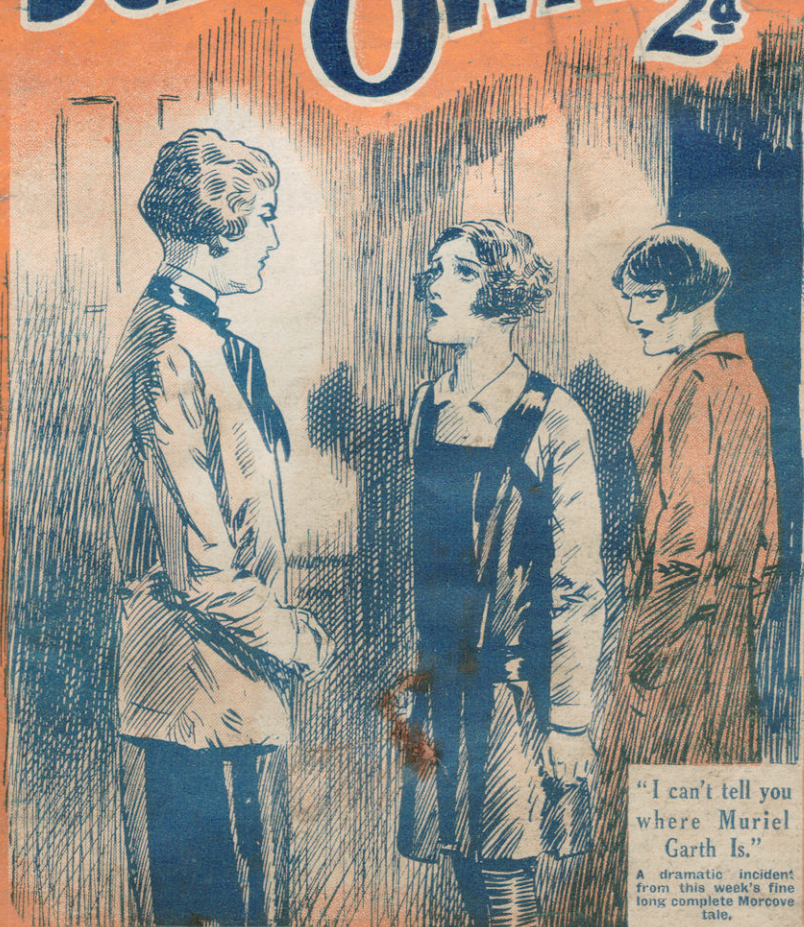


"JOAN ELVERTON'S HOLIDAY QUEST"
Grand New Serial by Gertrude Nelson Commences Inside

The **SCHOOLGIRLS'** **OWN** 2¢



"I can't tell you
where Muriel
Garth is."

A dramatic incident
from this week's fine
long complete Morcove
tale.

Grave Anxiety is Caused at Morcove by the Question—



Where was Muriel Garth?

By MARJORIE STANTON

A Scare for Naomer!

"POLLY, queek, are you awake?"

"No!"

"Yes you are, bekas you have heard me whisper! Polly—"

"Go back to your bed, Naomer—"

"No, bekas—"

"Go to sleep, and don't bother me!"

"It is no bother, bekas I only want you to give me the key—"

"Give you the what?"

"Ze key, Polly, of the corner cupboard downstairs, bekas I am hungry!"

Polly Linton made the most disobliging response. She turned the other way, in her bed in the Fourth Form dormitory at Morcove School. She drew the bedclothes up to her ears. She snored!

Then that dusky imp, Naomer Nakara, exclaimed in the darkness:

"What ze diggings! If you don't give me the key I shall take him. Bekas—"

"If you don't clear off, I shall take you and give you something!" Polly answered. "Routing me up at this time of night!"

"Eet all your fault," whispered back Naomer.

"Bekas you would make me go without ze usual snack at nine o'clock, for my health. And now I am so hungry I feel I shall die!"

"Go on, then, take the blessed key—it's in the pocket of—"

"Oh, I know where he is, zank you!"

And Naomer, in

dressing-gown and stockings, silently crept to where the madcap's day attire was carelessly thrown down.

Possibly, Polly was not nearly so grumpy as she made herself out to be. In any case, she knew that Authority would not mind a scholar slipping down to get something to eat if real hunger, as sometimes happens, had caused sleeplessness.

"Hist; Naomer!" whispered the madcap suddenly.

"Yes, what?"

"You might bring me a slice of cake, too!"

"All right; I will get ze jerk on. I have got ze key. I zink I better bring all ze cake, in case any of ze others wake up!"

"If you wake any of them up, Naomer, it won't be cake you'll get!"

With which warning the madcap settled her head upon the pillow again.

Naomer crept over to the door. The night was lit by a moon nearly at the full. Everywhere about the great schoolhouse there was likely to be enough moonlight filtering in at the windows to make this midnight foraging expedition of

Naomer's an easy one.

Nor did Polly, to her relief, hear a single sound made by her dusky chum, after the latter had crept from the dormitory.

A blessing that! She would not have been surprised if the Imp had gone sprawling, in spite of the friendly moonlight. And Polly

"I must save Muriel Garth!" This is the thought that is constantly in Helen Craig's mind. But what a formidable task it is. At the moment she does not even know what has happened to Muriel! To add to her anxieties the Garcios have made it clear that they will spare no efforts to get the fugitive into their power once more!

really did not want any of the other girls to be disturbed.

But were the others all asleep?

The doubt seized Polly as she suddenly heard the soft rustle of bedclothes, a sound made by some girl turning over at least restlessly, if not from wakefulness. Listening for the sighing breath which usually follows a sleeper's change into a more comfortable posture, she did not hear it.

Polly sat up in her bed and peered. The other girl who had stirred just then must have been Helen Craig, a few beds away.

"Helen?" whispered Polly. "You asleep?"

There was no answer, and so the madcap concluded, with relief, that Naomer had not disturbed Helen.

Polly lay down again. During the wait for Naomer's return with the midnight morsel, the school chimes clanged the hour. It really was—midnight.

Suddenly there was a sound like that of subdued panic outside the dormitory. A rapid padding of stockings feet, fluttering noises, a faint bump or two.

Naomer came dashing back, panting for breath. As quickly as she re-entered the dormitory she closed the door.

"Ooo, queek!" she was gasping to herself. "Ooo!"

"Quiet!" hissed Polly.

"Eat all very well—"

"Sh! Did you get it?"

"No, bekas—"

"You didn't get the cake?"

"I got ze wind up instead," confessed Naomer, in a breathless whisper, coming across to Polly.

"Bekas, I have seen a ghost!"

"Oh, go to bed—"

"What ze diggings, you go down and see!" was Naomer's challenging whisper. "I tell you, it made me get ze jerk on, yes! Just when I was coming back with that gorgus cake that hasn't been cut yet, bother him!"

"Then you did get the cake!"

"Yes, bekas, it was coming back that I saw ze ghost; an ce—normous one!" Naomer thrillingly described it. "As big as a woman. As big as Meess Massingham, yes!"

"Hop it, Naomer!" Polly retorted. "I've had enough of this! You cuckoo, trying to kid me—"

"No, bekas—"

"Sh! I wonder the others aren't all awake by now. If you got that cake, where is it?"

"On ze stairs! Bekas, you see—"

"Go back and get it, then!"

"No, zank you! But I zink you might go," suggested Naomer softly. "Bekas, zen perhaps you will see what I saw, and believe me!"

"I'm much more likely to run into Miss Massingham. And I've no desire to do that," said Polly, settling down in her bed once more. "I see quite enough of her in class!"

"It was not Miss Massingham—"

"Wasn't it!" scoffed Polly. "Jump into your bed, before she looks in; that's my advice."

Naomer took it. Had that stern disciplinarian, Miss Massingham, looked in a few moments later, she would have found it hard to tell which junior had been prowling about on the floor below a few moments earlier.

But there was no such sequel to Naomer's

recent scare, and Polly was more surprised on this account than was the dusky one. After a ten-minute wait, more than one reason for going after that dropped cake suggested itself to the madcap.

After promising herself a mouthful, she now felt definitely hungry. Moreover, she did not wish that cake to be found on the stairs, as it very well might be, in the morning before she and her chums were up.

"Oh, dash you, Naomer!" she fumed softly, slipping out of bed. "But you stay where you are."

"I am going to!" said Naomer.

Apparently, she had far from got over the scare. What moonlight the dormitory held showed her sitting up in bed, very much on the qui-vive as she awaited Polly's return.

And what happened? Nothing, except Polly's triumphant return with that cake!

"You and your ghosts!" she scoffingly whispered, starting to carve the cake with a pair of scissors from a dressing-table. "There you are; take it on the mat!"

"What ze diggings—"

"It's all you'll have to-night," decreed Naomer's mentor.

It may not have been good for the remainder of the small cake, to be put under Polly's pillow. But Polly seemed to think that it would be good for Naomer.

The resultant hard lump did not prevent Polly from falling asleep quite soon. It was neither she nor Naomer who, a great while afterwards, suddenly left a warm bed to creep across to the door and listen.

The scholar who did that was Helen Craig.

She did not go from the dormitory. Hearing not the slightest sound as she listened at the doorway, she went back to bed.

Presently, however, she was out of bed again, this time she went to the nearest window.

High in the cloudless night-sky the moon still hung, shedding a silvery radiance upon the outer world. Helen Craig's was an expectant watchfulness, her peering eyes keeping the school grounds under constant observation.

And so, what with the brightness of the night and her own vigilance, at last she made out a dark shape going away from the school-house; a woman's form, it seemed to be, keeping as much in shadow as was possible.

Helen, having once spotted that mysterious figure, kept it in sight until, fully five minutes later, it finally passed from view in the direction of the Barncombe Road.

"Madame Garcia!" the schoolgirl said to herself, going back to her bed at last. "She has been in the school-house to-night—and Muried Garth hiding under the same roof, for all I know, at the same time!"

Madame Garcia Visits Morcove.

"THE class," said Miss Massingham at ten-forty-five next morning, "will now go out for break. One moment; not so much noise, girls! Go back, Naomer—"

"But you said, plis—"

"Silence!" commanded the Form-mistress, banging a hand upon her desk. "Pay attention, every girl. When the bell goes, there is to be an immediate return. I have observed," Miss Massingham spoke on, with measured accents, whilst the class tried hard to stand still, "an inclination to dawdle

in after break. That sort of thing was never intended. Ten minutes does not mean twelve or fifteen. So mind!"

She at last gave the dismissal signal, and out swarmed the Form, like bees from a hive.

Madeap Polly had left a cricket-bat ready to hand, earlier in the morning, just outside the class-room. She snatched it up and dashed for the open air. Of the half dozen chums who dashed out after her, one had a cricket-ball. That was the Form captain, Betty Barton.

"Play!" cried Betty, hardly giving Polly time to take her stand, with legs for a wicket.

Smack!
"Wowp!" yelled Paula, as the smitten ball nearly flicked her left ear. "My gwacious!"
"You should have caught it," was Polly's bland comment. "Yes, come on, from over there, Madge!"

So Madge Minden, from where she had fielded the ball, bowled to the madeap.

Smack! Crash—tinkle, splinter, cling!

"Oh, goodness!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now you've done it, Polly!"

She certainly had. The ball had gone into the class-room via a smashed pane.

"You should have been there to catch it," Polly observed herself from blame. "Paula darling, just go and get the ball from the class-room, there's a dear!"

"Er—"

"If I go," Polly explained, "Miss Massingham will keep me in talk!"

"Er—"

But now Miss Massingham showed herself at the broken window.

"What are you girls doing out there!"

"Cricket, Miss Massingham; French cricket," Polly demurely explained. "And can we have the ball, please?"

"Come in!"

"Oh, dash—"

"Come in!" repeated the irate Form-mistress. "All of you!"

Groans under their breath from Betty & Co.

"As if you haven't enough room for games, you must go and do a thing like this!" Miss Massingham censured them. "It must be paid for. Come in and sit with arms folded!"

At this instant, however, a welcome diversion was created.

A car had been coming up the drive, and now it had stopped on the gravel just outside the main porch. A solitary passenger alighted; a tall, handsome lady, with a smile for the scholars that displayed a very fine set of teeth.

"Good-morning, girls!"

"Madame Garcia!" went up the cry from many. "Oh—"

"Ooo, queek, queek, good-morning, Madame Garcia, how do you do, bekas you are just in time!" shrieked Naomer, mindful of the order to return indoors. "You want to see Mees Massingham, yes? There she is!"

But Miss Massingham, realising that she looked absurd standing at the broken window, was already effacing herself.

"I have come to see the headmistress," explained Madame Garcia, "although I shall be delighted, of course, to meet that other lady again! 'Girls,' she added, very ingratiatingly, 'you know why I am here, of course?'"

"Yes, Madame Garcia—"

"Yes, bekas—"

"You wish to inquire about your missing step-daughter?" Pam Willoughby carried on the chatter. "You've not heard what has become of her, then!"

Madame Garcia shook her head, looking distressful now.

"No. And I am very anxious," she said in her fluent English. "I cannot make out why my dear Muriel slipped away from the yacht the other night, just when it was setting off for the voyage back to Mexico. She knows how fond we are of her. She had every reason to be so happy!"

Then, as the headmistress came out by the front porch:



Suddenly Miss Massingham appeared at the broken window. "What are you girls doing?" she demanded. "Only playing cricket," answered Polly, "and please can we have our ball?" "You will come indoors at once!" was the mistress' stern reply.

"Ah, my dear Miss Somerfield!" cried the Mexican lady. "How do you do once more! I am saying to these girls of yours it is about my stepdaughter Muriel that I am here. The Salvator is at Plymouth, and I have had to come back to Morocco—Jose and Andro also; we are all staying in Barncombe."

"I rather expected you," Miss Somerfield said, shaking hands with Madame Garcia. "I heard some talk of your having put in at Plymouth, on account of Muriel's strange conduct. The girl is missing. The most you know is that she must have got safely to land in the little seaboard by which she left the Salvator?"

"The boat that was found at your jetty," Madame Garcia nodded the rejoinder. "And so I think the naughty girl must be hiding in this district now. Strange, very strange! May we go into it all, dear Miss Somerfield?"

For answer the headmistress conducted the visitor into the school-house, that they might converse privately.

As for the juniors, in wandering off as they did, chattering to each other, they were not pretending to forget that command about returning to the class-room. Madame Garcia's sudden arrival had made them really forget. Every youthful mind was given up to the mystery of Muriel Garth.

"It's a marvel what has become of her!" Polly exclaimed.

"Most extraordinary, yes, wather!" agreed Paula Creel.

"It was three evenings ago that she deserted the steam-yacht and got ashore by means of a row-boat," Betty mused aloud. "We found the boat at the jetty; we've not seen or heard anything of the girl!"

"Not a single thing!" voiced others.

"Yes, well," Betty resumed, "it must mean that Muriel, as soon as she landed all by herself, set off on a journey to rejoin that young lady who used to be her governess. Miss Aylwin—"

"That's about it," nodded Polly. "Although—"

"Girls! Didn't I say you were to come in?" was the cry which stern Miss Massingham again asserted her authority. "Do you want to be kept in at midday?"

"Oh—blow!" grimaced Polly, turning back with the others.

Meantime, one of the juniors who had been involved in that little affair of the broken window had already gone indoors. That girl was Helen Craig.

In the very instant that she saw Madame Garcia alight from the car, Helen had sharply walked away. Now she was upstairs—not seeking her study, but going quickly to the very top of the great building.

Quietly and warily she went past the landing on which were the dormitories, and climbed the topmost flight that led only to some attics.

So, in a few moments, she gained the attic-landing, where two or three closed doors faced her. After making sure that no one was coming after her, she opened one door quickly, slipped into the gloomy attic, then closed the door.

Noises that came up to her, dully, from below, only made the attic's own silence more noticeable. Helen felt that, if anyone were in hiding here, she would be able to hear the person's very breathing.

After a few seconds' wait, the schoolgirl whis-

pered into the gloom of the spacious, lumbered-up attic:

"Muriel? Muriel, are you here?"

No answer.

Helen went out at once. She had not a minute to waste. "Break" was running out fast, and in any case—Madame Garcia was even now at the school, very likely suggesting to the headmistress a search for the missing girl!

Crossing the top landing, the agitated scholar entered another attic.

This time, with the door closed behind her, she did not venture any stealthy whisper. Instead, Helen prowled towards a pile of lumber—mostly the unclaimed belongings of former scholars. There were several playboxes. These had been more or less neatly stacked at some time or other. On the battered lid of one old box a folded slip of paper lay, like a note awaiting attention.

Helen took it up, sighing heavily as she did so.

Another disappointment! Increased suspense! She had hoped not to find the note lying there. For it was one she herself had written overnight, leaving it in this, an attic which she knew Muriel had resorted to for at least one night.

Putting the note in her pocket to be destroyed later, Helen crept out of this second attic. Then she went to the third and last. It was almost as bright as an ordinary room, having a big skylight, and it was bare and swept clean. Nothing like the hiding-place that either of the two other attics offered; except that there was a cupboard which, if anyone had the key—

Helen crossed over, tried the cupboard door—to find it locked, as she had expected—and then tapped softly.

"Muriel! You in there, Muriel?"

And again—no answer.

Not there. It had seemed out of the question that she could be there; and yet—somewhere the girl was hiding, and the hiding-place was a fresh one. It must be so, or she would have claimed the urgent message warning her to beware!

Suddenly the chimes came dinning into the attic. Eleven o'clock!

Dismay seized Helen. She should be in class again with all her schoolmates by now. And Miss Massingham always so fussy—specially cross, at present, on account of that broken window.

To descend the first flight from the attics without extreme caution was not to be thought of. But as soon as Helen had accomplished this safely, she ran the rest of the way downstairs.

The ground-floor reached, she heard her Form singing "Doh!" at the start of a tonic-solfa lesson. Late! And that was a nice thing, when she wished above all not to do anything giving rise to comment. She had gone out to play with her chums, when break began, for that discreet reason.

But now—even worse! She was being checked in her rush to the class-room by an arresting cry from Miss Somerfield.

"Helen Craig—the very girl I want! Come here a moment, Helen!"

She turned back, trying hard not to look flustered, although Madame Garcia was with the headmistress.

"You know who this lady is, Helen? And why she has called at the school?"

"Yes, Miss Somerfield."

"Well, I don't suppose you have seen anything of Muriel Garth!" blandly inferred the headmistress. "Madame Garcia is returning to Barn-

combe now; but she has asked if her daughter Jose may come out to the school later on. I have said 'Yes, certainly—'

"It is very kind of your dear headmistress," interjected Madame Garcia. "I have explained, for me there is much to do, but for Jose it is very dull there in Barncombe, and she made many friends in this school."

Helen nodded. It was only too true; many of her chums, as ignorant as was Miss Somerfield of the Garcios' duplicity, had been very friendly.

"You, Helen, I think, were most friendly with Jose, as you were with Muriel?" spoke on the headmistress. "Very well, then; I felt you would be glad to know that Jose has permission to come to tea. Go into class now, and, of course, you will tell the others, at the dismissal."

Helen went quickly to the Fourth Form class-room. All the doh-reh-mee'ing stopped as Miss Massingham took her pointer from the chart to level it at the errant scholar.

"Helen Craig! What does this mean? Do you see the clock?"

"Miss Somerfield has been talking to me. That made me later than I would have been."

"Oh, in that case—" And nothing more was said.

Helen went to her place in the class, smiling faintly. The encounter with the headmistress and Madame Garcia had served one useful purpose, after all.

Afterwards, however, she, the one girl out of Morcove's hundreds who had been in Muriel's confidence, felt heavy enough at heart.

She could guess why Jose Garcia was coming to tea this afternoon.

Nor could Helen Craig get rid of the dismaying idea that the Mexican girl, by hook or by crook, would manage to stay on for the night—as her mother's spy.

Her Mother's Spy!

IN the best sitting-room of a superior apartment house in quaint old Barncombe, Madame Garcia and her daughter Jose were alone together. Andro had gone out to buy himself some cigarettes.

"When you go along to the school presently, Jose," said Madame Garcia, "there is one thing above all you must try not to do!"

"Oh, I don't need to be told, mother—"

"But listen! Perhaps you think it will be as easy to deceive the scholars as it was that other time. If so, you make a mistake, Jose. I myself had to be all the more on my guard this morning when I conversed with the headmistress. She was so liable to suspect that Muriel was going in dread of me, or the girl would never have given me



"I'm sorry," Dolly Delane said, but she couldn't help laughing for Andro looked so funny as he came tearing out of the shed with the help of Dolly's cow. "You see," she said, as Andro murmured something in his own foreign language, "our English cows have some spirit after all!"

the slip. The scholars will also be liable, now, to suspect the same thing!"

Jose shrugged, holding her dark head high.

"I shall be careful, mother. I had thought of all that!"

"What I said to the headmistress was that Muriel must have been seized with a kind of homesickness for this country, which, after all, is her native land. You must keep that idea before the scholars, Jose," was her mother's impressive warning. "So they will regard Muriel's running away from us as something for which we are not to blame."

The daughter nodded.

"I am not a fool, mother! Of course, I shall be very careful. If I were you, I would not feel so afraid of the scholars getting suspicious, as of their being told something—by Helen Craig."

With a frown and a start, Madame Garcia echoed that scholar's name:

"Helen Craig! Yes, it is true, Jose, she is a great danger. When I think of what certainly passed between that girl and Muriel the other day, I feel— Ah, I would like to have her somewhere where her tongue could do no harm! But one must not have thoughts like that—in this country."

And the speaker slowly abandoned her sudden terrible ferocity, giving a resigned sigh.

Jose smiled.

"It is a country too lawful for you—is that it, mother?"

"Much too lawful! But there," shrugged the Mexican woman, "we know that Helen Craig has said nothing as yet to her schoolmates. So we can hope and believe that she does not feel free to speak."

A pause, and then Madame Garcia added:

"One word more, Jose. If—if you contrive to get invited to stay the night at the school—be careful! Remember, amongst so many girls besides the big staff, there may easily be light sleepers. Last night—I told you what happened to me."

Jose laughed again.

"Yes, that was funny, mother!"

"It might have been—a disaster," frowned Madame Garcia. "I made a big blunder—I admit it. I thought it was Muriel creeping down from some hiding-place that had eluded me; and it was only one of the scholars. If the girl had given me a second look—there was moonlight enough for her to see—"

"That you were no ghost, after all. I shall expect to hear something about that ghost!" laughed Jose.

Her brother entered, looking jaunty and loud—very foreign altogether in his gaudy attire, and smoking a cigar.

Madame Garcia eyed him with motherly pride; but Jose seemed to regard him with slight disfavour for once.

"Oh, put that thing out!" she derided his cigar.

"It is not done in this country."

"So much the worse for this country!" smirked Andro, puffing away at his cigar. "You can leave it to Muriel to stand up for this country!"

"Yes, Jose," the mother reproved her daughter.

"We do not want that sort of talk."

Andro threw a packet of cigarettes across the table towards his sister.

"For you to take to the school," he chuckled. "But when do you start, Jose, and am I to come with you?"

"As you please," she airily responded. "I go now. They will be out of afternoon school by the time I arrive."

So, a few minutes later, old-fashioned Barncombe had another sight of the youthful foreigners, looking very rich, but, like many rich folk, a little over-dressed.

Jose went into the Creamery and came out with a big package, which she handed to her brother.

Then they set off in the sunshine for the long walk to Barncombe. It may have seemed a hot, tiring day to natives of the district; but to this boy and girl, born and reared in a tropic clime, the present weather was quite bracing.

"I shan't come much farther with you," Andro said, when the school gates were only half a mile distant. "Jose, what a huge school that is! It may easily be hiding Muriel all this time, and no one any the wiser."

"Possibly, I shall be the wiser—by to-morrow morning!" Jose responded.

"And then the moor," he muttered, whilst he stood and gazed over the undulations of gorse and bracken. "The cover there, Jose!"

"Bah, she could never endure it, out there in the open," his sister exclaimed. "By day—yes,

perhaps. But she would feel she must have a roof over her head at night. No, she is in the school, and—we know; we can guess!—that Craig girl is aiding her."

Andro handed over the Creamery parcel, now that he was going to turn back.

"For my part," he said, grinning craftily, "I shall be out there on the moor this evening. I study the beauties of this country! I stay out to see the sunset, and to see the moon come up. Jose, if I should see someone—"

"A girl, Andro, creeping towards the school—"

"So!" he nodded. "It will be difficult for me to light my cigarette after that. I shall have to strike three matches—you understand, Jose?"

"At what time?" she asked softly. "I must know exactly, Andro, to be on the look-out."

"Nine o'clock, and again—at ten?" he suggested.

"By the school chimes, yes. There can be no mistake, then. Very well, Andro—good-bye for the present."

He responded with a gay flourish and started the walk back; but it occurred to him to do a little scouting at once, and so he suddenly left the road, sauntering out on to the moorland wastes.

For half an hour he loitered around, keeping to the narrowest of all the many grassy paths which criss-crossed the moor. Giant gorse-bushes, stunted birches, tall bracken—all helped to hide him, the more so as he was not tall.

But all he got in return for such crafty prowlings was a longing for a good tea.

He knew of a pretty little cottage beside the Barncombe Road; had passed it awhile ago. He would go and see what they could do for him in the way of refreshment.

He was not aware that from this same charming cottage a certain girl went twice daily to Morcove, as a day scholar. The first Andro knew of this was when, ten minutes later, he turned away from the cottage-porch, after getting no answer to his knock at the door, and went to look round the back premises. The cottage was not locked up, so he felt that someone must be about the place.

Then it was that he came upon Dolly Delane, busy in the little cowshed.

Over her school-clothes, the moment she got back from afternoon classes, Dolly had slipped a spotless overall. Now she was sitting down on a three-legged milking-stool milking her parent's Jersey cow.

"Good-afternoon, miss! Can you give me some tea?" was the cry that startled Dolly at her milking.

Incidentally it startled the cow. Her ears twitched; from a passive, cud-chewing, dreamy creature, proud mother of a lovely little calf crouching near by, she became a nervous resentor of the lad's presence.

"Oh, we don't supply teas!" Dolly looked round to say, without pausing in her task. "At least—only to oblige, when it's convenient. Stand steady, Beauty!"

"Huh!" snorted Andro, strolling closer to show himself off to Dolly Delane. "What d'you call that—a cow? In our country one of our cows would make three of those."

"Would they really? But," said Dolly, getting up and taking away both the stool and a well-filled pail, "it might take three of your cows to give what our Beauty gives. Anyhow, I must go to the dairy now—"

"Oh, no need to be so unfriendly—"

"I am not unfriendly; only busy!" said Dolly.

She would have gone away then, but, to her annoyance, he swaggered into the cowshed as she came out. He looked impudent, and she made up her mind to order him off if he started teasing Beauty.

"Pooh," he scoffed at the Jersey, "no spirit! In my country we have cows that will go for you like mad bulls. We have to chain our cows. We have all the best blood out there. England—she is finished! And what do you call this?" he chuckled, derisively looking down upon the wee calf.

He stirred the mild-eyed, happy little creature with one foot.

"Hey, get up; gee-hurr!" he shouted.

Next second pandemonium reigned in the shed.

Dolly, from the doorway, saw the mother-cow ramp round, tail up, and charge full-tilt. With her horns she fairly bundled a terrified Andro clean out of the way. He bellowed as he went sprawling, expecting to be tossed to the roof perhaps.

Then he scrambled up, lapsing into shouts in his own language, whilst he came out of that shed almost as fast as if he were being forked by a pair of horns.

"I'm sorry!" laughed Dolly. "But Beauty has some spirit, after all, you see. And it is English spirit, too!"

Which said, she went on to the dairy with her pail of foamy milk, whilst young Andro tried to recover his dandyish appearance by brushing thick dust from that man-about-town suit!

Left Alone With the Enemy!

GO in, Jose; tea will soon be ready!"

Betty Barton ushered the visitor into Study 12.

"I can't think what has become of Helen Craig," rattled on the Form captain, "when she was supposed to be the one to receive you. Still, we are here—"

"That is so; I come to see you all!" Jose caught the speaker up, with a very broad smile. "You were all so kind, that other time—I could never forget the kindness. And you must let me make you the little gift of some cakes," she added, laying the Creamery parcel upon a table that was already set for tea.

Naomer, over by the corner cupboard, turned round. Her eyes grew large.

"Ooo, gorjus, hooray! Queek, more cakes; more cream-buns! Good job, bekas—"

"Hands off!" cried Polly. "Jose, you shouldn't have done this, but it's awfully decent of you!"

"Yes, wather," Paula joined in. "And have this cheah, Jose, pway do. I can wecommend it as being quite the best, what?"

Jose dropped into it with a little exclamation of delight. Then she laughed.

"Droll! That I should be at this school again, after saying good-bye to you all—for ever, was it not, a few days ago? It makes me forgive my stepsister Muriel all the trouble she has given us. Not that I have been angry with Muriel—oh, no!"

She added silkily:

"One must understand her feelings. One must make the allowance. This so-beautiful country of yours is Muriel's also. She did feel her love for it, although there was nothing but happiness for her in Mexico."

"That's about what it all means," agreed Betty.

"It's what we girls have been saying; at the last moment when the yacht was setting out—a sort of homesickness."

"Bekas, I know myself," shrilled Naomer, "if they said to me, Naomer, you must go back to your own country and be ze proper queen, I would do ze bunk and stay at Morcove."

"You would?" smiled Jose, looking very much at ease.

"Yes, bekas, I pre-fer Morcove to Morocco!"

"Here's Helen!" cried Betty, as that girl entered along with Pam and some others. "You're a nice one, Helen. Not to be on hand when our visitor turned up!"

"Sorry!" Helen blandly apologised; and she nodded, but did not offer to shake hands with Jose, although the latter had stood up as if to be very ceremonious. "But who better than the Form captain, to receive the Form's guest?"

"More chairs! Hot water!" clamoured Polly.

"What ze diggings—yes, queek!"

And away rushed Naomer, to do her usual acrobatic turn with borrowed chairs.

Helen took up the hot-water jug and hurried away to fill it. Although she had only been in the same room with Jose for such a short time, she had the feeling that she must get away from the girl.

The chums showed such goodwill towards their visitor, and never for a moment dreamt of the duplicity that was masked by that dazzling smile!

Where was Muriel—where? It was nerve-racking, to be in total ignorance like this. If only—oh, if only it had been possible to get in touch with the girl, even for a moment, to-day!

Was she hiding in the school or not? Did she even know that the Garcios were back in England, the yacht having put in at Plymouth?

Helen returned to Study 12.

"No, my mother does not think that Muriel is hiding in this district," Jose was saying, as Helen entered. "We think we shall hear of her having rejoined that young lady who had charge of her in this country."

"You mean, of course, Miss Aylwin?" Polly said. "The young lady would try to get in touch with your mother?"

"Oh, for certain!"

Another falsehood! thought Helen. She, who knew all, could be quite sure that Miss Aylwin would try to prevent the Garcios from claiming Muriel, if ever it should be in her power to do so.

"My mother, just before I came away," Jose airily spoke on; "she had the idea, perhaps Miss Aylwin will be telegraphing or telephoning to Morcove. To consult, you understand, with your headmistress, not knowing that my mother is still in England."

"My word, yes!" said Betty, whilst busy, pouring out the tea. "And perhaps Muriel, after rejoining Miss Aylwin, will be packed off to Morcove again?"

"Well, we'd all be glad to see her again," said Pam. "We became very fond of her."

"I am sure," Jose responded, smiling very graciously, "she is very nice—charming! I regard her as a sister, quite. How late, please, can you receive telegrams at this school?"

"Oh, up till—well, our bed-time, at least," answered Polly. "They 'phone through the telegram, which amounts to the same thing. Then the telegram itself comes next morning by the post-man."

Jose was silent for a moment or two.

"If I could stay with you, in case of a telegram!" she at last exclaimed wistfully. "Or a telephone call from Miss Aylwin, a great way off. My mother would be so glad for me to be here, it case! But—not possible, perhaps?"

"Oh, why ever not?" cried Polly. "Of course, you could stay—all night, for that matter! Betty, you can fix it up for Jose with Miss Somerfield?"

"Will you?" the Mexican girl appealed to the Form captain, next to whom she was sitting. "Thank you so much! Ah, that will be kind of you!"

And Helen—what could she say? Not a word! She did not want to drag her chums into this affair. Her only course was to try and outwit Jose!

But the chances of doing that were very slender, she knew.

Already the Mexican girl had adroitly sought permission to stay until late evening. And there was no doubt that she would end by staying the night at Morcove. And it was after lights out that poor Muriel, like some hunted fugitive, could be expected to leave her hiding-place—wherever that might be!

With dread Helen anticipated the coming of night; Jose, under the school's hospitable roof, getting up when others were asleep—to lie in wait!

If only it were possible to warn Muriel! That poor girl must surely be resorting to the school-house as a refuge by night. Again, how could she obtain food, except such as was to be obtained in secret from the school?

Tea over, the chums invited Jose to go down to tennis or other games. Helen had to appear willing to be with the jolly party they made; but there was some temporary separating while the tea-things were cleared away, and that gave her a longed-for chance to slip away.

In her desperate anxiety to get into touch with Muriel, she went down into Morcove's vast cellars.

Was it somewhere there, perhaps, that Muriel now had a hiding-place? If so, the sooner she was warned the better!

Helen had closed the door behind her, at the top of the cellar steps, after entering unseen. She stealthily descended to the brick floor and switched on an electric torch.

Whisper an anxious "Muriel?" she dare not. Sounds of all the life of the school came down to her, and so she feared that any sound she made might be heard above. She could only tip-toe from cellar to cellar, hoping and yet dreading to find the torch suddenly flashing upon a girlish figure, huddled in some corner.

It would be a blessing to come upon Muriel; and yet—that a heartrending thing it would be to find her there!

But she was not there. Every corner had Helen searched at last, and in vain. She switched out the light after returning to the foot of the cellar steps. The torch went into a pocket already laden with a wedge of cake, wrapped up in a piece of paper. Helen had been going about all day with it in her pocket, in case she should suddenly encounter her hapless chum, half famished.

Her hand felt for the door-latch—and then she stood still, scarcely daring to breathe. Some of her chums were coming by, to go out by a side door into the garden, and Jose was with them.

"Yes, I would like ver' much to be shown all

over the school," Helen heard Jose saying. "It is wonderful; parts of it so very old."

"After some tennis," Polly cried blithely, "we'll show you the school—from cellars to attics, if you like."

"Oh, are there cellars—?"

"Yes, bekas—queek, look! What ze diggings!" was the cry from Naomer that sent Helen hurrying down the cellar steps in order to be out of sight when the door opened. "We can go down now, for a lark!"

The door at the top of the steps was opened.

"Ze Morcove bogey-hole!" Naomer remarked. "Queek, come on down, and I will show you; I'm not afraid of any jolly old bogeys!"

"Aren't you?" chuckled Polly. "What about last night, Naomer!"

There was much laughter at that.

"Come along out to games!" Betty cried. "You'll all get your tennis shoes filthy if you go larking about down there!"

Blessings on the head of Betty, thought Helen, for taking the others away! Bang! Naomer had closed the cellar door.

Ten minutes later, Helen, for appearance's sake, turned up at the tennis courts. Jose herself took a hand with the racquet, and at least it was a relief to see the girl passing the time like this.

But although permission had been granted for Jose to stay on until quite late, there was the stipulation that her presence must not interfere too much with prep.

"We shall all be free again after prep.," said Betty, when it was time to return to the studies. "So what would you like to do in the meantime, Jose?"

"Oh, I shall enjoy looking round the school!" was the reply.

"Go wherever you like, then," said Betty. "But surely one of us might show you round. I'll take upon myself to let—"

"Me, Betty—me!" burst from one and another eagerly. To get off prep was a boon worth seeking.

"Best thing to let Jose choose one of us," Betty suggested lightly. "What do you say, Jose?"

"Oh, in that case—will Helen Craig, perhaps?" asked the Mexican girl, smiling at Helen. "It will be a chance for me to find out what she knows about—Mexico. Her father is out in Mexico, we know."

"Go on, Helen!" laughed Polly. "Lucky girl!"

A few moments more and Helen was left alone with the girl whom she had grown to hate as much as she distrusted her. To anyone else, Jose's sweet smile must have seemed one of perfect goodwill. But Helen knew it as a smile of mockery.

"They were saying that there is a ver' fine view all over the moor, from a railed-in part of the roof?" Jose said, keeping her eyes fixed upon Helen. "We might go up to the roof—yes?" Naomer said it would mean going through the attics and out by a skylight. But I do not mind. I would love to see that view!"

An Anxious Time:

At last the ordeal was over, and after all the crafty girl had found out—nothing!

For the best part of an hour Helen had been compelled to act as Jose's escort, taking her out on to that safely railed-in part of the roof from which the marvellous view was often shown to visitors; then back through one of the attics—and into the others.

With that mocking smile of hers, and with eyes ever watchful for signs of alarm on Helen's face, the prying girl had blandly expressed a desire to see every inch of the school-house. Even the cellars—Naomer having described them as being quite unique. Then, in the grounds, out-of-the-way sheds, store-places behind the gymnasium—nothing had been overlooked by the girl, her bland interest standing as a mocking excuse for what was really a thorough search!

But she had gained no results, after all. Not even so much as a scrap of evidence to indicate what had become of Muriel Garth.

Jose returned to the other scholars again, in Study 12, and Helen went to her own study, on the plea that she would like to do a bit of her own prep.

Books and primers were open on the study table, but in spite of a genuine desire to work, she could not settle to the task. She had tried hard to concentrate, and simply could not.

On the wall in front of her were the red rays of the sinking sun. Another hour and it would be night. And Jose was to sleep at Morcove! As Helen knew, Miss Somerfield had said an indulgent: "Oh, yes, by all means, if the girl wishes. We can easily give her a bed."

Night at hand; the girl in a position to spend that night on the look-out; and Muriel—where was she? Did she know of the danger? Did she know that at all costs she must keep away from the school-house to-night?

Helen dropped her pen and drifted to the study window.

The sunset-light faded from the study wall. Presently Helen was aware of the dusk creeping over land and sea, for she was still at the window, still alone in the study.

Suddenly her straying glance picked out a dis-

tant figure in the gloom. But there on the moor someone was making furtive movements.

Was it Muriel?

Helen rubbed the window-pane, for in her sudden excitement she had put her face so close to it to peer out, that her breath had condensed upon the glass.

She looked again, and strained her eyes to try and glimpse the vague figure that she had seen only for a moment; but it had vanished.

That, however, only made her feel all the more certain that it was Muriel. The very furtiveness of the figure, apparently moving amongst the bushes and stunted moorland trees, was just what one would have expected of the girl.

She was hanging about, over there, waiting for dusk to deepen to night, and for the school to muster in Big Hall. Then, as on a previous occasion, with a cautious rush, she would get in bounds, creep to the school's outside fire-escape—the permanent iron stairway—and gain the shelter of the attics.

"But she mustn't!" Helen almost groaned to herself as she drew back from the window and paced about the study in great alarm. "Not with Jose herself in the school. Jose will not go down to call-over. It will be the very time for her to be on the look-out!"

Then Helen realised what she must do, and she acted promptly. Next second she was gone from her study. Luckily, the corridor was empty. From Study 12 came sociable sounds, and she knew that Jose was still there.

Helen sped softly up the corridor, then ran downstairs. She found some scholars just coming in out of the grounds, but they did not pay any special attention to her. Hatless, just as if she were going for a last turn out of doors, she passed out of the school-house.

Overhead the chimes pealed, seeming to warn her of the lateness of the hour. Forty minutes at most was all she had, if she was to be present at call-over. And not to be present would mean, she knew quite well, a terrible row. Well, she must chance it, that was all!

All too rapidly the half-light seemed to be



From her hiding-place Helen Craig watched Andro and Jose. "I have found Muriel," she heard Andro say. "I know where she is." How Helen longed and yet dreaded the moment when he should disclose Muriel's hiding-place.

waning as Helen hurried along the shrubby paths and came at last to the boundary hedge.

Through a weak part of the privet hedge she scrambled, then rose up and hurried away on to the moor.

Suddenly she heard sounds of movement among some brambles. Thinking that it must be Muriel, Helen was on the verge of disclosing herself, but she hesitated, and it was well for her that she did so. The next moment she saw—Andro Garcia!

Andro!

Down upon hands and knees Helen Craig dropped, almost entirely surrounded by screening bushes. She held her breath, and wished that she could not hear her heart thumping so loudly. In her wild alarm, Helen felt that Andro must surely hear it, too!

She must have blundered right upon him, as he started to tear his way noisily through some brambles—just as she was silently creeping about in the deep cover.

In a few moments she could tell that he was not coming her way. He seemed to be moving in the direction of the school. She stayed still, listening. It was quite dark, and a deathly silence hung upon the moor. Every limpet had stopped singing; the wind was down! not a leafy twig stirred.

All at once she heard him pause, and then rattle a box of matches whilst taking out one. She imagined he was merely lighting a cigarette; but peering closely at him, she saw that he kept the match burning until it nearly scorched his fingers. It lasted, as quite a steady, bright little flame, for several seconds.

Then he lit another match and let it burn out in the same way, and then a third—although he had a lighted cigarette at his lips!

A signal!

That was what it meant. Helen felt sure of it, after he had moved on again. It was a pre-arranged signal between himself, spying round out here on the moor, and his sister spying in the school!

The chimes sounded again; but she could not think about the time now. After him! For it was equally certain that the signal meant a desire to report something to Jose. He had not found Muriel, but he had discovered valuable evidence.

As silently as possible Helen crept after Jose's brother. He went straight on towards the boundary hedge, and there he hung about.

As Helen could tell, lying low only a few paces away, all the Morcove girls had gone indoors now. The stars were coming out over the deserted games field. Lights were on everywhere indoors.

It was almost time for call-over.

Suddenly she heard Andro give an attracting "Wheest!" as if to inform someone, stealthily approaching, just where he was waiting. A few seconds later there came an answer.

"Andro!" came his sister's whisper.

"Jose," he whispered back—but Helen could just see and hear. "It is all right; I have got her."

"Found her?" jerked out his sister. "But where, then? What have you done about it, Andro?"

"At the little farm on the Barncombe Road; she is hiding there—"

"You mean, where one of the scholars lives?"

"Yes, Jose; but that scholar knows nothing. Muriel is hiding in a loft. The people of the place do not know—"

"But why, then—why have you not done something? You have left her there—"

"Sh! It is all right," he pacified his excited sister, in a guarded voice. "She means to pass the night there—of course. But we must lose no time. You must come away with me at once—"

"Yes!" Jose panted. "Ah, yes, yes! In a minute I am with you—"

"Come now this instant!" he urged. "And explain to the school afterwards, Jose. I wished to have you with me. Not that I am afraid of the girl—pooh! But—"

"I understand, Andro—and I will come this moment," Jose answered, whilst she started to make her way through the hedge.

Helen Craig did not remain to see or hear any more.

Withdrawing silently to a safe distance on hands and knees, she then rose up and took to her heels.

To the Delanes' cottage, whilst there was yet time!

Muriel was there—and Jose and Andro were even now going to swoop upon the girl! But she, Helen, would beat them yet! She would out-pace them!

She knew it meant being out of bounds after hours, but that fact did not delay her, nor did the thought of the penalties that she might bring upon herself.

Muriel must be saved, and this was the only way to do it!

Critical Moments!

WITH only that moment's start of the brother and sister, Helen Craig sped fast over the silent moor.

Never in her life had she run faster. It was as if she herself, not Muriel, were the hunted one. For the first minute or so she had been more cautious of her steps than really speedy; but after that, feeling herself to be safely ahead of those who were following on behind, she flew like the wind.

On and on! Tearing past wands of brambles that seemed to want to check her; stumbling in the darkness, because of the ground's unevenness; recovering herself—fairly sobbing for breath at last, and yet she could not slacken speed—on and on she raced.

And soon, in the darkness, she had the lights of the cottage windows before her. The Delanes were all at home, very likely gathered round their supper-table.

Strange, that one of her own best school chums was there in her home, and yet she could not rush in to her! All must be done in the next minute or two, unbeknown to Dolly and her people. For they, like Miss Somerfield herself, would be powerless to intervene, to prevent Muriel Garth from being taken back to the yacht.

Helen's wild onrush across the moor brought her to the Delanes' boundary fence. Over a five-barred gate she scrambled, into the old grassy orchard, where two cows were turned out for the night. Repressing her hard gaspings for breath and treading lightly now, she made a bee-line for the outbuildings.

Ten seconds later she came tiptoeing into the combined stable and cart-shed. In the darkness she made out a ladder, leading up to the loft. She mounted the rungs two at a time.

"Muriel! Muriel!" she panted softly, as her

head and shoulders rose through the opening in the loft's floor. "Muriel!"

Then she heard a rustling in some hay or straw. She switched on the electric torch that had been ready to hand all day.

Shining it low down, she suddenly had the white, scared face of Muriel Garth in the full glare of the light.

Muriel was still half-covered with straw.

"Come out of that—oh, quick, quick!" Helen panted. "Muriel, they know you are here! They are coming for you—"

"What!"
"Jose and Andro—they may be here at any moment! Go whilst you can; get away—anywhere, anywhere for the present!"

The hapless fugitive flung off the rest of the straw and rose to her feet.

Helen switched off the light.

"You can see your way, Muriel? Go on, then—never mind me! Here, catch hold—something to catch and this torch!"

The bit of wrapped-up cake and the torch changed hands in a twinkling. Then Muriel went to the opening in the floor and got on to the ladder.

"Sh—a last word!" whispered Helen, whilst urging the girl not to pause but to listen whilst descending. "Keep away from the school to-night. There are caves on the shore; but be careful—they may be searched."

"Yes," Muriel whispered back tensely. "Helen, any news of Miss Aylwin?"

"There's hardly been time. Now—good-bye, you poor soul! Oh, Muriel, how thankful I am I have been able to—"

But Helen did not finish the fervent whisper. It really did not seem safe to venture another syllable. Muriel ran down the ladder, darted into the open air—and was gone!

One great gasp of relief came from Helen, and then she herself went down the ladder. Gropping in the darkness, she found her way out of the shed. She listened.

Not a sound, save the faint murmur made by happy voices, yonder in the lamplit cottage.

So, then, the thing was done. Muriel had been warned just in time—saved!

Another respite for the poor hunted girl! Another night gained, and that might prove to be everything!



Quickly Helen Craig mounted the steps leading to the loft. She flashed on her torch and then she saw Muriel Garth half-covered in straw. "You must come out of there at once," she said. "Jose and Andro are on their way here now!"

To-morrow, there might come some communication from Miss Aylwin. If only the piteous appeal addressed to her, yesterday, should prove not to have been made in vain!

Back to the field gate leading out on to the moor Helen picked her way. She clambered over and started the hasty return to Morcove School running quickly, although she could not run as she had run before.

Suddenly, she received a surprise that checked her haste. From either side of the rough path a lad and a girl sprang out upon her.

"Stop!" they both cried fiercely in the darkness.

"Got you, Muriel!"

"You have not got Muriel!" Helen answered; and then she laughed at them defiantly. "You will not get her, either, I fancy. Good-night, the pair of you!"

"But wait! Ah!" Jose gnashed her teeth, at the same time stepping close enough to grasp Helen by the shoulder. "You!"

"That's right—and take your hand off me; you had better!"

Helen wrenched herself free and strode on. She was roused sufficiently to feel like hitting out with clenched hands if the brother and sister, in their fury at being baffled, came for her. But they seemed to realise that she had them beaten.

As she strode on she heard them starting to jabber at each other. A sharp run quickly put her beyond reach of the seething whispers; and then suddenly she realised that Jose was running after her, and that she was alone.

Jose did not call upon her to stop. Instead, the girl kept on running until she caught up with Helen. That was because the latter, simply not caring, dropped to a brisk walking pace.

"You are very clever!" sneered Jose. "Or you think you are!"

"I am very late," Helen stated, "and I would prefer not to have anything to say to you."

"So?" The rejoinder was followed by a little laugh—Jose's attempt to conceal her helpless rage. "All the same, I shall walk back with you! And perhaps you will not be so clever as to beat me—in the end!"

There fell between them, then, the prolonged

silence of mutual, implacable enmity. They got to the school's boundary hedge without speaking; they each got through the hedge and went on again, side by side, crossing the dewy games field—and still not a word passed.

Morcove's great school-house was all lit up. The mustered scholars were singing an evening hymn after prayers, and by that sound alone Helen knew how late she was. But she felt she did not care. Not that she was going to be able to offer any explanation. Impossible, at this stage. She had saved Muriel, though—she had saved her, for the time being, at least!

Suddenly, near the school's front porch, Jose repeated that nasty laugh of hers.

"Clever! But now, I think, you will see how I am not quite a fool!"

Helen still kept her own scornful silence. Both girls reached the porch, just as two mistresses were coming out by that great door, talking anxiously.

At sight of Helen and Jose, the headmistress and Miss Massingham—for it was them—stopped dead, emitting little cries of relief.

"Helen! So there you are—and you, Jose Garcia! But," Miss Somerfield said in the same breath, "what does this mean? Late!"

"Past call-over!" Miss Massingham remarked sternly. "The school dismissed to the dormitories!"

"Oh, if you please, but really, you must excuse us!" Jose cried out, with every sign of being on good terms with Helen. "It is that we have both been after Muriel Garth—is it not, Helen Craig?"

"What!" gasped both mistresses astoundedly. "Never!"

"But yes," Jose nodded and smiled. "She has been seen! Ask Helen Craig—for she saw Muriel Garth; I did not. I was just a moment too late!" Miss Somerfield gazed at Helen, on whose face the light shone from the porch.

"Helen, what is all this? You have seen Muriel Garth? Where?"

"Hiding in the outbuildings at Dolly Delane's," Helen was bound to answer, now that Jose had shown the line she meant to take. "But the Delanes knew nothing about that."

"Needless to say! But where is the girl now?"

"I can't tell you where Muriel Garth is, Miss Somerfield!"

"Helen! That sounds as if you did not do your best to—"

There was an interruption. From the hall of the school-house came the sudden ring of the telephone-bell—an urgent, insistent tr-r-ring, ring, ring!

The two mistresses instantly went indoors, and Helen and Jose followed. A parlourmaid had already run to the telephone, to ask who was wanted. It was with a leap of the heart that Helen saw the maid turn round next instant, to say:

"For you, miss!"

"For you, Helen?" cried the headmistress. "Now what does that mean? But go along and see."

If it should be Miss Aylwin, ringing up from the other end of the kingdom, having just received Muriel's desperate appeal!

Such was the agitating thought in Helen's brain as she took hold of the receiver.

"Yes," she spoke into it, with hard-won calmness. "This is Helen Craig speaking!"

"Telegram for you, miss!" spoke a masculine voice. "Will you let me read it to you, and the telegram itself will be delivered in the morning, with the first post."

"Very well—go on."

"Handed in at Edinburgh Central," the operator read aloud to the listening scholar; "from Aylwin." Can you hear me, miss?"

"Yes!"

From Deborah Aylwin!
"Coming Morcove—hope to arrive to-morrow—do all you can meantime—very serious—AYLWIN," the operator finished. "Got that, miss? Good-night, then."

Helen's hand was shaking as she replaced the receiver. Her brain was whirling.

Miss Aylwin, on her way to Morcove! And in the meantime: "Do all you can"—to save Muriel from discovery, of course. So it was Miss Aylwin's grave conviction, as it had been her own all along; if Muriel were "retaken" by the Garcios, even Miss Somerfield would be powerless to intervene on the strength of mere ill-founded suspicions, as they would be bound to appear to that lady.

But if Muriel could only remain in hiding for twelve hours longer—then not in vain would she have aided her in secret!

"With whom have you been speaking, Helen?" asked Miss Somerfield, breaking off her talk with Jose Garcia.

"A telegram from Miss Aylwin, please—"

"Miss Aylwin! Why, that's the young lady who had the care of Muriel!"

"Yes, Miss Somerfield; and—it's all right," faltered Helen. "She is travelling down from Edinburgh as soon as possible. She is coming to Morcove to—see about everything."

As the words were said, Helen was aware of Jose's sallow face assuming a deathly pallor.

"Coming to Morcove?" echoed Miss Somerfield. "That is all very well—although I think Miss Aylwin might have wired to me, not you, Helen! And although she is coming down to see into things, I cannot wait for her. Jose Garcia has very rightly suggested that Muriel must be found to-night, and now I am going to ring up—the police!"

"The police?" Helen echoed, hardly being able to believe that she had heard aright. "But is that necessary, Miss Somerfield? I mean—"

Helen broke off in some confusion.

"Really, Helen"—Miss Somerfield looked at her scholar curiously—"I don't wish you to tell me what you think is best. I think the police had certainly better be called in."

She stepped to the telephone.

"You cannot go to bed yet, Helen. They may want to question you. Hallo, hallo!" she spoke into the instrument. "Are you there, Barncombe?"

And next moment Helen, still there with smiling Jose, heard with a sinking heart Miss Somerfield's urgent call:

"Put me through, please, to the superintendent of the police!"

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

What will happen if the police arrive? Helen has got herself into a very awkward position, and it looks as though Jose will outwit her even now. Be sure not to miss next week's long Morcove tale, entitled "Kept Secret By the Studies." Order your SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN at once!