

*Roble*

**"The Girl Who Kept Silent"** Grand Long Morcove  
Story Inside

# The SCHOOLGIRLS' 2<sup>D</sup> OWN

No. 788. Vol. 31.  
Week ending  
March 14th, 1936.  
EVERY TUESDAY.



## THE RESCUE OF RIO

A thrilling incident  
from this week's  
chapters of "Her  
Fugitive Friend of  
Mystery"

There are FIVE ENTHRALLING STORIES in This Issue

Grand Long Complete Story of Betty Barton and Co.



Welcome Back!

"O H, what a bother it is—having to get ready!"

"And not too much time, either!"

"No!"  
"These shoes of mine—must do something with them!"

"My hair—only wish I could do something with that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, grumble-grumble!" laughed one girl, as busy as twenty others in getting hastily smartened up. "Some of you are as bad as Betty Barton—"

"Why, what about Betty, Polly dear?"

"Making faces, because just for once she's got to wear her captain's sash!"

"Oh!" And more light laughter. "Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a great day for Morcove School—a happy day.

Miss Somerfield, the school's adored head-mistress, was due back almost any minute now, after several weeks' absence.

A world congress of head teachers, held in the United States, had taken her across the Atlantic more than a month ago. Now she was home again—had landed at Plymouth this morning, where her own car was waiting to bring her right across Glorious Devon to that grandly romantic patch of wild moorland and rugged coastline which was Morcove's own little world.

"Here is Betty!" one of the excited girls suddenly yelled; and there were prompt comments:

"Oh, she's got it on! Very nice, Betty! Ha, ha, ha!"

Betty Barton grinned. It was her own fault if she was being teased about her captain's sash. Her dislike of wearing it, due to a dislike of

**A MISFIT AT MORCOVE!**

**That was how the other girls at the famous old school soon summed up Zillah Raine.**

showing off any of the authority with which she was invested, had been joked about by the Form many a time before now.

"Will Miss Somerfield inspect us, Betty?" inquired Bunny Trevor with mock anxiety.

"Shall I pass?"

"And what about me?" shrielled that dusky imp, Naomer Nakara, who was Morcove's royal scholar from North Africa. "Bekas—"

"We'll hide you, kid," promised madcap Polly Linton. "So you can stand away from this mirror—"

"Yes, bai Jove!" wailed Paula Creel, who of all girls was most anxious to be spic-and-span. "I hev hawdly seen myself! I—"

"Take a look, then!" Polly said most obligingly.

At the same time she swept a rumpling hand over pretty Paula's head, so that that oft-teased sufferer now beheld herself in the mirror with hair down to her eyes.

"Ow, you wetch, Polly deah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will Miss Somerfield, Betty, really be in by the time expected?" several girls clamoured, thinking the captain might be better informed than anyone else. "Won't matter if we're a few minutes late—on parade?"

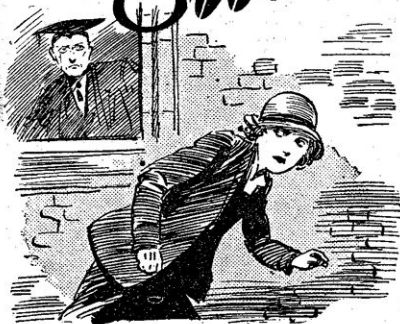
"I'll report any girl who is late!" Betty threatened with mock grimness.

"Oh, yeah!" gurgled Polly. "But what a

By Marjorie Stanton

ILLUSTRATED BY L. SHIELDS

## was Silent



glorious afternoon it is, anyhow—like spring! I'm off down—”

“Hi, wait for me!” shrilled Naomer. “I’ve got some chocs., Polly!”

The madcap flashed round.

“Where?”

“Here!” said the dusky one, triumphantly producing a half-collapsed carton.

“Chocs. are not allowed—on parade,” Polly said, and, promptly impounding them, she fled with Naomer in pursuit.

But most of the girls were now ready to surge away, making for the open air. Those implied suggestions that there was no need to hurry had been only voiced in fun.

At heart, all were eager to get into line, hoping that Miss Somerfield would be here even a few minutes before the expected time.

The various Forms had been ordered to muster, some on one side of the school’s carriage-way and some on the other. Betty herself, coming out of the huge schoolhouse with tall Pam Willoughby, Midge Minden, and a few more of her chums of Study No. 12, realised that it was going to be a most impressive sight.

Already scholars of all ages were “falling in.” There was Ethel Courtway, Morcove’s popular head girl, lined up with nearly every one of her fellow seniors. The Fifth, too, was almost complete.

And now the mistresses were coming out, each to take charge of her particular Form.

The Fifth would be called to attention at once, no doubt, for Miss Massingham was not an indulgent mistress! Great joy, accordingly, to Betty’s Form, happy in having youthful, sporting Miss Merrick over it again, after her discharge from hospital a couple of weeks since.

Sure enough, Miss Merrick allowed her girls to remain at ease and pretended not to notice when Polly circulated the last of Naomer’s chocolates.

Talking was allowed; and so the Form talked freely, addressing plenty of goading remarks to its traditional rivals, the Fifth, now under orders to keep silence.

“This is a wonderful afternoon, Betty!” Miss Merrick blithely exclaimed, having sauntered to where the captain was standing out in front of the double line.

“Marvellous! And we’ve been given a half-holiday,” the captain added, whilst her eyes glanced away to the school’s clock-tower. “Heaps of time left, there’ll be!”

“Oh, there should be, yes,” nodded the Form-mistress. “I expect they have come along fine! Miss Somerfield’s chauffeur knows the whole road so well, and— Why, hark!”

But the suddenly thrown-up finger, enjoining silence, became instead a signal for great commotion “in the ranks.” Miss Merrick had only heard what all the mustered girls had themselves picked up—the familiar note of a motor-horn, close at hand on the quiet country road.

“There she is! Oh—”

“Gorjus! Bekas—”

“Naomer, don’t caper like that!”

“But Meess Merrick, what ze diggings, I must! Bekas—”

“Attention, Naomer! The whole Form,” smiled Miss Merrick, “attention now!”

The car’s familiar hooter again—tr-r-rump, trump!—and then, in by the main gateway came the fine Roysler, all shiny in the brilliant sunshine which had favoured this great day for Morcove.

Up the well-kept drive came the car, slowing as it started to pass between the lined-up girls. Slower still—a mere crawl now—with all Morcove suddenly cheering frenziedly.

“Oh, see her—hurrah! There she is—Miss Somerfield, hurrah-h-h! Miss Somer—field, hooray, hip, hip, hurrah!”

No standing in line now! All Forms had broken ranks, and girls were mobbing round the car, so that it had to stop. Form-mistresses, like the chauffeur, could do no more than look on and laugh.

As for Miss Somerfield herself—looking splendidly fit and supremely happy, she took care to jump out before she should be, as it were, torn to bits by rival factions—one on either side of the car.

The Fifth, whipping open a door on its side, had tried to help Miss Somerfield out. Betty and some others, whipping open a door on their side, had also struggled to get at the head-mistress.

She came out—almost into the arms of Betty! Betty’s Form—THE Form!—had got Miss Somerfield all to itself! Hurrah!

“Bekas she is ze jolly good fellow!” Naomer crazily began to sing.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Healp!” came Paula’s squeal, as she found the turmoil rather too much for her comfort. “Owp! My hair, geals, my twock—wow!”

“Miss Somerfield! Welcome back!” Betty was dining; and the whole school seemed to take up that one cry.

“Yes, Miss Somerfield—welcome back! Morcove, Mor—cove! Speech, spee—ceeh!”

“Oh, girls—not now!” pleaded the overwhelmed headmistress. “When you have hardly left me breath enough for a word!”

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But—"

"Silence, silence! Order!"

"But, my dear girls—all of you!" Miss Somerfield panted on, whilst her eyes—a-shine with tears of joy—surveyed the sea of faces. "I must say 'Thank you,' at least. With all my heart, girls of Morcove School—thank you for this wonderful display of gladness at our being together again. It is a gladness that I share—well, more than I can ever hope to say."

She turned to re-enter the car, and then it was that Betty and others lost their breath in sudden surprise, so that they could no longer go on cheering.

There was a second passenger in the car—one who during the first excitement had not been noticed. Betty & Co. now got a good glimpse at her—a girl of their own age, beautifully dressed and extremely pretty. In fact, she was lovely!

For just that moment or so, lots of scholars had their first sight of the youthful stranger, whilst Miss Somerfield was sinking down beside her again on the car-seat.

There was time for many Morcovians to see the beautiful girl start some excitable remarks to the headmistress, who laughed and nodded. The eager expression of a pair of dark eyes—large and flashing—was observed, and a set of fine teeth helped to make the girl's smile quite fascinating.

Then both doors of the car were closed, and those who cared to do so were free to chase the Rovers the rest of its way up the drive.

### Meet Zillah Raine!

TEN minutes later, Morcove was providing an example of that facility with which it could get over sudden sensations.

Both games fields were teeming with girls who, most obviously, were not allowing their minds to be taken off a practice-game of hockey or netball, which this special "halfer" had provided.

Jolly afternoon—and Betty & Co., like the rest, were making the best of it!

Hockey was their fancy—a bustling game, and then indoors and up to the studies, for an early tea, so that there would still be some daylight left afterwards.

Tongues that had got busy as soon as the game ended, continued to rattle away during the return to the schoolhouse, and afterwards, when some putting-off of briefly worn "woollies" had to be made, and a few bruised shins rubbed.

"My word, Polly, that's a lovely one! Iodine or liniment?"

"Cup of tea," was the madcap's own prescription for the bluish ankle which a rolled-down stocking had exposed.

Pulling up the stocking with a careless rapidity which caused it to "ladder," Polly rose from a coat-room chair. She disposed of her hockey-stick by spearing it to a corner, smiled when it knocked over a lot of other sticks, and then remarked:

"Put out an extra cup, upstairs, for that girl who came with Miss Somerfield? What do you say, Betty?"

"Oh, I think—no need. It's not quite the same as a new girl at the start of term. Because this girl hasn't only come to a new school; she's come all the way from America. I expect Miss Somerfield will give her tea."

"I get you, Betty. So we shan't know more till by-and-by. Going to be in our Form."

"Wasn't she marvellous?" Bunny came nearer to rhapsodising. "A perfect peach!"

"Hollywood," Polly shrugged.

"Wrong!" the captain flatly contradicted her chum. "Zillah Raine is from Virginia!"

"Same thing!"

"Oh, Polly, how can you!" Betty laughed. "Better not let Zillah Raine hear you placing Hollywood in Virginia. I shouldn't wonder if she comes of one of those old families that are terribly proud—"

"Oh, yeah!" the madcap drawled.

"Booh, jealous!" piped in Naomer. As this was one of those bits of cheek which Polly never countenanced from her impish study-mate, a set-to ensued. It was all quite playful, but it was none the less boisterous, resulting in luckless Paula finding herself suddenly floored.

Whereupon, half a dozen girls flumped hats and coats on to writhing Paula, to teach her that lesson which she had never yet managed to learn—how to get out of the way, when Polly and the Imp were scrapping!

And so, ultimately, up to the Form quarters with a great pounding of feet on the stairs and the banging of many study doors all down the long corridor.

Tea, now! And in Study No. 12 this meant tea for as many as nine girls, elbow to elbow, round the table as soon as it had been laid and the boiling water fetched.

Then came an interruption; a parlourmaid's tap at the study-door and her delivery of a message. The Form captain, please, and Pam Wiloughby, to report to Miss Somerfield at once!

That Betty had been sent for, caused not the least surprise. But why Pam?

By her lifted eyebrows, Pam herself implied inability to say why! Habitually serene, she left others to voice amazement and went with Betty.

"This girl who has turned up from America, Pam—nothing to do with you or your people?"

"No, Betty."

The captain was another who never wasted words. So nothing more was said whilst she and Pam went downstairs, making their way to the headmistress's own private room.

"Yes, come in!"

It did both girls good to hear Miss Somerfield's cordial voice, when for the greater part of her time abroad her place had been filled by a far from satisfactory deputy.

Over by the window stood Zillah Raine, gazing with all a newcomer's interest at what could be seen of Morcove's surroundings. Miss Somerfield opened a few more of the many letters which had awaited her return, and so, suddenly, Zillah faced round to look at Betty and Pam.

They smiled at her, and back came that dazzling smile of hers. There was a good deal about Zillah Raine which, for the moment, gave Betty the feeling that here was a match for Pam, even.

Then came a doubt. No; Pam of Swanlake was endowed with much that this girl from Virginia, although so brilliant, would never acquire!

"Now, girls."

The headmistress was laying papers aside as she spoke so pleasantly.

"Zillah dear, this is Betty Barton, the captain of the Form to which you will belong. Betty, whilst I was in America, I was approached by Zillah's parents about her further education. She has had very good teaching in her own home town in Virginia—"

"Our college was only for the daughters of the best people," Zillah interposed quickly.

Betty felt that Miss Somerfield must have been amused by this, but if so, the headmistress did not mean to repress a smile.

"In Betty Barton, Zillah, you will find a first-rate captain who is also capable of being a very good friend."

"Well, thanks," said Zillah, as Betty gave her a smile of goodwill. "And, say, is this other—the Willoughby girl?" came eagerly.

"Yes, this is Pamela Willoughby, whose home, I told you, is only a few miles from Morcove; a home I would like you to see some day, Zillah, for you are over here to get to know English home life, as well as to be educated on British lines. Pam dear—"

Betty saw Zillah gazing at Pam with an eager curiosity that might have been embarrassing, for never Morcove's "little lady of Swanlake" was never upset by rudeness. Pam seemed to be oblivious of that critical stare, paying attention only to her headmistress.

"Zillah can be in your study, Pam? Who shares with you now? It is one of the smaller studies, I believe; only room for two?"

"Helen Craig—"  
 "A great chum of yours, of course! Will you feel it as a hardship, Pam, if I part you? Will Helen? I do hope not. You must put it nicely to her that any sacrifice will be out of goodwill to Zillah, who comes as a stranger to a strange country. And, after all," smiled Miss Somerfield, "whatever studies you girls are in, I fancy you manage a good deal of getting together in—Study No. 12?"

"I hardly use my captain's study," Betty laughed. "Could Helen come in with me, there, Miss Somerfield?"

"Oh, arrange it amongst yourselves!" was the kindly response. "But I would like Zillah to be with you, Pam, if only because you are more in touch with home than perhaps any other girl during term. So now, you two can go away together! Betty has to remain, for I have a few things to say to her about happenings when I was away."

Betty, receiving a fleeting smile from Pam, gave a grin. They both had lively recollections of things that had happened whilst Miss Somerfield was absent!

"Were you and the captain smiling about me?" Zillah rather touchily asked Pam, as soon as they were outside the room.

"Oh, no! Did you enjoy the voyage?"

"I surely did; but it's not answering one question, to ask another, is it?"

"I thought," Pam said gently, "I did answer your question. The studies are upstairs. You'd like me to show you the one you'll be sharing with me?"

"You show me just the best there is to be seen,"

Zillah particularly requested. "Same about other girls; I don't know that I want to know a whole crowd—not all at once, anyhow. This, for the downstairs part of the school," she critically added, pausing at the foot of the stairs to gaze around; "bit disappointing!"

"You think so?"

"I surely do. Our college in my home town had white marble. Our organ cost fifteen thousand dollars. It all seems here, to me, so plain!"

"Oh, there's nothing showy—"

"There surely isn't!" Zillah agreed. "What about your home?"

"I don't know what you'll think of it," Pam smiled, going upstairs with the new girl. "It's awfully old and may seem a bit dingy to you. One week-end I'll try to have you over there." And then, as two other girls, descending, met them on a half-landing:

"Oh, Etta—Biddy; this is Zillah Raine, the new girl from America; you know—"

"Oh, yes!" Etta and Biddy voiced together, and conferred friendly smiles and nods. "Hope you'll like it here, and—and be happy."

As Pam noticed, something just then seemed to take disagreeable effect upon Zillah. She assumed a put-out look and was sullenly silent as she went the rest of the way with Pam to the study they would be sharing.

Helen was not there—was still in Study No. 12, gossiping with Polly and others. Zillah, as she gazed around, kept her lips down at the corners, and her lovely dark eyes still had that sombre expression.



Hats and coats were loaded on the unhappy Paula, while her chums, delighted at the prospect of the return to the school of Miss Somerfield, laughed uproariously.

What, then, didn't she like about the study? Pam might well wonder, as it happened to be a study to which Swanlake had contributed a good many refinements and comforts.

"Anything wrong?" Pam asked at last with a smile.

"Well, do you think you should have introduced me to those two girls, and not them to me?" was the petty complaint in a brooding tone. "And, anyway, next time I hope you'll say more about me. The headmistress is strange about that. She didn't say my folks are big people in Virginia. We're an old family, and proud of it. It's something to have been a great family for a hundred years and be still rich."

"But do you like the study?"

"I'll say it's like everything else I've seen, so far; it's not what I should call swell. I guess you and I are going to hit it off all right. But—"

Her pause was followed by a sudden laugh, fiercely scornful. All in an instant she was the proud girl, passionately disappointed.

"This school of yours—what is there in it?" And then, sighing as suddenly as she had laughed: "Oh, well, I guess I've got to make the best of it. And I'll say this, Pam Willoughby; it won't be Zillah Raine, not to show all you folks! What there is worth having—I'm the one to go for it!"

#### Strange Newcomer!

ZILLAH RAINE, certainly, lost no time over a sampling, as it were, of all that Morocco had to offer.

During the next few days she was "doing" Morocco as she might have "done" London during a first visit to the capital. There was no shyness about her, and she made a point of sampling all the friendships that were to be had.

If her first liking for this or that girl endured, she wanted to become so "thick" that now and again it led to some fending off. Then she took offence fiercely; turned sulky because Morocco had hurt her pride. There was a strain of Mexican blood in her veins, as the school knew by now.

So it was—one afternoon just before tea—Pam; alone in the study, was on the point of going round to Study No. 12, when Zillah Raine flashed upon the scene, looking fierce enough for a vengeful Mexican.

Slam! she flung the door shut.

"Those Denver sisters—I shall never speak to them again!" she panted. "They're common! That's what they are—common! To do nothing better than grin when I went in just then to ask them if they'd come on a run to Barncombe." "I suppose they had made other arrangements."

"Then why couldn't they say so?"

"Fay and Edna often prefer not to talk about their little arrangements," Pam said apologetically. "You don't want to take any notice of—"

"I do! They're rude!" Zillah raged on. "I never wanted them as friends."

"But you went to them, didn't you—your first morning after getting here?"

"That was only to see what they were like! I must try everybody, mustn't I? You know"—with a lift and fall of the shoulders—"I begin to think there's just next to nothing for me at Morocco! What is there—for a girl like me?"

"Come round with me to Study No. 12, Zillah, and there'll be some tea for you and welcome. We had Betty and some of the others to tea in here, yesterday, and so—"

"Oh, I've done Study No. 12! I feel I want something better than that—a change. Say, I'd like to know, too, why the head girl hasn't even asked me to tea?" Zillah suddenly frowned. "Who is she that she doesn't take any notice of me?"

"Ethel Courtway is a ripper. Only she has even more to see to than an ordinary Form captain, so you must give her time. She'll do something nice by you—quite casually—"

"Not much of a treat in being treated—casually?"

"Don't you think so? I think it is much better when somebody, instead of making a fuss—"

"Then how awfully nice girls have been to me!" Zillah scathingly struck in. "For I'm sure they've all been casual enough! But I'll try this head girl right now and see what she's like! If I don't catch her in time for tea, then I guess I will come along to Study No. 12—to the Casual Ward. Say, did you get that?" she laughed round, on her way out. "You can tell your chums, next door, that's my name for their study. They should smile!"

She strode away, suddenly restored to a great jauntiness because of the joke she had made, although Pam considered that joke to be feeble enough. As Zillah did not make any appearance during tea-time in Study No. 12, it was to be inferred that she really had got herself invited to take a cup with the head girl.

But neither Pam nor any of the other chums, seeing nothing of Zillah for the next two hours, imagined her to be still in Ethel Courtway's company. Amazingly they listened to what Zillah had to say when next she met them, coming off the games field at dusk.

"Golf! Now that surely is some game, and you girls should have seen me—with the Courtway girl, doing a round after tea. Oh, yes, I've been to golf with her, and I'll say she just knows how to be real sweet. I've only just got back with her, and now I want to know if there's a store in Barncombe where I can get clubs?"

Some of the chums were exchanging glances. All were realising, most likely it was with an idea of constantly companioning Ethel Courtway that Zillah was suddenly crazy on golf. But was it to be supposed that the head girl would want to see much of her?

Betty's frank laugh ended the pause.

"Well, Zillah, I don't know! Only seniors have played golf so far—"

"Or have wanted to," Polly curtly added.

"Is that so?" returned the new girl loftily. "Well, I guess Ethel Courtway will make that all right for me. She likes me!"

Such a bragging remark—not to be at all relied upon—was too much for most of the chums. When Polly suddenly pushed on into the schoolhouse, Bunny and others followed.

A little of Zillah goes a long way," Polly muttered. "If it weren't for Pam—I could hardly be civil to her."

"Can't you imagine!" gurgled Bunny. "I suppose Ethel still couldn't get rid of her, after putting up with her all through tea, and so—Hallo, though, what's on the board?"

They darted to join the small crowd which had found some fresh announcement adorning the green-baize notice board. But it proved to be only an official confirmation of something the school had taken for granted—the date for the half-term holiday, with its school concert in the evening.

About that concert a debate began in Study No. 12, later on. As soon as the nightly infliction

of "prep" had been disposed of, the old ren-devous became packed out again with chums who were determined to provide some item of their own for the programme.

"One of your little plays, Polly! To come on at the end of the first half," Betty gaily suggested. "Can't think of anything better."

"Wather not, bai Jove!"

"Bekas—"

But Polly, waving to excitable Naomer to be silent, made a long face.

"Oh, sticking indoors to bash away at a type-writer—"

"Go on with you, Polly!" laughed Bunny. "How long does a play ever take you. Anyhow, you must!"

"Hear, hear!" insisted others. "The school will expect it!"

"As Betty says," smiled Judy, "it does serve so well to end the first half of the programme."

"And then the interval," Bunny chuckled, "gives us time to clear up the stage."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All right, then—I will," Polly said with a grimace that might have been taken to indicate the intention to write a tragedy. But the madcap, when at her grimmest as a playwright, was known to be at her best—as a humourist. "It'll be something really knock-about, I warn you," she was threatening, when the door opened, letting in Zillah Raine.

"Say," cried the new girl in great delight, "it's on the board about a concert!"

"Oh, yeah!" drawled Polly—and Zillah flashed her an angry look. Americanisms from other girls always offended the American scholar.

"Will you take part in a twenty-minute play that we are going to do, Zillah?" asked Betty. "Pam's in it—"

"I will—certainly," said Zillah eagerly. If there had not been that playful "Oh, yeah!" just now, she would have said she "surely" would. "I'm just great on acting! Give me a good part—in Shakespeare—"

"This isn't going to be Shakespeare." Bunny rippled. "We get Polly to write us something funny, and we do our best to make it go with a bang."

Zillah's lovely large eyes proclaimed pained surprise.

"You don't say! Well, now, that is a surprise! Now, at my college in Virginia, we always did

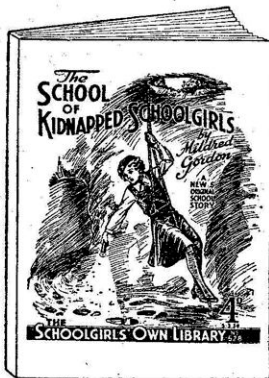
Shakespeare. We made a whole lot of him. But you folks over here—you don't seem to have any pride in him."

"We have," Pam said serenely. "We think Shakespeare is so wonderful, we're afraid to make a mull of him."

"Besides, what ze diggings!" shrilled Naomer. "Eef we prefer to make ijjets of ourselves for once, I suppose we can?"

"I'll say you can, easily—and it surely saves you a lot of rehearsing," Zillah said, smiling fiercely at the sting in her retort. "So I'll leave

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you to it. Oh, Pam, no hurry, but when you're free!"

Pam jumped up, feeling she had better comply at once. She herself was still hitting it off fairly well with the new girl; but relations between Zillah and Study No. 12 in general were rapidly deteriorating. If possible, she wanted to serve as a peacemaker.

"Say, this is sweet of you, Pam." And Zillah's nicest smile was an added reward for Pam's coming out after her. "You know I can sing, Pam? I guess I'll put myself down for a song on the programme; just one song—and an encore."

"That will be welcome, Zillah," was Pam's genuinely pleased comment. "There's always such a shortage of girls who will do anything by themselves. And Madge to accompany you? She's the Form's best player, you know."

"What about yourself? See here, Pam, I'd much rather have you, and if you could spare a few minutes now—go down to the music-room and try over my song?"

"Right-ho!"

It took Zillah a minute to rout out her song in the study; then the two of them went to the music-room on the first floor. Zillah sat down beside Pam at the grand piano.

Pam indicated the song.

"In German?"

"Yes, that's one of Schubert's. Why?"

"But you don't know German, Zillah?"

"I've learned how to sing those words. You just play for me, and I guess I'll show you."

The very right touch was Pam's for the dainty accompaniment. She knew the air by heart—it was the famous "Serenade"—and this helped her to get through the piece without faltering.

But Zillah did not manage the song itself at all well. She had a sweet voice, and Pam, whilst accompanying, could think of a dozen different airs—in English, and so much simpler—with any of which this girl might have "brought down the house," on the night.

The last notes of the piano followed Zillah's own stumbling to a finish; and there she was anticipating praise from Pam.

"It's a most difficult song—must be," Pam prefaced well-meant advice. "Even in English—"

"But my German is all right?"

"I don't know anything about that, Zillah. Only, if I were you, I would make it something less—less adult—for the concert. Not so ambitious. After all, think of songs like—"

"Oh, you just don't like it because it's Schubert—and you don't like my voice because it's no voice at all!"

"Zillah, I do like your singing! But—"

"But if you were me, you'd sing—just what?" panted Zillah, snatching the song from the piano and tearing it up. "Some rubbishy stuff made up by your Polly Linton, eh? You folks, you don't elocute, and I'm sure you couldn't sing a note if you tried! And so you only laugh at a girl for trying to do worth-while things. See here! Do you reckon you were playing the accompaniment right? You were out, all the way through!"

"Then I'm sorry—"

"No, you're not! You're glad, for now you know you won't have to play for me on the night, for I take good care I don't sing that or any other song! See? Give them Polly Linton! Give them 'Polly Winked Her Eye'! And this," she added wildly, "is Morcove! You're Pam—of Swanlake! A lot of hoodlums!"

Then she was gone, leaving Pam all by herself in the half-lit room.

A girl like that—what could you do with her?

Pam gently closed the piano, switched out the few lights, and was next minute back in Study No. 12—serene as ever!

### Beware of the Dog!

FROM that hour Zillah Raine had no use for any of the chums—excepting Pam Willoughby.

And, even towards Pam, the girl from Virginia acted in a way that was meant to imply offended dignity.

For a couple of days Zillah was proudly frigid when alone with her study-mate. Then she melted a little—and it was hard for Pam not to burst out laughing at Zillah in her gradually relenting state!

There was a story going about that Ethel Courtway had soon got tired of seeing so much of Zillah—and had ended by telling her so!

Yet many of Zillah's remarks, during the "relenting" phase, dealt with this boasted, yet non-existent, friendship with Ethel.

It was on a Tuesday evening—with all Morcove looking forward to the morrow's "halfer"—when Zillah suddenly said to Pam in the study:

"Oh, Pam, you never told me where I'd best try for those golf clubs in town?"

"I can only think of Billiek's," Pam responded, with no smile to suggest a bantering: "Surely, you are not still meaning to go golfing!"

On the other side of the study table, Zillah nodded, looking very bright and sweet-tempered.

"In the High Street, is it? I'll try there, tomorrow, and if not—get them from Exeter, that's all. I must go down to the library now. What I like about Ethel Courtway, she's one who really is—cultured! She tells me what to read."

Even Pam had to smile at that.

Then Zillah suddenly came away from the door with such a challenging expression that another row seemed to threaten.

"You been hearing from a boy, Pam?"

"What? Oh, this letter!" Pam caught the meaning, taking up a very untidy missive that had been lying open on her pad. "No. Polly gave me this to read from her brother—the one at Grangemoor, you know. By the way, he and his pals are coming over for our concert."

"Are they? Say, that's news. Grangemoor is supposed to be a swell college, isn't it?"

"It is one of our Public schools."

"I guess I'd like to see it, some time!" Zillah exclaimed. Slight excitement was making her revert to less "cultured" phrasing. "Maybe I'll think a whole lot more of it than I do of Morcove."

"Yes, well; when we go over to Swanlake—Grangemoor is only a mile or so away. We could arrange something."

"Is that so! Well, I'm always wanting to see your home, too, Pam, remember. I guess you're some proud of it, really—like you are of your looks, only you don't say!"

Zillah, believing she was being very sweet to Pam now, was jarring badly.

"You know all right how pretty you are, Pam! Only you wait for other folks to say it—eh?"

"They'd keep me waiting, if that were so. But about Swanlake, Zillah; I shall be writing to mother in a day or two. Then I'll ask her."

Pam, however, did not have to write home after all. Next day she had reason for making an unexpected run to Swanlake.



Quite suddenly, after dinner, she decided to cycle home and look out some things that she knew would be useful for the Study No. 12 playlet.

She would have asked Zillah to go with her, but that girl had already set off on a run into town, presumably to see about the golf clubs. So, at any rate, Pam assumed. But she was mistaken.

About the time the one girl was arriving at Swanlake, her study-mate was reaching, of all places, Grangemoor School!

From Barncombe, Zillah had caught a country bus that had set her down within a mile of Grangemoor. She had walked the rest of the way very jauntily, feeling very proud of an exploit about which she was likely to be able to brag later.

Here was the big boys' school that her own schoolmates so often talked about—the one she mustn't call a college! All right; now to see if, after all, it really was such a wonderful show.

Anyway, she'd take a few snapshots, even if they were not worth sending home. Fun to get them printed and hand them round at Morcove! She could think of several girls who would be just mad to know what she had been up to this "halfer." Some of those Study No. 12 girls, who had brothers at Grangemoor. "We weren't there, that afternoon, so why should you have been?" That would be it!

Pam, too—she'd be annoyed. Jealous! And the cream of the joke was that it was with Pam's pocket-camera she was going to take the "snaps." The camera had been lying about in the study at Morcove, so she had just picked it up and brought it along without asking.

Looking in at a main gateway, Zillah saw a lot of Grangemoor fellows at their games, this being a halfer for them also. Say! She hadn't thought of this before, but what a scream to "snap" a few of those fellows presently, and perhaps get one of them to "snap" her, with the school buildings for a background. With any luck, one might even get taken with Polly's brother, and Bunny's. And wouldn't that make Study No. 12 savage!

But Zillah felt that the best thing was not to be in any great hurry. If she appeared upon the scene casually, as it were, she would "go down" better with anybody belonging to the school, who might think: "Say, here's a visitor, wanting to be shown round!"

So she did not go in by that gateway, but worked round part of the school bounds and finally sauntered in at what seemed to be a tradesmen's entrance. The motor-way ran past the great kitchen-gardens, with glasshouses, and she was bound to be able to make her way out to open ground lying between one schoolhouse and another.

Suddenly Zillah stopped dead, rather heart-in-mouth. A furious whoof-whoof! made her aware of a great dog bounding towards her.

She could glimpse him, and—no, she didn't like the look of him at all. Say, he was a nasty dog! He knew she oughtn't to be here. Oh, and now somebody was shouting—a master, by the sound of his voice. If she had gone in at that main gateway it would have been different. The man was shouting mostly to the dog; all the same, she had better—

She did, and quickly, too! Zillah was suddenly in wild flight from that fearsome dog. It was such a panicky bolting back that she executed, with an attempt at short cuts, she knocked over one glass frame that had been stood upright by a gardener to let in air to some plants.

Crash! Oh, hang, what a row! Have to clear out altogether after that!

Whoof, whoof—whoof! bayed the dog louder than ever. Whoof!

And what a well-trained guard-dog he was, really, coming on not another yard when he could see Zillah flashing out by the gateway at which she had entered. Zillah appreciated his sense of having only a particular zone to guard. But that did not cause her to say less savage things about him.

Nor did it improve her temper when, next minute, she found that in her headlong flight she had dropped—Pam's camera!

By six o'clock Pam was back at Morcove. A car had brought her from Swanlake, the bicycle being strapped on behind.

And with Pam came numerous bundles which, when her chums saw their contents, caused what Paula called "gweat wejoicings."



"If you were me, you'd sing—just what?" panted Zillah Raine. In her anger with Pam, she snatched the music from the piano and tore it in half.

"This has saved us spending money on things that would not have been half so good!" Betty said in delight.

"I thought they might be useful," Pam smiled. "Is Zillah about?"

But nothing had been seen of Zillah since two o'clock. Such a prolonged absence, considering she was "out on her own," was causing the girls slight concern.

"She may have gone on by train to Exeter, about those golf clubs," Pam suggested. "But she shouldn't have done it without permission. I want to tell her; there is some idea of my taking her home on Friday week, for the weekend."

"Oh, lucky Zillah!" groaned Polly. "I wish some of us could have the treat!"

"Yes, wather, bai Jove!"

"Bekas—gorjus! Late dinner!"

Pam's wistful smile showed how she herself wished a party could be made up when the time came. Good taste kept her from saying openly that she would scarcely relish week-ending with only Zillah.

Another moan came from Polly; but it was due to a cruel denial of a quite different kind.

Polly would have liked—and so would others—to hold a dress rehearsal straight away, the Swanlake bundles having provided such dazzling possibilities. But it was time for "prep." So a temporary dispersal took place, on the understanding that Study No. 12 should witness a joyful remustering in an hour's time.

Pam worked away very steadily for about twenty minutes, with a study all to herself. Then she had to rest her pen. She could no longer concentrate upon the task.

As late as this, and Zillah not yet in!

Growing anxiety even took Pam to the window at last. In the fast-fading light she could just manage to tell that not one of some half-dozen girls, coming in at the last moment, was her study-mate.

Then she heard the study-door open, and she faced round to see Zillah entering.

By clicking on a switch as she came in, the new girl flooded the study with light that revealed her in a jaunty mood.

"Say, I shan't like settling down to work!" she laughed, heeling the door shut behind her. "I'll say it's been some halfer for me, this has, Pam!"

"Have you been to Exeter, Zillah?"

"Well—yes!"—with a laugh. "Why?"

"You're a new girl, and so perhaps you wouldn't get into a very bad row if it were known," Pam seriously murmured. "By rights, you ought first to have asked permission. And then you would only have been allowed to go with a companion."

"Is that so?"

"What did you think of Exeter, anyhow, Zillah? Did you take a look at the cathedral?"

"I surely did," said the girl from Virginia, already lying back in an easy-chair, looking pleasantly tired. "And I'll say it's a fine sight, Pam; a poem in stone! Say, who was it said that?"

"I didn't," Pam smiled. "I don't go in for saying things like that. I don't know anybody who does!"

"No, and that's where you folks are so funny," Zillah complained, going off into one of her "life is earnest" moods. "There you've got a cathedral like the one at Exeter, and yet you don't shout about it. You just—"

"Excuse me," Pam pleaded; for Betty had

suddenly put her head in at the door, opened to the extent of a foot or so. "You want me, Betty?"

"Just a moment, Pam."

As this invited Pam to step outside, she gave her study-mate another apologetic smile and went from the study.

She saw Betty's face expressing great gravity now that they were alone together in the corridor.

"Pam dear, when you were over at Swanlake this afternoon—did you go along to Grangemoor?"

"No, Betty."

"Then who did—I mean from Morcove? Some Morcove girl was seen, and it has been reported to Miss Somerfield."

"Really?"

"And there's a row on about it!"

### Injustice!

PAM'S brows, raised questioningly, caused the Form captain to continue, very gravely:

"I was sent for by Miss Somerfield about it, Pam. And she's upset. It seems that the Grangemoor Head rang her up himself. He saw the girl sort of hanging about over there, and he would have gone out to her, but when she saw him she just bolted!"

"A Morcove girl?"

"That's it. The Head was told afterwards that she had got into the grounds by a side entrance—and that didn't look too well."

"But who could it have been?" Pam amazedly pondered. "I never went near Grangemoor, this afternoon. Except for an hour's wander round at home, I was with mother."

"Miss Somerfield knows you went to Swanlake, Pam, and so she is inclined to think it might have been you. I think you had better let her know that it wasn't. She asked about Polly and Judy and Bunny, because they each have a brother at Grangemoor. I hope it was enough when I told her that they've been in bounds the whole halfer."

"What about Fay Denver or Edna? They have a cousin at Grangemoor."

"Yes, but they've both accounted for their movements."

"All right, Betty. I'll go along and see Miss Somerfield now. Don't look so worried."

But Pam, coming away presently from the head-mistress' private room, could better understand why the captain had felt cause for worrying. Pam knew now what Betty had previously been warned to expect. Unless the matter were cleared up entirely to Miss Somerfield's satisfaction—there must be a blow, a cruel blow for Study No. 12.

And, at present, the matter was by no means cleared up!

Pam, making for Study No. 12 now, could feel no happier because she herself had been completely exonerated. She was the bearer of a message which was, she knew, bound to exasperate some of her dearest chums.

"Polly—and you, Judy, and you as well, Bunny; you are all three to report to Miss Somerfield at once."

"What!"

It came as a general gasp, whilst the girls named jumped up from their chairs indignantly.

"Yes, what is this!" Betty exclaimed at Pam.

"I answered for them."

"Miss Somerfield wants each of them to give her own word—"

"Oh, all right!" Polly exploded. "Come on, then, girls."

"You're cleared, then, Pam?" Judy was glad to infer.

"Yes. I only needed to say where I'd been, and Miss Somerfield couldn't have been nicer. It'll be the same with you, I'm sure."

It was! Yet, even so, those three girls came back from the headmistress' room looking far from relieved. If anything, matters had now taken a turn for the worse. Miss Somerfield was issuing a notice to the whole school!

It would be on the board presently. Some girl, at present unknown, had to-day behaved discreditably during an unauthorised visit to Grange-moor School. Unless that girl owned up, the headmistress would have no alternative but to mark her extreme displeasure in a certain way.

**G**OODNESS, what now? Hadn't there been enough of this going along to see Miss Somerfield?

"Very well," Pam serenely remarked, "I can't say any more than I said the first time."

And away she went, remaining so composed that she was able to chat pleasantly with parlour-maid Ellen, who was going the same way.

But chums whom Pam had left behind in Study No. 12 were looking gloomier than ever now.

Bad sign, always, for a girl to be sent for a second time!

"**Y**ES, come in, Pam. There is something—" Decidedly there was something! It showed itself in a return of that "peevish" look which Pam had easily succeeded in banishing from Miss Somerfield's face during the first visit.



"Polly, and you, Judy, and you as well, Bunny, are to report to Miss Somerfield at once." Indignantly the three looked up. Were they to be cross-examined now, as Pam and Betty had been?

"Shan't be able to have our brothers over for the half-term concert; that's what it means!" Polly said furiously to Judy and Bunny. "Shame! It's going to be one of those cases where we all suffer, simply because some girl—"

"But who—who was the girl?" was Bunny's brain-racking cry. "I can't think of anyone!"

"Those Denver sisters!" Polly frowned. "I can't help remembering that they have a Grange-moor cousin—"

"No, Polly, that won't do!" came Betty's strenuous objection. "The Denver sisters are not always reliable, we know. But in this case they happen to have been able to prove, as it were, an alibi."

Polly grimaced. "Then it must be one of us who said she didn't—when she did!"

There was just time for some mirthless laughter to die away, and then parlour-maid Ellen appeared in the study doorway.

"Pamela Willoughby—to go to the headmistress at once!"

"Since you were here, Pam, giving me your word—"

"Yes, Miss Somerfield?"

"There has been another telephone message from Grangemoor," came the frowning announcement. "Now Dr. Halden tells me that one of the gardeners has found a pocket-camera—an expensive one, with a little ivory plate for the owner's name. There are initials on it—'P. W.'"

Pam shook her head.

"I have a camera with my initials on it. That must be the one, of course. But I didn't take it with me this afternoon."

"Did you lend it to another girl?"

"No."

"Would any girl be likely to borrow it, without asking?"

"That has happened—I mean, a girl has sometimes popped into my study to borrow it, but only to take a snap somewhere near by. I haven't minded a bit, of course."

"Are you going to assert, Pam, that some girl must have borrowed the camera this afternoon?"

"I think that must have happened. But I can't suggest—oh, no, I can't name any particular girl who would be likely to do it."

Miss Somerfield walked about the room reflectively, greatly troubled. At last:

"I am afraid, Pam, that I must dismiss the suggestion that the camera was borrowed. I cannot get it out of my mind that you were at Swanlake this afternoon, and that Grangemoor is only a few minutes' walk from Swanlake. Once again, Pam—"

"Miss Somerfield, I don't think I ought to be asked a second time. But I will say again: if I had wanted to go to Grangemoor, I shouldn't have done things that way. I would have reported to Mrs. Challenger—naturally, when she used to be here at Morcove and I'm very fond of her. I don't go hanging about places. You ought to know me by now!"

"I thought I did, Pam," was the sighing answer. "But, taking all the circumstances together—" She paused.

"Say it," Pam invited, smiling. "And tell me my punishment, that's all."

"As to the punishment," broke out Miss Somerfield, after a few more turns about the room, "had you been as frank with me as I have always known you to be, until to-day, then I might even have let you off with a reproof. As it is, I really must teach you a lesson. But I shall punish only you, allowing the usual arrangement to stand in regard to our half-term concert."

Pam, standing very still and straight, waited for what was to follow.

"Polly Linton and others, with brothers or cousins at Grangemoor, will be allowed to have them to the concert, after all," Miss Somerfield finally decreed. "But you, Pam—you will not sit with them when the time comes. You will receive special instructions what to do from your Form-mistress."

"I see."

"And you may go."

Pam gave a bow to a headmistress who, for the first time ever, was failing to smile her away to the door!

Click, that door was softly closed between them by Pam, and then—she could not at once go along the passage. She had to stand still, biting hard upon the tremulous lip that she had taken between her teeth.

Strength of character was hers, and others would soon be seeing her as composed as it was her habit to be; just as serene, even, as she had been whilst the very words of punishment were being pronounced.

But for these few moments—alone in the dimly lit passage—she did have to fight down feelings that threatened to overwhelm her.

### In Her True Colours!

"OH, shame—foul shame!"

"We won't have Grangemoor over for the concert, even if we are allowed to!"

"We won't give our play now. Why should we?"

"Don't let's go to the concert! Stay away as a protest!"

"Yes—swcandle!"

Such were a few of the furious cries from fire-breathing members of the chummery, now that Pam had reported the latest.

"Or shall we all go to Miss Somerfield and tell her—very likely it was one of the Denver sisters, after all? Fay and Edna have a perfect cousin at Grangemoor. He may have been the reason for one of them going over?"

"Betty, will you take us along?" clamoured Bunny. "All of us—"

"Now, stop," Pam calmly intervened. "I won't hear of vague charges being made. I might just as well say it must have been Zillah, because she shares my study and the camera went from there."

"How about Zillah?" Judy gravely doubted.

"Well, I expect she has been to Exeter, not being able to get the right clubs in Barncombe. You can ask her, if you like. But I am sure Betty realises—whoever it was, we must have proof."

"Then—ugh!" Polly stamped. "Where's your chance of being righted, Pam? There's no chance!"

"Unless," Pam shrugged, "the girl who really was at Grangemoor comes forward to clear me."

"But it's all over the school already that there is this row on," Bunny remarked. "And yet no girl has owned up!"

"Yes, but it may be different when it's known that I have been left with the blame. That isn't known yet."

A sudden stride took Betty to the study-door. "As captain, I'm going all round the studies now—to tell girls and to make it quite clear! It's up to any girl who is really to blame to own up!"

But this unlucky day for the chummery was to end with Pam still under the black cloud of disgrace. The blame was still upon her and not upon the actual culprit.

Many girls, including Zillah, who had been rather far afield during the "hafter," either offered such convincing proofs as to their movements, or made such indignant denials of having been near Grangemoor, they had to be acquitted. And, in a good many quarters, this resulted in a regretful belief that Pam, after all, simply must have been the culprit!

But Study No. 12 knew that Pam had NOT been the guilty party, and it was fuel to the fiery indignation that now, without doubt, some Morcove girl was being cowardly and callous enough to keep silent, leaving an innocent school-mate to suffer!

Still, the playlet was kept in rehearsal during the next few days, and there was no cancelling of the Grangemoor invitation for the night of the concert. The brothers of Polly, Bunny, and Judy were to come over with the rest of the Grangemoor party. Pam herself had pleaded most strenuously with her chums that they should not let it make any difference.

She had, however, dropped out of the play, for the simple reason that otherwise it might be thought that she was trying to dodge the penalty put upon her. Her view of the penalty was that before, during, and after the concert, she must not seek to mingle with her chums.

Last her absence should take disheartening effect upon the girls, she attended some of the rehearsals as a mere looker-on. But there were times when she would slip away to her own study, whilst Betty and the rest trooped downstairs to start another rehearsal.

There in the study, if Zillah Paine were not on hand to keep up talk which poor Pam daily found more and more jarring, she would hear now and then lively voices from the music-room below.

Polly's little play was a boisterous one—a screaming farce—and the whole schoolhouse was bound to know when a rehearsal was in progress.

"Say, those chums of yours are at it again!" Zillah said, with hardly a pleased smile, as she came into the study one evening, well before

"prep" time. "Stuff like they are going to put over—shouldn't have thought it would need all that rehearsing!"

"Shouldn't you?"

"Where do you think I've been, Pam? First, I had tea with Miss Merrick!" in a "Think of that!" tone. "She was sweet. She gave me candy. Then I looked along at the head girl's study again, and from there I went to the library."

Zillah came to the table and showily put down a fat volume.

"Browning, Pam! Ethel and I have been having a discussion—real literary!"

"Have you?"

"Say," Zillah suddenly stared touchily, "why do you speak like that, Pam? Don't you believe me?"

"Sorry, Zillah. I know what it is to be disbelieved," Pam said gently, "so I'd never wish to be in a hurry to doubt you."

"No, but you do, I guess? The mistake a lot of you folks make, just because the head girl is nice and friendly to me and not to all of us—"

"Ethel Courtway is a friend to all of us," Pam calmly protested. "But we happen not to like to live on her doorstep."

"Oh, so I wear out my welcome, do I?" cried

Zillah, turning sour. "I should smile! When she's always asking me to come again; and I can go to golf with her any time!"

"By the way—talking of golf," Pam said, wanting to ease the situation by a change of subject, "those clubs you said you bought in Exeter the other day—have they ever turned up?"

"No—er—no yet."

To see Zillah slightly flustered by the purely affable question was a surprise to Pam. She could not help watching her study-mate as that girl, on her side of the table, hastily sat down to throw open the Browning volume.

"Have you written about them, Zillah?"

"About what? Oh, those clubs! No, I guess I'll wait another day or two. In this old country of yours, everything takes years to do."

She sat mute and still after that, for a few moments, watching Zillah. That girl, with both elbows thumped upon the table, had started to read, the supporting hands for her head stopping her ears.

Pam suddenly hitched back her chair and rose.

"Zillah!"

"Oh, look here, Pam, I'm reading—poetry—"

"Did you buy any golf clubs at Exeter? Did you really go to Exeter that day?"

"Eh?"

THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN. No. 788. Vol. 31.

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YOU know, I'm afraid that I shall soon be getting very vain if this goes on: By "this,"

I mean the flattering and beautiful descriptions of me which I receive from readers. Often when a reader sends me a letter she finishes up by giving an imaginary description of me, and I may say that they are many and varied, although all of them are extremely flattering!

But I have been wondering if any of you have ever formed an idea of the appearance and personality of the authors of the SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN stories. For instance, from reading Miss Marjorie Stanton's fine tales of famous Moreove School, what opinions of Miss Stanton would you form?

Do you think that she is jolly and always ready for a joke, or should you be more inclined to imagine her as rather serious and fond of reading and walking by herself in preference to the company of other people?

I should very much like to know if you have formed any opinions about the authors who write for you, and if you have, what those opinions are. So, if you have a few spare moments at any time, just write to me and tell me what you think, won't you? I shall be highly interested and pleased to hear from you all.

Now for some news of our great debate about Pam Willoughby! You will remember that I published an extract from a reader's letter criticising Pam a short while ago. I invited you

all to write and tell me whether or no you agreed with all that this reader said.

Well, since then the SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN "fan" mail has increased tremendously. I have had letters from all parts of the country, some burning with great indignation at the criticism of Pam, others clearly setting out carefully formed arguments to show just why Pam is so much admired, and some partly agreeing with my reader's criticism.

But I may truly say that the huge majority of the letters received are strongly in Pam's favour. If any of you would like to send me your opinion of Pam, and have not yet done so, there is still time for you to write. I shall be pleased to print extracts from the best letters in my Chat.

Here is an extract from one letter sent by Hazel Hughes (Connah's Quay):

"I am writing to tell you that I heartily disagree with your reader's opinion of Pam Willoughby.

"I think that Pam is a very natural girl, and that it is very nice of her to be like the other girls, and not to show off because her parents are wealthy, and because she gets so much more pocket-money than the other girls.

"Pam has brilliant ideas, and is always ready to help anyone in her own quiet, reserved way.

"She has a wonderful personality, and interests me very much. I consider Pam the most likeable member of the Study 12 chummary, and I think your reader has formed an entirely wrong opinion of Pam Willoughby's character."

I shall publish further extracts next Tuesday

Next week's story programme is one you are sure to enjoy. You will want to know more about Zillah Raine, the intriguing character who has come to Moreove, so don't miss

**"THE TREACHERY OF ZILLAH RAINE"**

By Marjorie Stanton.

Also there will be further enthralling chapters of our two fine serials, and grand COMPLETE stories of her Harum-scarum Highness and the Crimson Shadows.

Until next Thursday then,

With every good wish,

Your sincere friend,

YOUR EDITOR.

"You didn't," Pam said, whilst Zillah angrily slammed shut the book and jumped up from her chair. "That was the very afternoon I went to Swanlake—the afternoon I'm supposed to have hung around Grangemoor School with my camera!"

Both girls moved, so that instantly the table was no longer between them. Zillah, moving close to Pam, looked ready to strike her. Then came a falling-away step, the unclenching of a hand, and a laugh.

"It's nothing to laugh about," Pam said sternly. "You—you were the girl."

"Can you prove it?"

"No."

"Say, then, hadn't you better be careful?" Zillah challenged, looking swarthy and passionate. "Any girl could have borrowed the camera, couldn't she? It was lying about."

"I have had to rely upon the girl who was at Grangemoor, that day, owning up so as to clear me. The girl hasn't done so—because she was no true, Morcove girl. She was only—what you are—"

"Well, say, what am I, then?"

"A mass of pretence," Pam said with fine scorn. "You're slushy. You pretend to be all for—high ideals, and yet all the while you can let a study-mate down. You think it makes you out to be somebody who is too good for Morcove, to quote poetry and be above acting anything but Shakespeare. The same as you think no school can be anything great, unless it has marble walls, like an insurance office, or a grand organ—like any cinema—"

"Say, cut it out now, Pam Willoughby—"

"Oh, I've done; but only on the understanding that you go along at once and own up to the whole business."

"Is that the idea?" scowled Zillah, her face going red and white by turns. "Well, I am just not going to!"

"What! But you must!"

"Oh, no, I mustn't! And if you go trying to put it on to me, I shall only deny it, that's all. I can still say that I never went to Grangemoor that day. I'll say I did go to Exeter, even if I didn't buy any golf clubs."

Pam came away from the door and stood conferring such a look upon Zillah as made that girl blench at last.

"I am not," Pam said steadily, "going to suffer for a girl like you. It's the humbug that you are; that poetry book on the table there—and yet you are ready to tell lies to try and escape. Are you going to confess, or must I denounce you—and then see whether your lying denials will count for anything!"

After a moment, Zillah raised her eyes. They met the other girls, reading in them, very likely, something so magnificently spirited that the effect was infuriating. For suddenly Zillah gave a kind of frenzied cry and flew at Pam, trying to hit her.

Then, as suddenly, the enraged girl desisted and dropped down into a chair, burying her face in her hands. She wept hysterically, with Pam watching her quite unmoved.

Yet what a mistake it would have been to think that Pam, at this moment, was left without mercy.

"All right, Zillah," she voiced gently. "Not to-night, then. Do you hear me? Not to-night."

Zillah lifted her tear-wet face from her hands and looked at her study-mate abjectly.

"But how you can want me to own up, ever, when it's become a whole lot worse for me now!" she almost whimpered. "I didn't know at the time that it was doing anything wrong, just to make my way out to Swanlake—"

"To where?"

"Swanlake, yes! Oh, did you think I meant to go looking round Grangemoor? Not a bit of it, Pam! I started off to get a look at Swanlake—just to give you a surprise when I got back by saying I'd been! But I came to Grangemoor first, and there it was—such old, interesting buildings, Pam! We Americans always say you folks over here don't think half enough of your old buildings—your cathedrals and—"

"Oh, be quiet!" Pam entreated wearily.

"Then you're going to be hard on me, after all! Or, say, will you—will you?" The strange girl was trying to catch one of Pam's hands now, as if to stroke it. "Will you, Pam—because it's surely going to be so awful for me now—"

"Oh, all right, then!" the sighing exclamation was drawn from Pam. "After all this time—let it go, that's all. I shan't say—not a word."

"Pam! Ah, you're fine! You're just—"

And there Zillah checked her crooning praise, and the other girl could see the smile of flattery fading, giving place to a dark look as of sullen mistrust.

"But you won't," Zillah hurriedly decided next moment; "you won't keep silent—not you!"

That was not the sort of remark Pam would deign to answer. A promise, to Pam, was sacred, and not to be broken. She opened the door, meaning to walk out.

"Here—come back! Shut that door again!" Zillah fiercely insisted. "If you do say a word, Pam—to shift the blame on to me—I guess you'll be sorry! Listen, will you, when I'm just telling you!"

And Pam's hand, on the doorknob, had one of Zillah's closing over it, trying to drag it away.

"I guess you're going to tell about me—so as to be all right for the night of the concert! But afterwards—you look out, that's all! You don't know what I am!"

"I do know what you are," Pam said quietly. "I've told you."

Suddenly flinging off the other's hot hand, she whipped open the door and strode out.

Be sure to read next Tuesday's enthralling long complete story of the chums of Morcove School:

**"THE TREACHERY  
OF  
ZILLAH RAINE"**  
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