

OUT AGAIN!

THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN ANNUAL }
THE SCHOOL FRIEND ANNUAL }
THE GOLDEN ANNUAL - - -

Price 6/-
Price 4/6

The Schoolgirls' Own 2^d



**FORCED TO BE
STAY-AT-HOMES!**

(A dramatic moment for Study 12
in the fine long complete Morcove
story within.)

A fine story telling of the trials of Study 12 "boarded out."



MORCOVE'S MISFORTUNE!

By
MARJORIE
STANTON

"Boarding out" under their own chummy mistress, would have been one long period of enjoyment for Betty and Co., but how different the advent of Miss Cunliffe, the new assistant mistress, has made it! You will sympathise with Study 12 when you read the account of their misfortunes below.

Nothing But Nagging.

YOU are well out of it all, Dolly; that's what I think! Jolly well out of everything!"

"Is it as bad as that, Polly?"

"Well, I'd like you to ask the others—Paula, for instance!"

And Polly Linton gave one of her grim smiles.

Afternoon school had ended only a few minutes since. At any moment, as Polly knew, the school's private 'bus would be ready to take her and certain of her chums back to the boarding-house in Barncombe. Meantime, she had snatched the opportunity for this lightning visit to Dolly Delane, in Morcove's bright and airy "san."

Dolly, ever one to look on the bright side of things, gave a wriggle with one foot, under the bedclothes, to illustrate how well she was getting over a recent injury to her ankle.

"You see, Polly? In a day or two I ought to be out, and then I shall be able to come along and share the life at Modena again. Hope so, anyhow!"

"You don't know what you are hoping for," grinned Polly, standing up to go. "Ah, it was a jolly life whilst we had Miss Redgrave with us at the boarding-house. But now——"

"It's strange, what you say about Miss

Cunliffe," exclaimed the san's only patient. "The Form seemed to think her a ripper."

"She did seem all right—then. She still seems all right to most of the girls, Dolly. But to us Study 12 lot she has become an absolute terror!"

"But why?"

"We think we have discovered the reason. She is down on Miss Redgrave, and we are getting the backwash of it. Dolly," confided Polly guardedly, "it's our belief that Miss Cunliffe will never rest until she has ousted Miss Redgrave from the school."

"She could never, never do that, Polly!"

"She jolly well won't if we can help it, anyhow! But we are up against it. You've got to be having our life, Dolly, to understand how awfully difficult things are being made for us and for Miss Redgrave. Oh, well!"

The girl in bed left off looking grave. It relieved her, after hearing such alarming news, to see Polly jumping up with every sign of being her old, madeap, jolly self in spite of the trying life it was.

"Thanks ever so much, Polly, for coming to see me! I must hurry up and get about again. The worse things are for you, the more I want to be back. And now, here's Paula. Hallo, Paula!"

"Bai Jove, gwand wejoints, what?" beamed the elegant member of the Fourth Form, as she suddenly floated upon the scene. "To see you sitting up, Dolly, and looking so gwand—yes, wather!"

"I've been telling Polly——"

"And I've been telling Dolly," struck in the madeap. "what a time we've been having!"

"Dwacdaful, dwacdaful, Dolly, deah! Positively frightful! Howeval!" And Paula dropped a couple of neat parcels on to the bedclothes. "A few twisles for the sufferer—yes, wather!"

"Now, Paula, what's all this? Oh, thanks ever so; but, really, you shouldn't!" protested Dolly, starting to untie the parcels. "Polly's brought me choccs. Madge looked in at midday with all those lovely flowers. And now—chicken broth?"

"Nothing wong, I twust? Most nouwishing, I thought, chicken broth?"

"As if I were really ill!" laughed Dolly. "Oh, you Paula; let me give you a kiss!"

"Thanks, thanks! I mean to say, if you are—er—pleased, then I am most gwatified—yes,

wather! As a mattah of fact," added the elegant one, hastily putting herself to rights after the rather ruffling hug, "I wather envy you, Dolly. Modena, at pwsent, is a wegular wash-out. One comfort; if it goes on, I shall soon be in the san. Nervous bweakdown—yes, wather!"

"You're not looking so bad on it, Paula!"

"Dweadful, dweadful!" sighed the beloved duffer, getting out her pocket mirror. "My looks may not pity me; but, in weality, Dolly, I am a weck, a wuin. I—"

"Sh! Oh, I do believe," whispered Polly, facing towards the door at the sound of a step, "it is Miss Cunliffe!"

Paula was going to say: "Howwows!" but had no time for even that one word of dismay. Already Miss Cunliffe was in the ward, glad of the chance that it was to nag the girls.

"Where's nurse? Why are you two girls hanging about in here, instead of standing ready for the bus? Paula Creel, what's that in your hand?"

"Er—er—as a mattah of fact, I wather faucey it is—a twife I always cawwy—"

"Show me! Pocket mirrors, the idea!" Mabel Cunliffe exclaimed tartly. "Give it to me!"

"But—er—how am I to keep to rights?"

"I'll keep you to rights, my girl!" the auxiliary mistress said bleakly, whilst she took charge of the mirror. "Both of you, downstairs this instant! I am surprised at nurse letting you—"

"Nurse was away when I—"

"Then, Polly Linton, you took a liberty in entering without permission."

"I don't think so—"

"No impudence! Fifty lines, to teach you manners!"

"If you would let me speak," fired up Polly, like the hot-head she was. "Nurse said yesterday that we could look in at any time, as it is not a serious case."

"That will do! Be off with you!"—was the impatient cry with which Miss Cunliffe wayed both girls from the ward.

"Positively cwuel, to deprive me of that miwwow," Paula almost groaned, going downstairs with the madcap. "I ask you, Polly deah, what can I do now?"

"Get another, of course!"

Such a simple, not to say lightning, solution of the problem quite staggered Paula.

"Bai Jove! Bwiliant inspiration! Thanks, thanks, I will! Isn't she a tewwow, though, Polly? Isn't she downwight unweasonable? It is a great misfortune for Moreove, her coming to the school. And she's going back to Modena with us geals once again! Ah, dear!"

Sighing heavily, Paula turned to gaze at the great schoolhouse now that she and Polly were in the open air.

At one corner of the vast building much scaffolding had been run up, for alterations and enlargements were in progress. It was on account of the structural alterations that certain studies had been closed, necessitating the boarding out of their occupants.

"Haow, I wish, Polly deah, we were still in the old studies," grieved Paula. "Life was all wight then, what? That tewwow hadn't come upon the scene to tywannise! Polly, don't be surprised if I stwike!"

The madcap chuckled, and suddenly streaked across the grass, joining the half-dozen girls who were ready for the run into Barncombe.

"Why are you standing about like this?" Polly mimicked Mabel Cunliffe's bullying voice. "At-

tention! A million lines before tea! And no talking. Paula Creel, you will walk home as a punishment for dawdling!"

"Thanks, thanks! I am not sure that it wouldn't be pwefexable to widing with that dweadful cwea—"

"Hem!" Betty coughed the warning, for Miss Cunliffe was suddenly bearing down upon them. It was marvellous how she seemed able to swoop upon them in the most unexpected manner.

"You are not standing in line! Attention this instant, looking like a disorderly rabble!"

There was no help for the girls; into line they had to form, absurd though the order was. Martialled like that, they had all they could do not to look sullenly resentful.

A few days ago they had been the envy of the Form, because of the novelty and jollity of being boarded away from the school. But now it was for them to envy those who did not have to go into Barncombe at the close of school every afternoon.

Some of the other juniors were on hand at present, getting a before-tea turn in the open air. They no longer looked as if they envied Betty & Co., but only pitied them—as well they might!

"Now, in proper order—march!"

As the command was given something happened to add to the chums' suppressed anger. Cora Grandways and Cissy Norton came mincing out by the front porch, and that malicious pair instantly sent up a cackling laugh.

It was very odd, but Mabel Cunliffe, although she was such a strict disciplinarian, did not drop upon Cora and Cissy for being so derisive of the marching girls. She had a blind eye for that pair of grinning faces, and a deaf ear for the jeering remarks.

"Oh, look at the poor little crocodile!" sniggered Cora. "Left, right; left, right! Pick 'em up there! He, he, he!"

"You lucky girls!" called out Cissy, mockingly.

Spitefully the ill-natured pair stood to see the chums get into the motor-bus, tittering comments to each other.

"Look at your Cousin Polly, Ciss; doesn't she look savage? And Paula—oh, what a scream it is! Wouldn't they like to be back in Study 12, now that Modena means this sort of thing!"

"Serve them right!" muttered Cissy. "They were far too uppish: Polly and her precious clique, too exclusive for me to be allowed to join. Poo!"

"Yes!" Cora nodded, with extreme satisfaction. "They are being put in their place at last, Ciss. As for you and me—come on, up to the old den, and we'll have tea all by ourselves."

The bus was going off now. The Grandways girl, derisive to the last, blew kisses to the hapless girls who were boxed up in the motor with Mabel Cunliffe. Then Cora whipped about and did a dancing run back into the schoolhouse, Cissy following.

Reaching the main staircase they had to check to let someone come down. It was the Form-mistress, Miss Redgrave, so absorbed in thought that she seemed not to notice them.

They, however, did not fail to take notice of her. They both paid particular attention to her troubled looks, but not as if they felt sorry to see her looking as sad as this.

"Hey, out of here!" Cora began at her sister Judith, a minute later in the study. "We don't want you, Misery, so hop it!"

"Poor Judy; you do lead her a life!" grinned Cissy, when Cora was slamming the study door after thrusting her sister into the passage. "But I must say it's much, much nicer to be alone. Cora, didn't Miss Redgrave look awfully down just now?"

"Yes, very funny, wasn't it? I was right, you see, Ciss," chatted on the Grandways girl, going to the corner cupboard to see what could be found for tea. "Miss Redgrave is getting it in the neck from Mabel Cunliffe. Well, it's for Betty & Co. to pity Miss Redgrave; I never had much use for her. Tea, milk, sugar, cake, chocs. And these," she added, holding up a packet of cigarettes, "for 'by-and-bye!'"

Cissy laughed.
"You won't be happy until you get expelled, Cora."

"I shan't get expelled," declared the flyaway one, with a shrug.
"I've got too good a friend in—I won't say whom!"

"Begins with C?" smiled Polly's cousin.

And Cora's exultant grin showed that she was right.

By Order of The Terror!

HURRAH!
Hooray!"

"Yes, wather! Gweat wejicings!"

They were due to the fact that Miss Cunliffe had stopped the "bus midway along Barncombe's quaint old High Street to get down and call at a few shops. Betty & Co., now that they had lost their Terror for a few minutes, were storming into the boarding-house in joyous style. No two-by-two about it now.

"Phew! It's something to be rid of her for only five minutes!" fumed Polly, unslinging a satchel. "Now I can breathe, after riding all the way from Morcove without being allowed to talk. Tea ready, I wonder?"

"Ooo, yes, queek—queek!" was Naomer's shriek, as she whipped off hat and coat. "We get ze cream-bun before she come in—queek!"

Then, whilst they were still bunched near the hall coat-racks, revelling in the sense of temporary freedom, they came in for a very pleasant surprise. Mrs. Mackay, the Scotch landlady, came forward, bringing with her a stylish, charming young lady, at sight of whom the chums fairly whooped with delight.

"Lady Evelyn! Oh, I say!"
"Bai Jove! Gweat wejic— Ow!" yelped Paula, finding herself suddenly slammed aside by Naomer, as that dusky scholar made a rush at the young lady from Barncombe Castle.

"I've been going to call ever since I heard

about your boarding here," explained the only daughter of Lord and Lady Lundy. "Mrs. Mackay said you were due in at any moment, so I waited."
"Splendid!" cried Polly. "And you can stay to tea?"

"Yes, wather!"
"Do—do! We've such lots to tell you!" dinned the other girls.

"Well, I should love it!"
"Ooo, yes, queek—queek! I run and get ze cream-bun for you, queek!"

With that, Naomer dashed upstairs to the bedroom which she shared with some of the others. Wildly, as if it were a matter of life and death to save a moment, she routed out the store of pastries. They were being kept in this secret fashion, because the Terror would surely confiscate them if ever she got to know.

Charging downstairs with the precious bagful, she found that her chums had already taken Lady Evelyn to the Modena tea-table. There was such a babel of tongues, none of the girls heard Miss Cunliffe admit herself to the house. In her own unpleasant way she was suddenly amongst them again, looking the caller up and down as if to say:

"Who is this person?"
Betty, nudged by one or two others, stepped forward.

"Lady Evelyn, may I introduce Miss Cunliffe? A new mistress at the school—only temporary," Betty added sweetly.

And then, to Miss Cunliffe herself:

"This is Lady Evelyn Knight, a chum of ours—daughter of the Earl and Countess of Lundy, you know."

"How do you do?" bowed Mabel Cunliffe, stiffly. "But—er—"

"These girls who happen to be boarding here are my very dear chums," the Barncombe Castle girl exclaimed serenely. "They're giving me tea."

"Lady Evelyn, I must explain," resumed Miss Cunliffe, with an edge to her voice. "No doubt it is very kind of you to take a friendly interest in these girls. At present, however, they are under special discipline. One of them, indeed—Polly Linton—is under orders to do a punishment task for a very bad breach of discipline."

"Terrible!" laughed Lady Evelyn. "What have you been doing, Polly?"

"I think, therefore," the mistress pursued, nettled by the visitor's girlish flippancy, "it will be better if you do not stay to tea to-day. I would prefer that Miss Somerfield's permission were specially asked, before—"



MISS CUNLIFFE'S LITTLE WAY.

"Paula Creel, what's that in your hand?" snapped the new mistress. "Er—er—" stammered Paula. "Show me! Pocket mirrors—the idea! Give it to me!" commanded Miss Cunliffe. "But—how am I to keep to wights?" gasped Paula, in dismay.

"Oh, if it is as bad as that!" was the good-humoured exclamation. "Before I go, though, I want to ask these girls to come up to the castle on their next halfer. You haven't been for ages!" Lady Evelyn addressed Betty and the others. "I've been away, and one thing and another. But do come next Saturday—three o'clock!"

"As to that," interposed Miss Cunliffe, fully aware that she was being playfully flouted. "I cannot possibly allow the girls out next Saturday. I'm sorry, but their being out and about is just what I have to keep in check."

Lady Evelyn turned to the door, her lovely face expressing open contempt for the mistress' obvious harshness. As she drew the fox-fur collar of her lovely coat higher about her chin she said with simple dignity:

"I'll see Miss Somerfield myself. Good-bye, girls! And we'll have cream-buns, Naomer, on Saturday!"

Then she was gone, conveying by her exit the greatest affection for the chums and the highest scorn for their disagreeable mistress.

"No," Miss Cunliffe said bleakly, turning to the girls, "it was not good enough! Naomer, what have you in that bag?"

"He is ze cream-bun."

"What! Hand that bag to me. Do you hear me, girl?"

"I buy them, and I shall eat them!"

"You will do nothing of the sort!"

With the stern cry the mistress pounced, snatching at the bag. But she did not get it away from Naomer before that impish little thing had whipped out one cream-bun, anyway.

Nor was it another half second before Naomer's pearly teeth were biting at that bun.

"Impudence!" stamped Miss Cunliffe. "For that, Naomer, you will do five hundred lines and go without your tea. Go upstairs!"

"I have got my tea!" said Naomer, biting again at the frothy bun as she marched to the door. "And he is a good one—yes!"

The auxiliary mistress was pale with anger as she stepped to the head of the table.

"I would like Miss Somerfield to know the trouble you are giving me," she said passionately. "Sit down, girls!"

"There is a lot that Miss Somerfield ought to know," said Polly.

Miss Cunliffe glared.

"Polly Linton, leave the table! You will not have any tea this afternoon."

"Won't I?" the headstrong one muttered, as she strode from the room. "Ugh!"

Slam!

Next second Miss Cunliffe was at the whipped-open door.

"Polly, come back and shut it properly!"

Polly came back. With exaggerated care, which caused a few chuckles at the table, she drew the door shut inch by inch. She would not let the hasp make the slightest snick.

Having done that, she scampered kitchenwards.

"Any chance of a cup of tea?" she gaily inquired of the two domestics there. "The Terror has told me I must go without. If I can't get

it here I'll go along to the Creamery. And that's me when I'm roused!" said Polly.

"Shame to serve you so!" declared cook, all buxomness and good nature. "Set her a plate, Sarah. And perhaps you'd like some ham, my dear?"

"Oh, good! But, cook, if I might ask Naomer to join us? She's another who has been—"

"Run and fetch her, certainly. The idea, after being at school all the afternoon, and then the journey home!" Cook expressed herself forcibly. "Growing gals want feeding!"

And she fed Polly and Naomer, anyhow, during the next ten minutes.

"Yes, well, thanks awfully!" said Polly, rising with the dusky one at last. "I won't forget this, cook. Such a tea—"

"He was a good one, yes!" agreed Naomer, with a beaming look. "I zink I give you ze kiss for him, yes!"

"Sarah, did you ever see!" giggled buxom Cook, suddenly finding herself hugged by the dusky one. "If these young gals won't be the death of me! There, run along, my dears, and any time you like—you know where to come!"

Polly and Naomer went upstairs to the sitting-room, and there the others presently trailed in—not followed up by Miss Cunliffe, for once.

"Dweadful, dweadful," groaned Paula. "Polly—Naomer, pway let me commisewate with you. No tea—deplorable, cwuel!"

"We shan't last much longer, Naomer and I." Polly said tragically, laying herself corpse-like along a settee. "How do I look, Paula?"

"Most distressing. Half-starved already! Look heah, though; shall I twy and scwoungo something for you?"

"Too late, I'm past it," sighed Polly. "Couldn't eat a mouthful! Not after the huge tea I've had."

"What!"

"Ham, shrimp paste, toast—"

"Howwows— I mean—"

"Sardines, jam—"

"Ooo, yes, and ze cheesecakes!" Naomer recollected joyously. "She is a good cook, and I love her!"

Then, whilst Paula gasped a relieved "bai Jove!" the others went off into great if subdued merriment over Polly's less cryptic explanation.

"Bravo, you," chuckled Betty. "She is at her worst at present—the Terror. Could anything have been more horrid than her refusing to let us go to Barncombe Castle?"

"Lady Evelyn knew how to treat her, anyway," rejoiced Helen. "I was glad she didn't beg and pray her to let us off for once."

"Any chance of our going, after all? That's the question," wondered Madge. "I rather thought Lady Evelyn was in a fighting mood when she went out."

"Hear, hear!" said Polly. "So we may hear more about it yet."

And they did.

Back from Morcove, the following afternoon, they again found the girl from Barncombe Castle waiting for them.

"Oh, Miss Cunliffe," she exclaimed serenely, "it's all right for these girls, about Saturday. I've seen Miss Somerfield. Perhaps she has told you—"

"It has been explained to me," broke out the auxiliary mistress, whilst she coloured up, "as a special favour the girls may be allowed to visit the castle. I will bring them—"

"Oh, you needn't trouble; I'll send a couple of cars for them. And, of course," added the young lady, with the same airiness, "they will be motored back."

The chums wanted to cheer. As plainly as possible, Miss Cunliffe had been told that she herself was not wanted at the Castle. Short of begging a special invitation for herself, and her pride forbade that, she was out of it for Saturday afternoon—hooray!

"Very well, then," she responded bleakly, trying not to look furious. "Good-bye, then, Lady Evelyn."

She offered her hand; but the Barncombe Castle girl chose not to see it. Lady Evelyn bowed.

"Good-bye. Oh, girls—by the way! I've got Miss Redgrave coming, she's such an old chum of mine! See you at three to-morrow. Bye-bye!"

And away she went, out to the waiting motor, the very quintessence of girlish charm.

As for the chums, as soon as they could be alone together, they went wild. Paula, although the rejoicing involved her in a skirmish with Polly and Naomer that left her quite flattened out, on a settee, retained a beaming look.

"Yes, wather! Bother it, though," she said, sitting up to get herself to rights. "I do miss that miwwow."

"Have this, Paula," said Polly, suddenly producing the latest thing in pocket toilet outfits.

"What!" yelped the would-be elegant one.

"Hooway, wheah did you get this, Polly?"

"Bought it, of course, duffer!"

"The very thing, bai Jove! Gweat wejoicings! And to-mowwow—"

"Barncombe Castle!" cried Helen, throwing up a cushion and catching it. "Best of all, Miss Redgrave will be there."

"Nasty knock for Miss Cunliffe, that!" chuckled Betty. "You could tell by her face—"

"Sh!" whispered Tess, from near the door. "She's coming!"

And the talk was very quickly changed!

Making Trouble—If She Can!

WELL, Ciss, this afternoon I think I shall drop in at Barncombe Castle!"

Cora Grandways made the remark with every sign of knowing how much audacity it contained. She and Cissy Norton were in their study, collecting their books for morning school.

"You coming, Ciss?"

"To Barncombe Castle? Don't be silly, Cora! You know very well we are not invited."

"Oh, as to invites—pooh! If I want to go, I shall go," shrugged the Grandways girl. "Just to show them! What's more, Ciss, it wouldn't be a bad idea to take Miss C. along with us—just to annoy Betty & Co.!"

Cissy Norton pondered this idea quite wistfully. "If only we could, Cora! I suppose it's very grand at Barncombe Castle, and I—I'd rather like

to meet this girl who seems so keen on Polly and the others. But what excuse could we find?"

"Any old excuse," Cora said carelessly. "Must have word with Betty—something to ask the Form captain, that won't wait! Or, I tell you what—yes, I know, Ciss! You must ask Polly something about family matters, eh? You're writing to Polly's mother by to-night's post—that sort of stuff."

Cissy brought her hands together with a little clasp.

"That's it, Cora! You've got it; because it so happens that Polly's mother is away from home, and I don't know her present address."

"There you are, then," Cora nodded and grinned, taking up her books to depart. "Nothing simpler!"

Cissy went to the window before following her study mate downstairs.

The school 'bus was just arriving with the girls from Modena. She saw it pull up opposite the front porch; then Miss Cunliffe alighted. A broad grin came to Cissy's face as she watched the auxiliary mistress putting Betty & Co. through the absurd formality of marching order.

"Sharper than ever with them, this morning—and I can guess why!"

Nor was Cissy wrong in the guess she was making. Mabel Cunliffe had lain awake far into the night, smarting at the thought of how her charges were to go to Barncombe Castle, the matter having been quite taken out of her hands.

To have been checked like this only made the auxiliary mistress feel her vindictiveness against Miss Redgrave all the more. Mabel Cunliffe had never before wanted so much to bring the other girl low, as she did now.

Was Miss Redgrave to have the chance to fulfil the invitation to Barncombe Castle? Not if Miss Cunliffe could help it!

Nor had she gone to sleep eventually last night before she had hit upon a plan that might serve her purpose. It was a ruse about as discreditable as it was simple; but she was not the one to scruple about the means adopted to further her own ends.

If all went as expected, her hated rival would be detained at Morcove this afternoon, whilst the Modena girls would be kept indoors at the boarding-house.

Meantime, in front of the assembled school, Miss Cunliffe was as falsely sweet as usual to the other junior mistress. It was the same when classes had started. Miss Redgrave had charge of the Fourth Form, whilst the auxiliary mistress had duties which did not tie her to the class-room. She was in and out, from time to time, always very bland towards Miss Redgrave.

Then, just upon the midday dismissal, Mabel Cunliffe decided that the moment had come for her to strike her blow. She suddenly appeared once more in the Fourth Form class-room, carrying a folded sheet of paper. Those girls who glanced up from their work saw how pale with anger she seemed.

In a voice perfectly audible to the whole class, although the tone was one of suppressed indignation, she addressed the mistress in charge.

"I think it right to show you this, Miss Redgrave, and to ask what you think of it. Is it the sort of thing to be allowed?"

The sheet of paper had been unfolded and displayed. Many a girl could see what it bore—a very positive caricature of Miss Cunliffe herself,

cleverly drawn, and with large wording hand-printed round it. There was a buzz of talk, instantly checked by Miss Redgrave.

"Quiet, please, girls. Pens down." She gave her eyes to the drawing again. "I would have torn it up, Miss Cunliffe—"

"Indeed! You think that is all there is to be done with a girl's sketch, caricaturing a mistress? Tear it up! You, if this were a caricature of yourself, would not mind?"

"I would rather it did not become known that a scholar had done such a stupid; insolent thing."

"I think it should become known who has done it," was Miss Cunliffe's tight-lipped remark. "Will you ask, or must I—what girl is responsible?"

"You hear the question?" Miss Redgrave addressed the silent but excited rows of girls. "Is any girl going to own up frankly? Did one of you draw this stupid picture?"

There was no answer. Nor could Miss Redgrave, closely scanning the rows of faces, detect any guilty looks. She turned to her colleague.

"I cannot believe that it was one of our girls—"

"Perhaps you do not wish to believe it."

"Most certainly I do not," was the emphatic answer which delighted Betty and others. "My advice is—"

"I will go to Miss Somerfield herself for advice!" Mabel Cunliffe exclaimed, snatching back the drawing. "The headmistress cannot intend such things to be passed over, making it an encouragement to the girls to show disrespect."

The Form buzzed again, causing Miss Redgrave to say: "That will do, girls; go on with your

work." Not one pair of eyes was returned to the lesson-book, however, until Miss Cunliffe had passed from the room, lip between teeth.

Straight to Miss Somerfield's room she went, taking the drawing with her. The headmistress was not there, but she came in a minute later, starting violently as the caricature was indignantly displayed.

"There is not much doubt as to the person it is supposed to represent, is there?" Mabel Cunliffe said bitterly, alluding to the inscription round the drawing. "Why I should be dubbed 'The Terror,' I do not know—unless it is for enforcing discipline, at your special request."

"Where did you find this, Miss Cunliffe?"

"Lying about a passage in this school."

"In the school? Not at the boarding-house

"No, or I would have known that one of the Modena girls did it," the auxiliary mistress exclaimed tensely. "It may have been one of them, of course. Tess Trelawney, I believe, has artistic talent—"

"Oh, but one must not infer from that," objected fair-minded Miss Somerfield. "Have the girls been asked? The whole Form, I mean?"

"No one owns up to it; and Miss Redgrave advises me to tear it up and say no more! Miss Somerfield, I have done nothing to deserve this being held up to ridicule. The vulgarity of it—almost as bad as wall-chalking."

"It is disgraceful, certainly. If I could find out the girl—"

"Will you insist upon knowing?" pleaded the auxiliary mistress, in a strung-up way. "It is hard on the innocent; but at any other school every girl would be kept in until the culprit had confessed!"

Mabel Cunliffe was feeling encouraged, emboldened, by the anger Miss Somerfield was exhibiting. It would be all right!

"Leave the matter in my hands," the headmistress said at last. "Candidly, it is not so serious as all that, although hurtful to your feelings."

"The girls boarding out are invited to Barncombe Castle for the afternoon. In view of this, Miss Somerfield, would you authorise me to keep them in?"

"Oh, no. No more than I would authorise Miss Redgrave to keep in the rest of the Form. It occurs to me," Miss Somerfield said shrewdly, "that this offensive joke may have been perpetrated by someone anxious to involve the whole Form in a gating order."

Miss Cunliffe had all she could do not to go very red in the face.

"But, Miss Somerfield, I fail to see why—"

"Girls can be jealous," deplored the headmistress. "We have all sorts at Morocco, as there are all sorts at other schools. When you were at school, did you never know a case of envy?"

"I—I— Oh, yes, of course. But—"

"Betty Barton and her companions at Modena have that invitation to Barncombe Castle. For that very reason, some girl in the Form may have tried to cause trouble. It is significant that you are the victim of this silly sketch, inducing us to believe that one of the Modena girls did it. But I cannot overlook something else just as significant. The sketch was picked up, not at Modena, but in the school!"

Far from wanting to argue further, Mabel Cunliffe was now anxious to get outside the room. Her plan had failed, after all! She even



"SYMPATHY" FOR STUDY 12.

As Miss Cunliffe was leading the fuming girls to the school bus, Cora and Cissy appeared. "Oh, look at the poor little crocodile!" sniggered Cora. "Pick 'em up there!" But, though she must have heard, Miss Cunliffe turned a deaf ear to the jeers.

had the uncomfortable feeling that she had done herself harm by coming to Miss Somerfield about it.

"I—see," she said, stroking a finger across her lips. "Oh, well, you know best, Miss Somerfield!"

With which flattering remark she quitted the room—beaten. It was not that the headmistress had formed any suspicion—no, thank goodness! But her sense of fair play for all had rendered the bit of trickery useless.

Betty & Co. would go to Barncombe Castle when the hour came, and so would—Miss Redgrave!

The Terror Triumphant!

TR-RING-RING, ring!

A pause.

Tr-r-ring, ring, ring!

"There, I wonder who that is on the 'phone? Lady Evelyn, perhaps, to ask us not to come!"

"Howwows, Polly, don't say so!"

In their upper rooms at Modena, the chums were just finishing their dressing for the visit to Barncombe Castle. The 'phone was ringing at the very moment when the girls were expecting the two cars to turn up for them, as promised.

In sudden anxiety, Betty went to the bed-room door and opened it to listen. As she did so, a neighbouring door was opened for the same purpose by Tess Trelawney. Four girls at one door and three at the other—thus they grouped themselves, paying heed to the first response to the telephone call.

"Yes, who is it? Oh, Moreove School! You want Miss Cunliffe? Speaking!"

Moreove School, ringing up Miss Cunliffe. What did this mean?

But the chums' anxiety lessened. Since the message was not from Barncombe Castle, everything was still all right about their going there this afternoon.

"It can't be anything to affect us," murmured Betty, moving away from the bed-room-door.

"And—hark! There are the cars."

"Ooo, yes, queek—queek!"

Naomer flashed to the window, peered down into the High Street, then pranced round.

"Ze posh car—two very posh ones!"

"My gwacious," palpitated Paula, flitting back to the dressing-table. "Am I all right? I wouldn't diswace Moreove for worlds!"

"I suppose we shall have to parade for inspection," grinned Polly, leading the way out of the room.

"Never mind; another minute and we shall be done with her for a bit."

"Yes, wather!" was Paula's thankful whisper, as she joined in the general exodus.

Sure enough, Miss Cunliffe was in wait for them in the roomy entrance hall, and instantly her order came:

"Line up—at attention! I want to look at you all before you go—that is, if I decide to let you go."

Those last words sounded ominous! With sinking hearts the chums stood to attention, wondering whether the mistress had merely made that remark to create suspense.

"Yes, well"—she broke silence at last, after going all along the line—"you will go upstairs and take your outdoor things off."

"What!" burst from several of them, quite furiously. "Miss Cunliffe—"

"You are not going out this afternoon!"

At that instant the street-door bell rang. Whilst they gasped in their resentment and anger



THE PRICE OF A CREAM BUN.

Miss Cunliffe did not get the bag away from Naomer before she had whipped out one cream bun and started work on it! "Impudence!" stamped the mistress. "You will do five hundred lines and go without your tea!"

at the cruel disappointment, the girls saw Miss Cunliffe go to the street-door and open it.

One of the liveried chauffeurs from Barncombe Castle was on the top step, saluting.

"If the young ladies are ready, miss, we are."

"My scholars will not be going to the Castle to-day," Miss Cunliffe said, to the increased anger of the lined-up girls. "We shall not require the cars, so you may go back!"

The chauffeur saluted again.

"Very good, miss. Any message for Lady Evelyn Knight?"

"I do not send verbal messages," was the lofty answer which sent the gaitered chauffeur stepping briskly back to his car.

Then Miss Cunliffe closed the street-door and returned her eyes to the disgusted-looking chums. There was the least suggestion of a malicious smile flickering at her lips.

"Dismiss, and go upstairs—"

"Miss Cunliffe, may we ask—"

"Yes, wather—"

"It is only fair that we should be told," Betty spoke on, whilst the others all murmured to the same effect. "Why can't we go?"

"Because, exercising my discretion—"

"Oh! Is that all?" flared out Polly, never one to hold her feelings in check. "It's no order from Miss Somerfield. Then why, may we ask—"

"Polly Linton, another word, and—"

"You didn't mean us to go, if you could help it! Anyhow, we've a right to know—"

"Silence! Now go to your room and remain there for the rest of the day."

"I won't! We are entitled to an explanation. It's not fair!"

For a moment it was just a chance whether Betty & Co., in open rebellion, would not rush out of the house, to go to Barncombe Castle on foot. The majority kept their heads, however. They realised that it would be a pretty unpleasant way of turning up for the afternoon. Awkward for Lady Evelyn, and bad for Morcove School!

"Shame!" protested Polly, loudest of all, as they protestingly stamped upstairs. "Wicked shame!"

Miss Cunliffe thought it best not to pay heed to the passionate outcry. Having decreed the abandonment of the visit, she was now feeling a little scared.

Had she gone too far? Did the phone message, just received from Morcove School, really justify her cancelling the girls' visit to the castle?

For all that she had been told over the phone, was that a Fourth Form girl had suddenly become unwell with symptoms of influenza. Miss Somerfield was going to take every precaution to avoid an epidemic. If any other girls at Morcove showed symptoms, then the Modena contingent had better not come to the school on Monday. They would see how matters went on. That was all.

After an uneasy turn or two about the hall, the auxiliary mistress gave a shrug of restored boldness. It was all right. The worst that could happen would be that she would be considered to have been over-anxious!

Meanwhile, Cora Grandways and Cissy Norton were just starting away from Morcove, by means of the motor-cycle and sidecar.

"We've no need to hurry, Ciss," said the one who was astride the saddle. "If we get to the Castle round about four, that will do nicely."

"Shall you call at Modena on the way?"

"Yes," nodded Cora. "To make our reason seem more real. The girls won't be there, and so we shall simply have to go on to the castle! He, he, he!"

In blissful ignorance of what had happened at Modena, the couple skimmed along the open country road, drawing into Barncombe just after half-past three. They stopped at the Creamery, to stock up with chocolates, but did not go to one of the tables for tea. That they hoped to get at Barncombe Castle!

From the cakeshop it was but a few hundred yards' run to the boarding-house, and in due time Cora braked-up at the kerb, and dismounted.

Out jumped Cissy from the sidecar, and the pair of them jauntily mounted the front steps to the street door. They were so sure that Betty & Co. were at the castle by now, they never troubled to glance up at any of the Modena windows. If they had, they would have seen some familiar, not to say wrathful, faces at the upper windows!

Cora rang, and then she and Cissy, after exchanging a last grin, straightened their faces. In a moment the door was opened by that comely servant who rejoiced in the name of Sarah.

"The Morcove girls—are they in?" Cora asked curtly.

"Yes, miss!"

"What!"

"They're upstairs."

Staggering surprise for Cora and Cissy! Here was a nice thing!

The Study 12 lot had not gone to the castle after all!

Turned Away!

"Oh—er—they're in, are they?" stammered Cora flusteredly. "Er—that's good! We—er—this chum of mine—er—wants to ask her cousin, Polly Linton, something."

"Yes—er—about—er about her mother's address," floundered Cissy, equally flustered. "Oh—er—Miss Cunliffe—"

"Well, what is it?" demanded the auxiliary mistress, who had suddenly replaced Sarah in the doorway.

"I only wanted to ask Polly Linton for her mother's address, please," explained Cissy. "I have to get a letter off by this evening's post to Mrs. Linton, and she is away from home, I know."

Miss Cunliffe signified to both girls to enter.

"Wait there, and I'll get the address from Polly Linton."

"Thank you, Miss Cunliffe!"

The two girls, as the auxiliary mistress mounted the stairs, stood nudging each other excitedly. As soon as it was safe to do so, they exchanged amazed looks.

"Not gone to the castle after all! My word," breathed Cora, "what a swizz for them! But why is it? And how about us now, Ciss? Oh, bother!"

"Wretched nuisance! We shall have no excuse for going on to the castle."

"Awful!" Cora commented, and then lapsed into savage silence.

In a few moments Miss Cunliffe came down.

"The Grand Hotel, Overham!" She stated the address tersely.

"Thank you, Miss Cunliffe!" Cissy exclaimed again demurely. "So—er—Polly and the rest are—er—all upstairs?"

"Yes. You cannot see them. They are under orders to keep upstairs, for being insubordinate."

"Oh, is that why they haven't gone to Barn— I mean," Cora corrected herself, "they had some invitation out, hadn't they?"

"That is so. But I decided that they must remain indoors. The influenza is about, and whilst I am responsible for those girls I mean to be careful. I thought Polly Linton looked rather pale."

Pale with rage, no doubt, was what Cissy and Cora thought.

"Well, thanks, Miss Cunliffe," Cora said coyly.

"If Polly and the others had not been here, we meant to go up to the castle ourselves. Just to inquire for that address."

"Wait a moment, you two."

Mabel Cunliffe was realising the craftiness in the two girls. Their actions this afternoon bore out her suspicion that they were at enmity with her present charges.

"You might take a note for me up to the Castle," she had the wit to suggest, guessing how it would delight the pair. "I won't keep you five minutes."

Nor did she. She was soon back, letter in hand.

"Ask for Lady Evelyn Knight, and let her have that."

"Yes, Miss Cunliffe! Thanks!"

By the time Cora and Cissy were back at the motor-cycle and sidecar, the street door was closed. They could let their looks proclaim their jubilation. On the point of riding away again, they looked up at the front bed-room windows of Modena. Rows of moody, angry faces!

Cora waved the note for Lady Evelyn, then pointed in the direction of the castle. She laughed outright, and so did Cissy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ciss, we're in luck!" exulted the Grandways girl, as they sped out of the town, going uphill to the castle. "Miss Cunliffe seems as though she wanted to let us crow over Betty & Co. And what did I tell you?"

"Lady Evelyn may ask us to stay to tea, even though the others aren't there?"

"That's the idea. You'll like the castle; your first visit, isn't it?" remarked Cora, in a tone implying that she had had the entree of the Lundy country place for ages!

A few moments after this they drove in at the courtyard gateway. A vast, oak-studded door was the entrance to the inhabited part of the great old edifice. Jauntily both girls stepped to that door, pulled at the bell-chain, and instantly had a hiered footman inquiring their business.

"We have a note for Lady Evelyn Knight, if you will tell her," Cora said, with the air of one accustomed to ordering servants about.

The footman invited them to step inside. Then he held out a silver salver for the note.

"Oh, but we wish to see Lady Evelyn——"

"Her ladyship will say," said the footman, "if she wishes to see you. The note? Thank you."

And he departed, Cora making a face after him. "Fathead! But it will be all right, Ciss," she predicted softly. "We'll get him into a row for being so officious!"

The man in livery was a long time gone; but that, no doubt, was because the building was such a big one. At last he came back, impassive as ever.

"Her ladyship is much obliged to you for bringing the note." He walked to the great door and set it wide open. "Good-afternoon!"

"But—but— Didn't she want to see us?"

"Her ladyship did not express that desire."

"Oh, all right!" snapped Cora, stamping past the imperturbable footman. "Come on, Ciss. Some people are too grand for anything!"

"It doesn't trouble me in the least!" disclaimed Cissy. "I've no desire to get to know Lady Evelyn—not a bit!"

A minute after this, and no more than a minute, the footman was again called to the door.

"Miss Redgrave to see Lady Evelyn Knight," the fresh arrival announced herself with simple frankness.

"Yes, miss! I was to show you to her ladyship at once," the footman said briskly.

And he led the way, taking Ruth Redgrave along the many stone-walled, richly furnished passages which led to Lady Evelyn's own dainty sitting-room.

Lady Evelyn Takes a Hand!

"RUTH! Sit down—I must hang on to this!" cried the Barncombe Castle girl, standing with a telephone receiver at her ear. "Hallo, hallo, exchange! Yes, give me Morcove one!"

She faced Ruth Redgrave again with a smiling frown.

"I'm getting your headmistress, to ask why those girls can't come. Stupid idea, that Miss Cunliffe keeping them in just because she fears that—hallo, hallo! Morcove School? Miss Somerfield, please!"

Then there ensued a conversation of which Ruth Redgrave, standing bewildered, heard only that rather indignant side carried on by her youthful ladyship.

"Miss Somerfield, what's this nonsense about Betty Barton and the others not coming this afternoon? No, they're not here. Pardon? I thought

so! There is no need, is there? No; so I guessed. Then may I— Pardon? Yes, I will, thanks! Are you there? Lady Lundy will be back on Monday, so do call! Bye-bye!"

A dainty hand crashed the receiver back on to its hook.

"Now, Ruth, I would explain, only there isn't time if those girls are to have tea here with us. Will you slip along in the car and say that Miss Somerfield says they are to come? She never intended them to be kept indoors for such a paltry reason. Shall I come, or can you settle with that Miss Cunliffe? I'd better not come, though, because if I start——"

And a laugh said the rest.

Miss Redgrave did not go off without being told more explicitly how matters stood. But the full story did not mean more than a few moments' delay. At 4.15 by the town hall chimes she was set down at the Modena doorstep by one of the castle cars. There was a second car in evidence.

She heard rapping at the windows, looked up, and could not help laughing at the sight of so many eager faces and gesturing hands. Something seemed to be telling the girls that they were saved.

Then the street door was whipped open and Mabel Cunliffe stood revealed, drawn to her full height, her face bleak with anger. There was a fighting look in her handsome eyes.

"Why are those cars waiting there?" she demanded sharply. "If you think to over-ride my authority——"

"Nothing of the sort," the victim of her bitter enmity dissented calmly. "Miss Somerfield herself has authorised the girls to go to tea at Lady Evelyn's."

"Miss Somerfield? So you have been ringing her up—going behind my back!"

"You are wrong—quite wrong," Ruth Redgrave said as composedly as before, whilst she stepped into the house. "I merely kept my appointment at the castle, and found Lady Evelyn phoning——"

"The impudence of her! But those girls are not going——"

"They are to go!" insisted the Form-mistress firmly. "It will be very foolish of you, Mabel Cunliffe, to go against the emphatic order which the headmistress has given."

And with that stern warning Miss Redgrave mounted to the second floor.

She had no need to enter either of the two bed-rooms. Betty & Co. were surging on to the landing. Some of them raised a great cheer. Naomer simply hurled herself upon the mistress and hugged her.

"Bai Jove! Gweat wejocings! Miss Wedgwave——"

"We can go to the castle? The cars are for us?"

"Yes, girls——"

"Hurrah! Quick——"

"Ooo, yes—queek, queek!"

"I will wait for you downstairs, girls."

"All right—thanks!"

"Hurry up, Paula!" gaily cried Polly as she herself dashed back into the bed-room to get her outdoor things on. "Tea at the castle after all!"

"Yes, wather! Good gwacious, my fingers are all thumbs, bai Jove! Miss Wedgwave—what a bwick she is! Here, wait for me——"

"Can't!" some of them laughed back, already whirling downstairs.

Mabel Cunliffe was not to be seen as they

mustered in the hall. Suddenly, however, just as they were passing out to the waiting cars she came to a sitting-room doorway, to stand looking at them with angry eyes.

Not a word passed, but the pallor of her lovely face, the dilation of her thin nostrils—it all told of the anger raging within her.

"Quick march!" Polly saucily gave the mock order, at the same time doing a skittish rush down to the pavement. "Two by two, girls."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

For the moment they could not help enjoying the laugh at Miss Cunliffe's expense. They had gone wild with delight, and the boisterous way in which they bounded into the cars made the two chauffeurs grin sympathetically.

Five minutes later that footman at the castle was pompously conducting the invited guests to Lady Evelyn's own pet room. Her very young ladyship was just switching on the loud-speaker as they entered, and it seemed a most fitting accompaniment to her vivacious welcome—the jolly dance music which was "coming through."

"Better late than never," the Barncombe Castle girl remarked blithely, sipping her own tea at last. "But I did feel cross when it began to look as if you were not coming. Crosser still when I saw that Grandways girl from this window—it overlooks the courtyard—turning up with a note. I'm afraid I couldn't be bothered to have Cora Grandways in. Who is her friend?"

"My cousin," said Polly. "Cissy Norton—"

"Oh, in that case, I'm sorry. But your cousin should be with you, Polly, surely, not with the Grandways girl."

"It's not Polly's fault, anyhow," spoke up Betty. "She has done her best—"

"I'm sure!" Lady Evelyn jumped up, creating a diversion. "Goodness, something that I brought in for tea myself not put out! Naomer, darling, come and open this box, and then see."

Naomer darted across. For a moment her little brown hands were clawing away string and unflapping the cardboard box, and then:

"Ooo!" she fairly shrieked. "Ze cream buns! Queek—queek!"

It needed this ecstatic shriek from Naomer to rouse Ruth Redgrave to laughter after she had been looking very pensive for a minute or so. Betty Barton had been watching her on the quiet, feeling sorry for her.

She was always like this nowadays, the mistress who used to be as light-hearted as she was chummy. Why?

That it was due to the auxiliary mistress Betty & Co. had been convinced from the first. But why—why should Miss Cunliffe be doing all in her power to destroy Miss Redgrave's happiness? Mere envy of one who was in a permanent position at the school—was that it?

"If only I could get the chance to ask her, I would," Betty was thinking as she saw what an effort it was costing the Form-mistress to be bright and sociable.

Tea over, Lady Evelyn asked them if they would like to go with her and see a wonderful discovery that had been made by workmen in the castle. Masons were always at work upon the fabric of the building, and just lately they had come upon a secret dungeon.

It was on the way back from this thrilling "side show" that Betty got her chance with the Form-mistress. They were all wandering through the various public rooms of the castle admiring pictures and tapestries.

Perhaps because she was preoccupied with dejecting thoughts, Miss Redgrave dropped behind, and suddenly Betty turned back to find her.

She was resting for a moment in the grand picture gallery, staring only absently at such canvases as were before her eyes. Quietly Betty came to her side and spoke.

Light on the Subject!

"MISS REDGRAVE—"
"Hallo, Betty! I—I was forgetting

"Please, before we go after the rest," the Form captain entreated in a subdued tone, "won't you tell me, Miss Redgrave, so that I can tell the others?"

"Tell you what, Betty?"

"You are not yourself these days, and we believe it is because of—well, because Miss Cunliffe won't be friendly. It's a great shame—a great misfortune for Morcove—that she should have come to the school and made herself so horrid."

"It is a very great pity, Betty, I will say that much," was the sighing response. "A tremendous pity that the grudge against me, which began years ago, should still be living on."

"Years ago, you say?"

Ruth Redgrave nodded. After a moment she motioned to Betty to sit down beside her. Then she faced towards her.

"I will tell you, Betty, on the understanding that you tell none but your chums at Modena. Mabel Cunliffe and I were at school together, although she bore a different surname then. She was always trying to beat me at work, games—everything. I never set myself to outdo her as if she were a rival who had challenged me. I think I was rather a plodder, but, anyway, I seemed to get on whilst she failed."

"And she took it in the wrong spirit?"

"You know what you have had to put up with from Cora Grandways time after time," the Form-mistress exclaimed sadly. "I had to go through just the same, Betty, in my schooldays at the hands of Mabel Denver—for that was her name at that time. She hated me in the old days, and she hates me still. I have done nothing to deserve it. That I could declare with my last breath. But some girls, they are like that."

There was an emotional pause in that grand picture gallery where mistress and Form captain were alone together. Betty said at last in a fierce tone:

"The headmistress ought to be told! It's only right—"

"Betty, no, there must be no telling!" struck in Ruth Redgrave, laying an impressive hand upon the girl's shoulder. "If Miss Cunliffe can keep her place, let her."

"She may try to get your place!"

"There are more unlikely things than that," assented the Form-mistress sadly. "All the same—no, Betty! I don't believe in hitting back—"

"I say, aren't you coming?" came the sudden gay interruption from Polly Linton, as she looked towards the seated pair from a big doorway. "We're going to have some dancing in the ball-room. They've got the gramophone there—such a beauty!"

Even as the merry madcap stopped speaking, there came the strains of a string band playing one of the latest dances. Polly rushed forward, making a playful bow in front of her Form-mistress.

"My dance, I think?"



WHO HAS DONE THIS? "Did any of you draw this stupid picture?" said Miss Redgrave, holding it up. It was a caricature of Miss Cunliffe. But there were no guilty looks in the Form.

"Charmed!" laughed Miss Redgrave, giving the madcap an affectionate pat as she stood up. "Come along, then. But don't forget, girls, you must soon be going back to Modena!"

Polly tossed her pretty head.

"Oh, well, this has done me good; hasn't it you, Betty?"

"And me," added the Form-mistress, looking tenderly at the one to whom, in those few quiet moments, she had confided the truth about her trouble.

Which Side Will Win ?

THAT evening, in the Modena sitting-room, Betty told her chums.

It was one of those rare occasions when Miss Cunliffe was not present to nag them into a state of misery. Swiftly the Form captain whispered the story that had come from Miss Redgrave's lips, and with eager looks and understanding nods, the listeners heard that story out.

There was a great pause when Betty had ended. Her chums did not care to say what they thought of Mabel Cunliffe for having kept alive the old jealous enmity. They were only anxious to debate, in guarded tones, what the end of it was likely to be, and how they could manage to do something for Miss Redgrave, in her time of trial.

"If only we could!" Helen Craig wistfully exclaimed. "I say, if only we could get it in our power to make Miss Cunliffe stop her cruel game!"

"Yes, wather, bai Jove! Tell her to dwoop it, what, and if she wefused she would be made to feel sorry!"

"When I think of all that Miss Redgrave has been to us," murmured Madge, her eyes ashine; "what a ripper towards the whole Form, helping to make Morcove what it is! And then that

wretch of a Miss Cunliffe crops up like this, to start worrying her!"

Polly jumped up from a chair and fumed about the room.

"Ugh! And supposing she manages to down Miss Redgrave, after all? Supposing she contrives to get her disgraced in the eyes of Miss Somerfield? There's been a bit of that already, don't forget!"

"I know," nodded Betty heavy-heartedly. "It takes a lot to upset Miss Somerfield against anyone she has always believed in; still——"

"You never know," deplored Tess. "We've seen how Cora often enough has managed to make white look like black. Well, we must make up our minds——"

"Yes, wather! Never mind what we have to go through, geals; Miss Wedgware for evah!"

"That's all very well!" exclaimed impatient Polly. "Of course we are going to stand together and see that Miss Redgrave doesn't fall! Question is, how to get the better of Miss Cunliffe!"

Again there was a pause.

"Well, are we all stumped?" broke from Polly. "Oh, bother, there must be something we could do—if only we could think of it!"

"Yes, wather!"

"Then why don't you think of it, duffer?"

"I am twying, Polly deah!" was the plaintive protest which drew smiles to the others' faces. "I am wacking my brains most stwenuously. Yes, wather! Howevah——"

"I have it—hooray!" And Polly clapped softly. "I tell you what—ripping notion! Listen, all of you! Supposing——"

"Sh!"

There was a footfall outside the room door.

"Yes, well," Polly said quickly and loudly, calmly sitting down, "supposing you play us something on the ioanner, Madge?"

And then—Miss Cunliffe came in!

At that moment, in a certain study at Morcove School, two girls were looking as moody as could be. At last Cora Grandways had the frankness to admit, with a sour smile:

"No mistake, Ciss, we came off badly to-day. Fancy those Modena girls getting to Barncombe Castle after all! We were whacked; but," she added, with a sudden touch of ferocity, "we are not finished, Ciss!"

"I should hope not, Cora!"

"Oh, no; oh, dear, no!" the Grandways girl said, throwing herself into an easy-chair. "Don't forget! Miss Cunliffe will do us a good turn if she can. That's been proved. She's on our side, knowing that we want to be on hers. Ciss, it will be as I said, you see!"

"What have you said?" asked Cissy rather irritably. She was feeling the day's defeat even more than Cora, never having seen the glories of Barncombe Castle. "You say so much!"

"I say this!" Cora exclaimed vehemently. "If Miss Cunliffe ever gets the best of Miss Redgrave,

it will only be because we have got the best of Betty & Co."

"So if they whack us it will mean that Miss Cunliffe is beaten?"

"That's it, Ciss! But we are not going to be whacked!" crowed Cora. "And neither is she!"

Cissy pondered dubiously.

"Well, I wonder!"

"Bah, you don't know me yet, Ciss!"

Again Cissy pondered.

"Perhaps I don't," she said at last. "But I am beginning to know—Morcove!"

(END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.)

Now that they know the whole truth of the affair, you may be sure that Betty & Co. will stand by Miss Redgrave with all the deep loyalty of which they are capable. Will they be able to help her? See that you read the dramatic developments that take place in next week's splendid story, "Suspended From the School."

This Week's Birthday Gifts List!

CLAIM NOW IF YOU WERE BORN ON
ANY OF THE DATES GIVEN BELOW!

Readers who were registered in the SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN Birthday Gifts Club before Saturday, October 1st, 1927, may now claim for their birthday gifts if the date of their birth coincides with the list given here. An entirely different list will be published next week and during subsequent weeks.

If you were born on any of the following dates:

JAN. 2nd, 1913.	JULY 28th, 1910.
FEB. 15th, 1914.	AUG. 20th, 1914.
MARCH 25th, 1912.	SEPT. 20th, 1911.
APRIL 29th, 1914.	OCT. 28th, 1915.
MAY 22nd, 1915.	NOV. 2nd, 1914.
JUNE 27th, 1913.	DEC. 11th, 1912.

fill in the coupon provided here, and send it to:

The Editor,
"Schoolgirls' Own" Birthday Gifts Club,
Gough House,
Gough Square,
London, E.C.4.

so as to reach this address not later than Thursday, October 13th. Please write the word "CLAIM" in the top left-hand corner of your envelope.

Birthday Gifts.

Claim Coupon.

Name

Address

I declare myself to have been registered in your Birthday Gifts Club prior to Saturday, October 1st, and as the date given here (*here state date*) is the day on which I was born, I wish to claim a (*state name of Annual you would like*)

in accordance with the rules of the club.
SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN, October 8th, 1927.