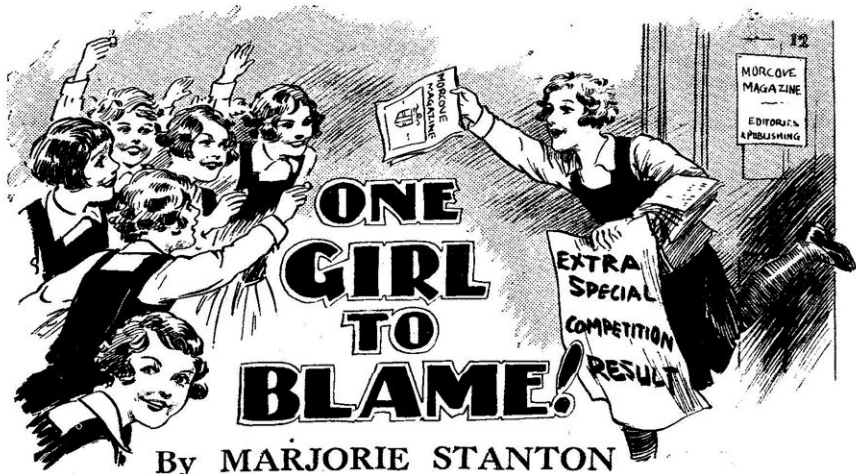


SCHOOL, DESERT AND MYSTERY STORIES WITHIN!

The SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN 2^d



Another exciting, long, and ENTIRELY COMPLETE school tale of Betty & Co.



By MARJORIE STANTON

Open To All.

MISS EVERARD, Fourth Form-mistress at Morcove School, left her desk to take a saunter up one class-room aisle and down another whilst her scholars worked.

In a few minutes the juniors would receive the welcome midday dismissal. Meantime, pens were racing.

There was nothing of the "pouncer" about the Form's adored mistress. Miss Everard would often go the whole round of the room without causing one girlish face to look up, troubled at a fault-finding word.

So it was now. Not until she came by the desk of Betty Barton, Form captain, did Miss Everard speak.

"Oh, Betty—one second!"

"Yes, Miss Everard?"

"When do you go to press with the next number of the 'Morcove Magazine'?"

"Friday of this week."

"I see. And if I offered a small prize for a certain kind of contribution—could you announce the winning entry in the next number?"

"Oh, rather! I'd get it in next Friday's issue, Miss Everard. That is, if you limit the length."

The Form-mistress laughed.

"I am not going to ask the girls to send in serials!" she assured the Form captain. "Just an anecdote on certain special lines."

"Fine!" Betty was commenting, when a much louder word of approbation came from Naomer Nakara, Morcove's royal scholar, who was sitting two desks away.

"Gorjus, yes! Bekas —"

"Naomer, go on with your work!"

"Wiz ze greatest of ze

pleasure," responded the Imp gaily. "Nearly twelve," she whispered to her desk-mate, Paula Creel. "So shift up ze bit, Paula, and let me get on with my work."

"Weally, Naomer, I have given you all the woom I—"

"Stop talking!"

Miss Everard was back at her place in front of the whole class now, and it induced scholars to do their best to be ready for "Pens down," when they realised that she herself was considerably watching the clock. Just like sporting Miss Everard, not to want to keep them a moment after midday!

"Pens down! Monitresses, collect books. And now, girls, before you go, I want to make a little announcement."

There was a rustle of excitement.

"I have just been saying to Betty Barton I would like to offer a small prize in connection with a competition in the 'Morcove Magazine.' I hope it will appeal to you all, and that the eddress will be swamped with entries!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shan't mind," declared Betty heartily.

"No, bekas I shall help her to—"

"To see that the prize goes to Study 12!" came the sneer from Cora Grandways.

The Form-mistress frowned.

"Now, Cora, we don't want any of that! If it was a joke, it was in very bad taste. I offer," resumed Miss Everard, "a prize for the best anecdote which the

sender-in can vouch for as being true, with a good moral. The decision of the eddress to be final, and all entries to be received by— When shall we say, Betty?"

"Not later than seven, to-morrow evening?"

Tremendous excitement at Morcove School! Everybody was eagerly awaiting the publication of the Morcove Magazine, containing the prize-winning entry in a competition! Only Lorna White in the Fourth Form was not excited—and she was looking forward to the great day with—DREAD!

"Bekas—"

"Naomer," said Miss Everard, "if you interrupt again— Why must you always—"

"Bekas I am ze assistant edjtitress!"

"Oh, indeed! I thought Polly Linton was that."

"So she is," responded Betty, with a smile for her best of chums, the madcap of Morcove. "Naomer only makes the tea on press day!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Anyhow," smiled Miss Everard, when the peals of laughter had subsided, "we must not be too hard on the editress, even if she does have your valuable assistance, Naomer. No entry to exceed three hundred words. Now, do remember that, girls. As for the prize, I will make it one guinea!"

"Oh!" The Form gasped its mingled surprise and delight. "Ooo!"

The girls had thought that the prize would be, at best, something like a gift book; well worth competing for, of course, but not the same as a cash prize.

"That is all, I think," wound up the Form-mistress. "Should any questions arise, Betty will gladly settle them for you, I'm sure. And so, now—dismiss!"

"Cheers!" cried Polly Linton, first to bound to her feet. "Cheers for Miss Everard for being such a sport!"

"Hear, hear!" chimed in the captain. "Hip, hip—"

"Hurrah!"

"Bekas zat guinea is mine already, so out of ze way, Paula!" shrieked Naomer, pushing past that elegant and long-suffering chum. "Queck, let me get ze jerk on! Ooo, I know how to write anikdotes! I have millions!"

Hearing this, Miss Everard called out loudly, above all the hubbub of the dispersing class:

"No girl to send in more than one entry, by the way."

She stood smiling them all upon their way out of the class-room, then picked up a few books of her own and departed, to come upon some of the girls again in the centre hall. There juniors were standing about in twos and threes, eagerly discussing the competition.

After Miss Everard had gone by, handsome Cora Grandways made one of her flippant remarks to her boon companion, Hetty Curzon.

"I shall send in a story about you, Hetty."

"You may," said that girl sweetly. "But I don't know where the moral will come in."

"Oh, I'll find one," sniggered Cora. "Moral—don't have a friend like Cora Grandways!"

The speaker looked round to see who might be feeling amused by this "joke." Far from being amused, however, those within carshot were indifferent. Katie Murray, for example, simply took no notice, although she and her study-mate, Lorna White, were standing quite close to the flippant pair.

"We'll get a game now, Lorna," suggested Katie, drawing her chum on to the outer door. "Evening will be the time to think about that competition. But wasn't it fine of Miss Everard to offer the prize?"

Lorna White nodded.

"She is an awfully nice Form-mistress," was her earnest comment. "They are not like that at all schools, I'm sure."

Perhaps Lorna White was entitled to speak with a sense of experience, for Morcove had not been her only school. She had entered Morcove at the

start of the current term, to settle down quite happily at once; but, being an unassuming, reticent girl, she had become of no importance in the Form. Amongst her schoolmates she was considered to be a nice girl, but one who was never likely to be outstanding in the Form.

"Shall you go in for it, Lorna?"

"The competition? Oh, I think so! Not that I shall get the prize," she added, with a laugh.

"Why shouldn't you get Miss Everard's prize?" Katie rallied her unassuming chum. "You ought to have heaps of anecdotes to draw upon about your other school. That's what I shall do: go outside Morcove for my anecdote! I've already thought of one," Katie added, with a musing look. "It's about a girl who was at another school—and it must have been a weird school, the way they treated her!"

"How do you mean?" asked Lorna.

"Oh—rotten!"

It became Lorna's turn, as the pair of them sauntered out to the games field, to look deeply reflective.

"I can see your entry standing a chance of the prize, Katie, if it has, for its moral, something about fair play. Betty Barton is so strong on fair play, isn't she?"

Katie nodded.

"I do hope so; but I shan't bring in the words, 'fair play'—too trite. I'll have to make the moral something snappy"—with a laugh.

"'Fair play is a jewel'—you'd call that trite?" said Lorna, smiling aside at her companion. "Yet there are lots of people in the world who never seem to have heard the saying."

"Think so?"

"I'm sure of it!"

And Lorna, as she answered, sighed as if this time she was speaking from an experience that had been bitter.

Running the "Morcove Mag."

"QUESTION is," said Betty Barton, "what exactly is an anecdote? I shall want to know. Where's the dictionary?"

"Naomer had it last."

"No, bekas—"

"Naomer, find the dic.!" stormed Polly. "It'll be a nice thing if that is missing on press day! Enough misprints slip through as it is."

"I am glad you call them misprints," smiled the editress of the "Morcove Magazine." "I should hate to say it was some of our bad spelling."

It was that free-and-easy half-hour in Study 12 known as "after tea." The famous rendezvous, in addition to its four rightful tenants, held Madge Minden, Pam Willoughby, and one or two more members of the coterie.

These girls would be going away to their own studies presently. Meantime, the "Great Literary Contest," as it had been dubbed by the madcap, could not be kept out of the chatter.

"Here's ze jolly old dishunnary—in ze corner cupboard! Which proves I didn't have him!"

"I rather think it does," said Polly, at the same time taking the battered tome from Naomer.

"Look up 'anecdote,' Polly," asked Betty, the editress. "Under 'a,' in case you don't know."

"I'm finding it," responded the madcap, and she twitched over the pages. "Angel—a girl of the name of Polly Linton; the perfect scholar. Ass—a species of schoolgirl only found at Morcove; see Naomer."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What ze diggings!"

"Here we are! 'Anecdote'!" shouted the madcap, and now she quoted correctly: "a relation of an isolated fact or incident of a biographic nature."

"Good!" said Betty.

"Now we know!"

"Pwesomebly, theahfore," drawled Paula, tidying her hair as she lolled in the best armchair, "that wules out autobiogwaphy. Wather a pity, what?"

"Yes, bekas—"

"I have been wecalling sundry cewious happenings to me pewsionally—"

"Oh, Paula, don't begin—"

"No, bekas—"

"I may as well say at once," Betty interposed grimly, "no member of the editorial staff is eligible for the competition."

"What!" howled sub-editress Polly.

"What ze diggings! Bekas—"

"Can I resign my post, Betty?" asked the madcap hastily. "As from this evening, please. I would like to win that guinea."

"Ah, bah, eet not fair that we are not able to go in for it! Bekas look at the gorgus spread the winner could—"

"Yes, I know," grinned Betty. "And you girls know very well what Cora is liable to say: that the editress lets the staff reads the entries and give themselves the prize. Never mind that guinea; think of the glory, Polly."

"Think of what?" inquired the madcap in a hard-of-hearing manner.

"The glory!"

"I thought you said the worry."

"A lot of worrying you do on press day!" cried Naomer scornfully. "What about me? Do I ever get a decent tea on press day?"

"That," said Polly, "is merely because I am too busy to lay it for you."

"No, bekas—"

"Don't argue!" And the madcap seized a ruler. "I can tell you this: next press day you'll not be allowed in!"

"Won't I? He is as much my study as he is yours!"

Polly ended the argument by flinging the dictionary—more or less playfully—at the Imp, who dodged it. Paula, still arranging her side hair, suddenly jumped up as the dictionary smote her by mistake.

"Wow!"

"Yes, well," said Pam, rising, "I think it's time some of us went."

"Wait ze bit!" yelled Naomer, now that Pam and the others were drifting to the door. "Bekas—a gorgus idea, Pam—you write an anecdote about me; and zen, eef you win, we can share him!"



"I want to see the Editress," said Cora Grandways rudely. "She is very busy, and can only be seen by appointment!"

Polly answered sweetly.

Although this bright idea was received with hilarity, that did not deter Naomer from enlarging upon it.

"You can say: 'Once upon a time there was a girl who was very good at school, and her name was Naomer—'"

"That's a fable, not an anecdote," ruled Betty.

There was an interruption. Open flew the door, to let somebody spin a foolscap envelope towards the study table. It was Ella Elgood, with the remark:

"My entry for the comp., Betty."

"Oh, right-ho! Thanks, Ella."

"Number one," commented Helen Craig. "And here comes number two."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

For another competitor had suddenly appeared with a sealed foolscap envelope.

"My entry for the comp., Betty."

"Right-ho, Elsie Ashby!"

Those who did not belong to Study 12 went out at last, leaving Betty busy finding a receptacle for all the entries that were likely to flow in. It meant clearing out a table drawer, and while Betty did this, Polly and Naomer cleared away the tea-things. As for Paula, she remained—purely ornamental.

A tap at the door.

"Come in!"

"Er—Betty. My entry for the—"

"Oh, thanks; leave it there, will you, Grace Garfield?"

"Do we have to wait until the next issue comes out before we know the result, Betty?"
 "Of course! And copies," jested Betty, "will be double price next issue!"

Grace Garfield, turning back into the passage, found Pat Lawrence coming to the study doorway.

"Betty, mine and Etta's entries for the competition."

"Oh, thanks; stick 'em down!"

"My gacious," palpitated Paula from the arm-chair. "I can see you having a stenuous time, Betty dear. Enough to precipitate a newwous bweakdown; yes, wather!"

"We'll manage," smiled the captain. "It's going to be great fun! Hallo, here's another!"

This time it was Diana Forbes, with her usual air of being rather more important than other girls.

"Here's my entry, Betty. Take care of it."

"Your entry will be duly considered with the rest after the closing date," Betty formally remarked. "Will you close the door on leaving?"

"Some of them have lost no time!" came Polly's comment. "I do wonder who will get the prize."

"I tell you what," exclaimed Betty; "with this competition to handle just before next press day, we had better get forward with some of the other stuff for the issue. You and I, Polly—we have half an hour now—"

"What about me?" put in Naomer.

"There's lots you can do," said the sub-editress sweetly. "Fresh ink in all the inkpots; fresh blotting-paper; dust the editorial chair—oh, and before you do that, Naomer, you might run down to the class-room and get hold of a few blue pencils!"

"Anyzing else?"

"Let me see. Yes. Wash your hands, they're too grubby for editorial work. Hem!"

At this instant someone delivered a mock-polite knock at the door very heavily. Then Cora Grandways sauntered in.

"Is this the editorial office of the 'Morovee Magazine'? I would like to see the editress."

"She is very busy at present," said Polly sweetly. "Can only be seen by appointment."

"Oh, funny!"

"Funny yourself! What do you want, anyhow?"

"Yes, clear out, please, Cora," requested Betty, handling a sheaf of contributions to next week's issue. "I really am very busy."

"But I want to ask a few questions about the competition. Are those connected with the mag. allowed to send in entries?"

"They are not," stated the editress flatly. "They would not be allowed to enter, even if they wanted to—and they have more sense of fair play than to do that."

"Anyhow," scowled Cora, "I do think Miss Everard herself should have been the judge."

"You think so; Miss Everard herself doesn't."

"I've a good mind not to enter—"

"Well, don't!"

This left Cora looking blacker than ever at Betty.

"Very wonderful, aren't you, Betty? Sitting there as if you were some—"

"Oh, outside!" stamped Polly, going towards the jealous Cora. "Scout, Cora! If not—"

"You'll put me out, will you? Pooh!" sneered

Cora; but in spite of her affected contempt, she stalked away, banging the door behind her.

Another tap at the door.

"Betty, my entry for the competition," smiled Elsie Drew, handing in a bulky manuscript in its envelope.

The editress weighed it upon her hand.

"Three hundred words, Elsie?"

"Well—about that. I didn't count them."

"Feels like three thousand! All right, leave it with me."

And so another gummed-up envelope went into the drawer, after which Betty went on with ordinary editorial duties.

With Naomer gone from the study, questing the class-room inkcan, blotting paper and fresh blue pencils, all was quiet on the editorial front. Presently Betty passed an accepted contribution to Polly, for her to sub-edit it.

"Not a bad little article, that, Polly," said Betty, passing it across. "Girls Will Gossip! I like the witty way Elsie Ashby has handled it. But you must touch up her spelling."

Polly could do that all right—without any need for consulting the dictionary. She was fond of speaking of the "dic." as being indispensable. As a fact, she was endowed with considerable literary talent, for she was the author of several successful Morovee plays, a "revue" or two, and some very clever monologues.

Suddenly Betty sighed over an MS. that she would have to reject. She sighed, just as Naomer came in with the ink, the blotting-paper and the pencils.

"Naomer, dear, about your contribution—"

"Ooo! Hooray! He is going in? Gorjus!"

"I'm sorry, Naomer—"

"What?"

And the dusky one, as joy changed to disappointment, dropped the inkcan.

"There you go!" cried Polly, jumping up. "All over the carpet!"

"Bekas—what ze diggings; what's wrong with what I sent in?" demanded Naomer, leaving the inkcan on the carpet, to come and argue with the editress. "He was a jolly good pome—wasn't he, Paula? You say, queek!"

"Er—as wegawds your poetry, Naomah, you will remember that I said there could be no hawm in twying it on Betty. Er—"

"No harm?" gasped Polly, who had seized the rejected poem and given it a glance. "Why, it might have given Betty sleepless nights to read such stuff as this."

"No, bekas—"

"You see to that spilled ink!" commanded the madcap. "Poetry! Enough to kill the paper stone dead!"

"All right, give it back to me, and I send him to ze 'Barncombe Weekly.' Then you will see!"

Dodging Naomer, the madcap began to read aloud from the very blotty MS.:

"The rane is falling gently,

We can't go out to-day;

But we'll have tea (presently)

And then be ever so gay!

Bekas—"

"Take it away!" Polly broke off with a groan.

"Ah, bah! I don't care, any old how!" said Naomer, tearing up the poem. "Bekas I only wrote him in class! But eef you don't like pomes, what do you like?" she demanded of the editress. "What about an article on physicackle jerks?"

"Meantime—that ink!" said Polly, unheeding.

In the end, and with the enforced assistance of long-suffering Paula, Naomer mopped up the lake of ink, using most of the new blotting-paper for the purpose.

How Betty and Polly managed to do any serious work whilst the other tenants of the study were so noisily engaged was a mystery.

"And now, prep.," said Betty, shuffling all the literary efforts together at last, to put them away in the drawer. "Hallo, what's this?"

For Naomer, unnoticed, had busied herself at the corner cupboard in the last minute or so. Now she was at Betty's elbow, with a tray bearing brimming glasses and cut cake.

"A refresher for ze editress," said Naomer. "Bekas you have earned him, Betty!"

"She has," agreed Polly grimly, on the other side of the table. "Reading such stuff as yours. For goodness' sake pass me a lemonade, Naomer. I think I deserve it!"

Katie Will Compete.

IN various other studies there were a good many Fourth Form girls in the throes of literary composition. And one such girl was Katie Murray.

Watching her, the co-tenant of Katie's study was feeling a certain belief greatly strengthened. Katie, as likely as not, would be the winner!

Ever since midday, as Lorna White realised, Katie Murray had been composing her entry in her mind. Unlike some of the other girls, Katie had not flown to pen and paper as soon as school was over for the day.

During tea Katie had not chatted quite so freely as usual. Lorna had seen in her study-mate chum a girl who was putting her very best into her work.

"Three hundred words," sighed Katie, suddenly resting her pen. "Oh, dear, I'm too long!"

"What a shame! You'll have to cut it," said Lorna, across the study table.

"You ought to be making a start on your own entry, Lorna! You are going to send in an attempt?" Katie asked, looking up.

"Oh, I—I—"

"But you must! Do let the guinea come to this study, one way or another!" laughed Katie. "Surely you are not hard up for an anecdote. I should have thought that you, having been at another school before you came here, would have had heaps."

"I—I must think out something," Lorna said, rather flusteredly; and then her study-mate looked at her steadily, perhaps noticing her sudden quietness.

"Lorna."

"Yes, Katie?"

This was after a lengthy pause.

"Weren't you happy at that other school, that you never talk about it? You haven't you know, the least thing about it since you came to Morcove! Other girls have noticed it, too."

"No, well, I—I really don't want to talk about that other school—"

"Yet it was a good one, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes, it was—big and well known, and all that," Lorna nodded uncomfortably. "But it was not Morcove, Katie."

"In what way was it different?"

"Oh, I'm happy here! I was not happy at—the other school; at least, not in the end."

"Well, I'm surprised," said Katie blandly. "It's usually a girl's own fault if she is not happy at school, and I should have thought that you would have been all right."

"That's nice of you," the other girl said rather faintly; and then she got up in an ill-at-ease manner. "May I see what you have written, Katie? Or don't you care to—"

"Would you just look at this sort of draft? For that's all it is," disclaimed Katie, blushing handing over the MS. "I'd be so glad to have your opinion."

Then, with the very human dislike of standing by whilst having it criticised, she quitted the study.



Sorting through the entries for the competition, Lorna White soon found her study-mate's effort. It must never be published, she resolved; her whole future at Morcove depended on that.

Left to herself, it was with a smile of complete goodwill that Lorna began to read the other's work. In a moment, however, that kindly smile was banished.

As if the very first lines of the anecdote had given Lorna a violent shock, she was now deathly pale, hard-eyed, and visibly trembling.

Then she went on reading, standing nearer the light that was mostly shed upon the study table. Not again did she break off, but whilst reading on to the very end she was breathing fast, wincing often, like one who is being hurt.

She lay the manuscript down at last, having read it all and having seen in it a story from her own past!

It was indeed so. Oh, if only there had been room for doubt! But unmistakably this study-mate of hers at Morcove had got hold of an anecdote dealing with her life at that other school. The school where she had ended up so unhappily; the school where other scholars had as good as hounded her out of their midst!

Lorna dropped down into a chair, still breathing jerkily, her face remaining marble white. No look of bitter anger came into her eyes as she looked again at the manuscript lying there on the table. She knew that Katie had acted quite innocently and with the most innocent of motives.

Quite unwittingly had that girl penned this story; even so—would its publication bring no harm? Lorna was asking herself that question now, and although she was no coward, although she knew that Morcove was different from that other school, she was full of dread.

Supposing, after publication, the identity of the girl in that true anecdote became known! The moral of it, as stressed by Katie, was that nothing can be crueller than the hitting of others when they are down.

Morcove, on the whole, was fairly safe from doing such a thing as that. Lorna had seen, by now, what a fine spirit prevailed at this, her new school. But here and there, perhaps, a girl who was different; a girl who would regard it as a kind of "stunt" to enjoy at her expense.

"Well?"

Katie was whisking back into the room, all smiles.

"Say what you think of it, Lorna! Don't let me send in a dud! Does it stand a chance, do you think?"

"It's—just the thing, Katie." The speaker was struck with the dullness of her own voice, and she got up agitatedly, the colour tiding back into her cheeks, so ashamed she felt of appearing to condemn the thing by faint praise.

"I mean, Katie, it seems to me just perfect; the very thing that is wanted. It will appeal to Betty. It goes straight home, somehow."

Katie drew the MS. towards her.

"It is good of you to say that, Lorna. Frankly, I am feeling rather hopeful about it. After all, surely something like this stands out from ordinary stupid little anecdotes, supposed to be funny? This really is true—you see, I have vouched for it. And don't you feel sorry for the girl to whom it happened?"

"I do, Katie."

"So do I. I never knew her. As it says here, the story was told to me by another girl, but that doesn't make the story doubtful. The girl confessed to having been the ringleader of the set that made this girl's life so unbearable."

Katie was putting the draft MS. away now, for the evening.

"I shall revise it first thing to-morrow, Lorna, then copy it out and send it in—exactly three hundred words. By the way, I have not given the real name of the school, of course—"

"No, I noticed that."

"I suppose it's all right. Oh, it must be!" Katie cleared up her own doubt. "And I've given fictitious names. After all, the girl who suffered so much at that school is still somewhere in the world, Lorna."

"Yes."

"Not that I think I have done her any harm by telling the story, do you? I've taken her side, haven't I?"

"Yes, Katie; oh, yes. The only thing is—"

"Well, what?"

"Perhaps—you never know—perhaps some girls, reading that story, might—might take a different view from yours."

"You think so?" Katie exclaimed, with some dismay. "Well, of course, there are girls—even at Morcove. But then, it's for them I've written the story, pointing the moral. Lorna"—after a pause, and with increasing uneasiness—"do you think I ought not to send in the story?"

"You want it to do good, Katie; so it will. But if I were you— Oh, don't ask me, Katie!"

"But I do ask you! Candidly, now?"

"It may do harm, Katie—"

"Then I won't send it in, that's all. I'll tear it up," cried Katie, tugging open the table drawer to take out the draft MS.

Then she paused.

"Oh, but I don't know! How can it do harm, Lorna? No one here knows the girl! And I do think there's a good moral, which is what has been asked for. Oh"—Katie shrugged and laughed—"I'll send it in. After all, it may never be published."

And she closed the drawer, leaving the draft still there.

"I rely on the fictitious name, Lorna. You see, I never knew the girl's name, so I racked my brains to think of one that would be safe, and you saw the one I hit upon—'Laura Black.' I must have been thinking of your name—Lorna White," Katie smiled. "But you don't mind, do you?"

"Oh, no, how could I?"

There the talk ended. Both girls began upon some schoolwork that had to be done before the morning, and whilst they were thus occupied, some music and singing came from downstairs.

It sounded like Madge Minden's rare touch upon the music-room piano. If so, she was accompanying Ethel Courtney, Morcove's head girl, in an old, familiar song:

"I shot an arrow into the air;

It fell to earth—I know not where."

Lorna knew the words so well, but never until to-night had she felt so strangely moved by them. Was her study-mate firing an arrow into the air by sending in that entry for the magazine contest? Not knowing where the arrow might lodge!

Into the silent study floated the music, and the rich contralto of the singer:

"Long, long afterward, in an oak,

I found the arrow—still unbroke. . . ."

Katie glanced up from her work suddenly, looking across at her study-mate quizzically.

"What's the matter, Lorna?"
 "I don't know, Katie. But somehow—oh, I can't work to-night."

And Lorna, leaving her seat at the table, went to an armchair and became lost in thought.

Can She Save Herself?

A HALF-HOUR'S brisk hockey practice after school next morning, and the editress of the "Morcove Magazine" was ready to get to work upstairs.

So, too, was Polly.

They arrived at Study 12 to find more entries for the prize competition lying upon the table. All were in envelopes, and some envelopes bore the competitors' names. Others left Betty to guess, for the present, the source of origin. She was not going to open any, promptly putting all in the table drawer.

"There must be one for nearly every girl in the Form, Polly—barring the editorial staff, of course!"

"What about a rise in my pay?" inquired the trusty assistant of the Form's official organ.

"Nothing doing, I'm afraid," sighed the editress. "The only thing I can promise you, Polly, is a bust in the entrance hall some day, next to mine."

"Are you talking about a busto?" cried Naomer, whisking in at this moment. "Bekas that means a feed!"

"Hallo, Naomer!" Betty greeted the dusky one. "Got an article this time?"

"Yes, bekas—here he is! I did him in ze jolly old class all right," exulted her Majesty, producing a very screwed-up MS.

It proved, when unfolded by Betty, to consist of one page torn from the back end of an exercise-book. The title of the article, with sub-headings, was:

"HOW TO REJUICE!"

By Naomer Nakara.

Don't miss this speshul article by the only queen at the present at Morcove School!

It tells you how to KEEP FEET without losing the APPERTITE!

Speshully written for the 'Morcove Magazine' by Naomer Nakara!"

"Give it half a page, Polly, in the next," decreed the editress, tossing the MS. to her assistant.

"What! Going to publish this, Betty?"

"Must give the readers something comic—"

"Comic!" yelled Naomer. "Queek, give him back to me, bekas I am deesgusted now! Comic!"

"All right, take it back," grinned Betty. "Send it to the 'Barncombe Weekly.' But you won't get it nicely illustrated by Tess Trelawney in that case."

Thereupon Naomer left the MS. in the hands of Polly, who took it to Tess.

"Here, Tess, can you do a comic strip in time for Friday?"

"Leave it with me," mumbled Tess, terse as ever.

By her tone, any stranger would have imagined that the staff-artist of the "Morcove Magazine" was an unwilling worker. Really, she was a most reliable colleague, good for a lightning sketch at any time.

Polly returned to Study 12 to find Katie

Murray engaging the editress' attention for a moment.

"All right, Katie; it will be considered along with the rest." Betty was saying monotonously.

"Thanks! Heaps of other entries, I suppose?"

"Oh, heaps!"

"I'm so glad. Well, I mustn't hinder you all—"

"No, bekas—"

"Katie," said the madcap, "you don't happen to know anyone who wants a pet? We're wanting to find a good home for Naomer, if we can."

Katie went away, laughing.

"Well, my entry's gone in, Lorna!" she gaily remarked to that study-mate, encountering her in the corridor. "And the next I shall hear, I expect, it will have gone into the waste-paper basket. Heaps of other entries!"

"I dare say," Lorna responded, with a faint smile. "Still, your entry stands as good a chance as any, I'm sure."

"And you are not cross with me for making use of that anecdote?" pleaded Katie. "You did rather advise me to give it a miss, didn't you? I asked your advice, and then I didn't take it!"

"Betty hasn't looked at it yet, Katie, I suppose?"

"Oh, no! She is keeping them all, unopened, until after the closing time for the competition—seven, this evening. I saw her put my entry with all the rest, in a drawer of her table. Betty will have a job reading them, and then having to decide."

Lorna nodded, but offered no remark to keep the conversation going. She passed into the study; but Katie, who had not been out of doors since "break," now scooted away to get some fresh air before dinner.

Closing the study door, Lorna assumed a very thoughtful attitude.

So Katie's entry had gone in. A few hours from now and it would be opened to be judged. Would it win the prize, thereby obtaining publication in the next issue of the magazine?

To-day, Lorna's belief that it would be so was stronger than ever. Again this morning she had seen how Katie was sparing no efforts to pull off that prize. On the other hand, there had been time to get to know how slap-dash some of the other girls had been.

A serious rival to an effort as good as Katie's might have been one sent in by Polly—that born author. But Polly, as a member of the editorial staff, had not competed.

There was a strong presentiment in Lorna's mind of how things would go. Her study-mate's entry might be accorded the prize, and so that true story would appear in the magazine—given a special display, and meeting with special attention throughout the school on account of its being the winning story!

And that story was one drawn from her—Lorna's—own life!

Only let Morcove's curiosity be piqued by what the winning entry related, and then—to what might curiosity lead? How great a disaster for her if ever it should become known at this school that she was the girl who had been hounded out of that other!

A miserable smile flickered across Lorna's face. She could feel so little faith in the moral of the story achieving what her study-mate expected. Girls with a nasty spirit were influenced as easily as that.

Let a girl like Cora Grandways get hold of the

inner history of the story contained in that true story, and then it would go hard with the girl who had been hounded out of Chelverdale. It might even go as hard with her at Morcove as it had at that other school!

For the dreadful aspect of the matter was that even nice-minded girls, although not wishing to hit anyone who was down, would yet feel that "Lorna White" should never have come to Morcove.

After all, girls did not need to be snobs to feel that a convict's daughter was hardly a desirable fellow-scholar. And she—Lorna—was a convict's daughter!

Her own father, innocent as he was, he had gone to prison six months ago. And it would be years, four long years at least, even with a remission for good conduct, before he was free again.

Penal servitude!

"And I hope," the judge had said, when passing sentence, "it will be an example to others that there must be honesty in business, not roguery and fraud."

Lorna thought of the care that her study-mate had taken, not to do any harm by writing that true anecdote, but only good. Katie had been at pains to get fictitious names. She had called the central figure in the story "Laura Black."

"And the name I am passing under at Morcove is Lorna White!" mused the convict's daughter. "Strange—yet not so strange, after all, I suppose. But if Katie knew—if only she knew that even by the choice of a fictitious name she has so greatly increased the risk!"

Lorna's expression softened suddenly. It was such a relief to her to realise that the whole thing had come about unwittingly, so far as Katie was concerned. If that girl knew—

Why not tell her, then?

"No," Lorna pondered. "I would rather the whole school knew than only my study-mate. But I am quite sure of this: if Katie had the least inkling, she would withdraw her entry whilst there's still time. She would be horrified at the risk it meant for me."

From this it was a sudden leap of Lorna's mind to the thought: why not take steps, then, herself to prevent publication of Katie's entry?

The idea took firm hold of her, making her tremble with excitement.

Since the writer of the anecdote herself would have been anxious to withdraw the entry had she known what harm it might do, was not this one way out? Lorna felt sure that it was. Katie herself, if she knew, would never wish to see the story in print. That guinea prize—a girl like Katie would rather miss a thousand guineas than win them at the expense of another girl's whole future.

"My future; I must think of that," Lorna said to herself in her hard-driven state. "When mother has done so much, striven so hard to get me restarted. As if it is not enough that dad's going to prison for another man's crime, nearly breaking mother's heart! Is there to be this as well? 'Laura Black' found out to be 'Lorna White'! And it will be so; oh, something tell me it will become known if ever that story gets into print!"

Suddenly the gong for dinner took Lorna by surprise. She had not noticed the flight of time whilst racked with such tormenting thoughts.

Other girls instantly left their studies to go chasing one another down the stairs. But she—

she must wait a minute or so. A glance at herself in the glass was showing her how white and worried she looked.

"Din—ner!" Naomer was shrilling, as she pranced up the corridor, doubtless propelling elegant Paula Creel at headlong speed.

Then, with rather less skittishness, other girls surged by Lorna's closed study door. She heard Betty in talk with Polly.

"Have to put in some hard work this evening, Polly!"

Then, last of all, there went Cora Grandways and Hetty Curzon, sippant as ever.

"Well, I'm sorry you don't think my entry will get the prize, Hetty."

"I'm perfectly sure it won't! It may get you heavily 'lined' if it's seen by one of the mistresses!"

"Pooh—just as if!"

That pair—if Morcove held no more than those two nasty-natured girls, did it not mean a big enough menace?

"I remember Chelverdale—how it started," Lorna said to herself bitterly. "Simply by one nasty girl getting to know, and telling another."

Steps and voices died away, and now all was quiet in this upper part of the great schoolhouse. Lorna pulled herself together, opened the door to go downstairs—and then stopped.

Finding herself quite alone in the long corridor, she fell into a fresh tremble of excitement.

If she was to carry out that desperate idea which had occurred to her—was not this the very moment for doing so? Everyone else gone downstairs! The captain's study deserted!

A moment Lorna hesitated, then she made a quick and silent run to Study 12. Guessing which drawer in the table held the entries, she pulled it open, and there they were—a score or so of envelopes, as yet unopened.

Sorting them through, Lorna soon found the one that held her study-mate's entry. She took it out of the batch, and, folding it up, hastily crammed it into the pocket of her tunic.

Done!

The deed was done, yes; and now she could slip out into the corridor, to hurry downstairs and mingle with her schoolmates, trying to appear as if she felt as care-free as any of them—she, the daughter of a convict!

Getting Busy!

BUMP, thump!

"Good gracious—"

"Open the door, Paula!"

"Wight-ho, Polly dear!"

The reason why madcap Polly had not burst into Study 12 as usual was apparent when Paula, having risen elegantly from an armchair, admitted her chum.

Polly came staggering in with a huge, old-fashioned make of typewriter, borrowed from the bursar's office.

Thump! She finally landed the weight upon the study table. Then Polly gave a breathless "Phew!"

"So sorry to disturb you, Paula darling! Go on with your nap!"

"Er—as wegwads naps, Polly dear, you are under a misappwe— Owp! Gow!" broke off the beloved duffer, finding herself run into at the back—by a bit of machinery, as it proved.

"Bekas you should not get in ze way!" cried Naomer, who had followed Polly in with the school's up-to-date copying press.

Study 12, in addition to being the editorial office of the "Morcove Magazine," was also the printing works and publishing department of that important organ. Press day always found Naomer turning the handle of the copying press, with Polly superintending.

"Now, go away," Polly requested Naomer, after the machine had been safely stood aside for the time being. "We don't go to press until to-morrow, and until then—silence is requested!"

"Can't I help you work ze typewriter?"

"You can not!"

So the Imp had to bottle up her abounding energies, merely standing by to watch Polly carry out some of the highly technical work of "make-up."

"Hallo, you at it?" cried Betty, bustling in just as the school chimes rang out. "Good! Well, that's seven striking, so now the competition is closed."

"Hooray, bekas —"

"Shoo!"

Polly was tapping out a title, copied from an accepted MS. lying beside the machine. She hit two keys together, and they stuck, and she said:

"There, that's your fault, Naomer!"

"Paula," said the editress blandly, "I wish you would take care of Naomer."

"Er — as we-gawds —"

"Get quite all right," Naomer whispered, tiptoeing as if she were in a sick-room.

"Bekas I am not going to breathe! I am only going to have ze snack."

The typewriter keys suddenly rattled away under Polly's fingers. Tap, tap-tap, tap! Then a crash, as she slammed back the carriage and began another line.

Meantime, on the other side of the table, Betty pulled open a drawer and lifted out the big batch of entries for the great contest, still in their respective envelopes.

Shuffling them together neatly, she silently counted.

"Here, I say, Polly," exclaimed the captain. "Whoa! These entries, dear; one short!"

"What?"

"Know anything about it?" questioned the editress, looking puzzled. "There were twenty-one at dinner-time; another came in after that. But there are still only twenty-one!"

"What ze diggings!"

"Shoo! Is that so, Betty?" was Polly's astonished response. "Strange! Are you quite sure?"

"Oh, certain! I thought I had better keep count of them. I say, perhaps it was just as well I did do that?" Betty continued gravely. "If one is missing —"

There was silence for several moments. Paula sat bolt upright in her armchair, sharing Betty and Polly's uneasiness about the missing entry. Naomer, also, was looking greatly concerned.

"You'll have to do something about it, Betty."

"Yes, Polly. Let me think. Best plan, to make it known at once that we are one entry short."

"A notice on the board downstairs," suggested Polly. "It needn't hinder you much, Betty; you can be judging the entries you have in the meantime."

"That's it."

Polly took out the sheet that was in her typewriter and slipped a fresh one between the rollers. Next minute she was taking down the names of all competitors as Betty got them by opening the envelopes.

This task, although tiresome, was soon completed, and then Betty sprinted away, to affix a typewritten notice to the green-baize board downstairs:

"MORCOVE
MAGAZINE'
PRIZE COMPE-
TITION.

Will any girl who has sent in an entry, and whose name is

NOT in the following list, communicate with Study 12 at once?

BETTY BARTON,
Captain IV Form."

She returned upstairs, reaching Study 12 just as Naomer came out with a coffee-pot.

"I zink I go to make some coffee, Betty! Bekas —"

"Right-ho!" laughed the captain-editress.

Polly was going full speed again, composing a page of the next issue.

After an admiring grin for her colleague, Betty sat down and began upon the entries.

The first must have taken her fancy. She read it with an increasing delight. The next only



Katie Murray burst into the study. "I say, Lorna, the oddest thing has happened. My entry for the competition—it's been stolen!" In her excitement Katie did not notice how Lorna White had paled.

kept her trying not to giggle; it was the perfect "dud." Again she helped herself from the batch.

"Here's Cora Grandways trying to be funny," she remarked, whilst Polly fiddled with the ribbon of the typewriter. "My story is about Betty Barton, captain of our Form . . ." and so on.

"Chuck it in the waste-paper basket, Betty!"

The editress, however, would not do that. Cora's contribution simply became Number Two of those that would receive no further consideration.

During the next few minutes Betty enjoyed quite a run of praiseworthy entries. Two or three were very good indeed. Undoubtedly she was going to have a hard task to make a final decision.

Suddenly the door flew open, letting in Katie Murray.

"Betty! About that notice on the board downstairs—"

"Oh—"

"My name is not on the list, although I sent in an attempt!" panted Katie, greatly excited. "Why is it, Betty? What's become of my entry, then?"

"That's what we are wondering," responded the editress. "All I know it, Katie, there were twenty-two before we went into afternoon school, and there are only twenty-one now. But don't let it upset you."

"Still, I mean to say—"

"It's certainly strange," nodded Betty. "I don't like the look of it at all. But—"

"What a good job you counted the entries," cried Katie. "Otherwise it might never have been known. Hearing no more about my attempt, I would simply have considered that it was among the duds."

"Of course you would," Betty again agreed. "And that, of course, is why it's so serious. There is just a possibility that someone has been having a game; if so, it was a rotten thing to do. All I know is, your entry has not been mislaid in here."

"Oh, I'm sure you have been very careful, Betty. The mere fact of your counting the entries—"

"Well, I felt I ought to do that. What I was going to say, you must send in a copy of what you wrote; that's all, Katie."

"I— You'll let me do that—although it's after the closing time?" Katie exclaimed eagerly.

"Of course! It wouldn't be fair not to let you do it," the editress said calmly. "This isn't your fault, Katie. Your original entry was in as early as middle-day, wasn't it? Well, then, that's all you've got to do—let me have a copy."

Katie's eyes shone.

"Right! But if I can't get it in to-night, Betty?"

"Oh, the morning will do; any time up to mid-day."

"Thanks ever so, Betty. I have a music lesson now—must go down—and after that it will be so late," deplored Katie. "I'll let you have it at the first moment, Betty."

"Pity you should have all that trouble," came Polly's sympathetic remark, as Katie moved towards the door.

Out in the passage she glanced at her wrist-watch and then grimaced. Bother that music lesson! It could not be given a miss, for she was one of several girls who were due for the special

lesson from a visiting mistress. The others had already gone down; but she decided to look in for just a moment on her study-mate.

So, flying to her own study, she opened the door just wide enough to put her head inside the room.

"I say, Lorna, the oddest thing about my entry for the competition—it's been stolen!"

"What?"

"Or else some girl is simply having a game with it," Katie breathlessly pursued, whilst Lorna jumped to her feet, staring. "But I can't believe any girl would do a thing like that, thinking it a joke. Betty, luckily, counted the entries; so she knew, this evening, that one was missing. Otherwise my entry would never have been judged—and I would never have been any the wiser."

"N-n-no—"

"You see, don't you, Lorna? Only Betty's carefulness has saved me. Just like her, to be so methodical. Oh, and she is going to wait until I have sent in a copy of the original!" Katie wound up.

"I—I see," said Lorna dully. "You are going to send it in again?"

"Of course; wouldn't you? And it's quite fair, isn't it? Betty says it is."

"Oh, yes, Katie! I—I was not thinking of that."

"What were you thinking, then?" laughed Katie excitedly. "That I would not be able to get my copy done in time? I'll be up early to-morrow, Lorna, getting it done before first bell. Now I must fly!"

The door closed. Lorna heard her study-mate's retiring scamper as she herself despairingly resumed her seat.

All for nothing!

In vain had she carried out that desperate yet excusable deed at midday. It would have been all right, only Betty had been keeping count of the entries.

"And I never thought of that," Lorna said to herself, sighing. "That one thing has beaten me, and now I must prepare for what is to come."

Naomer in Form.

WHAT was to come now?

Once again Lorna could not help feeling that her fate was sealed, her time at Morrove School fast running out.

Katie's true story had only to be seen by the editress of the "Morrove Magazine" to be accorded the highest praise. There was, Lorna felt sure, some quality in it that would make it stand out from all other attempts.

And on Saturday morning every girl in the Form would have a copy of the magazine and read the story of "Laura Black."

"And my assumed name is Lorna White—"

Yes, it was bound to come now; curiosity would be excited as soon as the girls read the story. In all innocence speculation might begin, but it would soon take the form of a determined, if not spiteful, resolve to prove that this sudden sensational theory was correct. Lorna White, of Morrove School, was really the "Laura Black" of that startling true story!

At last Lorna returned to the study table and resumed her evening work.

By and by she heard other girls, their work finished, gossiping in the corridor. The one topic was the disappearance of Katie's entry for the competition.

Then Katie came back, mopping her hair to

rights after a run upstairs, and looking very happy and eager.

"Well, Lorna, I believe I can find time to make a start at least upon that duplicate entry. You won't think me unsociable if I get down to it at once? Odd, but at this moment I feel I can't re-write what I wrote before, but no doubt it will all come back to me, word for word, as soon as I start."

Lorna managed to give a smile as she drew off to the door.

"I'll leave you to it, Katie."

Passing out, Lorna encountered two or three girls who were asking her opinion about the missing entry.

"What do you make of it, Lorna?"

"Oh—someone took it, of course!" was all she could say.

"But who? Why was Katie's entry taken?" the unusual incident was pursued. "Was there anything very special about Katie's entry?"

"In any case, how was another girl to know?" argued someone else.

"Unless Katie showed her entry round?" rejoined a third member of the group. "But she says she only showed it to you, Lorna!"

It was the moment for Lorna to realise, with increased dismay, that the disappearance of the original entry would help to bring about her undoing now it was known that she had seen the story before it went in.

"Have you sent in an entry, Lorna?" she was suddenly asked.

"No. As it happens, I haven't."

"Oh, then," laughed one of her questioners, "you can't be suspected of having taken Katie's, knowing it to be a better story than your own!"

There was a general laugh, assuring Lorna that it would have been hard indeed for any of them to suspect such a thing.

"Still, it's just as well you haven't a story of your own entered for the comp.," remarked one of her Form-mates. "I can think of two girls at least who would have been nasty enough to say it looked fishy."

More might have been said, but now a diversion arose. Some other juniors had taken it into their heads to fill in this spare five minutes by forming a playful crowd outside Study 12.

Some smart rat-tappings on the door brought a shout from within:

"What do you want?"

"We want to know the result of the comp—"

"Go away!" came the voice of sub-editress Polly. "Busy!"

"Yes, bekas ze staff is now having a refresher."

"Oh! Booh—slackers! Get on with it, Betty!" More knocks at the door.

"Hi, you in there, tell us who has won!"

"What about it, Betty?"

"Naomer, a free feed next time you are in Barncombe if you'll tell us!"



Naomer Nakara was performing a sort of one-finger exercise on the typewriter keys. "I am writing ze leading article for ze magazine," she said hastily as Polly Linton seized her by the ear.

"No, bekas I don't know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Then the door of the editorial sanctum opened. Polly glared out upon the light-hearted crowd, now grown to huge proportions.

"The result of the competition will be made known in this week's 'Morcove Magazine,' price threepence, and not before! Pass away, please!"

"Who wants to buy the 'Morcove Mag.?'?" howled the mob.

"Any more, and the price will be raised to sixpence!"

And the door went bang!

"Expecting you to work whilst that row goes on!" growled Polly, sitting down to the typewriter again. She took a mouthful of bun, a sip of coffee, then resumed.

Tatatatata! Ting—crash! rattled the typewriter.

"Go it!" said Naomer, a cheek bulging with Banbury cake.

"Well," said Betty, who had had a deaf ear for all the commotion. "Some jolly good entries, Polly!"

The editress shook a sheaf of marked "possibles" together, and put them aside for final consideration.

"Now I am waiting for Katie's duplicate entry. How do you stand, Polly?"

"I don't know whether I stand on my head or my heels! Press day to-morrow, and we don't even know the result yet!"

"We'll manage. Once we know which story has got the prize, we'll soon rush it in. I say, you have got on well," Betty commented, at Polly's elbow now.

At this instant Polly upset the remainder of her coffee.

"Dash! Hi, Paula, wake up! Just wipe up this for me, Paula, there's an angel!"

"Certainly, Polly, dear, certainly! But—er—wheah is there a duster, Polly?"

"Find one!"

"You've done enough for to-night, Polly! We can leave everything as it is until the morning."

"Yes, I'll have another go before morning school," announced the sub-edress.

But although, to save time, she left her side of the table just as it was, with one of the magazine's contributions still in the typewriter, next morning someone got to work with that machine before Polly showed up.

She came into Study 12 a good half-hour before breakfast, to find Naomer working at the typewriter.

The dusky one had taken out the sheet of make-up and was doing a sort of one-finger exercise on the keys, a fresh sheet of paper between the rollers.

"Hey!" exploded Polly. "What are you up to, you?"

"Eet all right. I am writing ze leading article for—"

"Shoo!" And Polly swooped, taking Naomer by one ear again. "Outside, you young scamp!"

"No, bekas—"

"Out—side!"

There was a prolonged "Eeeeee!" as Naomer went headlong from the editorial den.

Polly returned to the table, ripped the sheet of paper from the rollers, and read:

"SHOULD GIRLS REJUICE?"

Ther is a krazz at t/hE pe4ressent moMment 4 bing thin? "wHy!?"? Ther kwqestCHUN may well b5 bee askd—Bekas ther iss NO dowt ther is no doubtet thet g8girls make a bee-ig m8misMistak to pertend ththey haf a p9POR3 apyTITE—"

Here Naomer's leading article on what she considered a burning question of the day broke off. With an affectionate smile Polly crushed up the screed and hurled it into the waste-paper basket.

Then Katie Murray rushed in.

"Hallo, Polly, busy already? I say, when Betty comes—here we are; my duplicate!"

"Oh, good! Stick it down, Katie."

"Word for word, the same," beamed Katie. "I managed to make a start on it last thing last evening, and have just finished it off. Musn't ask what the other attempts were like, of course!"

And, to keep clear of temptation, Katie scooted off again.

A few moments later the editress arrived upon the scene, knowing what was in the foolscap envelope lying on her pad. She had met Katie in the corridor.

"Now to see, Polly! We shan't be much behind, after all."

"Oh, no!" And Polly was off on the typewriter again.

Betty opened the envelope, took out a neatly written MS., and sat down to read. Presently:

"I say, Polly!"

"Well?"

"A winner! In fact, I feel that this is the winner! Have a look at that."

The MS. changed hands, and for the next minute or two Polly was the absorbed reader. Then she looked up, meeting her chum's eyes across the table.

"What a first-rate entry, Betty! I don't mean only because the composition is so good. As a matter of fact, it's just perfect all round."

"Not like some of them!" murmured Betty.

"But, as you say, the story itself—"

"Splendid!"

"I like the moral, too. She has drawn that out so nicely at the end. Not too preachy."

"And not stuck in as if it was something that simply had to go in to comply with the conditions."

"No."

Betty received back the MS., read it again, and continued to nod admiringly. Finally she fetched out the overnight's best selection and read with them again in conjunction with Katie's entry.

One by one the favourites of last night were finally "turned down." Betty's task was no perplexing one, after all. On all points, Katie's entry was far and away the best.

"There you are, Polly; it can go to press," the editress was soon announcing, very definitely and very happily. "And we haven't had brekker yet. Not so bad."

She wrote, "Winning entry" upon the MS. in blue pencil, and passed it across to Polly.

That girl read the story afresh. She remained absorbed in it, even when Naomer squeezed back into the study, bringing Paula with her.

What Polly read was the true story of a girl whose life at another school had been rendered impossible owing to mischief-making. Another girl had found out that the father of "Laura Black" had been sent to penal servitude for fraud. This other girl, instead of keeping the knowledge to herself, as she should have done, since "Laura Black" herself was proving a credit to the school, told others. From that hour "Laura Black" had been shunned by the school.

But the story did not end with a poignant description of how, at last, "Laura Black" had been removed from the school, and of how her schoolmates had even demonstrated against her when she was going away.

If that had been all that Katie had to tell, hers would never have been the prize-winning story perhaps. But there was the closing reference to the remorse of the girl who had been the first to make mischief.

Katie quoted the very words which had been spoken to her by that girl: "I know now that I may have injured 'Laura Black' for life. I have certainly made myself unhappy. I shall always be thinking of what I did—"

"There goes the gong, Polly!"

"Hooray, yes, bekas—brekker!"

Polly jumped up from her chair, handing back the MS. to Betty, who put it away in the drawer.

"And now, girls—not a word as to who the winner is!" was Betty's smiling warning as she was leaving the study along with its co-tenants.

"We shall be mobbed—"

Even as that chuckling prediction was being made it came in for fulfilment. The sight of the editress in the corridor was the signal for lots of girls to swarm towards her, raising a fresh clamour.

"Betty! You can tell us now, Betty! The winner?"

"Yes, do, do, Betty!"

"We'll buy the mag. all the same!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You've got to wait," said Betty flatly. "On sale this evening, and no advance in price!"

"Boom number—booh!" Cora's jeering voice overrode the hubbub. "With a coloured plate of the editress, I expect."

But the attempts of Cora and Hetty to be funny at Study 12's expense fell flat. The Form, as a whole, was quite content to wait, however impatiently, for the sale of the "Morcove Magazine." Meantime, there was a careering downstairs to breakfast in all-round high spirits.

"Come on, Lorna—down to brekker!" cried Katie, throwing an arm affectionately about her study-mate's waist. "And, I say, did you notice anything just then, when Betty and Polly were going by? The way they glanced at me."



The sight of Betty Barton, the Editress, was the signal for the girls to swarm forward. "Betty, Betty! Tell us the winner!" they clamoured. Betty laughed. "You'll have to wait till this evening," she declared flatly.

"I noticed, yes," Lorna said, smiling faintly.

"They couldn't have meant to let me see," whispered on Katie in a thrilled tone. "But, oh, Lorna, I do believe— When the mag. comes out this evening you'll probably see that I have won. Just fancy!"

"For your own sake, Katie, I hope you have."

"Thanks, Lorna. And if I have—if—do you know what I'd like to do with the prize? But I'll never be able to, of course," sighed Katie. "I'd like to send the guinea to 'Laura Black.'"

Lorna was silent then, looking aside so that this good-hearted friend of hers could not see how upset she was.

"Press Day!"

STUDY 12 was up from tea by a few minutes after four that afternoon.

It had the table cleared, the tea-things washed up and put away, and a notice stuck up outside the door, by four-fifteen.

That notice said:

"PRESS DAY!
Keep Out!"

Polly, thumping the typewriter on to the table, sat down to it and began tap-tapping out the last page of the issue. That was the page containing the prize anecdote.

Tess Trelawney, staff artist, had already done a most attractive picture-heading and the title in ornamental type. Beneath this Polly was now typing the last paragraphs of the story of "Laura Black," word for word as sent in by Katie; not even a comma altered.

"Nearly finished, Betty."

"All right, Polly; no need to hurry. We are in good time, after all," remarked Betty, whilst she looked over the copying-machine to make sure that it was in proper working order.

"Leave that ink alone, Naomer!"

But Betty's injunction should have come sooner than this. Naomer had done the usual thing on press day—fiddled about with the special ink supplied for the copying-machine; the sort of ink that turned finger-tips into rubber stamps.

"Now," shouted Polly, starting up and brandishing a ruler. "sit down, Naomer!"

Whereupon Naomer sat down—on Paula!

Then Polly, giving them a final glare that dared them to move an inch, resumed her work. Tatatatata! Trut, trut, click, ting—crash! She slammed back the carriage of the typewriter.

Then someone gave a teasing knock at the door. Thump, thump!

"Is the editress in?" yelled Cora Grandways. "I do so want to know if I have won."

Betty took no notice, being busy with the copying-machine. But Polly, whilst making a deceptive noise with the typewriter by thumping the space-bar, sat ready for Cora, if she should put her head inside the room. Polly, her eyes upon the door, held the dictionary poised for a throw.

Thump, thump!

"You must excuse me," Cora pleaded, opening the door to show a smiling face. "But I—"

Whizz! went the dictionary. Plop! And Cora hastily withdrew, a sadder and wiser teaser.

Smiling grimly at the complete success of her

ruse, Polly now took the last sheet out of her typewriter.

"Finished, Betty! That's the mag., all complete!"

"Splendid! You deserve a medal, Polly!"

"Still no mention of rises, I notice. Are we all right for paper? We must print extra copies this issue, Betty?"

"Oh, rather! I've got a good stock of paper; only Naomer, I see, has been dabbling her fingers—"

"Ugh!" exploded Polly, and looked round for Naomer. "Do you suppose girls are going to buy copies all thumb-marked? Miles of paper wasted!"

"No, bekas eet will do for paper-chases!"

"Shoo!"

"Naomer, in our next issue, will be able to do an article on 'How to Reduce'—the number of copies we sell!" jested Betty.

"There won't be another issue," growled Polly. "I'm through after this. I wouldn't mind, if only Paula would—"

"Can I healp, geals?" came the elegant one's belated offer.

"You can," said Polly tartly. "You can put Naomer outside for me, whilst Betty and I go to press. Go on—put her out!"

There was something so commanding in this, Paula found herself turning to Naomer.

"Come on, zen, put me out!" challenged Naomer stoutly. "Bekas—"

"Naow, Naomer deah, like a good geal, just oblige, what?" coaxed Paula. "You must realise that your pvesence is undesiwable, in fact, intolewable, yes, wather! On the othah hand, I do not wish to use fowce. Heah is the door," said Paula, crossing over to open it—and then at least half a dozen juniors surged in.

"Betty!"

"Outside!"

"Isn't it printed yet? Oh—"

"Outside!" stormed Polly. "Clear out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" pealed the invaders, retiring before Polly's war-like gestures.

"Hurry up, anyhow!" Study 12 was entreated, just before the door was banged shut once more.

After that there was comparative peace, and the "Morcove Magazine" went to press at last.

The first cyclostyled copy came off the machine and was hurriedly, anxiously examined by the editress and her chief assistant.

"Any mistakes?" they asked each other in concern.

"It's all right," Betty joyously declared at the end of the inspection. "Bit smudgy, Polly, but that'll go off in the printing."

"The prize story page doesn't look so bad, Betty."

"It looks fine! Right away, then!"

And the issue started printing. Polly turned the handle; Betty fed paper into the machine and took off the printed copies.

Copies of the "Morcove Magazine" came off the machine with commendable speed. Two a minute was good going. But there was no breakdown, anyhow, and presently the complete edition was printed off, folded, stacked ready for sale.

"Extry!" Polly shouted, becoming a madcap again now that the cares of editorial work were over. "Speshul!"

"Ooo, yes, queek!" Naomer clamoured for her quite of copies, with which to dash out into the corridor. "Me, too, Betty!"

"Go along, then!"

Polly, however, was first. Ahead of Naomer, she rushed out into the passage, imitating a news-boy's raucous voice, and carrying a placard bearing the words in big, blue-pencilled letters: "EXTRA SPECIAL—COMPETITION RESULT!"

"Extry! Re—sult of the gre—eat compe—tition!"

Open flew study doors all down the corridor. If one eager junior dashed out, at least a dozen did so.

"Hoora—at last! Here, Polly—here! Naomer—"

"Thrippence ze copy—queek—and no change given!" yelled the dusky one. "No snatching! Take your turn! Two copies for sixpence, eef you like!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Like hot cakes the edition was selling. As soon as girls had secured copies, they looked for the result of the competition. There was a great babel of voices, dying down as the first excitement of the result gave place to a perusal of the winning story.

Meantime, Polly had burst in upon Katie and Lorna in their study.

"Don't you girls want copies?"

"I— Yes, Polly," stammered Katie in a great fluster. "Er—threepence, isn't it?"

The fact was, Katie had felt almost afraid to rush out and secure a copy, in case she had not won the prize after all.

"Free copy for you, Katie—with the editress' compliments."

"What!"

"You've won."

"I have? Really? Oh!"

"Your story—streets ahead of anything else that was sent in," Polly complimented the victor. "Let Lorna read it; then she'll see how good it is."

Katie smiled across at Lorna, who smiled back.

"You know the story already, don't you, Lorna?"

Know it? How well the original of "Laura Black" knew that story! And now the worst, for her, had happened. It was being broadcast through the school. At this very moment—because it was the winning story—girls everywhere were eagerly devouring it.

No sooner had Polly romped away than Miss Everard came in, bringing the Form captain-editress with her.

"So yours is the prize story, Katie Murray! Well done! I want to congratulate you, and so does Betty. I have not read it yet, but Betty says that it was easily the best sent in."

"Yes, Katie," said the captain-editress, "you have earned that guinea."

"And here it is, Katie," smiled Miss Everard, tendering a cheque for the amount. "With my heartiest congratulations."

"Bravo, Katie!" cheered several girls who had gathered at the doorway. "Bravo! Well done!"

It was indeed a proud moment for the winner of that cheque as it came into her hands.

"Oh, Miss Everard," she stammered, blushing prettily, "I—I—I don't know how to thank you! It was good of you to offer such a fine prize. I—I'll try to use it wisely."

But it was to be Katie's lasting regret that she could not use the cheque as she would have liked. After Miss Everard and the others had gone away, and when all the happy commotion had died down, Katie turned to her study-mate.

"Now, Lorna," said Katie, flourishing the cheque, "if only I knew where the real 'Laura Black' is to be found! Life had been made so hard for her; yet why should she be made to suffer because her father is in prison?"

"Laura Black" and Lorna White!

THAT night, in the dormitory, quite an animated debate took place, with Katie's prize story for the theme.

Some girls were for maintaining that the school where such a thing happened must have been a rotten one. Nothing like it could ever take place at Morcove.

But others were not so sure. Every big school had every type of girl; and, after all, Morcove was no exception to this rule. Without mentioning names, plenty of Morcovians could think of two or three schoolmates who were not above making mischief when they could.

"If we had a 'Laura Black' in our midst you'd soon see!" averred one girl who took this line of argument.

"Of course, there are always two types at every school!" Madge Minden exclaimed.

"Yes, well," murmured Pam; "there's black, of course, and there's white."

"'Laura Black'—and Lorna White!" sang out Cora; and then she gave a sharp little laugh, as if the attempted witticism had seemed more remarkable than funny, after being voiced.

Lorna could not help being aware of a sudden heavy pause in the chatter after Cora had said that. It seemed to Lorna that every mind was trembling on the verge of a sudden startling suspicion—the beginning of an astounding theory!

Little sleep did she enjoy that night. Out of all the great host of girls who had read the story and been very impressed by it, were there already some who had begun to put two and two together? And if there were, would they all be girls who would act differently from the way that hateful girl had acted at Chelverdale?

After morning school Cora Grandways came up to the study which she shared with her sister Judith and Hetty Curzon. Judith was at hockey practice, but Hetty was here.

"I say, Hetty, a funny thing has struck me about that prize story of Katie Murray's," began Cora, closing the door. "Has it occurred to you?"

"Has what occurred to me, Cora? I'm afraid I didn't think much of the yarn myself."

"Neither did I, for that matter, as a yarn. Who couldn't have done better, if they had cared to take the trouble?" sneered Cora. "But I am wondering, Hetty—the 'Laura Black' in that story—can she be a girl we all know?"

Hetty looked across from her armchair with raised brows.

"What on earth are you driving at, Cora?"

"This," whispered the elder Grandways girl; "it was rather strange, wasn't it, that Katie's original MS. was the one to be taken from Study 12 before the judging? And from what I can find out, Katie's own study-mate was the only girl to whom Katie showed that first MS."

"Well?"

"Oh, you're dense! How could any other competitor have felt tempted to steal Katie's entry, not having seen that story? But Lorna White saw it—"

"Lorna didn't send in a rival entry."

"That's just what I am coming to. Rivalry was not the motive if she crept to Study 12 and pinched Katie's entry. What, then, was the motive? Lorna White tries to prevent the publication of a true story about 'Laura Black.'"

Hetty jumped up.

"Phew!" she breathed. "I say! You mean, Cora, that somehow or other Katie wrote a story dealing with Lorna herself!"

"Lorna, at her other school, wherever that was. We don't know," Cora whispered on. "Morcove never has known. Lorna has never said a word, that I'm aware of, about her other school, or why she left. So there it is, and I think it rather odd, don't you?"

"Funny," grinned Hetty, "very funny, if it should be so! Oh, I do wonder if it is!"

"A nice thing if it is!" Cora now scowled. "It means that Morcove has a convict's daughter in its midst. Do my people pay for me to mix with convicts' daughters, Hetty? I reckon the thing ought to be thrashed out."

"It isn't pleasant."

"They turned her out of that other school—and no wonder. And why should Morcove have other schools' leavings? All very well to gas about fair play for 'Laura Black.' Where's the fair play for ordinary respectable scholars, in having to put up with a convict's daughter?"

"There's a good deal in that, Cora, and if it really is as you suspect—"

"Oh, I know it's only a theory at present, but what about finding out for certain? I hate not being able to prove that I'm right. Look here, Hetty, do you feel like coming with me to ask Lorna a few questions?"

"Yes, I don't mind. After all," Hetty argued virtuously, "it's only fair to the school."

"Just so. No harm in asking. If Lorna White can knock my theory on the head, so much the better that I have given her the chance. Come on, Hetty, we'll do it now," grinned Cora, relishing the self-imposed inquiry greatly. "And so, perhaps, the Form will see that it doesn't always depend upon its wonderful captain for looking after its welfare."

Hetty also was grinning. This was likely to afford great excitement.

They came to the door of a certain study halfway up the corridor, and Cora grinned again as she tapped with mock politeness.

"Oh, Lorna," she began sweetly, going before Hetty into the study, where Lorna was alone, "can you spare a minute?"

"I can; but why?"

"About Katie's prize story," explained Cora, with a gleam in her eyes that was not lost upon Lorna. "Do you know, there is something about that true anecdote which strikes me as being peculiar."

So it had come at last! "Just as I feared!" was Lorna's agonised thought, whilst she fought hard to appear composed.

"Katie calls the central figure in her story 'Laura Black,' doesn't she?" remarked Cora. "A fictitious name, we know. All the names are made-up ones, of course; the name of the school as well."

"I'll ask you a question before you go any further," Lorna said, feeling her courage rising. "Do you agree that the girl who got 'Laura Black' turned out of that school did a thing of which she might well be ashamed for the rest of her days?"

"No, I don't!"

"All right, then."

"There's the other point of view, you know," said Cora, whilst Hetty, standing by, nodded in agreement. "Can you expect girls out of decent homes to put up with a convict's daughter?"

"You have read the story," flashed Lorna. "There it says that the girl who was first to turn the school against her suffered the most misery in the end. If you can't take warning from that—"

"I'm afraid the moral of it all does rather leave me cold," laughed Cora. "But you're asking me questions, when I should be asking you! Number one, Lorna: Why did you go to Study 12 and sneak Katie's original entry before it had been judged?"

It was a bow drawn at a venture, and even as the shaft went home, it was followed by another, from Hetty:

"Did you do that, Lorna—did you?"

"Yes, I did, and now you can tell the whole school!" was Lorna's spirited cry. She stood drawn back a step or so. "The story of 'Laura Black' is my story!"

"You don't mean that you wrote it, and not Katie?"

"I mean that it is a story from my own life at another school. I am the original of 'Laura Black'!"

"There!" gasped Cora triumphantly. "Just what I guessed!"

"Yes, and I guessed that there would be at least a few girls like you even at this school," panted Lorna. "And you've been the one, Cora! You—"

The impassioned speaker broke off. Katie was suddenly in the room, looking startled, glancing from one to another of its three occupants, whilst she stopped dead just beyond the threshold.

"What's this? Lorna, what's the trouble?"

"I will tell you, Katie," her study-mate answered with tragic calmness. "It has been found out, as I knew it would be directly your story appeared in the 'Morcove Magazine.'"

"What has been found out?"

"That I am the original of 'Laura Black'!" A cry of horror came from Katie.

"Lorna! Oh, no—no!"

"Yes, I am. But, Katie, dear, don't look like that; it isn't your fault."

"Oh!" Katie moaned. "Oh!"

"Shut that door, Hetty," hissed Cora; but it was too late. Passers-by in the corridor had stopped, attracted by the emotional talk that was going on. Now they were crowding into the room.

"I am the original of 'Laura Black,' in Katie's story!" Lorna told them all fearlessly. "I'm the girl who was turned out of that other school—"

"A convict's daughter," put in Cora softly; and then Lorna turned to her.

"The daughter of an honest father; a man who should never have gone to prison!"

"Oh, I dare say!"

"Cora!" And there was the Form captain, standing forward from the crowd that had surged into the study. "Keep that hateful tongue of yours still!"

"Yes, bekas—"

"Shoo!" For Polly also was here. "Now, Lorna."

"Yes, Lorna—go on," clamoured other girls.

She drew a hard breath and resumed with a tragic gesture:

"I can't ask you to believe what I and my mother will believe to our dying day, that dad went to prison unjustly. They wouldn't believe it at my other school; it is too much to expect of Morcove even. I'll have to leave; have to go home to mother—after all the effort she made to get me restarted."

Lorna finished on a sob, and was too breathless to say more, and in the silence there came the sudden loud weeping of Katie Murray. She was down in a chair, crying into her hands.

"If only I had known! Oh, Lorna, Lorna! Why didn't you tell me? I would have kept it secret; I would have, Lorna, whether your father is a wronged man or not!"

"I know you would, Katie," the convict's daughter answered huskily. "But I couldn't bear you to be the only one who knew, having me for a study-mate all the while. It would have been too hard on you, Katie."

An interruption came from Betty. She had faced Cora.

"Thanks to you, Cora! Get out of this study—get out at once!"

"Why? What have I—"

"You may think you have done a clever thing," panted Betty. "For the good of the school—is that it? Did Morcove ever gain any good from you? Take yourself off—"

"Yes, bekas—Booh! Booh!" Naomer began the scornful cry that was to be taken up by others.

"Disgraceful! Cwuel!"

"Like the girl at that other school!" stormed Polly. "And may you be as sorry some day, Cora, as that girl has been!"

"I doubt it!" the spitfire laughed brazenly, as she took Hetty with her to the door.

The others made way for that despicable pair, putting no restraint upon their scorn. In this first moment of the sensational disclosure, the general impulse was one of pity for Lorna White. How it would be with the school later on was another matter, perhaps.

The captain showed splendid tact now. She made signs to the crowd to pass away. And so, in a few moments, only Betty remained with the rightful occupants of this study.

Katie Murray had got the better of her tears by then. All was calm after such a sudden storm. The captain spoke a few soothing words presently—so calmly and gently that they hardly affected the tragic quietude of the room. Words of cheer for both girls in their distress; and Katie was comforted a little. But Lorna—

Even whilst she seized Betty's hand and pressed it in silent token of gratitude for such friendly support, Lorna knew—and Betty herself could hardly have denied—that only one thing remained now. The daughter of a convict must stand prepared to bid Morcove School goodbye—for ever!

Strangest of All!

A STATE of gloom prevailed in the Fourth Form.

There was a dark cloud hanging over the whole school, a cloud that would only pass, it was felt, when Lorna White had said her sad farewell to the place where life had broken down again for her.

Another week had started. In the interval there had been time for girls with the best minds

and kindest natures to reach the sorrowful conviction; for Lorna's own sake it would be better that she left Morcove.

Something far different might have been managed had a good-natured girl been the one to find out Lorna's secret.

But as it was Cora who had discovered the truth, that made all the difference. As at that other school, so at this; one girl was to blame!

"The old, old, trouble," exploded Polly in Study 12 on Monday, after tea. "All Cora's doing! If only it could be Cora who had to leave!"

"Yes, wather!"

"But there it is," grimaced Polly; "she has told Miss Somerfield that she intended no harm to Lorna—is ever so sorry. Oh, don't let's talk about it; I get so wild! Girls, shall we go down



"Excuse me, young ladies, but could I see the headmistress?" the man asked courteously. "It's about this—the 'Morcove Magazine.'" Who was the stranger? The Morcove girls wondered. And why was he so interested in their magazine?

to the games field to shake off some of this misery if we can?"

Betty glanced to the window.

"It will be light for a little while yet. Yes, let's," she hailed Polly's suggestion.

So down they went, picking up others on the way, and after a raid upon an odd lot of hockey-sticks, kept in the ground-floor cloak-room, they trooped out to the field.

"Look, there's Lorna," murmured Betty, just when play was about to start. "Wandering about all alone."

"Hallo, who's this?" came Helen Craig's interrupting cry, and then the others saw that a stranger—a well-dressed, middle-aged man—was coming across to them from midway up the drive as if to make an inquiry.

Hockey could not begin when this gentleman, whoever he might be, was so obviously intending to speak to the girls. Accordingly they went to meet him, liking his appearance all the better as they drew nearer.

"Excuse my troubling you, young ladies," he began courteously, "but am I likely to be able to see the headmistress? I take it that this is the school that has to do with—this?"

And, to the amazement of the chums, he suddenly flourished at them a copy of the "Morcove Magazine."

He smilingly resumed before they had got over their astonishment.

"You rather wonder, do you, girls? Let me explain, then. I was taking a stroll along the shore and rested before climbing the zigzag. Somebody else had rested there, leaving behind this amateur magazine—and I must say it appears to be a most excellent production. A great credit to those who run it."

Study 12 was not inclined to smile and blush at such praise. Betty and her "staff" had been almost hating the sight of the current issue of the magazine since last Saturday. If it hadn't been for that story—

"I glanced the pages through," continued the stranger. "In particular, I was greatly struck by a certain feature—a prize story."



"Oh!"

"Most extraordinary thing," he spoke on, whilst his listeners stood dumbfounded, "that true story of a girl who was turned out of another school has a personal interest for me."

Again the chums gasped.

"And a very painful interest, too," he supplemented, in a tone of great feeling. "I will be quite candid. The girl who started all the mischief at that other school is a niece of mine. I am her guardian."

"You are, sir!" Betty found her voice at last. "Well, I never!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Bekas—" But Naomer received a silencing nudge from Polly.

"Yes," the gentleman continued. "And well I know how true the story is in every particular. The whole affair has given me great concern for months past. I have visited that other school without being able to do any good. My object is, you see, to find the girl who was turned out of

that other school—find her and her mother; but they have vanished, changed their name, it is supposed, and so I am baffled."

"But—but—" burst out Polly. "Oh, if that's the case—"

"Yes, bekas—"

"It's like this, sir: we don't know your name," came from Betty excitedly; "but—"

"Mr. Sylvester."

"Then it's like this, Mr. Sylvester: the girl who was turned out of that other school—she is at this school now."

"What!"

"Over there—look, there is the very girl!" they cried, with directing gestures.

He made a half-turn and stared at the girl who could be dimly seen traversing a side-path in the grounds.

"You amaze me!" he gasped. "She is the girl who has suffered through my niece?"

"Shall we fetch her, Mr. Sylvester?"

"Oh, please, please—at once!" he entreated, and away sped the fleetest of them. Polly and Naomer, they were off at a mad gallop to tell Lorna.

"Marvellous thing!" the gentleman commented.

"The result of my picking up that discarded copy of your school magazine and glancing through it. Now I hope that something good is to come about. This should be a very happy day for that girl, as well as for me!"

"And here she comes!" rejoiced Betty.

A few moment more and all three girls were at the end of their breathless run, their faces charged with intense excitement.

"Your name is Lorna—?"

"Lorna White, sir, is the name I have taken, but—"

"I quite understand, my dear. Your mother, when she had to take you away from that other school, decided that you must make a fresh start under another name. Yet I have found you most miraculously."

"Oh," exclaimed Lorna gently, "these things are bound to be found out sooner or later, it seems."

"You see, Mr. Sylvester," interposed Betty, "Lorna has had a very thin time. Something happened after that story appeared."

"I begin to understand," said the gentleman, "but let me say this to you, Lorna, at once. You must not feel down-hearted any more. As guardian of the girl who caused you so much harm at that other school, I am determined to

make the best amends I can on her behalf. You protested at that other school that your father was wrongly sent to prison?"

"Yes, sir, and so he was! There has been no one to take up his case."

"I have been taking up his case, my dear," Mr. Sylvester hastened to say, "and the more I go into it, the better I am convinced. There was a miscarriage of justice."

"There, now!" cried Polly. "Oh, Lorna!"

"Yes, bekas—Hooray! Gorjus!"

"Mr. Sylvester—"

"Unless I am greatly mistaken, information now in the hands of the Home Secretary will shortly result in a King's pardon."

"Hooray, hurrah!" cheered the chums joyously.

"You shall come with me to your headmistress. Lorna, and it won't be me if I don't make everything all right for you for all time. For you and your mother and your father. Let one or two of your chums walk with you."

He himself singled out Betty and Polly for the purpose, and those two girls went with him and Lorna to the schoolhouse.

As for the others, as soon as there had been time for that advance party to pass indoors, away they rushed, to make the good news known.

A minute later girls in their studies wondered what on earth it meant that a lot of mad things were yelling down the corridor:

"Hurrah, hooray! Great sensation, girls!"

"Yes, bekas—queek, queek, eberybody! Gorjus!"

Study doors were whipped open.

"Where? How?"

And then the good news was told.

Presently there was more cheering. Lorna White had come away from the headmistress' room, with Betty and Polly, and only to see the girls' radiant faces was to know that all was promising well.

Mr. Sylvester, by telling Miss Somerfeldt all that he had told the chums, and much more besides, had ensured one thing already: Lorna White would not leave Morcove!

Why should she, when she could hold up her head again, knowing that her father's release from prison was only a question of days?

Within a week the whole country knew that a King's pardon had been granted to Lorna's father.

Katie Murray had not even broken into her guinea prize by the time this happy state of things had come about.

"And so, Lorna, the best thing I can do with the money, I think," said Katie, "is to spend it on a special celebration! What do you say, dear?"

Lorna's eyes sparkled.

"You must let me share, though."

"Very well. But whom do we invite? The whole Form—excepting Cora and Hetty, of course? We are not going to have them?"

"Oh, let them come if they like," shrugged Lorna generously. "But I do think, Katie, that we ought to have certain guests of honour. The editress and staff of the 'Morcove Magazine'!"

"So we will," agreed Katie, clapping gaily. "After all, I owe my guinea to the jolly old mag."

"And I," rejoined Lorna, smiling seriously. "owe lifelong gratitude to the mag., for what it did for me!"

THE END.

"Saved By Schoolgirls"

This is the title of next week's lovely, long ENTIRELY COMPLETE story featuring the chums of Morcove School.

It is written by

MARJORIE STANTON

2d. THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN 2d.