type it—that you deceived me?"

"Oh, I typed it!" *Jemima* said. "And here it is!"

She turned then to her dispatch-case, unlocked it with the small key she kept round her neck, and produced a paper-bound typescript.

Captain Carstairs took it, stared at it, and returned his attention to his daughter.

"You took it from my pocket, Jimmy," he said in flat tones—in tones of shame and disappointment. "I had a higher opinion of you! I—"

"Not at all, gov'nor! I didn't do the pickpocket act," *Jemima* interrupted him. "Good gracious, no! I'm not clever enough for that, you know. Here's the typescript you wanted, and as for the other thing, that will come to light."

"Come to light? What do you mean? I don't understand. I'm ill at sea, Jimmy."

And Captain Carstairs slammed the door and sat down in the best chair.

Ursula looked as though she would like to sit down. Her face was the colour of chalk, and she looked at Jemima in bewilderment and fear.

"Let's have it," said the playwright testily. "What's it all about, Jimmy? Why should that other thing appear? What was it?"

"The play of yours they produced a long time ago in America, gov'nor—that one that American chap, Krayner, produced."

"I remember. The only play I have produced there—the only one of mine they'll ever see! They swindled me frostily. Krayner is following me now, whining for contracts—"

He broke off then abruptly. His anger had carried him away from the point, and he remembered Ursula's presence.

"I know Krayner swindled you," Jemima nodded. "But he'd give thousands for a play of

He went to open the door, but it was opened for him, and a maid peered in.

"Captain Carstairs?" asked the maid.

"Yes, yes. What is it?"

"There is a visitor to see you—a Mr. Krayner."

And then into the study stepped a man with a round, florid, but cheerful face, a man whose voice filled the study, and who held out a fat hand to Captain Carstairs.

"Well, Carstairs," he beamed, "here you are, hey? Chased you all over the place!"

He mopped his face with a silk handkerchief, while Captain Carstairs drew himself up with dignity.

"You could have saved yourself the exertion," he said coldly. "I have told you a hundred times at least that I will not have you touch any more of my plays! I will not produce another in America!"

"Easy! Easy!" said Mr. Krayner, still beaming. "I haven't come about that, you know. I'm doing you a favour."



IT MUST NOT BURN! "Goodness! What's that blue paper in the stove?" gasped answered Ursula. "Blue paper?" Jemima. "Why, it's the paper you threw in with the others," Jemima snatched up the rake and tried to recover the important manuscript.

yours now—or one that would sell as well—wouldn't he? That was a marvellous success. Mr. Wade remembers it."

"Mr. Wade! I won't hear a word against Mr. Wade! I'm tired of this petty suspicion, Jimmy!" And the playwright brought his hand to the table. "Great Scott! I believe you merely gave me that wrong copy so that he shouldn't get the play!"

"I did, gov'nor." Her father opened his mouth to speak, and closed it. Then grimly, the play gripped in his hand, he rose.

"Jimmy," he said, "you have acted like a little outsider, and I'm ashamed of you. I thought you were white all through, but you're not. This is mere petty spite, and nothing more."

Jemima paled, but said not a word. She was prepared for this.

"As for the play," went on her father, "I shall take it to Mr. Wade at once!"

"I don't want your favours!" Mr. Krayner was not perturbed.

"I'm saving you from plagiarism," he said. "People cribbing your stuff, under different names, different title of play, and so on."

Then the agent produced the typescript, with a flourish, from his pocket.

"Cast your eye over that!" he said. Captain Carstairs looked at the typescript, and then gave a startled exclamation of surprise.

"But this is the play that I produced in America, with different names! What is the meaning of this? Where did you get this?"

Ursula Wade crouched back, as though prepared for the playwright to turn upon her in temper, and Jemima looked from the agent to her father with growing interest, yet with no surprise whatever.

"From a gentleman who said it was a new play,

and wanted it produced in America. He was to put up the money, and take most of the profits."

"But his name?"

"Wade—stout man, small eyes."

Captain Carstairs said not a word, but his hand tightened upon the typescript, crumpling it.

"Wade—my friend!" he said. "But—but—why this play that was produced in America? I'm afraid I don't understand."

Nor, apparently, did the agent; but Jemima knew, and Jemima clutched Ursula by the arm.

"Speak up, Ursula!" she coaxed. "Tell them how you picked the gov'nor's pocket, and sent the play to your father."

But Ursula Wade, too limp and frightened to speak, snatched her arm from Jemima, and then bolted out of sight, the agent staring after her in surprise, and mopping his brow.

"I'm tremendously grateful to you, Krayner," said Captain Carstairs. "Perhaps I can see you in town at some time?"

"Right! A pleasure, captain," said Mr. Krayner, in delight. "A pleasure! Rely on me." And, being perfectly well aware that he was not wanted then, he hurried out.

Captain Carstairs turned to his daughter, and his face was pale.

"You were right, Jimmy," he said. "I see their game clearly now. I suppose Ursula burnt the script."

"Made me burn it," Jemima agreed. "She shuffled it somehow amongst the paper to be burned. Sad life, isn't it, gov'nor? That's the girl I have treated as the apple of my eye."

Captain Carstairs' face was grim and hard.

"I have found my play—and lost a friend," he said.

"Friend!" exclaimed Jemima. "What—Mr. Wade? Doing his best to produce your new play under a different name in America, and burning

the only duplicate you had, just to make sure he couldn't be bowled out! Friend of your bosom, gov'nor, what?"

Captain Carstairs smiled faintly.

"I seem to have acted like a fool," he said. "But, thank goodness, I had you to look after me, Jemima! What you have endured, forcing yourself to be friendly with that girl Ursula!"

"Tush! Let's forget!" implored Jemima, with a shudder. "The horrible thing is I shall I have to stay on here—"

"No, you won't," said her father. "I'm taking you away with me. I shan't allow you to remain in a school with that girl, Jimmy! You're coming away with me now! Why, hallo—"

He broke off in astonishment, for the door of the study had opened, to admit Betty Barton, Polly Linton, and Paula Creel, with Madge Minden not a yard behind them.

"Oh!" they gasped.

"We—we thought you had gone," stammered Betty, in confusion. "We came to apologise to Jemima for—"

"For thinking she was a sneak and a cheat," went on Madge Minden. "Ursula has just confessed; she asked us to come and tell you. Why didn't you say, Jemima—"

"Yes, wather. Why didn't you let us know, deah geal? It was hardly fair."

"Well, perhaps not," Jemima agreed. "But I had to stand by my jolly old pal, Ursula, you know. So nice of her to confess, but tell her it really doesn't matter, as she won't be reported."

"No, no; I want no publicity!" shuddered her father. "Jimmy is leaving Morcove, as it happens."

"Leaving? Oh!"

And there was a chorus of disappointment at once. Too bad, they thought, that she should leave them, when they were just beginning to understand. They had treated her so badly, they felt, although mostly it was her fault.

"Sorry to go," smiled Betty.

"Oh, but," protested Jemima, "we really thought—"

"Hear, hear," agreed Jemima. "Don't look so sad! I'd stay on like a bird, but fact is, I couldn't stand Ursula's face. If you knew how tired of it I've grown! But there, we'll have a really merry evening to-morrow, and then I'll love you and leave you, what?"

A merry evening they certainly had, and Jemima was gaily and merriment itself. Betty was there, and Polly and Madge, with as many of the others as could squeeze in. One girl, however, had not been invited; but she had reason to be thankful that she was at Morcove at all, although Morcove had little to be thankful for on that score.

Ursula Wade, however, was lying low, and when, at last, Jemima, waving a gay handkerchief from the taxi window, departed, Ursula heaved a great sigh of relief—a sigh that was echoed by Jemima herself, only too glad to have seen the last of her false "friend."

(END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.)

Next week a grand new series of complete stories, relating the adventures of the chums of Morcove, on holiday at Linton Hall, commences. The first is entitled: "Their Christmas Truce!" and tells of the shadow which came between two loyal chums just before "breaking-up" day.

Those readers who would like to continue reading of the adventures of Jemima should order a copy of next week's issue of our splendid companion paper, "The School Friend," which contains a story featuring this popular character.

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Your Editors Chat.

Write to me, and address your letters **The Editor, The School-girls' Own, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, E.C.4.**

MY DEAR READERS,

BREAKING-UP day! Can you possibly think of a happier day? I don't suppose you can, especially when the breaking-up day is the one before the Christmas holidays. Well, in next week's special long complete tale of the girls of Morcove School, which is entitled:

"THEIR XMAS TRUCE!"

By Marjorie Stanton,

you will read of how Morcove School broke up for the holidays. Betty & Co. are such inseparables that they cannot bear to be parted from each other even at Christmas-time, and it is Polly Linton who solves the difficulty by taking them all off to Linton Hall for the festive season. But just before the girls leave Morcove something happens, and, as a result, there are strained relations between two of the girls who are to go to Linton Hall. Of course, such a thing is unthinkable at Christmas-time, so these two girls have a truce over the holidays. Then things happen— But what they are you must wait to know until Miss Stanton herself tells you. But tell your chums about this fine new Christmas series of stories which commences next week, and tell them, too, that their own Christmas holidays will be ever so much more enjoyable if they have the doings of Betty Barton & Co. to read about during the festive season.

"CASTAWAYS OF MYSTERY ISLAND!"

By Gertrude Nelson.

I am afraid there is going to be no Christmas treat for Ruth Hargreaves and the rest of the

castaway party of the South Seas. One cannot very well enjoy Christmas when they are placed in the unenviable position in which they are. But some startling developments take place, developments which you will follow with the greatest of interest.

"IN MOTHER'S PLACE!"

By Mildred Gordon.

Shopkeepers, as you know, have a very busy time of it during the days preceding Christmas, and this gives Emily Davis' relatives a further chance to strike against her. Her spiteful Cousin Clara does not let any thoughts of "peace and goodwill" prevent her from carrying on her campaign to force Emily to give up her little shop. But you will see next week how Emily fared in the days that preceded Christmas.

In response to the requests of many readers, I have prevailed upon one of our authors to give us a story about the Sea Guides, and next week you will be able to read

"BRAVO, THE SEA GUIDES!"

By Ruth Maxwell,

who, you will remember, wrote "Myra Harvey's Choice!" and other fine stories for us. This is an excellent story of some sterling British girls who did not waver when duty called them to do a great deed. I am sure you will enjoy this tale, whether you are a Guide or not.

Christmas is very much in the air just now, and in a fortnight's time you will have our

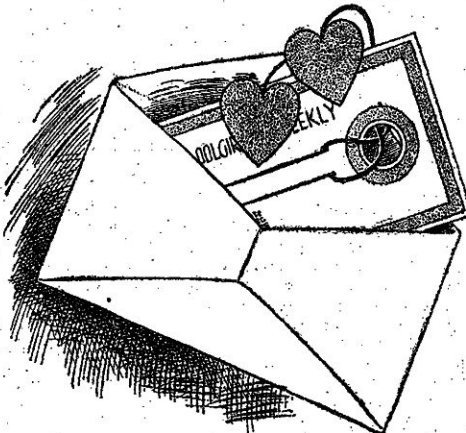
SPECIAL CHRISTMAS NUMBER.

This week I have not enough space to tell you of the fine things I have in store for you that week, but in my chat next week I will give you full information. So keep your eyes upon this page of mine!

Your sincere friend,

YOUR EDITOR.

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