

54-1
"The Mischief-Makers of Morcove"

New-Term
Story Within

The SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN 2d

No. 631, Vol. 27
Week ending
MAY 5th, 1934.

EVERY
TUESDAY



THE INSULT
THAT STARTED
STRIFE BETWEEN
TWO SCHOOLS

2 Fine Complete Stories: 2 Magnificent Serials

*Brilliant Complete New-Term Story,
Featuring Betty Barton & Co.*



The Mischief-Makers of Morcove

BY MARJORIE STANTON

FAY and Edna Denver are new to Morcove School, and they find it not quite to their liking. But these two sisters, who think so much of themselves—"We Denvers, you know . . ."—are nevertheless resolved to dare disgrace in their desire for a "good time."

CHAPTER I. "We Denvers"

TWO new girls had come to Morcove School this term—Fay Denver and her sister, Edna.

A study had been found for them that accommodated a couple of girls just nicely. The sisters had rather turned up their noses at it when it was made over to them, for they liked things to be of the very best.

In the course of their first fortnight, however, they had done much to make the study quite charming.

Edna it was who, set free from morning school only five minutes since, was now doing a few things in the study to make it look still more attractive.

A tall, supple girl, this fair-headed Edna; but it was Fay, a year older, who had such astonishing beauty, and hair so fair that Morcove had never seen the like of it before.

The door opened, letting in Fay. She looked as if she was enjoying life. Something in her

manner hinted, too, that that was her purpose in life—to enjoy it.

"Oh, I like that easy chair much better there," she instantly approved her sister's rearrangement. "Makes a little more room to spare."

"Which we can do with," laughed Edna. "If we are ever to have more than two girls at a time to tea."

Fay set down school books brought away from the class-room.

"I've had such a nice talk with the Form-mistress, Edna. But she's young! I think she likes me." And Fay put up a hand to her hair to give it a caressing touch.

"Why shouldn't she like either of us?" submitted Edna lightly.

"Said she was pleased with our work," the elder sister purred, after dropping down into an easy chair. "Asked me how we were getting on with the rest of the Form now that we've been here a fortnight."

"And you said?"

"Afraid I didn't say all that was in my mind about the other girls," Fay smiled and shrugged.

"You know, Edna, I'm beginning to feel that there is something—I don't know what it can be. You said just then that Miss Courtney ought to like us, and I imagine she does. But, all the girls—do they?"

"If they don't, they can do the other thing."
"Oh, quite. We're not going to make a trouble of that," Fay laughed. "Still, it wasn't like this at our other school."

"Ah, but our other school was not Morcove! You must remember," Edna said with an ironical smile, "Morcove has a lot to be proud of!"

"I suppose it has," sighed Fay. "But, coming to the Form, Edna—our Form. The captain, for instance—"

"Betty Barton? I just can't understand her being cap!"

"Yet there she is, and her chums of Study 12 seem to count for everything in the Form. Polly Linton—"

"Just a tomboy. Can't stick that sort of thing in a girl. And then there is that African kid—the one they call Naomer; a royalty, or something. Pooh!"

"I know. But Pam Willoughby is real class, Edna, and I honestly don't think you could call her snobbish."

"She may not be snobbish, but—I just don't like her, that's all."

"Once or twice," mused Fay, with a pretty frown, "I've thought she seemed—a bit jealous."
"I dare say. After all, until we came along, I suppose she was sort of—unique."

"Madge Minden—what about her?" Fay pursued blandly.

"Oh—all piano practice! She and Tess Trelawney."

"But Tess is awfully clever. Some of her water colours, Edna—"

"Clever, but irritable. That's Tess Trelawney." Fay suddenly laughed.

"This is rather awful, Edna! Out of the whole lot of them in that 'chummyery,' not one that we really take to! Oh, well, we must do our best to rub along with them all. Quarrels are such a bore. How some girls can be fond of squabbling, Edna, when it's such a waste of time! Time that one might be spending—I won't say profitably"—and she laughed again—"but pleasantly!"

"I think you're right," Edna nodded. "The best thing is to be all things to all people. Then you don't come up against tiresome problems and all that. This afternoon, Fay—a halfer."

"Yes—Wednesday. Some tennis, first? Then we might go into Barncombe for tea? It's a poor town for shopping; but that's a nice tea-room, anyhow—and Cousin Bert might be over that way, from Grangemoor. I'd like to see Bert."

"Oh, of course you would," smiled Edna, not at all pettishly. "All right, if he turns up, I'll beat it."

"You needn't, dear. He might bring a chum with him! By the way, Edna, that's another thing about those Study 12 girls. Although two of them—Polly Linton and Judy Cardew—have each a brother at Grangemoor, they don't seem to find anything in that to draw them towards—us. They know, of course, that Bert is in the same House over there; is even House cap, this term—"

"Jealous, Fay!"

"I expect they are, a wee bit." Now Fay had gone to the study window, which looked on to the school games-field, besides having an extensive view of the rugged coastline and the blue sea beyond.

"Morcove School," Fay murmured, with that

faint smile of hers. "I suppose some of those girls down there are getting excited about the sports. What do they think they are doing—running?"

Edna came and stood beside her sister.
"And look at that girl—thinking she's doing a pole-jump, I suppose."

"Oh, that's the Naomer kid—she's mad."

"Looks like it, Edna. Well, I've entered for the quarter mile. It seems that Pam Willoughby won that last year."

"You weren't here then, Fay!"

"Edna darling, you do your best to make me vain."

"Not a bit, Fay. I don't see why we Denvers should run ourselves down. After all, don't people take you at your own valuation, Fay?"

"Cynic, Edna—and there's a compliment for you! But it's perfectly true, of course. Look at Cousin Bert, for an example! I'm awfully fond of Bertie, but who could call him clever? Yet, somehow, he has managed to get himself made captain of Challenor's House, at Grangemoor—"

"Yes, in the same way, I dare say, that Betty Barton, at this school, managed to—"

Edna broke off sharply. Then she and her sister burst out laughing. For the girl who had entered briskly, after a formal tap at the door, was that very one—the captain!

CHAPTER 2.

Fay Must Be First

"HEATS for the quarter mile," Betty Barton accounted for her friendly intrusion.

"You're in this, Fay Denver?"

"Yes, I don't mind. Do you want me now?"

"Well, the sooner we get down to finals the better," the captain submitted. "And there's a good opportunity before dinner. I've got all the others down there—"

"Right! I'll come."

Fay was most affable. Both sisters were showing Betty the most ingratiating looks; this in accordance with a policy that was more self-seeking than sincere.

"You've made this study look awfully nice," Betty commented, before turning to withdraw.

"In a way, it reminds me of Pam's."

"Pam Willoughby? Oh, the girl whose people have such pots of money?" Fay threw out blandly.

"You'd better not let Pam hear you say that," the captain laughed. She changed the subject. Morcove girls were not given to talking about their parents' means. "You two said you liked cricket?—We rather thought of getting up a match this afternoon, just for prancer. We play Grangemoor next week, and they're hot stuff, those boys."

"I adore cricket—so does Edna," said the elder sister. "But, if you don't mind, we'd rather make it tennis, after dinner. We must bike into Barncombe fairly early."

"Oh, quite all right!"

Two members of the Form were just coming off the stairs as Betty and the Denvers got to them. There was a very spontaneous smile from both the girls for their captain, who said a blithe:

"Hallo, Judy—Helen!"

But it was only after a little hesitation that the smiles were devoted, in passing-by manner, to Fay and Edna. They were aware of this, but smiled in return most sweetly. Policy!

Flight after flight they descended with Betty,

reaching that outer hall whose spaciousness was in keeping with the entire vastness of the school-house. There were no separate "Houses" at Morcove; the whole school, huge though its numbers were to-day, was under one roof.

Much more impressive things were to be seen in other parts of the ground floor—in the famous Big Hall in particular. But Fay and Edna might well have felt a thrill of pride, even at the end of their fortnight, as they crossed the outer hall with Betty, making for the open air.

The same when they were walking across to a part of the big games-field where the heats were to be run off.

Any newcomers to Morcove, if they had the right spirit, must have continued to think, "What a school—wonderful!"

But Fay and Edna were really not inclined to regard Morcove as being so very wonderful. After a fortnight—not quite what they had been accustomed to? Not quite so free-and-easy as they would have liked it to be? Well, yes.

"All those for the quarter-mile heats!" Betty gaily called out, and promptly girls concerned came running up.

But no one else took any notice, a circumstance that rather hurt the self-pride of the Denver sisters. They liked to make a stir.

Pam was one of those who approached, and somehow this became the moment for Fay and Edna to like her less than ever. Tall Pam's equanimity jarred upon them. She was so obviously well-bred, yet with it so unassuming.

But there was a lot of it at Morcove—too much.

The captain, for another example—she seldom wore her sash. What she meant, of course, was that if—if ever YOU should become captain, you wouldn't be expected to wear the sash all day long. either. Absurd!

"Here's Fay Denver, Pam," said Betty lightly. "Going to have a shot for the final. A dark horse, so look out!"

"Oh, I'm nothing!" Fay declared prettily. "You'll beat me easily in the final!" So she expected to get in the four for the final race on the great day, anyhow. "You always win, don't you, Pam?"

"No. But I try to," was the serene answer.

"Others all here?" Betty inquired, her roving glance encountering one familiar face and another. "Right! But look here, Naomer—"

"Yes, bekas I am going to try for ze quarter-mile, and zis year I mean to do ze trick!" Morcove's dusky scholar stoutly announced. "Bekas zere is a silver cream-jug for ze prize, and we could do with him in Study 12. So now zen, out of ze way, everybody!"

And she pranced off in advance of those other entrants whom Betty was conducting to the taped-off course.

Edna Denver fell in be-

hind with just a few girls who had abandoned games for the sake of watching the trials. She noticed Polly Linton and spoke to her.

"You're not in this?"

"What would be the use—when Naomer has entered?" joked Morcove's maidcap. "I see your sister is one of them."

"And she doesn't stand any chance, either?"

"Oh, I didn't say that! You must have known I was only joking about Naomer."

"Yes, but there is Pam; you all take it for granted that Pam will find it a walk-over?"

"Pam's awfully good, of course—"

"So is my sister, come to that."

"I'm glad," Polly said. She had become a bit off-haud; but then Edna had shown a certain tartness quite uncalled for, Polly thought. Besides, the entrants were all getting ready for the "Go!" and she wanted to give all her attention to them.

"Do look, Paula—at Naomer!"

"Yes, wather!" chorled that fatuous yet adored member of the Study 12 "chummyery," dainty Paula Cred. "Bai Jove, the professional touch, geals, what?"

It was like the dusky one to be enlivening the preliminaries with antics due to over-agerness. Naomer, in fact, said her own "Go!" more than once, and sprinted off all alone, to be shouted after and laughed at by many a schoolmate.

Her comment, each time she was brought back to the mark, was "Sweendle!" But this was not to be taken as a serious complaint, any more than her predicted win on the great day was to be regarded as boasting.



Pam got up. "Sorry, Fay, but I must go. Thanks for the tea." And without a glance at Bertie Denver she walked away.

"I wonder the captain allows her," muttered Edna. She resented so much amused attention being devoted to the Imp, when Fay was there as a possible surprise-packet. "At our other school nobody would have been allowed to fool about like that, just because she happened to be a royalty."

Polly turned upon the speaker, open-mouthed. "What! Do you imagine that we—"

But now a shout "Go!" from the captain sent all the runners flashing away.

Polly changed to wild excitement, with which was infused a good deal of affectionate derision for Naomer—who, this time, had no sooner started than she went all asprawl.

"Hi! Not fair—sweendle!"

As the others went on, however, and Naomer, now that she had picked herself up, went galloping after them, cheered on by onlookers near and distant.

"Go it, kid!—Ha, ha, ha! Go on, Naomer—harder, harder!"

"The cream-jug, Naomer! Ha, ha, ha!"

Nine girls in all were to be seen, plying over the sunny grass. Had there been a larger number, Betty would have run them off in heats in the true sense of the word. But she had decided that so few entrants could be tried out in a single eliminating race.

Only four girls were allowed to run in the final. This rule had been made, so that the big race should not be swamped with entrants who stood no earthly chance.

On sped the present nine, and in such a lengthy race it was impossible tell at once those who were fated to be amongst the also-rans—except that Naomer was hopelessly behind, pulling up a slack stocking as she ran.

As for others who seemed to be getting left, they might be practising tactics of a final-dash kind.

"Fay Denver runs well; good style!"

"Yes, wather, bai Jove!"

Edna heard these praising comments whilst keeping her own eager eyes intent upon her sister. She would not slout encouragement to Fay, there was a sense of being above that sort of thing. But at heart Edna was crying: "Oh, go on, Fay—go on! Let them see—we Denvers—"

Pam, at any rate, did not seem to be doing anything very wonderful as yet. First two hundred yards covered, and Pam really nowhere. Oh, what a lark, what fun if that girl did no good at all.

"Ba Jove, geals, what's the mattach with Pam?"

"Pam's all right, never fear!" This was Polly, all a-dance as she watched. "There you are, girls—look, now! Hurrah! Pam!"

Wiry Pam was streaking along now, overhauling those who had outstripped her at the start. One after another she caught up with them. Longer and longer grew the line of runners towards the finish of the race. Those who were at the back now were definitely the also-rans.

Naomer, clawing up a stocking, was even coming back.

"Fay Denver still leading," someone cried.

"Yes! Well done, the new girl!"

Edna, chewing a lip, glinted her eyes sideways at the speakers. Her feeling, just then, was one of "Now you know what we Denvers can do!"

Then she gazed eagerly to see the finish. Fay, still leading, Pam, a bad second, and only another twenty yards to go. So it was all right.

No. Pam had kept something in reserve for that last twenty yards. But then, so should Fay

have done. Where was Fay's final spurt? Pam was level with her now.

"Pam! Fay! Pam!" They were ear-splitting yells from wildly excited watchers, the one name dinned as good-heartedly as the other. Moreover only wanted the best girl to come in first. But Edna felt exasperated.

"Dead heat!" girls were guessing at the very last moment; and then—

"Pam first—Pam!" It was a general shout, developing into great cheering and a babel of comment. "Pam's got it! Hurrah!"

"And your sister a close second!" Polly turned to say to Edna with a felicitating smile. "Something to be proud of!"

"You think so?" Edna smiled back.

She found it hard to be civil just then. Nothing less than first place ever left her and her sister satisfied.

Naomer came up, making a comical face over her fiasco. Some of the other also-rans straggled back, laughing against themselves. The girls who had been first, second and third were standing in talk together at the winning-point.

"All bekas my jolly old stocking would keep on coming down!"

"You should have let down both stockings," chuckled Polly. "Then you might—I say you MIGHT—have won!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All I know is, I am just as thirsty now as if I had won," said Naomer; and she capered off to resort to one of her own "patent refreshers"—at this season of the year, sherbet and lemonade.

"Pam first, Fay Denver a close second, and Etta Hargrove third," the captain officially commented, closing a notebook in which she had made some jottings.

"A very bad third, too," Etta ruefully smiled. "So we know between whom the race will be, on the day. Pam and Fay!"

The throng dispersed in chattering twos and threes. It was time to go indoors and be ready for the gong. Fay could not immediately rejoin her sister; Betty and others were having congratulatory things to say to her.

But, half-way to the schoolhouse, Edna, hanging back, found Fay stopping, all by herself, to wait for her.

"Not so good!" Fay pouted prettily.

"Oh, you'll do better on the day—beat her easily!"

"I'm not so sure, Edna. That Willoughby girl is all staying power. She finished as if she had only just started. The way she came on in the last hundred yards—"

"Couldn't you have spurted then?"

Only after a pause did Fay admit, in sudden dejection:

"No, I simply couldn't."

And she sighed, a little bitterly, as if she had suffered a big blow to her self-esteem.

A Denver—outclassed!

CHAPTER 3.

"Cousin Bertie"

"SO you two girls don't feel like joining us for the pick-up match? We could do with you!"

"Nice of you, Betty, but— Oh, I don't think so, thanks. Do you, Edna?"

"You see," said Edna, addressing the Form captain. "Fay and I have just been getting some tennis."

Both sisters were twirling rackets, now that



"I've come," Betty said quietly, "to speak to you about something that's been reported to me." Fay affected a disdainful drawl: "Oh, so Pam has been telling tales, has she?"

they had been checked on their way to the school-house, after an hour at the courts.

"And we really have some shopping to do," Fay pleaded sweetly.

"Oh, right-ho, then! We must play one short on either side, that's all. You may see Pam in town." Betty cordially added, turning away. "She has an appointment with the dressmaker."

"We'll look out for her! Come on, Edna. Can't stick this!" Fay continued in a dropped voice. "Too slow for anything. So that Willoughby girl gets her clothes made in Barncombe. Fancy!"—disdainfully.

"Appointment—pooh!" scoffed Edna. "If the truth were known, I expect there is something else on in Barncombe. She wouldn't be biking in all by herself just to suit a dressmaker's convenience—and cricket to be had with her chums!"

So little did either Fay or Edna know or understand Pam yet. But Study 12 knew; the Willoughbys gave a good deal of dressmaking to a very deserving widow, Mrs. Marlowe, living in a by-street in the quaint old town. If Pam had not gone in this afternoon to be fitted, the hard-working dressmaker would have had one order hindered at a time when she had nothing else to get on with.

"Perhaps she hopes to meet that Grangemoor fellow whom she is so chummy with, they say," grinned Fay. "What's his name—Jimmy Cherril?"

"That's more like it," nodded Fay. "It's a halfer at Grangemoor, of course."

"And I wish now that I had dropped a line

to Cousin Bert." Fay murmured. "What shall we do, Edna, if we don't run across him? I want— Oh, I don't know! Something better than this!"

They were half an hour getting ready for the jaunt into town—an unheard of amount of time for Morcove girls. But Fay and Edna were not girls to fling down a comb after running it just once or twice through their hair.

Ultimately they cycled away in a style that did, at any rate, evidence the spending of so much time over their toilettes to good purpose.

Fay, as usual, was the really winsome one; dress and manners alike, to the extent that she dared—and her daring in such things was pretty great—in advance of her years.

Barncombe seemed to be asleep in the warm sunshine. Few cars were passing in the old-fashioned High Street, and the pavements were almost deserted.

For twenty minutes or so Fay and Edna window-gazed, derisively commenting on things that they would not be seen dead with.

Their only purchase was at the leading bookshop. Edna bought an expensive magazine there. Then they drifted back to the Creamery tea-rooms, where they had

"parked" their bicycles—in the bakehouse yard, hard by.

"Hey!" a voice hailed them, when they were at the shop doorway, and they flashed round.

"Bertie!" cried Fay.

"Hallo, you two!" their schoolboy cousin grinned. He appeared to have left his bicycle, this very minute, in the bakehouse yard. "This won't do, you know!"

"What won't do?" sparkled Fay. "Getting off on your own! What about games? Morcove won't like this, I'm sure. But come on in," he chuckled, pushing the glass door open for them. "And get some tea with me. Place to ourselves?" as he saw that the tea-room at the back of the shop was deserted, except for a waitress or two. "Splendid!"

Fay went first, jauntily of step. Hers was the right to choose a table. She chose one in a nice secluded corner.

"Thankful!" she sighed, after dropping down into a lounge chair.

"For what, Fay? Meeting me?"

"Anything, to relieve the—the—the— What's the word, Edna darling?"

"Monotony," said Edna, already taking an interest in her magazine.

"It's deadly," Fay smiled at Cousin Bert, who was smoothing his glossy hair now that his cap had been tossed on to a coat-peg. "In a way, the school is all right. And yet—"

"I knew!" he exulted, at the same time twitching the menu-card across to her. "You two were bound to be, bored stiff by Morcove."

"How are you going on?" Fay smiled, toying with the card.

"Oh, I'm all right; my stook stands above par at present, rather! But you, Fay, don't look any the worse for Morocco, anyhow. In fact—" And he hitched his chair more round to her side of the table.

"Now then!" she laughed. "Oh, some tea, and just the usual," to the waitress. "Bertie, you're looking very fit. Your getting the House captaincy agrees with you."

"Better than it does with some of the chaps under me. By the way, two girls at your school—brothers at mine."

"Oh, you mean Polly Linton and Judy Cardew?"

"They're the ones; Jack Linton and Dave Cardew—I'm going to have to put them through it."

"And isn't there a Jimmy Cherrol, a great chum of theirs?"

"Yes, he's another. But why do you ask about him, Fay?"

"Oh—just interested."

"Well, I'm not going to be jealous of Jimmy, the young blighter! Been doing anything, Fay? And you"—reaching a hand to slap Edna upon the knee—"put the book down, can't you?"

"Fay ran in the final heat for the quarter mile to-day," Edna announced, casting aside the magazine. "She got in—"

"But only second," pouted Fay. "And now— isn't it awful. Edna won't believe it possible, but I'm sure I shall be whacked on the day."

"Why, who was first in the try-out?"

"A girl called Pam Willoughby."

"The Swanlake girl? Her people own that whacking great estate at Swanlake, over by Grangemoor. But you can beat her, Fay, when the time comes."

"No"—pathetically—"I don't believe I can."

"But you must!" he insisted with violent gaiety. "We Denvers can't take back seats. Any chance of her crocking up?"

"I should say; not an earthly."

"Well, hang it, if it's like that, we must do something. There we are," as the waitress set down the tea and cakes.

Fay served the tea, and he offered her and Edna the mixed pastries.

"Talking of that Willoughby girl," he harked, back presently, "she's the one who thinks rather a lot of Jimmy Cherrol, isn't she? I say, you two—that seems to give me a bit of a pull, doesn't it?"

"Look out!" Edna whispered. "Here she is!"

Then Fay crashed down a tea-cup, voicing a false-friendly:

"Pam! Oh, come to this table, Pam—do!"

Bertie stood up, fingering his tie. He switched an extra chair into position, as if he were showing off his strength.

Pam showed no hesitation in crossing over to sit with the three. Like her mother, she accepted any *contretemps* with serenity. As a matter of fact she was wanting to do everything that was friendly by the Denver sisters. But this fellow—she could guess he was uppish, and she hated that sort of thing.

"This is Cousin Bertie, Pam," Fay sweetly introduced him. "House captain at Grangemoor, you know."

"Oh, yes, I know." Pam seated herself. "Lovely day! So you gave the cricket a miss?"—to the girls.

"Was it very awful?" Fay returned prettily.

"But we had been getting some tennis—"

"And that quarter-mile this morning, eh?" rejoined Bertie, looking away to beckon to the waitress for an extra cup and saucer. "You're the girl, I'm told, who beat Fay?"

"Only just," Pam responded.

"What I want to know is," Bertie grinned, "whom am I to back when the great day comes?"

"Oh, Fay, of course," Pam said serenely. "She's your cousin."

"But I like a cert. Er—these pastries! I'm afraid we've scoffed the best. I'll ask for some more."

"Not for me, thanks. Just a cup of tea," Pam said to Fay, "and I must be off. I want to get back in time to see something of the match."

"Cream?" Fay asked. "The jug, I suppose, is to remind me of the prize for the quarter-mile that I am *not* going to win! Oh, well!"

"Is that to be the prize?" chuckled Bertie.

"Look here, then! I'll make it a whole tea-service for the loser—consolation prize. Does that tempt you, Pam?"

"I'm afraid not," she smiled.

"Dash it all, you're not one of those girls who can't be tempted, are you?" he joked on.

Fay interposed blandly:

"It depends, of course, on the sort of temptation. A fine day can be a temptation—to run into Barncombe."

"Instead of staying for cricket, eh?" laughed the boy cousin.

Pam shook her head as she sipped the tea.

"I wasn't tempted by the weather. I had to come, that's all."

"Well, I'm sorry, but I had to gate several fellows this afternoon, and Jimmy was one of them," Bertie Denver laughed. "And that's all about him—except that otherwise, I dare say, he would be here."

He cast his eyes aside to Pam, who turned the other way to speak to Edna, immersed once more in the magazine.

"Good number, Edna?"

"Oh, not so bad! Sorry! I wasn't meaning to be rude."

"Just as if!"

"But, I say, Pam," persisted Bertie, "about that race. You don't want to win it again this year? You've got one cream-jug. Be a sport, Pam, and give Fay a chance! And I'll make it up to you in some other way—eh, Pam?"

He laughed as she regarded him with her steady eyes.

"Oh, I'm not meaning a tea-service—that was only my joke," he chuckled on. "But I can, you know, repay one good turn with another."

"Bertie," said Fay, smiling uncomfortably, "don't be a stupe!"

"But it's all right," he rashly insisted. "Hang it, aren't these things arranged often? And Pam knows very well Jimmy Cherrol's her boy. It's not so easy to meet him, but—"

"Yes, Well," Pam struck in gently, standing up, "now I think I must be off!"

"Oh, Pam, not yet!"

"Sorry, Fay, but I must. Thanks for the tea."

And she walked out.

"You idiot!" Fay said to Bertie, whose face had reddened.

"Why?"

"To imagine that she is that sort of girl!"

"Oh, rot!" he shrugged. "Every girl is that sort when she is fond of somebody. Besides, I gave her the chance to think I was only joking."

"And she saw at the finish that you weren't," frowned Fay. "She does so fancy herself, too!"

"But we've got to keep in with her," Edna remarked. "Falling out with the other girls only means that they are on the watch afterwards to catch you tripping."

"Hanged if I'm going to forget her going off like that!" Bertie scowled. "In front of the waitresses, too! All right, I'll pay her out—through that Cherrol chap!"

His swaggering air returned. He took out a cigarette-case and opened it. Fay instantly dipped her fingers to take one of the Virginians. She stroked it, not daring to light up there, although he playfully offered the match.

"She shan't see that Cherrol fellow in the team I'm bringing over to Morcove next week," he threatened darkly. "Putting on her airs to me—huh!"

"Pity that you are to bring over a team to our school this day week," Fay mused glumly. "Pam will have told Polly Linton and other girls by then, and they may tell the boys—those brothers, you know. That won't do you any good at Grangemoor, Bertie."

"Oh, hang! Well, then, I'll get that fixture cancelled somehow. I'm not so keen, after all, on a game of cricket."

"And, of course," Fay smiled, "you don't want to come over to Morcove just for the sake of seeing me and Edna."

"Now then! Here, I tell you what," he eagerly whispered. "Next Wednesday and other girls will get an outing together, eh? A real razzle! Do you girls know that the motor-bus will run you to Sandton Bay in an hour from here?"

Fay turned to her sister.

"What about it, Edna?"

"Lovely! But what's the use of Bertie talking like that? He'll never be able to wangle it."

"Ho, won't I! But, mind you, if in the meantime that Willoughby girl seems to be seeing something in the offer I made—about the race, you know—then the match shall stand, eh? After all, we can go to Sandton Bay some other time. But there is only one sports day for Morcove, and you want to do yourself a bit of good, I suppose, Fay?"

He rushed on, under the impulse of selfish thoughts.

" anyhow, I want you to win. Can't have chaps at Grangemoor saying that my cousin only came in second, beaten by that Pam! So what I think, Fay—I think you ought to sound her. Oh, I know she up'd and walked out like that. But you give her a hint. I would! It will answer in the end!"

Fay shook her head. But his suggestion must have lodged in her mind, for she remained deep in thought after that.

Not until he had followed his girl cousins out at the tea-shop, having paid at the desk and stopped at the counter which displayed chocolates, did Fay have another word to say. Then:

"Perhaps she isn't so wonderful as she appears to be!"

Then which, in regard to Pam Willoughby, no greater mistake could have been made.

CHAPTER 4. Not So Good

EDNA DENVER got back to Morcove a good two hours in advance of her sister.

Fay had decided to leave her bicycle to be mended, although there had not been much the matter with it, on the outward journey into Barncombe.

Fay came home by train to Morcove Road

station, Cousin Bertie riding with her—first class, as became members of the Denver family!

He said good-bye to her at the tiny, wayside station, for the train, working a "shuttle" system, was going back almost immediately.

So Fay turned up in the study about the time for doing a "spot of prep." She brought with her a carton of "choos" that Bertie had dumped in her lap during the train journey, also a bunch of flowers.

"Aren't they adorable, Edna?" smiled Fay, after arranging the flowers in a jar of water. "Sweet peas at this time of year. I wonder what he gave for them!"

"What did you give him, that's more like it!" laughed Edna.

She was in perfect good humour, not minding in the least that Bertie concentrated upon her sister. Edna was always ready to "clear out." It was what she would expect Fay to do when her, Edna's, turn came.

In all of which there was evidence of that complete understanding between the two sisters; get all the fun you could, and don't, if possible, spoil anybody else's.

"I say, what do you think, Edna?"—after Fay had dropped down into a chair. "Bertie happened to ask me if I was entering for anything else on Sports Day. I said I thought of going in for the costume race, just to make Morcove sit up. Something daring; or where's the fun?"

Fay relaxed in the chair, and her low laugh was like a kitten's purr.

"He's going to send me a parcel of Grangemoor togs, Edna—"

"He is!"

"Yes-s-s!" Fay gurgled. "So that I can dress up as a Grangemoor fellow for the costume race."

"How lovely! But will it be allowed, Fay? This is Morcove."

"But I shan't be seen until the race is due to start," Fay rippled on. "Anyway, I shall have the joke of coming out in the togs, even if I'm sent to the right-about. Oh, I'll make the natives stare, Edna!"

"When do those clothes arrive, Fay?"

"He is going to look them out to-morrow. They should be here on Friday."

Sure enough, after the midday dismiss on the following Friday, Fay was told that a parcel had come for her.

Together the sisters claimed it, and raced upstairs to their study to go through the contents at once.

"We mustn't let anybody in, Edna!"

"Oh, no!"—with a gleefulness that equalled Fay's. "But there is no key to the study-door. I can wedge it with a chair perhaps."

Whilst Edna did this, Fay, at the table, clawed string away from the parcel, then turned everything out of the brown-paper wrappings.

"Edna! Oh, I say, dear,—here's a scream!"

The younger sister, turning round, instantly doubled up with laughter.

Fay had picked out a pair of flannel trousers and was holding them in front of her, from the waist downwards, in great merriment.

"Think they'll fit me, Edna?"

"Fay, it's too funny for words! You do look— He, he, he!"

"Let me try the jacket—oh, and this Grangemoor cap. He's sent everything—Grangemoor scarf, too."

"You'll be an authentic copy," chuckled Edna. "Why"—as she helped her sister into the jacket— "it's quite a fine fit."

"It'll be Miss Somerfield who will have the

fit. But I don't care; I'm going to do it. Something that no Morocco girl, I know, has ever done before! Edna darling, if you breathe a word about this—"

"Oh, as if I should! But where to keep the things? Down here in the study?"

"I think so—yes. Do them up in a parcel again and they'll be all right. Well, I must write to Bertie this evening, thanking him for being such a sport!"

"I would like to see you in the togs, Fay," said Edna, becoming serious. "Don't you think you can beat that Willoughby, after all?"

"Edna, I just know for a fact that I can't! In the elimination race, I was nearly dead at the finish. I simply couldn't stay the distance. Wish now I had never entered."

"But I don't see how you can scratch."

"Oh, no; can't do that." The Denver self-esteem was making itself felt again. "You know, Edna, I have been thinking, off and on—"

"About what Bertie said to Pam Willoughby? Have you noticed, Fay—Pam has not shown signs of being offended?"

"I have noticed that, and—and it has made me wonder," Fay said, a frown hinting at desperation; "is it, after all, safe to sound her—again?"

"She's nice enough to us both now, anyhow. So, surely—you might feel your way with her?"

Fay moved about the room, deep in thought.

"She must know, too, Edna, that Bertie can make it nasty for that Cherrol boy, over there at Grangemoor. In her place, Edna—wouldn't you rather scratch from a race than be done out of chances of meeting a chum now and then?"

"She won the race last year. What does it matter to her, if she runs again or not, this year!"

Fay nodded.

"Oh, I shall chance it, with a talk with her!" was the sudden, desperate decision. "Dad and mother will be down here for Sports Day. Quite likely, Bertie will be over. I must win something. Edna, I know what I'll do!"

And that same evening, an hour before posting-time, Fay did it.

PAM WILLOUGHBY, at that moment, was alone in her study, doing a rather strange thing.

Standing at the table, she was sorting out and winding into little spools, of different colour, odd lengths of knitting wool.

A tap at the door and Fay Denver came in.

"Hallo!" Pam greeted her cordially. "Like me—indoors, when you might be out, Fay."

"I have a letter to get off. What are you doing with all those oddments of wool, Pam?"

"Mother sends me them, from time to time. There's a cottage girl not far from here who has spinal trouble. She loves knitting, but her people can't afford to buy the wool. So I take all these odds and ends to her, and she does the most wonderful things with them."

"Really," said Fay, not very interested. "Er—Pam, it's my Cousin Bertie I'm writing to, this evening. I wondered, can I send him any message for him to pass on to Jimmy Cherrol, from you?"

"What?"

"Isn't Jimmy a special chum of yours?"

"Oh, if I want to send a message to Jimmy, I write," said Pam, winding more wool. "Care to sit down?"

"Thanks" But Fay remained standing.

"Another thing, though. I rather fancy that Jimmy will have a difficulty about getting over here next week for the inter-school match. My cousin—House captain, as you know—"

"Yes? Go on."

"He has a good deal of authority—"

"I hope he uses it well, Fay."

"Oh, he does! He can be very firm— Why do you smile, though?"

"I was meaning, Fay, I hope he uses his authority rightly."

"Oh, I see! But, of course, he does! We Denvers— But it so happens that Jimmy Cherrol—and, I think, one or two others, chums of his—have got the wrong side of Bertie. Still, my cousin is ready to do his best, I know; ready to arrange it all nicely for us, over here, if—"

"If what, Fay?" Pam was still smiling, so it seemed all right to proceed. What Fay was on watch for her—not knowing that it was a sign she would never get from Pam—was a sudden bridling look of indignation.

"Look here, Pam!" Fay suddenly exclaimed with a bold smile, "you don't want to run for that quarter-mile? You can easily scratch—"

"On what condition, Fay? The one that your Cousin Bertie hinted at the other day?"

"Yes!" came the eager answer. "Why not?"

Pam threw down a finished ball of wool. She looked at Fay steadily.

"Now, you know, you have put me in a difficult position, Fay Denver. Supposing I don't win, after all—and who is to say that I am bound to win? I may quite possibly lose to you on the day."

"But in any case—"

"In that case, Fay Denver, I stand the chance of its being whispered about me, afterwards, that I allowed you to win; that it was all arranged."

"But—"

"I wouldn't let it turn me against you, the other day, when your Cousin Bertie made the suggestion. I took it for granted that you and your sister were shocked. But now the very same suggestion has come from you yourself, Fay. So—"

The rest was a directing glance to the door.

Fay went away then—abashed, as she had never been abashed before. Never!

The best she could do, when rejoicing Edna in their study, was to give a wry grin.

"Why, what?" stared Edna.

"Put my foot in it, that's all."

"With that Willoughby girl? About the race?"

"Yep."

"Oh, well, you're not going to let that upset you, Fay. She isn't worth it."

"Dash this school!" Fay suddenly seethed. "I feel I'm going to hate it. None of the girls are our wavelength, Edna. We don't get them, and they don't get us. And you can't do—anything."

"Fay, you can. Only it does look as if you have to be careful how you do it." That was Edna's pertness again. "If Pam Willoughby wouldn't agree—well, then, I'd let Bertie know."

"So I will, by this evening's post—hang her! Now she shan't see anything of her Jimmy Cherrol for a month to come!"

Fay sat down at her side of the study table and flung out a wad of notepaper. Dipping a pen, she began the letter, writing furiously. Her sister, having nothing better to do, resorted to an easy chair with a book to skim through.

Suddenly there was a tap at the door.

The sisters looked at each other before one of them said:

"Come in!"

It was the Form captain who entered. She looked grave. Before speaking she closed the door behind her.

"Sorry, Fay, but I'm bound to speak to you about something that has been reported to me. Pam Willoughby—"

"Oh, she has been telling, has she!" Fay said disdainfully.

"Didn't you gather that she would have to tell me?"

"I'm afraid I didn't!"

"But she told you, in so many words; you had put her in a difficult position?"

"Well?"

"Don't you see," Betty pursued, more in sorrow than anger, "unless Pam made it known to somebody in the school, there would be that risk hanging over her? As she said, supposing she doesn't win the race after all? And supposing she had never told anybody that you approached her about scratching and that she refused?"

Fay burst out laughing.

"Do you understand all this, Edna?"

"Bothered if I do!" Edna said with a shrug.

"Oh!" Betty exclaimed. "Would it be taken less seriously at any other school? Pam was bound to report it. She has made the best of a bad job by simply reporting it to me."

"So that you can—do what?" asked Fay saucily.

"Report it to the Head?"

"No! If you'd think, you'd see there is no need. My being in the know is sufficient. I can bear witness at any time, to clear Pam. Also," Betty added, "I hope the warning will be sufficient, coming only from me. At this school we don't arrange amongst ourselves who is to win. Let there be no more of it, that's all."

Next moment Betty had softened to a forbearing, even friendly mood.

"You two girls are both new to Morcove. You do want to stand well with others, don't you?"

"Oh, yes—if possible," Fay nodded sweetly.

"It shouldn't be difficult," Betty said gently. "They're a fine lot, in our Form especially. So I'm sure it is true to say it simply rests with both of you. And that's all I am going to say, except that you needn't be afraid—of Pam, I mean. Now that she has told me, as a matter of principle, she will put the whole thing out of her mind."

"Oh, I see. By the way," Fay added, with studied carelessness, "it never occurred to Pam Willoughby that I was only—joking?"

Fay flashed round, in the act of opening the door to pass out.

"That, Fay, is not the thing to say. You were NOT joking!"

The sisters had a moment's sight of the captain

at her very sternest. Then she was gone, closing the door behind her—quite quietly.

CHAPTER 5.

Such a Scream

THE sisters, as they looked at each other, laughed feebly.

"That was another brick I dropped, Edna!"

"So it seems! But what a lot of rot it is," the younger sister exclaimed.

"Anyhow, the captain was graciously pleased to let me off with a warning."

"I'm afraid her manner jarred upon me—didn't it you?"

"Jarred? I could have knocked her head off! But there," shrugged Fay, throwing herself back in an armchair. "Who wants rows!"



"Jimmy Cherrol, meeting Pam Willoughby," chuckled Fay, addressing the dummy. "Good-evening, Pam! I'm here at the gate—alone!"

"We don't, that's certain. Besides, we want to let it appear we Denvers are above that sort of thing. Pam Willoughby," said Edna tensely, "is not the only girl who can be grand enough to put things out of her mind!"

A pause followed this. Fay lolled in the armchair, trying to retain a smile that seemed determined to fade.

"As for that captain," Edna said shrewishly; "can't we do something to take a rise out of her? I wish we could!"

Fay raised her eyes; they had been contemplating her straddled feet.

"It would be fun, Edna! But, of course, the way to hit back for the whole thing is through Bertie, at Grangemoor. I'll finish my letter,

"I'll tell him— But what are you thinking?"
 "Can't we do something at this end, Fay? If we could bring about a jolly good row between Morcove and Grangemoor? So that all this friendliness between the two schools got stopped. Then none of those fellows could come over. That would give Pam and Betty and others a knock."
 "But I don't know that I want Bertie to be stopped from—"

"He wouldn't be stopped. House captain—he's different. He might even have to come over, to inquire into things."

"That's better," Fay said. "I like the idea of —"

"Here, I know!" her sister rushed on jubilantly. "Suppose we do something in secret that Morcove considers an insult—and they blame Grangemoor for it? Miss Somerfield might go into a tearing rage and cancel that match for next week. After all, do we want to play cricket?"

"I don't! I want to go to Sandton Bay next Wednesday," Fay laughed. "Only, I don't see —"

"I do! Oh, I've got it!" Edna whispered, with a rejoicing clap. "We've got those Grangemoor clothes; the very thing to enable us to get Grangemoor blamed. Morcove must find a Grangemoor cap, or a scarf, or something, that will convince them a Grangemoor boy has been over, on the quiet—"

"But so he might have done," Fay objected quickly. "And all Morcove will think will be that just one boy or another did it. As for Jimmy Cherrol and his lot—they'd never be suspected. In any case, their denials would be accepted by Pam and her chums."

"Listen," Edna pleaded softly. "The way to work it; cause it to happen at a time when every fellow at Grangemoor must have been in school. That will give the two schools something to row about! Grangemoor, don't you see, Fay, will be up in arms, because it couldn't have been one of their fellows, they'll say. But Morcove will insist that it must have been!"

"Oh, this is great," Fay chuckled. "I can see even the Study 12 lot falling out with their best Grangemoor chums and their brothers over it all. So when would be the best time?"

"At dusk this evening," Edna suggested eagerly. "It will be nearly nine then. Grangemoor call-over is at nine. There's no likelier time for every boy to be accounted for. Fay, by-and-by you must get into those togs—"

"And let myself be seen in them? I say! But I don't mind," came with a reckless laugh. "How can I possibly be suspected? But what am I to do when I've got the things on?"

Edna, as she racked her brains, was plucking a lip.

"Let's do something to make that Barton girl look ridiculous, Fay," was the suggestion, at last. "Guy her—shall we? Make up a dummy Form captain—"

"Insult to the captain," gurgled Fay. "That will cause a war! Edna, you're a marvel, thinking of all these things."

"I haven't a Cousin Bert to think about," was the dry retort. "Are you game then?"

Fay let action answer that question. She nudged her sister to come away with her and get busy. "Upstairs, Edna," was the whisper, as they passed out of the study. "Collect some things!"

"And smuggle them out of doors. But we

shall want the Grangemoor parcel as well, Fay."
 "We'll get that afterwards."

AN hour later, the two sisters were entering into the daring plan with a zest and a merriment worthy of a better cause.

It had gone eight o'clock, but it would not be twilight for another forty minutes at least. They had, however, much to do in the meantime, for they had only just got to this suitable spot for the preparations, out on the open moor.

First they were dealing with the dummy. It was to be almost life-size, as gross a caricature of Form-captain Betty as they could make it.

Morcove regulation dress had been easily got together by the sisters and for "stuffing" they had only to pluck handfuls of grass and ling. The head had looked like being a problem; but Edna had pounced upon the very thing—a round, whitey-grey stone, just the right size. Such stones lay about in great numbers on the moor.

"You'll have to be careful the captain doesn't lose her head, Fay," tittered Edna, busy pencilling nose, mouth and eyes upon the face of the stone.

"I shall carry her head separate—he, he, he! Oh, Edna, what a look you've given her. Enough to scare anybody!"

"I'm not Tess Trelawney, that wonderful artist of theirs," murmured Edna, putting in finishing touches. "So I can't be exactly lifelike. There!"

"Then we're ready with the dummy? I've done my part. Stick the head on and see how it looks, Edna."

"I don't know if you think she looks nicer this way," said Edna, putting the head on with a definite tilting backwards, "or this?"—giving it a lop-sided effect.

"Oh, either way!" bleated Fay.

They were both in convulsions of suppressed merriment for a minute or so. Then they unrolled the parcel of Grangemoor clothes.

"You must keep a look-out now, Edna," tittered Fay. "I mustn't be seen yet."

"It's all right," the younger sister reported, after some cautious peeping in different directions.

Tarning round to look at Fay, who was struggling to put the clothes on over her own things, Edna collapsed in a fresh fit of bottled-up laughter.

Fay herself looked as if she might fall over at any moment, not only because she was standing on one leg whilst thrusting the other into a trouser-leg, but because so much mirthfulness was exhausting her.

"Yes, come and do me up, Edna. Braces! I say, they are long in the leg, Edna!"

"We'll take them up," grinned Edna, approaching with the braces. "Stand round, dear. Oh, only one button at the back! And that's loose!"

"It is? Goodness, I hope it won't give. How can I run, presently, if my tut-tut-trousers are coming down?" spluttered Fay. "Oh, dear, talk about a scream. This beats anything we have ever done."

"What you must do, in case of need," said Edna, standing in front of Fay now, with the braces brought over either shoulder, "run with your hands in your pockets. Then you can hold them up. Better tighten up the braces before you put on the waistcoat. There we are!"

"I feel stuffed up—like a guy myself! This collar," Fay said, wrestling with it—"too big."

"You look most handsome, I'm sure!"

"Hah! Handsome is as handsome does! I can see myself looking handsome, if I am—"

"I do wish you could see yourself," Edna tittered. "Really, it's a shame I can't take a snap of you. Now walk about, just to feel what it's like."

"Oh, dear!"

But Fay was exaggerating the discomfort only for fun's sake. The entire escapade was one just after the hearts of both girls.

"I'm Jimmy Cherrol, meeting Pam Willoughby," chuckled Fay, coming back to Edna after a few trial paces. "Good-evening, Pam! I'm here at the gate alone! Dash, that button's gone!"

"Stop making me laugh," bleated Edna. "I shall go into shrieks. But look here, can you manage to carry the dummy without any help from me? If not—"

"Edna, I won't hear of your coming with me. That would be fatal. You've got to be indoors when I bring off the stunt—and you had better go now. There's nothing more to be done here."

"Right-ho, then. Best of luck!"

And Edna flitted, leaving Fay to do the rest.

CHAPTER 6.

Morcove Is Furious

ON the games-field and at the tennis courts, girls were having to cease play now.

The light was gone. In a few minutes the bell for the last assembly of the day would ring. A few girls, at this moment turning in at the main gateway on their bicycles, were the last to be due back.

Those cyclists came riding up the gravelled drive, merrily chiming their bells. From the

courts came cries of "Game and set!"—just in time before any wild skying of a ball could cause it to be lost in the dusk. Some of the Study 12 chums were going to knock off now from batting practice at the nets.

"Last ball coming down!"

"No, bekas—"

"Hi, kid, don't stand in front of the stumps! How many more times!" yelled Polly, getting ready to make the last ball a particularly speedy one.

It will have been inferred that Naomer Nakara was batting. She had been in five minutes, and out every thirty seconds.

Polly, the demon bowler of the "clummery," took her short run and brought her right arm over, and the ball whizzed down the pitch. Whereupon Naomer executed one more of her wild swipes—with no resulting crack! that would have counted as a boundary hit. Instead—

Three stumps were splayed again, and yet Naomer was ready to protest:

"Not out! Not ze bit of cet, bekas—"

"Play!" Betty called, preparing to bowl.

"One more for luck!"

"Oooo!" Naomer shrieked, delighted to see a nice easy one. "Got him!" she yelled, after fetching a sounding smack! from her bat. "Where is he? Ooo—"

"Catch, Paula! Catch!"

"Bai Jove— Owp!" howled the beloved duffer, as the dropping ball slipped through stung fingers. "Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Boo! Of all the butter-fingers!" Polly snorted. "If I were you, Betty, I'd cancel that match with Wragemoor for next Wednesday. How can we do any good!"

"Oh, we'll manage," the captain voiced her slogan blithely. She knew that Polly was only joking. "Better bring those stumps in for the night, Naomer."

"No, bekas—I am carrying my bat!" the dusky one announced, with some idea of this being an achievement to be proud of.

"Hark to her!" the madcap scoffed. "Well, Paula, you fetch the stumps, there's a dear!"

"Er—pawdon, Polly?" demurred the elegant one, not at all inclined for fatigue duties.

But Pam was running in to collect the stumps. She came to Betty and the rest, a few seconds later, with them rattling under an arm.

"Shame to go in, although the light has gone," Pam commented on the soft, warm evening. "Fine day to-morrow, anyhow."

"And to-morrow is Saturday!" Helen Craig rejoiced. "We ought to get a— Hallo though, she broke off, using her eyes in a startled way. "What—on—earth, girls."

"Yes, bekas—what ze diggings!" came Naomer's amazed yell. "Over zere by ze hedge! Ooo, look—queek!"

"Bai Jove!"

"But—but whatever is it?" gasped others.

Vaguely, in the waning light, they could see one figure, moving about very briskly. But that figure seemed to be accompanied by another that was strangely inert.

"Come and see!"

"Yes, queek—queek!"

They went racing across the dewy grass, and their eager onrush, as they instantly realised, was the signal for the active figure to retire hastily through a gap in the hedge.

"Why, that's a boy!" Polly shouted. "You saw?"

FREE PATTERNS

for making these frocks



—a Tennis Frock and a smart visiting dress are given with this new "Bestway" book. Schoolgirls who want specially pretty clothes on growing lines will find masses of designs for frocks with summer wraps, shorts, coats and suits, and delightful outfits for sport and other occasions, in this book. The designs are simple enough for any girl to copy



BEST WAY

SUMMER FASHIONS for GIRLS IN THEIR TEENS

Book No. 519

6d. from all Newsagents and Book-stalls or 7d. post free (Home or Abroad) from "Bestway," 291a, Oxford Street, W. 1.

"Yes! Yes!"

"Extraordinary!"

"A schoolboy?" Betty specified. "You could tell by his clothes. But who's the other, staying there on this side of the hedge?"

"That's a girl!"

"So it is!" gasped several of them, in greater bewilderment than ever. "Why—?"

"Good gracious! A Morcoove geal?"

They were already near enough to discern familiar features in the clothing of "the girl," who, to their alarm, seemed to be sitting about in a very queer state.

Then the chimes got to the spot, and both amazement and alarm gave place to furious indignation.

A dummy! An offensive guy, representing a Morcoove girl!

"And look at the label! 'I'm the captain!'" Polly read the large hand-writing on the square of cardboard. "Oh!"

"Disgraceful, bai Jove!"

Other girls had rushed up. Quite a big crowd was forming.

"Who did it?" the clamour started. "Does anyone know?"

"We saw a boy," some of the first-comers upon the scene answered in chorus. "He got through the hedge with it; then made off."

"A boy?"

"Yes, a schoolboy."

Polly, ever the one to act with lightning haste, had rushed to that weak place in the hedge through which the boy had come and gone.

She pounced to catch up something.

"I say, here's his cap!"

"What!"

Polly flung the school cap for the crowd to see, then pushed through the hedge. Next moment she was shouting again:

"I can see him, running away over the moor!"

"Yes, there he goes!" Betty had now got through the hedge, and was at Polly's side. "The wretch!"

"After him!"

"No, Polly—no! We'd never catch him, and besides it's much too late—too dark. I say, that's a Grangemoor cap!"

"I know!" Polly thundered, following Betty in a scramble back to the crowd on the inside of the hedge. "So it was a Grangemoor fellow! Well, I wouldn't have believed Grangemoor owned such a lout—to do a thing like this!"

"Disgraceful! Yes, wather!"

"Shame, yes!" was the general opinion.

There was some further staring at the guy. Nobody laughed, although the thing, in its way, looked comical enough.

"No, it isn't funny!" Polly stamped. "We can always take a joke—when there is a joke. But this!"

"A hit at you, Betty, too, as captain!"

"Oh, I don't mind that—"

"We do!"

"There'll have to be an explanation—an apology!" Helen said fiercely. "It will be up to Grangemoor to find out the fellow and deal with him."

"No dealings with Grangemoor until they have done that!" someone else proposed, and the many murmurs of approval proclaimed the mood that Morcoove was in. Burning indignation.

"Yes. Well," Pam said, "it should be easy for Grangemoor to find out who did it. The time now—just upon nine."

"Ah, yes," Betty exclaimed. "So the fellow

who has just made off can't possibly be back at Grangemoor in time for call-over and chapel."

"Not with a motor-bike even could he do it," Polly declared, with grim satisfaction. "So there should be a certainty of finding out who it was."

"Any initials inside the cap?" someone asked.

"No. It's just a Grangemoor cap, that's all."

Betty said, having taken possession of it. "Well, we must go in now. Get rid of this dummy!"

"Take it to bits, and take the clothing indoors." "How did he get these Morcoove things?" Judy Cardew wondered, whilst helping with the taking-to-bits.

"Bought them, I suppose. They look new," Betty responded. "If he bought them at the outfitter's in Barncombe, we might be able to trace him ourselves. If he sent away to London for them—"

"And he would do that, you may be sure," Polly exclaimed, "to avoid being traced as the purchaser. He could send the order by post, under an assumed name."

"Wouldn't Jack and Dave and Jimmy be wild if they knew!" said Madge Minden. "Such a low-down trick!"

Suddenly Polly went rushing away in the direction of the schoolhouse. Even Naomer and others who ran after her, wondering what possessed her now, could not overtake her.

With less than ten minutes to go before assembly, Polly got to the school telephone. She should have asked permission first, but she was going to do that afterwards!

As it happened her call was put through, and she obtained a three-minute talk, and only her Form-fellows knew about this, coming in out of the twilight just as she came away from the telephone.

"I've rung up my brother at Grangemoor," she announced. "Was just in time to get him before he went into hall. He's going to take note of any absentees at their assembly."

"Good!"

"Didn't have time to explain what had happened here," Polly rushed on. "But I did tell him that it was something very serious, and that it must have been a Grangemoor fellow. He is going to ring me up in the morning, if possible."

"That's the stuff!" Betty commented.

"Why, has anything happened?" inquired a demure voice; and the excited crowd that it was in the outer hall found Edna Denyer approaching, looking mildly alarmed.

"Oh, nothing," it was Betty's first impulse to answer; then she corrected herself. "Some fellow from Grangemoor has played a low-down trick on us."

"Oh, really? But this does interest me, yes!" Edna said prettily. "Remember, I have a cousin who is a House captain at Grangemoor."

"Zen how would you like eet, Edna, eef one of us made a guy of him, over zero, like one of ze Grangemoor fellows has made a guy of our cap over here?" Naomer shrilled.

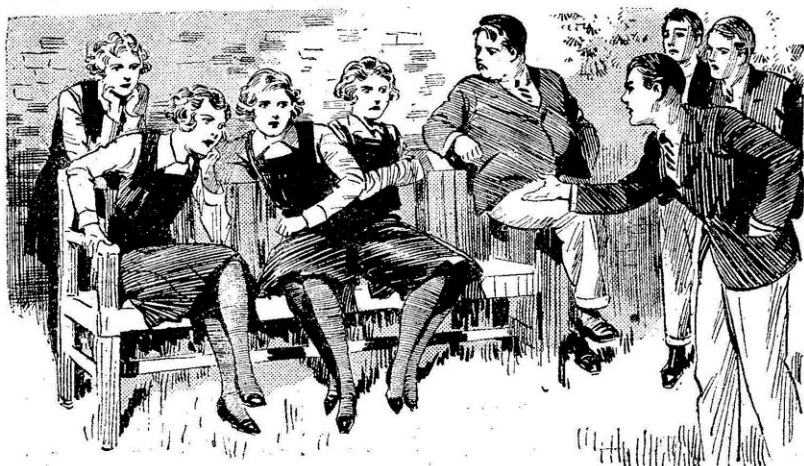
"Oh! Is that what has happened?" And Edna's brows went up, expressing suitable surprise. "How disgraceful!"

"So we think," several girls angrily voiced.

"And we're not going to take it sitting down!"

"We shall get the fellow, though!" Polly declared grimly.

"But is there anything I can do?" Edna asked sweetly. "My sister will be just as peeved, too, when she hears about this. She will be down in a minute; has had a bit of a headache this



"But look here," Jack expostulated. "We know it simply couldn't have been one of our fellows who put up that dummy." But Polly was adamant. "It's no use, Jack. We've got his cap—a Grangemoor one."

evening, so she has been keeping quiet in our study."

"There's nothing for you to do, thanks, Edna," said the captain. "We must all wait until the morning, that's all. If your sister's head is still bad, she can easily get let off Big Hall. Does she know that? She could go up to bed now, and you could explain to Miss Courtney."

"I'll run up again and tell Fay," Edna nodded. "Thanks so much!"

She was almost the only girl to go racing upstairs. Assembly was now so imminent, it did not seem worth while going up, only to have to come down again immediately.

The remains of the guy were disposed of downstairs, to the accompaniment of more indignant chatter. But the Grangemoor cap—that piece of circumstantial evidence—Betty retained it, cramming it for the time being in her frock-pocket.

EDNA DENVER, upstairs, whirled into the study which she shared with her sister, quickly closed the door, then fell back against it, laughing.

"What are they saying?" asked Fay, grinning. "Oh, dear, Fay, you should be down there, to hear! It simply couldn't be better!" Edna giggled. "The Form is mad about it—raging mad!"

"Have they got that cap?"
"Yes-s-s! Betty Barton has it. And—listen, Fay; I fancy Polly has already rung up her brother Jack, at Grangemoor. You can guess why?"

"This is great, Edna!"
"Now they're all waiting for the morning, I suppose, to hear what Jack Linton will have to report over the 'phone!"

The Morcove chimes ding-dong'd.
"There goes nine," Fay chuckled. "It was exactly twenty-to when I did the trick. How

fast would a Grangemoor fellow have to travel, Edna, to get from here to there in—say, fifteen minutes?"

"Sixty miles an hour. And it just couldn't be done. The girls have figured that out for themselves, you may be sure. So they have got Jack Linton to look out for any fellow who gets in late and can't prove an alibi! But what have you done with the togs, Fay?"

"They're done up in a parcel again. You know I had simply to tear them off—"

"I expect you did! Oh, how very funny it all has been," Edna gurgled. "I'll never forget you in those clothes. He, he, he!"

"I slammed the parcel amongst the bushes, out there on the moor. I hope it will be all right! I think it is safely hidden. Of course, if any of the girls find it—"

"That's all right Fay," laughed her sister. "Anyhow like the rest of the Form, we've got to wait until the morning."

CHAPTER 7.

According to Plan

THE morning, when it came, brought a big surprise for the Form.

As early as half-past eight, Polly's brother Jack 'phoned through from Grangemoor that not one fellow had got in after time, overnight.

Jack and his best chums could vouch for it that Grangemoor had been "All present" at nine o'clock last evening.

Then what did it mean?

In all the studios, before morning school, excepting the Denver sisters' study, the talk was of nothing else than the great and unpardonable insult, viewed in the light of this assertion that no Grangemoor fellow could have been the culprit.

Morcove, in the end, could not rely upon that assertion. Polly herself was one of the first to conclude—because no other conclusion seemed tenable—that her own brother had been deceived, hoodwinked.

It was no use his saying that a Grangemoor fellow could not have been the culprit. A Grangemoor fellow it must have been! Seeing was believing, and a Grangemoor fellow had been seen making off from the Morcove grounds last evening.

Besides, Study 12 was in possession of that Grangemoor cap!

Jack and one or two others were going to cycle over this afternoon, to go into the matter. Meantime, it would have been a bad look-out for Betty & Co. if, because of special ties in connection with Grangemoor, they had been inclined to make light of the affair.

The general mood of the Form was one of continued indignation.

But Study 12 itself was indignant enough to leave other girls in no doubt whatever; the honour of the Form could be safely left in the captain's hands for vindication.

Study 12 could see that the practical joke had not been funny. Betty, as she had at once made clear overnight, was not so much concerned with the insult done to her personally, as she was with the furtive and ill-natured feature of the affair, casting a slur upon the very name of Morcove.

So sure were other girls that the captain and her intimates could be trusted to leave no stone unturned, the start of the Saturday "halfer" was quite normal. Bicycles were fetched out for the usual runs into Barncombe. Then tennis-courts and the games-field had a good quota of players drawn from the Form.

In other words, there was no waiting about for the arrival of Jack Linton and his chums, except by the Study 12 Co.

Even they were enjoying a bit of French cricket, just inside the school gateway, when suddenly the boys arrived—four of them.

Betty did not say so, but somehow the very sight of these Grangemoor fellows stiffened the conviction that it had been a Grangemoor boy, last evening.

Jack Linton, Dave Cardew, Jimmy Cherrol, Bobby Bloot—to look at any one of these four was to see again, allowing for the difference in the height and other conditions, that schoolboy who had run away, leaving his Grangemoor cap behind.

"Morcove School?" Jack inquired with characteristic facetiousness. "Committee of Inquiry! This," said he, jokingly introducing Judy's brother, "is David Cardew, Esquire, the fingerprint expert; Mr. Jimmy Cherrol, of the Grangemoor Flying Squad. Myself, the brains of the party. And this," indicating corpulent Bobby, "the Beef!"

Polly, in spite of the gravity of the matter, could not help matching her brother's mock-serious beginning.

"It was so good of you to come," she said, after the authentic manner of a troubled heroine in a detective story.

"My dear young lady," he said, playing up to this, "calm yourself! All will yet be well. Over a sherbet and lemonade—for I and my colleagues have eaten nothing since we got your message!—you shall tell us everything!"

But, although Naomer gladly took the hint to race indoors and prepare "refreshers" for the

boys, serious talk was not deferred pending the slaking of thirsts.

The dusky one came back in a few minutes with a laden tray to find the case being argued pretty strenuously. Some of the girls and Bobby Bloot were perched on a garden seat, the rest were standing.

"But my dear old Polly-wolly—and you, Betty; all you girls," Jack was obstinately insisting, "we know it simply couldn't have been one of our chaps!"

"Jack, it's no use your saying that! I tell you we saw the boy. We've got his cap!" Polly retorted.

"Could you girls have been a wee bit mistaken about the time?" Dave gravely asked. "Five minutes might make all the difference."

"If, for instance, he had a motor-bike," Jimmy rejoined. "A few of our chaps have."

"No," Betty answered. "We can fix the time to a minute."

"That's why I rang you up last evening, Jack," Polly remarked. "Over here at Morcove we knew that the boy simply must get in late at your school. He couldn't do the journey in the time!"

"And not a single chap was absent at nine pipemmer," Jack reiterated. "We four can witness to that."

"Oh, but that can't be!" Polly stamped. "You boys, I suppose, are going by the fact that the report was 'All present'?"

"Yes, and also we kept our eyes peeled—"

"You yourselves couldn't have checked all the two hundred boys who are mustered from different Houses, every evening," Polly argued crushingly. "So what it amounts to, you depended mostly upon the 'All present' report. Well, some boy must have answered for someone else, that's all."

"That could be done?" Betty submitted gently.

"Collusion?" Dave returned crisply. "In that case, a good many fellows would have to be in the know, and keeping silent."

"Which makes it all the worse, doesn't it?" Pam rejoined sadly.

"Pam means, it is bad enough for us to know that one Grangemoor fellow could do a low-down trick of that kind!" Helen exclaimed. "But to know that others must have been in it, shielding him—far worse!"

"And that's how it was done, obviously!" was Polly's convinced cry. "The fellow who did it hadn't got back in time, so others got him reported present."

Jack clawed his hair.

"Oh, I can't believe—"

"But you must allow us to—"

"Polly—all of you listen—"

"Jack, it's not a bit of use, all over again! And I'm sure Betty and the rest will bear me out in this," Polly spoke on glumly, "our Form is not going to—"

"Now zen, spell-O, plis! Bekas, refresher, queek," Naomer piped in, having charged various tumblers from a great jugful of the "grand patent."

"Aha!" said Jack, the fun poking out of him again as soon as he was served with a fizzing glass. "These, my dear Watson, are the amenities of life!" He changed from Sherlock Holmes to a village policeman, nodding over the glass to Polly, as if she were the mistress of a house. "Thank you, mum. And afterwards, perhaps, we might go over the ground?"

"Ground? What ground?"

"The scene, mum, of the tragedy! But don't think, any of you, that I am not taking this thing seriously enough. If only we could say who did

do the deed, whether he was a Grangemoor fellow or not—we'd soon give him what for, wouldn't we, chaps?"

"Bring him here and make him apologise in person," Dave nodded, all quiet scorn for the low-down nature of the practical joke.

They all drifted away, presently, so that the boys could have the happenings of last evening described to them with all the help that it meant to be exactly on the spot.

There was the usual breaking up into talkative twos and threes. Jack walked with Polly, Betty, and Madge. Dave was chatting with his sister and Helen and Tess. Pam and Paula trailed behind with Jimmy Cherrol.

"I'm awfully sorry about this," Jimmy said to Pam suddenly, as if he felt he must stress his regret to her.

"I'm sure you are, Jimmy. Unless the affair is cleared up, it is going to cause some bad feeling between the two schools."

"Bound to," he nodded. "You girls have got your proper pride."

"Yes, well, we're awfully touchy about anything that relates to Morcove. And this term," Pam added, "we expected the two schools to be more to each other than ever. It's too bad!"

"Disgwacful, bai Jove! As Pam has just w-mawked, Jimmy; now that our former mistress is married to your Housemaster at Gwangemoor, theah should be a stwonger tie than evah, what?"

Jimmy spoke through clenched teeth.

"If I keep on saying, like Jack, that it simply couldn't have been a Grangemoor fellow, then it will only lead up to a quarrel. Yet I must support Jack and Dave and Bobby—"

"That's quite all right, Jimmy," Pam assured him serenely.

But she was silent for a good while after that, troubled in her mind about possible unpleasantness. She wondered if Betty and the rest were realising that it might be a kindness to the boys not to ask them to stay on for tea.

It transpired, presently, that Polly and Judy had come in for hints from their respective brothers, that there was no intention to stay to tea, even if the customary invitation were made. All four boys were due back at their own school by tea-time.

Just as well! So, in the circumstances, Pam was bound to think, and she divined a like sense of relief amongst her girl chums.

Yet when the moment came for the boys to be off, the shadow of things to come seemed to be upon the parting. Even Polly and Judy were conscious of this, although in their case each was saying good-bye to a brother.

For as long as the boys could be kept in sight, riding away from Morcove, the girls watched them, more or less wistfully.

Then came the saunter up the drive to the schoolhouse, and that rush at them all by other girls, which was exactly what the chums had expected.

In a few moments they were mobbed by Form-fellows who had considerably kept away whilst Betty and Co. were going into the affair with the boys. But that recent display of patience only meant a greater bitterness than ever, when eager inquirers were told that no good had resulted.

There were remarks that told of exacerated feelings, and Study 12 felt thankful indeed that the boys had not stayed on to tea.

"But what are you going to do about it all?" one of the disgruntled girls asked Betty pointedly.

"Not let it drop, I hope!"

"Of course Betty won't!" cried others, in tones that plainly meant: "She had better not!"

RESULT OF "FILM STARS" VOTING COMPETITION

In this contest no competitor correctly placed the eight film stars in their order of popularity as fixed by the popular vote, so THE FIRST PRIZE OF £1 has therefore been awarded to:

Miss E. Noble,
Temple Cottages,
Cressing,
nr. Braintree, Essex,

whose forecast, containing three errors, came nearest to being correct.

CHARMING BEAD NECKLACES have been awarded to the following thirty-two competitors, whose efforts came next in order of merit:

Miss M. Almgill, Bootham, York; Miss G. Astih, Southfields, Leicester.

Miss J. Boddington, Carshalton Beeches, Surrey; C. M. Brown, Southcoates, Hull; Miss N. Brown, Edinborough; Miss M. Bumfrey, Westerhope, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Miss J. Gatlin, Watford, Herts; Miss A. Connell, Courock, Scotland; Miss J. Crossley, Huddersfield; Miss E. Cullshaw, Lostock Hall, Preston.

Miss M. Danning, St. Columb Minor, Cornwall; Miss A. Dean, Poynton, nr. Stockport; Miss M. Dowler, Cheam, Surrey.

Miss Q. Edwards, Horley, Surrey; J. M. Elleby, Swansea; Miss B. Elliott, Hadley, Wellington, Shrops.

Miss K. Freeman, Gloucester; Miss G. Fyfe, Lennoxtown, Glasgow.

Miss K. Griffiths, Orrell, Liverpool, 20.

Miss E. Hamilton, Nutton Ruddy, Yorks; Miss J. Hanstock, Penketh, Warrington; Miss J. Hill, Hucknall, Motts; Miss S. Houghton, Armlay, Leeds, 12.

Miss J. Justins, Eynsham, Oxon.

Miss M. Kershaw, Rastrick, Brighouse; Miss S. McCarter, Allerton, Liverpool.

Miss A. Robinson, Preston, Lancs.

Miss D. Steel, Chester Road, Sunderland; Miss M. Stenning, Sutton, Surrey.

Miss M. D. Tallentire, Bridlington, E. Yorks.

Miss G. Waldie, Stow, Midlothian; Miss K. Willis, Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim.

"It will be up to me, as captain, to seek an apology from Grangemoor, through the right channel," Betty said spiritedly. "And if that fails—"

There was a sudden interruption, most dramatic in its effect upon the entire crowd. Although it was a mere mild-sounding: "Oh, Edna dear, here is Cousin Bert, just fancy!"—the words fell like a bombshell.

The throng stirred excitedly, and all eyes switched to that Grangemoor scholar who, it was now seen, had left his machine at the gateway and was coming up the drive on foot.

Fay and Edna Denver had been innocent-looking listeners to the angry mutterings on the fringe of the crowd. Now those two sisters were stepping quickly to meet their cousin.

The captain of Challenger's House, at Grangemoor!

He had turned up like this—he, who was exactly that "right channel" through whom Form-captain Betty had declared that she must and would seek an apology. Herein lay the tense drama of the moment. Eyes were being returned, instantly, to Betty's face.

Now, if Betty wanted to be as good as her word; now, if she were anything like the captain they had always thought her to be—let her seize this chance!

Betty walked out of the crowd to go after the

sisters, and so confront Bertie Denver within a moment of their greeting him.

They saw her in talk with the visitor for perhaps a minute—no more. Then she returned.

"He says he will go into it all later with me—before he goes," she explained. "He wants to have tea with his cousins."

This sounded perfectly reasonable, and in the expectation of fair treatment, even the most fiery scholars were ready to adjourn—to get their own teas. Fay and Edna, it was presumed, would take their cousins to the school tables.

As for Betty and Co., they went up to Study 12, and it was there, half an hour later, that a fresh sensation occurred.

For Etta Hargrove came rushing in with the furious cry:

"He's gone!"

CHAPTER 8.

'This Means War'

"WHAT!" "He's gone!" the disgusted cry was repeated. "And without seeing you, Betty!"

Chairs were hitched back. The entire "chum-mery" was on its feet. Behind Etta—who was not a girl to get worked up without cause—crowded other girls, aflame with indignation.

"Insult added to injury!" cried one of them. "He's dodged you, Betty! Booh for Grangemoor—booh!"

"Shame, yes—shame!"

"I must see," Betty said. She was always calmest in a crisis. "Just give me time for a word with the Denver sisters. They may have an explanation—may have fixed up everything with him themselves."

"Then I don't think they should have!" fumed Polly.

"No! No!"

The Form had never been in a touchier mood. But Fay and Edna had done nothing, it appeared, that could be regarded as going over their own captain's head.

They were as sweet as honey to Betty. Of

course, they had told Bertie all about the affair, they said, but they would never have dreamed of making a demand that must, of course, come from Betty.

They were afraid, however—this with angelic looks of regret—Cousin Bertie regarded the matter as too trifling to be bothered about. That was why he had not waited, after all, to hear what Betty had to say.

"I see," Betty said, tight-lipped, being alone with Fay and Edna in their study for this talk. "In other words, if I write a formal letter—"

"Not much use, I'm afraid," smiled Fay. "Of course, Edna and I see it from the Morcove point of view. Oh, we're quite on the side of Morcove. Even though he's a cousin of ours who is House captain over there, if it becomes war to the knife between the two schools—"

"I understand," Betty nodded. She did not think she was called upon to say more than that. If—if relations between the two schools should go from bad to worse, Fay and Edna would not be the only girls to feel bound to put loyalty to Morcove before all else. Polly and Judy! And Pam, too, come to that.

The corridor, when Betty came out of the sisters' study, seethed with scholars.

"Then what are you going to do, Betty?" clamoured these roused schoolmates of hers. They had read grave dissatisfaction in her looks. "Up, Morcove!" someone shouted. "Hurrah—yes!" others cheered. "Booh, Grangemoor!"

"There will be a meeting—"

"Bravo, Betty!" she was applauded wildly.

"That's the stuff!"

"When, Betty—when? What—Monday night? Not until Monday?"

"Why not this evening, Betty?"

"Yes, Betty—this evening; why not?"

"No," she declined, firmly but pleasantly. "We all need time to consider. But I'm going now to write the notice for the board downstairs."

"Hurrah!"

BETTY went into Study 12. Her best chums were all there, but they did not rush at her questioningly.

She sat down and wrote the formal notice convening the Form meeting.

"This means war," she said at last. "I think I ought to put in a proposal on Monday night. I don't know how the Form will take it, and I don't really care, about some of you girls being allowed to be—neutral."

"Don't do it for me, Betty," came from Polly smartly.

The captain let a moment go by in silence. Then:

"How about you, Judy?"

"Same as Polly."

"And you, Pam?"

"Just the same."

"Well, I think that's perfectly splendid of you," Betty commented. "By the way, the Denver sisters have talked in that strain, too. But in their case—I doubt if they mean it."

The captain stood up. Another moment and she was gone from the room, with the notice for the green-baize board downstairs.

And, as she passed up the long corridor of studies, her chums could hear more cheering.

"She was right," whispered Madge. "It means war—a break with all our friends at Grangemoor."

"Then we must stick it," said Polly, "that's all!"

Next Tuesday's powerful long complete Morcove School story, featuring your favourites of Study 12, is entitled:

Morcove "Declares War"



BY MARJORIE STANTON