

**"PERIL IN THE CAMP"**

GRAND LONG MORCOVE  
HOLIDAY STORY INSIDE

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

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EVERY TUESDAY.



A thrilling incident from  
"Peril in the Camp"  
this week's grand story of  
Morcove and Grangemoor.

**FIVE MAGNIFICENT STORIES WITHIN**



*Enthralling Long Complete Story of Morcove and—*



# PERIL IN THE CAMP

## Holiday Spirits!

"CAMP life is all right," said madcap Polly Linton, as she and her companions seated themselves in the best café at Southville-on-Sea. "But you do need a change now and then!"

"Even if it is only a change from the cooking," put in Bunny Trevor, with a meaning look at Polly.

"So let's have a look," was Betty Barton's rejoinder as she picked up the menu card.

"I'm ordering," said Polly's brother Jack, calmly taking the card away from Betty.

"You're not!"

"I'm ordering—why shouldn't I?" challenged Jack. "When I've just borrowed five bob from Tubby!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Seat for Madge, when she comes in," Dave Cardew commented, setting down an extra chair which he had fetched across to Betty and Co.'s corner table.

"Gone to the jeweller's, hasn't she—about that broken necklace of hers?" Dave's sister, Judy, murmured. "Madge will be glad to have it back."

"That necklace!"

This, from Tess Trelawney, was in a tone implying that great importance attached to the trinket in question. It was the sort of remark that leads on to animated discussion; but now Jack was wanting to know what everybody would have.

"Hot milk, children, and—or—a bun?"

"Oh, yeah!" said Polly. "Vanilla ice in lemonade for me, please, and if I may be allowed to choose my own pastries—"

"Yes, we must have ze French pastries!"

## A LION AT LARGE!

*Such is the unnerving discovery made in the Morcove-Grangemoor camp. Dire peril threatens, but the chums show they have courage as well as resourcefulness.*

shrilled dusky Naomer. "Bekas—what zo diggings, ages since we had brekker!"

"Had what?" demurred Bunny. "I have a recollection, a painful recollection of—"

"Forget it!" counselled Jack. "But something ought to be knocked off the rent of that camping-ground for the rotten, ramshackle stove in the cookhouse. Miss!" very engagingly to the smiling waitress. "Pastries, lemonades, ices and lemonades, ices without lemonades, a few coffees, and—or—let's see! Tubby, feel like a pork-pie with me?"

"I don't mind what it is," said beefy Tubby, his looks implying: "So long as it is something substantial!"

"Can I have a pork-pie?" Naomer pathetically asked.

"My child—no!" Jack told her, in a fatherly tone. "Meat course for Grangemoor only. Bug, elbows off the table, and you shall have first pick at the pastries, for a reward!"

"Here's Madge," cried Betty, as the musical member of the Morcove chummery came stepping between the café's many refreshment tables. "Got it, Madge?"

"Yes."



## —Grangemoor on Holiday



By Marjorie Stanton

ILLUSTRATED BY L. SHIELDS

"Good! What did the man at the shop think of the bracelet, Madge?"

"Thought it a bit—peculiar!"

"I dare say he did," chuckled Polly. "Did you tell him where you bought it, that time—out in Nakara? Did you tell him that Pam's father says it must be several thousand years old?"

"Ancient Egyptian, bai Jove!" beamed elegant Paula Creel. "A pviceless welic, what?"

"No, I didn't say anything about that," Madge smiled, dropping into the seat that had been kept for her. "Oh—just a coffee, thanks, Jack."

"That's what I like about Madge," the jester rejoiced. "She never helps to pile up the bill! By the way, Sir Tobias," to fat Tubby, "no difficulty about a small overdraft on my account? Otherwise, I'm afraid I'll have to ask Madge to let me bunk to the pop-shop presently with her bracelet."

"I can see Madge letting you do that," grinned Betty. "Now that she knows such strange things about the bracelet. You'll even be afraid to wear it now, Madge."

"I shall have to be careful whilst I am in camp, anyhow," Madge soberly smiled. "One is so apt to mislay things."

"Mislaid—don't talk about it," groaned Polly. "I just don't know what becomes of the tooth-brushes! Four in five days."

"Bai Jove, I know what became of one of them, Polly deah," chortled Paula. "It turned up in my bed, last night. I was feeling nice and comfy"

"When suddenly," Jack guessed.

"Yes, bai Jove! A pwickling sensation at my toes—"

"Yes," Naomer clapped, "and didn't you yelp! Zinking it must be a hedgerhog, or something!"

"So that," Bunny's brother Tom commented, "was the awful row we heard—and thought it was the caged animals at the circus next door!"

Again the light-hearted juniors laughed at Tom's allusion to the travelling circus which was occupying the next meadow to the one in which Morcove and Co. were camping, just behind the seashore.

The waitress arrived with a very crowded tray, set everything down—and went back for more! This suggestion of more to come caused Jack to give Tubby a mock-anxious look.

Presently, healthy appetites being appeased and thirsts slaked, Madge unpapered the little cardboard box in which the jeweller had placed the mended necklace on a bed of cottonwool.

She took it out, and it came in for general inspection. It was not that the chums were merely eager to see what sort of a job the jeweller had made of the broken fastening. Curiosity went further than that.

"If you had never broken it, during tennis at Beach Place," Betty remarked, "you might never have known, Madge, that it was once a king of Egypt's gift to his queen! Only Mr. Willoughby's chancing to see it, whilst Pam Willoughby was minding it for you, led to that!"

"What Mr. Willoughby doesn't know," Jimmy Cherrol exclaimed admiringly. "Fancy his being able to translate those bits of dead language on the back of the pendant."

"Yes!" was the chorus; and then Betty recited words that had become impressed upon her memory:

"ANKH, WHO RULES, HAS DOMINION  
OVER THE GOLDEN GROTTO, TO HIS  
ROYAL WIFE GIVES."

"You would never imagine that such a few characters in that dead language could mean so much," Bunny exclaimed. "It's the 'Golden Grotto' bit I like! Makes you think of some cave of gold somewhere—"

"In Africa," put in Tess. "Where that Kwamba fellow, at the circus, was born! Why not, when we noticed last evening that his right arm has a tattoo mark—"

"Exactly the same design as is on the front of the pendant—yes!" Betty broke out. "And how it all comes to be—goodness knows!"

Jack, paying attention whilst he offered round a plate, gave a chuckle.

"Say, chaps!" but he meant the girls as well; "Wouldn't it be grand to go out to Africa on an expedition—"

"Gorjus!"

"And fight our way through forest and jungle— Urrr! hear the lions roaring, boys! And search for this place that's called Kwamba and find the Golden Grotto—"

"And go in!" Betty nodded, to help on the narrative.

"And see chunks of gold lying about; just chunks of it," Jack's wild fancy suggested. "So I'd be able to pay back all I owe Tubby here; and you girls—you'd be able to pay for yourselves, whenever you came out with us chaps!"

"If only we could," sighed Polly. "I mean, do that African trip some time! Taking Kwamba with us for a guide, of course—"

"Bekas, he knows where eet is, and he is a jolly good sort, too," Naomer stressed. "Ooo, I feel I'd like to start to-day!"



"I'm afraid," said Betty, "we can't! But, anyhow, we are getting the roaring of lions every night, even though we are at Southville-on-Sea!"

"Making a dickens of a row, they were, last night," Jack grumbled. "I suppose that was because Kwamba hadn't been able to look after them, being laid by after his accident, and so they missed him."

"He said they would," Madge quietly remarked. "Poor Kwamba! I do hope that broken wrist of his gets quite all right again."

"If I," Tubby suddenly suggested, "buy some chicken jelly and things like that for Kwamba—would some of you others take 'em to him?"

"But why shouldn't you take them, Tubby?" Morcove asked, without really needing to be told why.

Tubby's was that admirable disposition; never so happy, he, as when he could be allowed to "foot the bill" for a treat for someone else, and miss being thanked!

His fondness for "treating" was only equalled by his genius for keeping, as it were, in the background.

But all these chums of his took good care not to let him ruin himself over such lavish generosity. Happily, he was supplied with ample funds; all the same, he wanted looking after!

So, ten minutes later, he was not allowed to be the only one of them to visit the café's ham-and-beef counter before leaving.

That counter showed a tempting array of delicacies, just right for an invalid.

Glass jars of clear chicken jelly; bottles of soup; even a cold roast fowl—such were a few of the things which Morcove and Co. secured, by general subscription, for that injured black man at the circus.

With these purchases made up into one handsome parcel, back to camp went all the juniors, although they failed to turn up there in one big batch.

Two or three of the girls fell to window-gazing in Southville's fine High Street. Tubby and Tom enticed Bunny and Naomer into another café, to try ices there! Not that Naomer required much enticement.

Then there were a few of the girls and boys who suddenly decided to drop in at Beach Place, where tennis could be had.

They would find Pam Willoughby there, sitting about on the sunny lawn, for Pam was still not her virile self again, after a bad riding accident of several weeks ago.

But Betty and Polly and Madge, with Jack and Dave, went straight back to camp, to see if any help were wanted. As it wasn't, they decided to call "next door," to inquire after Kwamba.

A handy gap in the ragged hedge enabled them to get through to the adjoining field, and then, to their delight, they saw honest Kwamba himself, sitting about in the sunshine, near his own makeshift tent, with his left arm secured by a sling.

#### Kwamba Is Surprised!

"HALLO, Kwamba, old sport! How goes it?"

"Fine, folks!" crowed the woolly-headed negro, waving his sound arm in welcome. "I feel jus' grand, I do!"

"Able to sit up and take a little nourishment—eh, Kwamba?" smiled Betty. "A spot of chicken, say?"

"But soup first," Jack gaily prescribed. "Thick or clear, Kwamba?"

"What say, massa?" goggled the darkie as the café parcel became in evidence. "Now all you young folks, you habn't a-been wasting your money on old Kwamba, hab you?"

"No," said Polly flatly. "How could it be a waste of money! We know you're a real live giant, Kwamba, and as strong as one of your own lions in the cages over yonder. But a broken wrist is a nasty accident—"

"Oh, but I can still feed myself with de ubber hand, missy, sure 'nuff! You should jess' hab seen me, not an hour ago, taking my trimmings as well 'sever!"

By "trimmings," Kwamba meant "victuals." The visitors had already noticed an old crone, whom they knew as "Liz," hobbling across the grass with all a nurse's inclination to be near her patient. Kwamba, who had refused to go to hospital, was being looked after by Liz. And as this meant providing him with meals, cooked in her own living-van, Betty now took the parcel from Jack and went to meet Liz with it.

"Here, Liz," was Betty's friendly whisper; "you take charge of these few things for Kwamba."

"Oh, young lady!" gasped the old woman, giving a lift and fall of bony hands before accepting the offered parcel. "If you young people aren't just as kind as can be! I shan't forget how some on you called at Kwamba's tent last night, to see how he was arter the accident."

"Well, we didn't know how bad he might be. But he is in his usual good spirits this morning, anyhow! You must let him have some of the soup that's inside pretty soon, Liz—and a plate of it for yourself wouldn't do any harm!"

"Thank 'ee, missy, again, I'm sure! I'll go back to my van and see about getting him summat to sup! I know one thing," Liz added, her wizened face wrinkling with a grin, "he'll be a terror to mind if he has to stay idle for long! He's only sitting there now, a-sunning of hisself, akas he's bin to have a look round the cages and found things being done all right."

"He's a dear!" Betty voiced the general opinion of the camp, and she turned to go back to Kwamba, leaving Liz to hobble away to the little Home-on-Wheels. A yellow-painted caravan it was, not a stone's throw from the black man's ragged tent.

"I'm not the doctor, Kwamba," Polly's brother was saying, as Betty rejoined the group. "So I can't ask to see the arm that's in a sling. But—any objection to my seeing the other?"

"Dis one, sah? Cert'nly, sah!" grinned the happy invalid, promptly holding his right arm straight out. "And if you folks can see anything wrong with him, you jess' let Kwamba know!"

"By heck, what an arm!" Jack admiringly commented on its muscular thickness.

Ebony black, it shone in the sunshine. Kwamba, in his pride, worked the muscles, which jumped and knotted themselves under the dark skin.

"And the muscles of his brawny arms," Polly quoted, "were strong as iron bands!"

"Yes, folks!" Kwamba agreed. "I'se no chick'n!"

"And this bit of tattooing," Dave further remarked, "you say that all Kwamba men have that done to them?"

"As chillern, yess, sah! Ebery little boy and ebery little girl as is born at Kwamba, hab de mark put on."

"But what does it stand for?" asked Betty.



"Two hawks facing each other is the design. Meaning—what?"

Kwamba, sitting on an old Windsor chair, gave a broad grin that displayed his great white teeth. He shut his eyes whilst smiling—a simple man, taking pleasure in his thoughts.

"Him like de ticket for de Big Treat, folks," he chuckled, suddenly opening his eyes again. "Jess' as you folks hab to hab a ticket for de circus, so all Kwamba men, women and chillerns hab to hab de mark on de arm, to show dey belong!"

"Don't quite get you, Kwamba," said Jack. "You're one special tribe out there in Africa; we understand that. And the tattoo is a sort of passport, eh? If there's anything on, only those with the tattoo pass the turnstiles, so to speak. But when you talk of the Big Treat—that's where my chums and I are stalled!"

"Kwamba means a kind of annual beano, I suppose," Polly chuckled. "Sort of grand get-together of the Kwambas, with a speech from the throne—under a gum-tree. Tom-toms," Polly imagined, "and a torchlight procession—"

But now Kwamba, his eyes again shut to the sunshine, shook his head and rocked his great body as if ready to burst out laughing.

"You'm guessing wrong, missy," he next moment informed Polly. "De Big Treat is what no Kwambas hab ebber had yet—no, sah! Him de Big Treat dat is to come some day. Him bin coming ebber so many years and years and years!"

"Oh, I see," grinned Jack. "And you Kwambas don't get tired of waiting?"

"No, sah! De Kwamba who grumble at having to wait, him no good Kwamba. All good Kwamba folk, dey say, if not now, den bimeby! If not for us, de Big Treat, den some day for our chillerns!"

"Kind of share-out, is that it?" Dave asked, not at all in jest. "Only, at present nobody knows—"

"What the dividend will be!" Jack flippantly put in. "Gee, now I begin to savvy! Well, Kwamba, I'm glad there is money in the family, so to speak. Glad the tribe is on the gold standard and all that!"

The girls would have laughed, but they noticed that Dave was remaining very serious.

"Perhaps it really will be a share-out—in gold?" he said to Kwamba. "When your tribe finds out—at last—where the gold is?"

"Massa!" the black fellow gasped with such a stare at Dave as seemed to mean fright. "You'm full ob de magic to say dat!"

"Sorry," Dave genuinely apologised. "I won't do any more guessing. There are some things about your Kwamba tribe that you don't care to talk about."

"Dere now! You hab got it again, young sah!"

"Oh, Dave's got it right enough—here." grinned Jack, touching his forehead. "Our prize solutionist!"

"Rabbits," said Dave, "and we'd better go back now or we shall only be worrying Kwamba."

"But, folks, don't you go away wid de idea I'se angry," the honest fellow pleaded. "Nunno, folks! You'm my kind friends. It's only dat I jess' wunner if I ought to talk about de Kwambas, being de fust man ob de Kwamba tribe to come to dis country—yes, sahs! Kwamba folks hab wunnerful way ob hearing about things all ober de world!"

"Then they may have heard what a name you have made for yourself, Kwamba, as a member of Samway's Celebrated Circus!" Betty rejoined. "And they're proud of you!"

"Kwamba," said Madge, taking off the ancient necklace to offer it for his inspection, "what do you think of this?"

"Er, missy? Eh, what!" he cried in simple delight at being shown the curious trinket. "Him made ob de real gold? But—but—"

Those bright eyes of his were suddenly goggling again as they now saw the pattern that had been wrought so many ages ago upon one side of the pendant. The same device that was tattooed upon his right arm—two hawks, facing each other!

"Strange, isn't it?" Madge smiled, although she wished now that she had not let him see the



"Here, Liz," said Betty, "you take charge of these few things for Kwamba." The old woman took the parcel. "If you young people aren't just as kind as can be!" she murmured gratefully.



necklace, he was so agitated. "But never mind

"But, missy, where did dat come from?"

"Oh, I just picked it up for a few coins in a bazaar out in Nakara. That's a place in Africa, but nowhere near Kwamba, of course. This can't have anything to do with Kwamba, can it?"

"Dat should be true, sure 'nuff, missy; and yet

Even as Kwamba put up his right hand to rub his lined forehead in a puzzled way, the tattooed device showed itself again.

"No, folks," he said in a sighing, bewildered way, "dis yere Kwamba don't see how, and dat's de fack!"

"Cheerio, Kwamba, for the present," Dave said.

He gave his chums a meaning glance, and started to walk away. But in a moment he checked, to pay attention to someone who had come quite close, unnoticed, approaching from the heart of the circus encampment.

This caused the other juniors to take a look at the newcomer—a well-dressed man who might, they supposed, be a holiday-maker taking a stroll round out of ordinary curiosity.

He certainly did not belong to the circus staff, although there was the possibility that he was connected with the management up in town.

As he drew even nearer, he smiled in an ingratiating way at the girls and boys, but they did not feel inclined to linger to fall into talk with him.

Vaguely there was something about the man they disliked. His face, handsome enough, was not, to them, an honest face. And that smile of his was rather a foxy one.

Paying no more attention to them, he now called out to the negro:

"Are you Kwamba?"

"Yes, sah!"

"Ah, I have heard about you—last night's accident in the ring!" the juniors heard the man pursue, as they walked away. "Read about it in the papers. Bad luck—eh?"

Betty glanced at Dave to see how he, always such a shrewd observer, was taking this overheard remark. To Betty, the sympathy sounded false.

"Bit of a foreigner," Dave quietly commented, as if stating the obvious. But that had not been at all obvious to his chums.

"Foreigner, Dave?" was Madge's astonished murmur. "What on earth makes you think that!"

"It's a foreign face—at least, so it seems to me. Besides, the shallow complexion."

"But he speaks such good English!" Betty objected.

"I only said—a bit of a foreigner," was Dave's smiled response. Then he looked at his wrist-watch.

"We haven't a morning paper in the camp, have we?" he continued. "Well—there's just time, if I hurry, to get into town again and back before dinner."

"Again!" cried Betty. "What for?"

"To get a paper. I just want to see what it says about Kwamba."

This was Dave in one of those reticent moods which often set his chums wondering: "Now what's he thinking?"

He was next moment parting from the three girls and Jack, walking briskly to get out of the field and on to the road into town. They were all gazing after him as he vaulted a five-barred gate and then hurried on.

"What it really means," Jack said; "he wants

to see what that foreigner has been reading about Kwamba."

"Oh!" Betty laughed. "But where's the difference?"

"Don't ask me," grinned Jack. "Ask Dave, when he comes back!"

### Something Wrong

MORCOVE & Co, came to the open-air dinner-table, presently, with that boisterousness which was a feature of every meal in camp.

Dave was not yet back from his sudden errand into town; but his absence made not the slightest difference to all the laughter and chatter. He hardly ever contributed to the jocularity, although he always delighted in it.

"Stew again!"

But to-day it was a stew which young Mrs. Cardew—with the right to be styled camp commandant—had herself prepared.

It would not be "mysterious," as one of Polly's stews had been, or productive of stray prunes, as Bunny's of a few days ago. The hungry juniors were confident enough that any stew for which the mother of Judy and Dave was responsible would be something LIKE a stew.

Hungry they were, in spite of mid-morning coffees and cream-buns, and soft drinks and ices. A jolly breeze was blowing in from the sea, and some of the diners were quite glad of it, as helping to cool their ladled-out rations quickly.

The wind was not often so kind. It was Polly who, laying breakfast this morning, had found she must weight the cloth over the trestle-table with empty lemonade bottles, if it was not to blow away the moment her back was turned.

The conversation soon became as nonsensical as ever, although one of the girls who had looked in at Beach Place an hour ago suddenly remembered a thing of great importance.

"And Pam's people want us all to go along there this evening!"

Loud cheers! It was the first most of the juniors had heard about it.

"Evening dress, with long trousers?" Polly informed Jack.

"I'm not sure I've got any," he said. At the moment he was in shorts. "Hey, Tubby, you won't want to go to any dinner-party to-night at Beach Place?"

"What ze diggings!" Naomer shrilled. "You're always borrowing money from Tubby! Now you want to borrow his black trousers!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Course he will go!" Naomer continued, answering for Tubby. "To look after me!"

"I don't see, though, how we can all go, and leave the camp to look after itself," Judy soberly observed. "But we can arrange it between us—I'll be one to stay behind."

"What rot," Jack said. "Dave's the one. Give him a book to read, and he'll be quite happy. Or he can have my accordion."

Bunny suddenly gurgled.

"Wouldn't it be funny to hear Dave crooning!"

"It might be a welcome change," Polly snorted, "from Jack's crooning. Anyhow, be careful what you say about Dave. Here he is!"

"My hat, how many papers has he bought?" gasped Jack, observing the great wad of them hugged under his best chum's arm. "Way to spend money!" he sighed.

More laughter went up, and Dave knew that he was the object of that hilarious chatter which



prevailed, as he set down the sheaf of newspapers where the wind would not take them, and came to table.

But he was not rattled—not he! Betty and a few others felt that something had even bettered his habitual good spirits.

He apologised to the "Camp Commandant," for being late.

"Sorry, mater."

"I call it disgracing the old school tie," Jack jested. "You can have some of the stew, David Cardew; but you won't mind staying back to keep an eye on the camp, this evening, whilst we others all go out to dine?"

"Right-ho!" Dave nodded. "Beach Place?"

"Aw—yaas," the jester further amused the company in general, pretending to adjust an imaginary monocle. "And if we're not back by two in the morning, James, you needn't wait up. If you like to read the newspapers—I think I saw a few somewhere."

"What do the papers say, Dave?" Betty asked, when the merriment had died down, "about Kwamba?"

"Oh, some of them have made quite a story of it," was the reply. "That scare with Jubilee, the elephant, you know, in the ring——"

"I don't wonder!" Madge exclaimed.

"Please, Mrs. Cardew," Polly mock-meekly entreated, "may I get down before I have my pudding, to see what's in the papers?"

"Is there a pudding?" cried Tom. "I don't mean roly-poly——"

"Why, when did we have roly-poly?" Jack asked across the table.

"We didn't," said Tom. "But we were supposed to, if you remember, the day before yesterday."

"Oh, ah! Of course!" Jack now recollected. "That pink paste—— Wow!"

For Polly, who had risen to go across for the newspapers, had rushed at Jack, smiting him. That alleged roly-poly had been one of her ambitious dabbings in the culinary art.

She remained away from table for as long as it took her to glance at one newspaper of Dave's after another, quickly finding in each a bold-headlined account of the circus accident.

"Kwamba's quite the hero of it all—so glad," she said. "Here's one paper that describes him exactly! 'As I chatted with him in his tent by the light of a hurricane lamp, I noticed how his thick, black arm was tattooed. And, somehow, as I noticed the strange device—two birds that were obviously hawks——'"

"Oh, chuck it!" sang out Jack. "And come and try some real polly-wolly; I mean, roly-poly!"

"'Strange device' isn't original," Bunny criticised. "The reporter got that from 'Excelsior.' An arm that bore this strange device," she paraphrased—"Excelsior!"

"No wonder people are turning up at the circus meadow to get a word with Kwamba," Madge remarked. "Like that man just now."

Betty looked at Dave, expecting him to say something. But he only went on eating.

"If I were you," Mrs. Cardew said quietly to all of them, "I would keep away from the circus ground for a bit, or the manager might not like it."

Her own good nature was known too well to the whole party for this advice to be misconstrued. The juniors knew that she herself would be anxious to know that Kwamba was going on all right, and if anything could be done for him, it would be—

gladly. But she was perfectly correct, as they all realised, in thinking how annoying it must be to the hard-worked circus-folk, to have their place over-run.

So, for the rest of the day Morcove & Co. kept away from the adjoining meadow.

Whilst Samway's celebrated circus was giving another afternoon performance, the juniors were dividing their time between the camp and the seashore.

It was one bit of holiday-fun after another, including some tennis on the sands, right on until the hour came for "trekking" to Beach Place.

Betty and Polly and Judy stayed in camp, with Jack and Dave. The two boys would not have minded in the least being left to themselves—they had said so, ten times over, not wanting any of the girls to miss the treat.

But those three Morcovians were just as insistent about "going some other time." Not, of course, that they felt the camp needed as much minding as all this!

What was in their minds was an idea of putting in a busy time, straightening up, and they may have fancied, too, that their company would not come amiss to the boys.

Nightfall certainly brought about conditions in the camp that could easily have been oppressive.

The very noise going on in the neighbouring circus-ground only made this tent-dotted meadow behind the seashore seem all the more silent—eerily so.

It was a calm night, and if ever there was a lull in the band-music of the circus, or the murmur of vast crowds at the evening show died away, those in camp could hear the sullen plunge of waves along the cold shingle.

The three girls contrived a nice hot supper for themselves and the two boys; and to-night, at table, Jack did not banter Polly about her share in the cooking.

Suddenly they were aware of a queer figure coming towards them, in the light of the camp fire, from the surrounding darkness.

It was Liz—that gipsy-like woman who had become Kwamba's self-appointed nurse.

They all stood up and went to meet her as she came hobbling nearer.

"That you, Dave?" Dave spoke to her quietly. "Anything the matter?"

"Well, my dearies, I don't know, I'm sure," she quavered distressfully. "I hope I hain't done wrong, a-coming across to you like this; but you ha' been so good and kind to poor Kwamba——"

"That's all right," Betty jerked. "Is he in a bad way, then? The arm—paining him?"

"Why, no, missy—no, I'm thankful to say; as to his bad arm, that do seem to be mending fine! But he's not hissel to-night, my dears. I don't know when I've seen Kwamba so down as he is jist at present. 'Tis like as if he felt—oh, I dunno! Summa going to happen to him."

"One or two of us will go across to him now," Dave promptly decided. "Judy—you and I? We had better not all go."

"Oh, no," Betty approved, much as she longed, out of sympathy, to hasten there herself. "You and Judy."

So, leaving old Liz to hobble back at her own slow pace, Judy and Dave ran to where they could get through the hedge into the circus-meadow.

All the hubbub that was in the air came only from the great marquee. Living-vans, looming picturesquely in the darkness, were deserted.

Kwamba's own rough shelter, in its remote corner of the circus-meadow, seemed pathetically lonely at this moment.



A lantern was burning there, only dimly lighting the interior which was revealed to the brother and sister as they unflapped the opening and stooped in.

"Come to look you up, Kwamba," was Dave's cheery cry as he went before Judy into the rough shelter. "How do you feel to-night?"

"Oh, I'se not so good to-night, young sah," was the low-spirited admission which was all the more touching, coming from such a giant of a man.

He was squatting on his mattress of old horse-clothes and sacking, and the lantern-light illumined a face that had lost its ebony shininess. His skin looked putty-coloured.

"The arm, Kwamba?"

"Oh, him be doing fine, sah! Him no trouble at all, no, sah! I jess feel I sort of got a debble getting at me, yes, sah."

Neither Judy nor Dave could smile at this quaint way of expressing low spirits.

"Have you had some of the chicken, Kwamba?" Judy tenderly inquired. "And soup?"

"Oh, yess, missy, sure 'nuff. I'se jess about made dem trimmings look silly, as you kind folks brought me. Nuffing wrong dere, folks. And de doctor—when he come 'safternoon, he say, de arm doing fine, Kwamba! Soon be as good as ebber, he say. But I dunno, folks. I feel more like ole Kwamba, going to die—"

"You mustn't talk like that, old chap," Dave rallied him heartily. "Anything you'd like that we can get?"

"No, fank you, young sah! I'se got a lantern as'll last for a bit, and dat's good. You folk'll sure say Kwamba is a little chile to-night, afraid ob de dark." He laughed, ashamedly, uneasily. "De wust of it is, if I go to sleep I may hab de dreams."

"Have you been having too many people to talk to you, Kwamba?" shrewd Dave gently asked. "Not getting enough rest during the day?"

"No, sah! You folks came, and welcome, and den dere was de man—de man—"

"That man who turned up as we were going away?"

"Yes, sah—him!"

"What about him, Kwamba?"

"Ah," and the weak voice was suddenly like that of a small child who has become afraid of the dark. "I'se not gwine to say nuffink about him, sah. All I know is, folks, I only wish it had been my other arm as got hurt and had to be done up in de cott'n-wool."

Dave turned to his sister.

"I shall stay on for a minute or two, Judy, just to let him feel there is—someone," was the whisper. "He's all nerves, depressed—afraid."

"Then I'll go back," Judy nodded. "Good-night, Kwamba! You'll be better in the morning!"

"Fank you, missy. Good-night! I'se sure I nebber wanted to give such trouble to folks—"

Poor old man, stranger in a strange land! Judy's mind was full of understanding, her heart full of sympathy, as she found her way in the darkness back to the other field.

She could imagine; simple soul that he was—a negro whose birthplace had been some tribal village in the heart of Wild Africa—he needed only to be a little out of sorts, after that accident of last night, and vague terrors would be upon him. Such a great strong man, and yet in his mind he was like that—an easy prey to superstitious fears.

Very quiet it seemed to her, all at once. Perhaps some of the circus acrobats were giving their "turn," and so the audience back there in the great marquee was holding its breath as it watched.

Judy could see nothing of Liz. That old crone must have gone to her own ricketty van. At any rate, she had not remained in talk with Betty and Polly and Jack.

Those three could be seen in the light of the camp fire, to which fresh fuel had just been added, making a jolly blaze. Whilst treading across the rough grass to rejoin her chums, Judy smiled at the feeling which was suddenly upon her. A feeling of not being in the Homeland at all, but in camp with others in some far-off land, under the wide and starry sky of the tropics, Africa, say!

To have been with Kwamba, just then, helped to make one think of that great continent, where it was still possible for daring explorers to pitch camp for a night in some wild spot where the foot of a white man had never, until then, been set.

But now, was it only a trick of the mind, due to such thoughts as those, which caused her to see a shadowy object pass upon her right hand—quickly, silently, like some prowling beast?

Judy made a startled pause, dilating her eyes in that direction, to make sure whether something really was moving there in the darkness; stalking, catlike, through the long grass. And she thought: "My nerves, too!" as she felt her heart beating violently.

Then she knew that it was no nervous fancy, but that a great catlike creature really was close at hand.

*A lion!*

**S**HE kept quite still in a striking posture, fearing lest another movement should draw his attention.

For at this moment the huge creature was paying no heed to her.

As he had strangely ignored her when he came out of the other meadow into this field, so he now took no notice of her, although she was but a few yards from him.

There he was, at a pause now, sideways to her horrified eyes, and she saw his tail lashing slowly whilst he stared towards Morcove's camp-fire.

A full-grown lion—as fine a beast as ever stalked in search of his prey, in the African "bush"; one of the circus lions, as Judy had instantly realised, *escaped from his cage!*

#### Tooth and Claw!

"**T**HE jolly old accordion, where is it?" Jack exclaimed at that moment. "Mind if I provide a little music, Polly-wolly?"

"Oh, and do croon as well!" she returned his unusual politeness. "Such a lovely evening for a sing-song round the camp-fire. Find me Tom's tin whistle, and I'll provide a—"

She stopped; she stared. Then:

"Gug-gug-goodness, Jack—Betty! L-l-l-look!"

"Eh? My hat!" Jack gasped, as both he and Betty now made out that terrifying object which the firelight revealed. "A lion!"

"From the circus—oh!" Betty quavered. "And he's—he's looking at us!"

"Jack, dear—"

"Now, steady," he said quickly. "What do we do? Don't move, anyhow, you two."

"I can see Judy," Polly panted, in a whisper of increased horror. "All alone—to the right of him there. Oh, how awful for Judy, away from the fire!"

"Then draw him on," Betty breathed frantically.

"Oh, if he turns and goes for her!"

"Quiet, I tell you," Jack snapped, whilst he edged nearer the fire of driftwood. "Keep still; but when I say come on, keep after me."



Although his sister and Betty had their gaze fixed upon that fearsome beast, as he stood hesitant and yet so bold-looking, they saw Jack as he quickly stooped to the fire and picked up a burning brand.

"Now," he whispered round to them, "come on!"

And he moved away from the fire, taking advancing steps in the direction of Judy, who was still mute and motionless.

Polly and Betty followed Jack's example. Snatching up long pieces of burning wood, they moved close beside him.

He, for his part, would have preferred to step out alone, carrying that flaming brand; but he expected this skirmishing movement to stampede the lion—away from Judy, it was to be hoped. The desperate manœuvre must not, at any rate, leave Polly and Betty exposed to some sudden attack,

Jack gave a loud yell, and it was evident that the sound had taken daunting effect upon the beast.

"He's off—he's going!" Jack shouted. "Gosh, to Judy now—all of us, *quick!*"

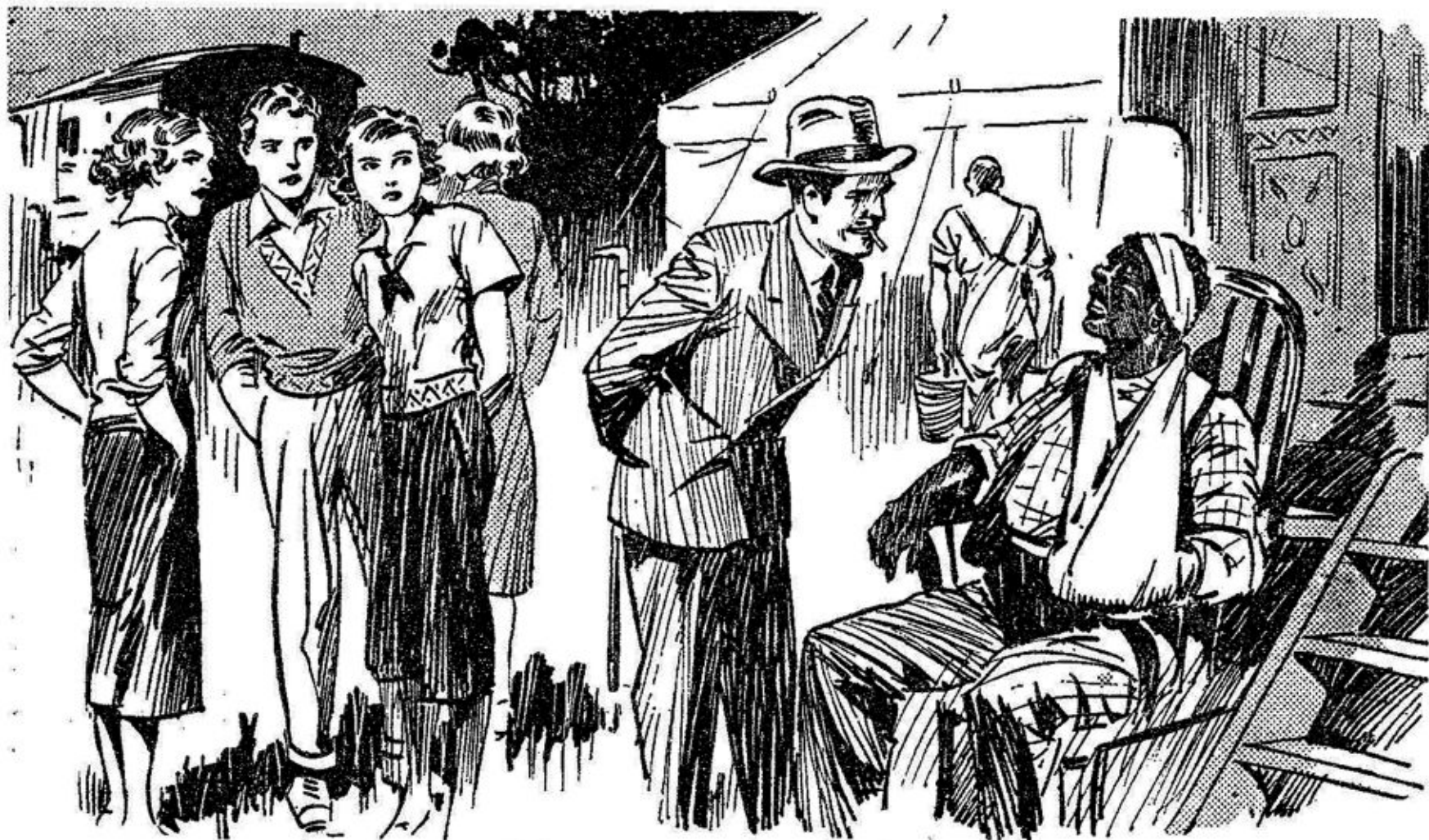
Another moment and they were with Judy, who had moved to meet them. Bunched together, they all four watched the dangerous beast.

He was padding towards a couple of the tents which could be approached without his going any nearer the camp fire. He stopped for a moment, then went on again. It was as if he felt lost—not knowing where to go.

"This all comes of Kwamba being ill," Jack muttered. "Some careless fool has been put in charge of the cages."

"If he gets into the town!" Polly palpitated. "Oh, but look now!"

"Sh, steady."



Betty and the others paused for a moment to watch the stranger as he went up to Kwamba. There was something about him that, vaguely, they mistrusted. They wondered why had he come here at such a time?

without him at hand. That was his reason for wanting them to be at his heels.

The lion glared at all three of them as they hunched along together, with a hundred yards yet to go before they would be with Judy.

It may have been the firelight, but the beast's eyes were like balls of fire in the darkness. His mane bristled, as if sullen rage had transmitted itself to every separate hair.

Two of the burning sticks lost their flame and only glowed and smoked at the lighted ends. Betty and Polly then saw that the lion, during the moment or so when the torches were not flaring, had padded towards them.

He was coming straight at them now! At any moment he might crouch and spring.

Jack could think of only one thing to do, and he did it.

He walked straight towards the lion, flourishing the torch. The others followed.

The lion had come to a standstill in front of one of the tents. He was tail towards the four juniors, who, from less than a couple of hundred yards away, could see that tail lashing again.

No thought of running away had entered their heads, although the opportunity offered. Their own escape from immediate danger had left them thinking of the danger to others.

The circus was situated on the very outskirts of a large seaside town. And there was even the circus in the adjoining field, thronged for the evening performance.

All three girls gave a sudden violent start as a dark figure put itself close to them and Jack. But it was only Dave. He had come to them without making the faintest sound.

There was just time for them to give him a glance, noticing how steady he was keeping, and then the lion gave a great spring at one of the tents.



They all saw him as he landed upon the taut canvas, bringing it down. The whole tent seemed to collapse like a pricked balloon.

"Look out!" Jack panted. "He's fairly roused now!"

They all took a few retiring steps, for indeed the beast's sudden growling proclaimed the maddest rage at what he had done for himself, by springing upon the tent.

It had collapsed like that, to get him entangled instantly in slack guy-ropes and loose folds of the canvas.

"Tennis net," Dave said, giving Jack a nudge. "That'll help."

"Gee, yes! But where——"

"I know where," Polly struck in eagerly. "Oh, come on!"

"No, not you girls!" the two boys hissed together. "Stay here!"

But neither Polly nor her two chums paid heed. For a moment, indeed, Polly was in front, as they all five walked towards the camp-fire, every step taking them nearer to the lion.

The tennis-net was one which had been folded away a couple of hours before by Polly and one of her chums, after it had been used for tennis on the sands.

It was laid by between two of the girls' tents, and those tents, worse luck, were very close to the one which the lion had attacked.

Whilst Polly took Jack and Dave to where the net was lying, Betty and Judy routed the camp-fire about, so as to create a bigger flare. They not only kicked some of the burning wood farther into the blaze, but each snatched at burning brands, to have them ready for waving protectingly.

A brace of seconds and the two boys were racing, with the tennis-net, towards the already entangled lion. They were unfolding the net as they bore it along, and Polly was giving great assistance with it.

Then, although they were perhaps risking their lives in doing so, both boys stepped quite close in upon the raging beast, and made their cast with one end of the lengthy net.

It fell, draping over him, and instantly he was entangled in that as well.

Then it seemed to all five juniors that they had as good as got him. The more he struggled and clawed, and flung his great head about, the more he drew in the rest of the net upon himself.

Nothing—nothing, they felt, could have been to better purpose, in this time of danger, than the tennis net. Its meshes were strong, and there were yards of it.

"You girls," Dave called out, "now run and let them know at the circus. We can't do more ourselves."

So Betty and Judy sped away, although Polly remained, to stand with Jack and Dave at a safe distance, watching the lion's futile struggling.

Much of the tent-canvas had become so ripped to ribbons by his claws, it served as well as the loose ropes and the tennis-net to hold him fast.

It could have been only another minute when he was reduced to a state of exhaustion and helplessness, lying still then, except for pantings that shook him.

"Whew," Polly puffed, mopping her hair to rights. "Some scare! He is quite helpless now, I hope?"

"Looks like it," Dave nodded coolly. "And here, anyway, come some of the circus-hands."

It took six men a full hour to get the ensnared lion back into his cage. Betty and Polly and Judy kept out of the way, reckoning that it was a job that was no longer their concern.

A thing to laugh about, now that all the danger was over, was the fact that nobody at the circus had been aware of the lion's being at large until Betty and Madge made their breathless arrival with the news!

"And even now," Betty said, "it is not known amongst the audience! The show has been going on all the while."

"Won't there be a row about it all in the morning, though," Judy deplored. "The sack for somebody, perhaps. But it won't be Kwamba, anyhow."

"What I'm thinking," Polly chuckled; "whilst we were having the scare of a life-time, Paula and Bunny and all the others were nicely out of the way! That's too bad," she jested, "that they should be dining out at Beach Place whilst we very nearly made a dinner for the lion!"

"The poor brute!" Betty exclaimed, as they all three returned towards the firelit camp, now that all was quiet there. "I can't help feeling sorry for him. I don't suppose he enjoyed being free in the least."

"It might have been much worse for him, that's one comfort," Judy feelingly murmured. "I mean, if we had not been able to help him to get all tangled up like that. He might have had to be shot."

They found Jack and Dave making a tidy heap of what remained of the tent which the lion had destroyed. Most of it had, with the tennis net, gone with the lion, for it was, of course, in a wound-up state that he had been taken away.

"A Morocco tent—of course, it would be!" Polly grimaced. "He couldn't go for one that you boys sleep in—oh, no! And where, I'd like to know, are Betty and I and Paula and Naomer to sleep, now?"

"You needn't worry about Paula and Naomer," said Jack affably. "I can't imagine those two getting any sleep to-night, in any case!"

The Beach House party, returning in due time, certainly did suffer a shock. Not a word as to what had been happening had reached their ears, from which it was to be inferred that all Southville was still in blissful ignorance.

So various juniors, all in their "evening best," got back to camp with Mrs. Cardew to find the "minders" still pretty busy, making fresh order out of recent chaos. And although those who had the story to tell made a point of merely remarking, as it were, that a lion had looked in upon them, the consternation was considerable.

"Bai Jove!" gasped Paula, after nearly swooning with horror. "But—but good gwacious, that's tewwible!"

"Bekas—you never know," quaked Naomer. "Supposing he gets out again!"

"And you mean to say you actually caught him?" stared Bunny, details of the re-capture having still to be given. "How?"

"Oh, simple enough," Polly shrugged. "I ran to the cookhouse and got what was left of the brawn stuff you made the other day."

"Yes, he liked that," Jack nodded seriously. "He let me stroke him whilst he was chawing up the nice gristly bits, purring like a cat! Then Dave came up with a bit of string and said: 'Excuse me, sir, but you're wanted at the circus.'"

"He went," Polly supplemented, "quite quietly."

"Story!" yelled Naomer. "Ze fact is, you have all been having a most eggsciting time, and now you'll be in the papers, and we shan't!"

But although the five had figured so heroically,



there was to be none of that publicity which Naomer, apparently, would have envied them.

The affair had been too well hushed-up for that.

The manager, travelling with the circus, came across to follow up words of thanks with almost pathetic entreaties that Morcove & Co. would "say nowt." He offered to pay for any damage done, but Mrs. Cardew generously waived this.

All she wanted was an assurance that nothing of the sort could happen again during the next few days and nights. She did not want to have to break up the camp; on the other hand, Samway's Celebrated Circus would not be going on to another town until next week.

"Oh, that's all right, ma'am; don't you have any fear about that!" the manager gave the required assurance with intense fervour. "And your boys and gels—they can have as many free passes as they like, and welcome, I'm sure!"

"Thank you."

"Not at all, ma'am! It's I who have to thank them! Most of all, as they've been so good as to keep their mouths shut. A thing like last night now—you know, it don't do a circus any good, to get about! But I've got a better man now a-looking after the cages, although he's not another Kwamba."

"How is Kwamba to-day?" Mrs. Cardew asked as the manager turned to go.

"Why—queerish; that's all I can say, ma'am; something very queerish about him. Down, like! Can't make it out, myself. All of a dither, he is. I'm sure I bin nice to him; bin across several times, I have, to have a talk. But it don't do him the good you'd expect!"

"I'm sorry. He's a good fellow, and the girls and boys are quite fond of him. Er—as you feel grateful for what some of them did last night, would you mind if they visit Kwamba, now and then?"

"Not a bit, ma'am! Tell 'em as often as they like, and welcome!"

So that was their reward—the only one they would ever have asked.

Betty and a few others were at Kwamba's tent a few minutes after the circus manager had left the camp. They found the negro in as strange a mood as ever. In spite of all their cheering talk, he remained a prey to some vague oppression, the cause of which they could not trace.

He even declined an invitation to come to the camp that afternoon and be given a meat tea.

Yet it was apparent that, if anything, he had become fonder than ever of Morcove and Co. At one moment there were tears in his eyes as he said again how good the juniors had been to him since his accident.



"It must have been stolen in the night!" Madge Minden insisted, referring to the necklace. Already the others were thinking that this was no ordinary theft, for the necklace was a relic of ancient Egypt!

Some of them saw him once more, at sundown, and he was still so doleful.

Then, as late as ten o'clock that night, Jack and Dave went across from the camp to give him a last look-in.

Returning, they could only report that he was still very "down." As a set-off to this disappointing news, the boys added that they had taken the opportunity of going round the menagerie cages at that late hour, and had personally satisfied themselves that to-night, anyhow, no unwelcome intruders would trouble the camp!

But an intruder there was—must have been, some time during those dark hours when all were sleeping soundly.

Not one of the campers could speak, next morning, of having been disturbed; and yet no sooner had they started the jolly activities of another day than Madge made a sensational discovery.

Her necklace was missing!

She had placed it, overnight, in the cardboard box in which the local jeweller had returned it to her, after repairing the broken fastening. She opened the box, only to find it empty, except for a layer of cottonwool.

Instantly she had all her fellow-campers drawn to her, just outside the tent which she shared with three other Morcovians.

Madge was not an excitable girl, but she had



cried out so loudly in her sudden surprise and dismay, all had heard.

### Stranger Still!

"GONE?" was the incredulous shout of several who thronged around her. "What—not stolen, Madge? How could it have been?"

"But it must have been—stolen in the night!" she insisted. "Our tent, entered by a thief who was so stealthy, not one of us was disturbed!"

"Madge dear," Betty cried, "are you quite, quite sure you put it away in the cardboard box at bed-time?"

"Positive! I wore it at Beach Place last evening, and I was very careful at bed-time to put it in the cardboard box, as things are so liable to get mislaid when you're under canvas."

"And where was the box during the night?" Dave asked. "Under what serves for your pillow?"

"No; I placed it, last thing before lights out, upon the folding camp stool. My hair brushes and some other things were with it."

"Amazing, that it should have gone and the box itself be left!" Bunny gasped.

"As to that," Dave quietly observed, "the thief might reckon that there was a better chance of the theft not being found out first thing this morning if he left the box. He may have reckoned that Madge would not go to put on the necklace until later in the day."

"There's something in that!" Polly nodded. "But who was the thief!"

"Goodness knows!"

"Bekas, what ze diggings," shrilled Naomer. "Eet not as eef we were in a hotel, where a thief

THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN. No. 796. Vol. 31.

Week ending May 9th, 1936.

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THE motto of those excellent organisations, the Girl Guides and the Boy Scouts, is "Be Prepared," and certainly, as regards this wonderful climate of ours in Great Britain, it is necessary to "be prepared" for anything!

At the time of writing Spring has not long been with us, and, of course, when Spring comes everyone, only too glad to think that Winter is over, begins to think of sunshine, long, warm days, sports, pretty frocks, flannels and blazers, lemonade and ices, and—well, all the jolly things that the nice weather brings in its train.

There was an outbreak of "Summer-itis" in the office last week. The sun shone brilliantly for a day or two. The office fire remained unlighted, overcoats were discarded, and Cuthbert blossomed forth one memorable morning in grey flannels of irreproachable cut, a wine-coloured pullover, and a sports coat that simply took my breath away. It was not, strictly speaking, the kind of garb usually seen in this busy metropolis of ours, especially in an office, but with the sun streaming in at the window, and cheeky city sparrows twittering on the sills outside, it seemed exactly right.

Next day I even got out my newest "plus-fours," and wondered whether or not to don them in place of my usual inconspicuous dark suit, but, not having Cuthbert's aplomb or sang-froid (sounds fine, doesn't it?), I decided on the latter.

Alas for our mistaken optimism!

Cuthbert accompanied me to an office dinner on Friday last, and when we emerged from the hotel to commence the homeward journey it was—snowing!

"One swallow does not make a Summer," the well-known saying has it, and now Cuthbert and I both heartily agree. Nor do elegant flannels, no matter how razor-edged the crease.

Now I must really devote a little space to answering the welcome stream of letters which continue to arrive in the Den.

**Annie Dalrymple (Cupar, Fife).**—Many thanks for your most interesting letter. Annie. I have noted your

list of favourites. Most readers agree with your opinion of Pam as one of the most likeable members of Study 12.

**Nell Knight (Gayton, nr. Stafford).**—Your estimate of Miss Stanton was not far wrong, Nell. I have passed on your good wishes to Cuthbert and Angela as requested.

**Vera Noyce (Preston-on-Stour).**—"The School for Stage Stars" and "The Crimson Shadows" have both proved very popular. Very many thanks for the nice things you say about SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN.

**"An Admirer of Study 12" (Lums, Lonmay).**—Hearty congratulations on passing the qualifying examination. You will, no doubt, get to know other readers of SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN in time.

**Peggy Gibson (Putney).**—I will certainly bear in mind your requests. I agree with you in thinking that Pam is anything but selfish.

**"Pam's Fondest Admirer" (Heeley, Sheffield).**—Your nom-de-plume makes it unnecessary to quote your opinion of Pam. Many thanks for your efforts to introduce our paper to your friends.

**Constance McCarthy (Roath Park, Cardiff).**—I was glad to hear your views, Constance, even though they do not coincide with those of most of my readers. However, it would never do for us all to think alike, would it? The world would be very uninteresting if we did.

**Mary Rollaston and Dorothy Beck (Nuneaton).**—I read both your letters with much interest. I notice you are neighbours, and expect you often meet and chat over the contents of SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN.

**Joyce Cox (Stroud, Glos.).**—Welcome to the ranks of our readers, Joyce. I shall be pleased to hear from you again.

**M. Oates (Mytholmroyd, Yorks.).**—The lettering was probably put on by an artist who made the mistake. The fact that you noticed it shows that your powers of observation are good.

**Vera Edwards (Brundall, Norfolk).**—The Morcove colours are orange and blue, Vera. I am delighted to hear that our story-programme has pleased you so much.

**Mary MacGillivray (Shanghai).**—Further stories of the character you mention may appear at a future date. Kay is about fifteen. Miss Holden and Miss Marriott, the writers of the two stories you find so enthralling, are both very experienced.

Next Tuesday's issue of your favourite paper will be as full of good things as ever, dear readers. You will enjoy every word of Marjorie Stanton's grand long Morcove holiday story, "Morcove's Necklace of Mystery," and there will also be another enthralling instalment of "The School for Stage Stars," and grand COMPLETE stories of her Harum-scarum Highness, the Crimson Shadows, and Peggy and her amazing Puzzles.

With every good wish,

Your sincere friend,

YOUR EDITOR.



could see ze necklace being worn, and zink to himself. 'He is a good one; I will have him!'

"The necklace was more than a good one," Betty murmured. "According to Pam's father, it was thousands of years old—a relic of Ancient Egypt. There was that strange inscription on one side of the medallion, about the Golden Grotto—"

"And that design of two hawks facing each other," Polly caught up Betty. "The same design that is tattooed upon Kwamba's right arm!"

"Yes, bai Jove! And that, geals, has seemed to be a most extwaordinawy coincidence, what? Considewing that Kwamba comes fwom twopical Africa, whilst the necklace owiginated in Ancient Egypt!"

"I say," Bunny distressfully exclaimed, "it occurs to me; could the thief have been someone belonging to the circus?"

"But how could it have been known at the circus that Madge had such a trinket?" Mrs. Cardew now joined in the grave debate. "Have you talked about it over there, Madge?"

"I showed it to Kwamba the other morning. I did that simply because there is the same design on the necklace and on his right arm."

"And did he say anything?"

"He wanted to know where it had come from."

"How about Liz—did she have a chance to see the necklace?" Mrs. Cardew pursued. "I hate to imply any doubt as to the honesty of a poor old soul like her, but—"

"She was not there at the time; no, she never saw it," Madge was glad to say.

"But Kwamba," Betty regretfully commented, "might have mentioned it to her afterwards? She has been the one to chat a good deal with—"

A warning cough came from Dave, who then whispered:

"Not too loud about Liz. Here she is."

"What!"

Many a pair of eyes grew round with amazement, now that all were paying sudden attention to the old crone of the circus as she came

hobbling across the camping-ground from the other field.

"She's upset!" Betty instantly inferred. "She'd run to us, if she could."

And it was that pathetic inability of hers to get to them as quickly as she wished that caused the entire party to flock to meet her.

"Why, Liz—"

"Oh, my dearies; oh, ma'am!" she included Mrs. Cardew in her panted outburst. "I ax pardon for—for troubling you; but—Kwamba? Have you seen him this morning?"

"Seen him?" half a dozen of them cried as with one voice. "Why, how do you mean, Liz?"

"He's gone!"

"Gone?"

"Yes—gone in the night!" the poor old woman wailed, wringing her bony hands together. "I went to take him his bit of breakfast, just now, and he wa'n't there! And they've looked all over the place—all amongst the cages, and everywhere else he might be, and they can't find a trace o' him! Not a trace!"

"But that's—amazing!" Mrs. Cardew voiced the general consternation. "Why—why should he be missing? Where can he have gon'?"

"Has he taken it into his head to wander round the town?" Betty suggested eagerly.

"Oh, Kwamba would never, never think o' doing a thing like that," Liz said, shaking her head. "'Twouldn't be like him at all. I suddenly wunnered if he might ha' come across to you, as you have been such kind friends to him. But you say you haven't seen him?"

"There's not been a sign of him here!"

"Oh, dearie, dearie me, then what does it mean?" Liz almost wept. "Can't any of you say?"

It was a pitiable entreaty which, the campers felt, had better be met with silence.

Not one of them spoke, although all were thinking:

"The necklace gone, and Kwamba gone as well! Kwamba, who *knew about it!*"

"Ah," Liz faltered on, "but I'm the one who should be able to say, if anyone can! I, who had the care on him, and so I could tell better'n anyone else, yesterday, how strange he was! So unhappy, it made me miserable to see him, that it did. And the manager, promising him a rise when he returned to work—even that never cheered 'un up!"

She turned away slowly, as if in a daze because of the blow it had been to her.

"Gonc, he is, and now—aye, when I think how he were yesterday, I do fear the worst, I do! Never set eyes on him again, we won't, you mark my words! Not to see him alive, leastaways—"

Pausing, she faced the campers again, and suddenly her cracked old voice took on a screechy note of terror.

"For I tell 'ee, kind friends, that's the meaning of his being like that, yesterday; like a pore man who knows his number's ! Oh, I arst pardon for my way o' putting it, but I'm only a rough, ignorant creature—"

"That's all right, Liz dear," one of the Morcove girls tenderly whispered. "You mean—"

"What I do mean is, kind friends, somehow, Kwamba had summat telling him—if he stayed where he was, then he'd be sure to die!"

[END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.]

**What has happened to Kwamba? Is his disappearance connected with the theft of the necklace?**

Be sure to read next Tuesday's thrilling long complete Morcove-Grangemoor story—

**"MORCOVE'S NECKLACE OF MYSTERY"**

BY MARJORIE STANTON