

Enthralling LONG COMPLETE Girl Detective Story Inside!

# SCHOOLGIRLS' WEEKLY 2¢

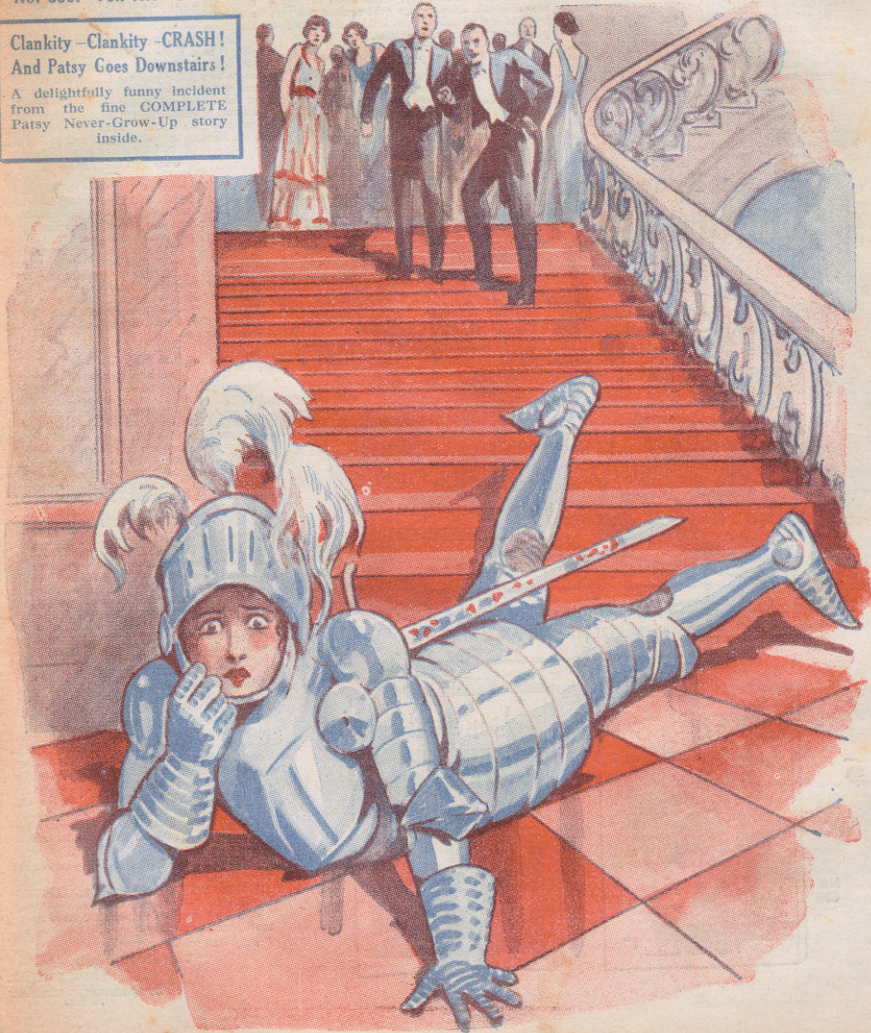
No. 656. Vol. XXVI.

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

May 18th, 1935.

**Clankity—Clankity—CRASH!  
And Patsy Goes Downstairs!**

A delightfully funny incident  
from the fine COMPLETE  
Patsy Never-Grow-Up story  
inside.



Valerie Drew helpless—thunder raging, lightning searing the sky—rain driving down. A vital book, meaning everything in the world to a trusting girl, must be protected. That is why Valerie dramatically commands:



# “GUARD IT, FLASH!”

## Grand LONG COMPLETE Girl Detective Story

### THE VITAL BOOK!

“I DON’T like it at all, Miss Kalendo,” said Valerie Drew gravely. “If, as you say, your father, the ambassador from Ladonia, slept in this room last night, and hurried off for London this morning, I can’t understand why he left this valuable little code book lying on the floor just beneath the window.”

Pretty, dark-haired Malo Kalendo, from Ladonia, was watching the famous girl detective uneasily.

And Flash, Valerie’s talented Alsatian dog, stood beside them with ears erect and bushy tail slowly waving, his adoring greenish eyes so full of expression that one could imagine he was thinking:

“She’s quite right. If Valerie’s suspicious, there’s some reason for it. I only wish I could get a sniff at something that would help her!”

“You see this scratch on the window-ledge?” Valerie went on, pointing to a long thin line that ran across the white paint. She examined it intently through her magnifying glass. “It’s been very recently made; there is scarcely a particle of dust in it yet. Now look at the ivy outside the window. It’s badly torn away in two or three places, and the broken stems are still moist.”

And whilst the pretty little foreigner sought words to express her bewilderment Valerie turned her attention quickly to the code book she held in her hand.

The code was a secret one. It was, she had been assured, of vital importance to the Ladonian representatives negotiating a commercial treaty in London. To spies acting for other nations anxious to know what was going

on behind the scenes it would be a most valuable possession.

“Whc-ew!” Valerie whistled softly; and suddenly taking a sheet of white paper, she opened the book over it and shook it carefully. “What kind of tobacco does your father smoke?” she asked quickly.

“He does not smoke at all, Miss Drew!” exclaimed Malo in fresh surprise.

Valerie pointed to the paper triumphantly. “Then that proves it, Miss Kalendo!” she declared, the seriousness of what she had just discovered reflected in the brightness of her violet eyes. “There were grains of tobacco clinging to the edges of the binding. It means that only a few hours ago the book was in the pocket of someone who is a regular smoker.”

“But this—this is dreadful, Miss Drew!” Malo Kalendo protested incredulously. “No one but my father should ever handle that book. If he did such a careless thing as to lose it we should immediately have to return home in disgrace.”

Valerie’s hand rested encouragingly on the other girl’s shoulder. There was something about Malo Kalendo she found very attractive; she was sincere and courteous, and sweetly—almost innocently—trustful. Valerie knew, without being told, that she was the sort of girl who would take any kind of disgrace deeply to heart.

“I’m only telling you this because it’s best for you to face the truth, Miss Kalendo,” she said. “This book, I do not doubt, was in your father’s bag last night, beside him as he slept. Someone climbed the ivy, entered the room, and opened the bag; he stole the book and put it in his pocket. Luckily for us, as he was getting through the window again the book

fell out of his pocket without him noticing it. Unfortunately, your father suspected nothing, and believed he had the code with him when he left.”

A rich flush suffused the Ladonian girl’s cheeks.

There could be no doubt that the girl detective’s shrewd deductions, drawn from little signs that might have entirely escaped less keen observation, betrayed an amazingly daring scheme that had only failed through an accident.

“Miss Drew, will you please help me?” the foreign girl asked earnestly. “I had no idea when I telephoned you and asked if you would act as our messenger to London that my father had such enemies. You will think of some way of taking that book safely to my father?”

Valerie gave the other girl a sympathetic, understanding smile. She would be only too happy to do anything she could to reassure this pretty girl, on whom the responsibilities of her father’s high position weighed so heavily.

“You can rely on me to do my best,” she promised. “And, Flash”—her voice was suddenly sharper, though still kindly—“the book, old boy! Guard it; see no one gets it!”

Just the opportunity dear old Flash had been waiting for to show the stuff of which he was made.

“Whoof!” With that one muffled bark he sprang forward and took the little book in his strong teeth. Swiftly he retired to a corner, his lips twitching, the whites of his eyes showing, as he simulated angry defiance of some imaginary enemy.

“Oh, isn’t he a darling?” cried the foreign girl delightedly. “What a wonderful help he must be to you, Miss Drew! Do let me give him a hug?”

Valerie’s half-smile as she watched proud old Flash being rewarded for that little display of his ability showed that her thoughts were elsewhere.



She consulted a map keenly, then looked up the trains for London. A glance out of the window showed her not only the lonely nature of the country where the ambassador's house was situated, but a dark, oppressive sky that threatened to break into storm at any moment.

"Is there any way, Miss Kalendo, by which I could leave the house without being seen?" Valerie asked suddenly.

"Why, yes!" In a moment the other girl's eyes lit up with excitement. "Of course, there is the old tunnel in the garden. No one knows why it was built. It leads right through to a wood at the back of the house." The animation of her face was suddenly dimmed by a disturbing realisation of the thought at the back of Valerie's mind. "But why? Are you afraid the house is being watched?"

Valerie nodded slowly.

"There can be little doubt of that," she gravely replied. "A spy may already have let them know that your father did not recover the book before he went to London, unware of his loss. They will be suspicious of anyone leaving the house and making for the station. It's best to take all possible precautions. As a matter of fact"—Valerie made her last revelation with obvious reluctance—"I believe I heard someone tapping the telephone wires when you were actually speaking to me about the code book on the phone."

And scarcely were the words out of her mouth than the oncoming storm startled them with a crash—a thunderous peal that made Malo Kalendo nearly jump out of her shoes.

**Through the pouring rain went Valerie and Flash. Both were on the alert. They knew only too well that danger lurked on all sides.**

Valerie—an electric torch shining brightly ahead, and faithful Flash trotting protectingly at her side—was glad she had chosen that way of leaving the house.

Her mission was an unusual one, and a change she appreciated. Her cases, as a rule, were straightforward ones that called for powers of keen deduction.

But to ensure that the valuable little book safely reached the man who had lost it was as important, when Valerie thought of Malo Kalendo's anxious feelings, as any other task she might have been given.

She was conscious of a keen sense of responsibility. It would have been possible for her to refuse altogether to act just as a messenger; but that was not Valerie's way when her natural, warm feelings had been awakened.

A vague patch of daylight dawned at last at the end of the tunnel. Valerie had seen an ancient flight of brick steps before she decided, for safety's sake, to extinguish the torch.

Flash growled in sudden sharp amazement as their ears were assailed all at once by an unexpected rumble, like that which might be caused by some heavy wagon being driven right over the tunnel roof.

"There—only thunder, old boy!" Valerie breathed, a moment later, patting his head reassuringly, as she realised the explanation. "The storm's broken at last. If a soaking's the worst thing we've got to fear, we shan't be too worried about that."

Flash's cold nose pressed affectionately against her hand; his little sniff of eagerness told her he would be glad to be out of the rank atmosphere of the passage.

Buttoning her waterproof more tightly, Valerie ascended the ancient stairs. Emerging with extreme caution into the open air, Valerie found herself in a rocky depression situated in the heart of the wood.

It was a cunning exit to the tunnel that few people would be likely to discover by accident. The rain was streaming down, and thunder muttered angrily in the distance. But Valerie paid little heed to the weather conditions as she scrambled over the rocks, and Flash, shaking himself already, bounded along at her side.

Moved by a natural cautious instinct to make a survey of the wood before she proceeded farther, Valerie made quickly for the

shelter of a clump of bushes growing close at hand.

Crash! came a clap of thunder right above their heads.

Lightning dazzled upon the woods—a leaping blue radiance amongst the trees that threw black shadows in all directions from their shining black trunks.

Softly Flash growled, and in the nick of time Valerie dropped a cautioning hand to his faithful head, to tell him that she, also, had observed something that gave her an uncomfortable shock.

A bearded man was moving amongst the trees not thirty yards from the very spot where she and Flash were concealed!

Instinctively, in that intensely disturbing moment, Valerie's hand tightened on the little book she held.

How fortunate that her suspicions had been aroused at the very start of this strange case!

Luckily, so far, Valerie had given nothing away. Her caution in choosing a safe hiding spot before she penetrated deeper into the wood had been rewarded. The bearded man had not seen her; she still had the advantage of him.

What was the best thing to be done?

The sky shone again with vivid lightning whilst she was still concentrating on her problem.

A fresh dimmy momentarily filled Valerie as she saw another man—a lean, cadaverous foreigner, with drooping black moustaches—actually within a few feet of the tunnel from which she had so recently emerged.

Her retreat, even if she had thought of returning to the ambassador's house, was already cut off.

But Valerie stiffened; she was not thinking of going back. There were at least two men patrolling the woods; probably more.

It would be best to wait. So far she had eluded her strange enemies. If she were patient, her opportunity to slip quietly away would doubtless come before long. The gang, even if there were a number of them, could not be everywhere at once.

Once Valerie had undertaken a task it took a great deal to put her off it. Somehow, she was going to get the vital book to London.

At her side she could feel Flash fairly bristling with suspicion. He growled softly, just enough for Valerie to hear him, to tell her his keen senses were aware of hostile, prowling strangers. But he was too wise to give Valerie's presence away.

In the unforgettable minutes that followed Valerie was aware that more than once someone passed actually within feet of the spot where she and her four-footed friend were concealed.

But all was well. She had chosen her hiding-place wisely, and luck seemed to be on her side. The storm at last showed signs of moderating. The lightning grew more distant; the flashes were less frequent.

When, even Flash seemed satisfied that danger no longer threatened them, Valerie deemed that the moment to attempt to move on had come at last.

Stealthily she stepped from amongst the bushes and glanced keenly round in every direction.

It was now or never.

Once she could get away from the wood she would be in open country, and no great distance from the railway station. There was a train she should still be able to catch with comparative ease. The wait had not mattered.

The woods, silent save for the constant patter of raindrops, seemed utterly deserted now.

Cautiously, like a shadow fitting amongst the wet trees, Valerie crept on, glancing affectionately every now and then at her faithful four-footed friend trotting at her side. Seldom had she appreciated his noble company more. If there was anything to fear—

An uncomfortable thrill stirred Valerie as she suddenly realised that the danger was not yet past.

Flash bristled angrily; the low, warning growl that escaped him instantly brought her taut nerves to a new sensation of anxious disturbance.

Valerie glanced back over her shoulder. A feeling of fear, as sharp for the moment as

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an actual pain, shot through her as she saw a slinking figure not twenty yards behind her.

It was the figure of the bearded man she had first glimpsed. Without a doubt he was actually on her trail.

What was she to do?

The valuable code book seemed to turn hot in Valerie's grasp. If it fell into the hands of the woodland spics it would mean ruin for the girl she had promised to befriend.

### STRUCK DOWN!

"COME on, boy!" whispered Valerie tensely.

Flash obeyed her instantly; but she could see the hair rising on his neck and his white teeth gleaming as his sensitive lips were drawn back.

Just ahead of her was a thick clump of trees. She made for it at once, and discovered, to her joy, a deep depression in the ground on the far side.

Seeing a possible way out of her dilemma, Valerie jumped for the lower ground, turned swiftly to the left, and ran at top speed, with Flash bounding at her side. Amongst the trees she quickly dived again, then turned to the right. A sharp glance back over her shoulder told her that she had temporarily shaken off her pursuer.

But she was deep in the wood, and she had been seen. The alarm might at any moment be raised.

The fact that she had been discovered changed everything. Until she knew the coast was clear it would be the height of folly to keep the book in her possession now.

The idea passed through her mind to give it into Flash's keeping, telling him to make a dash for the open countryside and wait until she called on him to show himself. She dismissed it almost instantly.

The enemies of Ladonia were desperate men, and they might be armed. They would not hesitate to attack a dog that carried so valuable a prize. Valerie shuddered at the very thought of such peril to her faithful companion.

But a fresh thought came to her as, skirting the trunk of one of the biggest trees she had seen, she suddenly espied a rabbit-hole near to one of the roots.

The book could rest there in perfect safety until she was sure she could return for it under more favourable conditions.

Safety first! That was always Valerie's motto. In an instant she had stooped and dropped the priceless little volume into the hole. Flash made an instinctive snap to pick it up, then checked himself, watching her wonderingly. That book, he knew, was something to be guarded at all costs. Why was Valerie acting so oddly?

"Bury it, boy!" she instructed him tensely. Flash understood instantly. Burying, of course, was one of his most natural instincts. Burying choice bones in Valerie's garden had more than once got him into temporary disgrace. He always understood the meaning of that word.

Eagerly he scratched with his front paws at the loose earth around the hole, and in a few moments the valuable book had completely disappeared.

"Good boy!" Valerie approved, giving his faithful head a pat for reward. "Now guard, old boy!" she instructed. "Stay there and guard!"

He obeyed at once. Her word was always law. He would stay there, if necessary, for hours. But, not understanding her purpose, the reason why she felt she must go on alone, he watched her with anxious, almost pleading, eyes, as she walked cautiously away.

He knew there was danger in the woods, and he wanted to be at her side.

But Valerie, already easier in her mind, intended to carry out a cautious survey to find out exactly where she was. It was possible that she had already shaken off her pursuer, but she was taking no chances.

She felt she had little to fear now that the book was no longer in her possession. She missed Flash's noble presence at her side, but knew that her whistle would bring him instantly racing to her if he were needed.

Towards the spot where a brightness amongst the tree-trunks suggested that the edge of the wood was to be found, she made her way.

Crash!

It was when she least expected danger from such a source that disaster suddenly befell her.

Lightning blazed amongst the trees; thunder echoed simultaneously in the black sky above. And a branch, torn from the very tree beneath which Valerie was passing at that moment, hurtled towards the ground.

Valerie heard its crashing fall, turned horrified eyes aloft as she saw the ugly menace looming towards her, and sprang desperately to one side. Alas, she was just a second too late.

A projection of the branch struck her head. Without a sound, without even the remotest idea of what had happened to her, Valerie sank down. Her senses fled at the numbing impact, and she lay motionless on the ground.

Flash, his forelegs rigid, his green eyes shining defiance, stood exactly where Valerie had left him, guarding the object he had buried.

Why didn't his beloved mistress come back to him?

It was not given to Flash to reason like a human being. He could not associate the storm that still raged over the woods with the menace of lightning. But some sixth sense that he possessed filled him with a sudden anxiety that communicated itself to every nerve of his fine body.

His ears were erectly cocked, listening for even the faintest echo of her familiar whistle. The slightest sound of it would send him bounding instantly, in desperate excitement, in the direction from which it came.

But Flash heard nothing. A slight whimper of doubt and uneasiness escaped from him. Unconsciously he found himself straying, hesitantly, guiltily, from the spot where he had been standing. He ran round in a little circle, sniffing anxiously. Had Valerie intended to be away as long as this? Had something prevented her from coming back?

Whining uncertainly, he ran back to the filled-in rabbit-hole and took up his position again.

Her instructions had been so clear and definite. "Guard, old boy!" she had said. "Stay there and guard!" And her word was everything in the world to Flash. He lived only to please her; to do her bidding to the

best of his faithful ability and back in the joy of her approval when he deserved it.

He couldn't desert his post when she expected him to remain there.

But what was that? Flash's ears stood erect. A low, angry growl escaped from his throat as he heard a movement amongst the trees.

It wasn't his beloved Valerie returning.

Two men were coming towards him; a man with a beard, and a man with long black moustaches. Flash knew instantly that they were enemies he had seen and scented before.

"Why, look!" one of the men ejaculated, excitedly grasping his companion's arm. "There it is—the dog! The girl can't be far away!"

Flash growled again; his green eyes shone menacingly as the two men hesitantly approached him.

"Good dog!" murmured the bearded one, making enticing motions. "Come here, old fellow! Good dog—I give you a nice biscuit!"

But Flash couldn't be wooed in so transparent a manner. His teeth showed in a snarl. These men were his mistress's enemies. Where was she? What had they done with her?

"He's savage!" the other man muttered. "Better be careful of him!"

"The first grinned as he took something silken from his pockets and handed it in a curious manner.

"That dog knows something!" he declared, in a low voice. "If we can't get his mistress, we'll get him. Oscar will know what to do!"

Cautiously, but with a strange assurance, he still advanced on Flash.

Flash rumbled deep, warningly, in his throat. If only Valerie had been here to tell him what to do! But she had told him to stay on guard—and guard he must. The men were after the book he had buried in the rabbit-hole.

Growl!

"He'll jump!" muttered the man with the moustaches, as Flash, quivering with rage, crouched before them.

"Come on, old boy!" the other responded.

Flash leapt. With powerful front paws extended, his whole frame stiffening as though driven by the recoil of some powerful spring, he flew towards his adversary, intending to knock him over.

Alas for Flash, it was exactly what the mau wanted him to do.

In an instant he leapt to one side, extending,



"Good dog!" murmured the bearded man. "Come here—" Flash growled ominously. Valerie had left him on guard and he wasn't going to move!

as he did so, the wide-mesh, tough silken net he had been holding in his hands.

Missing his man completely, Flash thudded to earth again.

And then the dreadful thing happened. He tried to scramble up and couldn't. His legs were entangled. He tried to snap at the sharp, invisible strings that bit cruelly into his flesh, but the baffling thing was over his head as well. To make matters even worse, the bearded man had snatched up the ends of the net and was making a more painful tangle than ever.

"Whoof, whoof!" Flash bayed, in mingled fury and pain. "Whoof!"

In an agony of dazed bewilderment he sought to fight his way out of the terrible trap in which he had been caught.

Hands caught his back legs together. Before he could realise the dreadful thing that was happening, they had been quickly fastened together with cord.

"Now, my clever dog!" muttered the bearded man, as he snatched off his waterproof. "We'll roll you up in that and you'll be all right!"

A last terrible struggle Flash made, but nothing could avail him now. The folds of the waterproof nearly stifled him as it was wrapped tightly around his struggling form. From sheer exhaustion he lay suddenly still, so dejected that he could have died from the misery that filled him.

He had failed his beloved mistress and betrayed the task she had given him to perform. What ever would she think of Flash when she returned to fetch him and found that he had disappeared?

#### LOST MEMORY!

"YES, I'm all right now, thanks—fine!" Valerie Drew assured the lady and gentleman, with a desperate smile.

"I must have fainted. It's ever so kind of you to stop. I'm quite all right now!"

But her smile belied her feelings. Her head was aching cruelly; even though she was trying her hardest to think she seemed to be only half-awake.

She had recovered consciousness, to find herself on a country road, a car stopped beside her, and a lady and gentleman anxiously administering restoratives.

Their idea had been to drive her in to town and take her to the nearest hospital. It was that dire threat that made Valerie protest, despite her throbbing head, that she was quite all right to manage for herself.

Where was Flash?

That was the one pressing question that thrust itself through all the buzzing bewilderment in her brain and demanded an immediate answer.

At all costs she must find Flash as soon as she could.

"You're quite positive we can't help you any more?" the lady pressed, evidently very reluctant to let Valerie go.

"Yes—thank you again," Valerie assured them. "I have friends. They'll be wondering where I've got to. I'm fine now, thanks to your kindness."

And this time, assured by the confidence she managed to assume, the lady and gentleman got back in their car and drove on again.

Desperately Valerie strove to recall what had happened. A queer mist seemed, for some reason, to have descended on her brain. She could only remember patchily.

This road, for instance, was one she was certain she had never seen before. How she had come to be lying on the grass at the side of it she could not, for the life of her, understand.

Her violet eyes narrowed suddenly, and for the moment the dizziness left her brain. In the soft ground at the roadside she saw the pointed impression of a woman's shoe, the toe heavily marked. It had been made so recently that a few grains of sand at the side of the impression fell even as Valerie watched.

"A woman—stooping down—made that!" she murmured incredulously. "Then I must have been carried here—left by the roadside so that someone would find me and take me off." Greater bewilderment than ever showed in her violet eyes. "What happened to me?"

The confusion came crowding back into her mind, but with it came a memory.

Of Flash, mounting guard! Flash—she had told him to stand by a tree and wait until she returned! Why? What had he been told to guard?

Her pulses throbbed uncomfortably. A book, of course—a valuable little book of which she had had charge. They had been in the woods with it. She had left Flash guarding it. She had walked on.

Taking a tight grip on her reeling senses, Valerie headed for the wood. She could be in no doubt which way to go. Elsewhere the spreading countryside was almost treeless.

She ran her fingers absently through her red-gold hair, soaked by the rain. If only she could think and remember everything! Alas, the effect of that cruel, unexpected blow was still upon her. Of the flash of lightning and the falling branch she retained not the slightest recollection.

But suddenly, as she made her way amongst the trees, she stopped sharply, astounded at what she saw before her.

Her own handbag, its contents thrown heedlessly all over the muddy ground!

Almost mechanically she began to pick the things up. Her magnifying-glass and flap-jack, the little tin box of finger-print powder, a handkerchief, her card case, even the neat little lock-picker that often proved so useful. She knew that nothing had been stolen. Her bag had been searched for something different. The book, of course.

But something else had suddenly caught her startled gaze, causing a fresh access of dismay to dawn within her as she realised, in an instant, the grim message it had for her.

Beneath a fallen branch of the tree she saw—her own hat!

She touched her waterproof. Yes, it was muddy; elm leaves adhered to it. And this was an elm-tree beneath which she stood. She must have lain here; the falling branch had struck her down.

Horror filled her. She took a startled glance at her wrist-watch, and saw it had been injured in her fall. Nothing to tell her how long she had lain there before some stranger carried her away and left her by the roadside.

"Flash!" she cried; and in almost a panic of apprehension, she emitted that sharp whistle that never failed, when he was within hearing distance, to bring him to her side.

The mocking echoes died quickly amongst the trees; in a silence she could almost feel, Valerie waited, scarcely daring to breathe, for the eager padding of her pet's footsteps as he came racing to her side.

Nothing happened. A sudden fear, amounting almost to a panic, assailed her. How long had she left Flash on guard? How long had the faithful old fellow stood there, waiting for the mistress who never returned?

Desperately she whistled again and again. Her conscience smote her guiltily as she still received no response. She should never have left him. Flash meant everything in the world to her; they were inseparable companions. One burning determination filled her. At all costs she must find him.

She started forward amongst the trees, only to pause dizzily as the worst aspect of her present unhappy plight was borne in on her mind at last.

She did not know which way to go or where to look.

Of her walk after leaving Flash she had formalized every detail. She could not even visualise the setting where she had seen him last, could not even picture Flash on guard. Her memory on all those details was a complete blank.

"Come here!" ordered the man Oscar, peremptorily.

With drooping ears and dragging footsteps, Flash obeyed; not because he feared the cruel whip the man held in his hand, not because he wanted to.

Flash could simply do nothing else!

Oscar, with his powerful presence and burning, reddish eyes, had something in his personality that made Flash hate him and yet submit.

Oscar, little though Flash could realise it, was one of those men with some peculiarity in his nature that made him master of any dog he set out to command.

"Sulky brute!" the man snapped. "Come here quickly! I'll break that spirit of yours if you're not careful—break it with the whip, my fine fellow! It's a long while since I met a dog as sullen as you!"

It was a compliment that Flash could not appreciate.

He was lost—hopelessly, bewilderingly, horrifyingly lost. The little world in which he lived with his adorable mistress, waiting



Valerie ran her fingers through her hair in desperation. Since that blow on the head she could remember nothing—nothing. And valuable time was slipping away.

gasterly on her lightest word, had been turned upside down. She had left him to perform a task, and vanished.

And Flash was now this terrible man's captive, his very will seemingly caught in a net as strong as the one that previously had paralysed his limbs.

"You've hidden something!" Oscar accused Flash fiercely.

More despondently than ever Flash hung his head. Even Flash was almost frightened. He understood the words. It was as though the man could read what was going on in his mind.

"That precious book in the rabbit-hole! Valerie valued it highly. Flash himself had scooped the earth over it. He had stood on guard over it until the last minute—until he couldn't resist the leap that had landed him in this dreadful plight.

"Where's the book?" the man demanded, like a crack from the whip he held in his hand.

Unconsciously Flash's ears moved slightly at the familiar word. Too late he let them droop again, as though in dejected bewilderment.

The man's hand gripped fiercely at the back of his neck.

"Book!" he shouted fiercely, triumphantly. "You understood! You've buried it! Those fools of mine ought to have made you sniff it out and dig it up. But I'll make you!"

A shiver shook Flash's powerful frame.

He wanted to leap away and snarl defiance, yet he couldn't. He hated this man Oscar; with Valerie's inspiring presence he could still have defied him. Alone he was done. Oscar was powerful, compelling; it was his very fearlessness and determination that seemed to have sapped all Flash's strength.

"A muzzle!" the man suddenly decided; and, before Flash could ever realise what was happening, one had been clamped over his head and fixed in position. "You'll maybe need that till you get used to the taste of the whip. The whip's going to teach you which side your bread's buttered!"

He caught a lead to Flash's collar, then kicked open the door of the woodland hut, to which Flash had been brought on being captured.

"Come on!" the man ordered peremptorily. "G-r-r-r-r!" growled Flash, shrinking back. The whip sang in the air; with a cruel thud, like the sudden application of a burning wire, it fell across his back. Mad with pain, Flash flung himself at the bully, only to crash against the man's upraised knee and fall back to the floor. And—awooop! fell another torturing blow upon his aching back.

"Now get along!" ordered Oscar in a steely voice.

Flash, like a dog in a dream, obeyed. Never in his life had he missed Valerie so terribly. Against an ordinary captor he would have maintained his bristling defiance to his last gasp. This man was different.

He knew about the book; he knew that Flash had hidden it. And even now Flash knew that by his sheer personality he was going to force the dog to lead him to where it was hidden—Flash, by the exercise of all that was most clever and artful in his nature, could still find some way of escape.

But was it still possible?

"Get along!" ordered the man.

And Flash flinched involuntarily as he heard the threatening whistle of the whip as it sang in the air, and knew the man would not hesitate to employ it again on his aching back.

Flash led the way, but—he went in the wrong direction. His doggy mind had come to that swift decision. He could pretend. There seemed no need to show how good his memory really was.

With drooping, husky tail, his sensitive ears twitching as though he constantly picked up some familiar scent, Flash padded amongst the trees, keeping his nose close to the ground. It seemed an easy way, after all, out of his dilemma. He appeared to be trying. Outwardly Flash was giving no further sign of defiance or even unwillingness to help.

He must keep it up as long as possible until Valerie herself appeared upon the scene. Sooner or later she was bound to come back. He could not imagine an existence without her. She was everything—the whole world to Flash.

Swish!



It cut him like a knife—a stinging, searing pain across his haunches that raced in throbbing, burning impulses to the tips of his nerves.

He leapt in agony, crouched, whirled round in a frenzy on the bully who had aimed that unexpected blow at him.

"You brute!" snarled Oscar. "You can't fool me!"

His blazing, reddish eyes seemed to rob Flash of all the spirit he had left. Poor Flash! He had never realised until this terrible moment that the different use the man made of his senses would tell him so quickly that Flash was simply leading him in a circle.

Flash felt beaten.

His scheme had been seen through. The ruthless man was determined to make him lead him to the spot where Valerie had buried the book.

He shivered as he faced the man, knowing that he was on the point of being forced into betrayal, and the man laughed with gratifying satisfaction.

"Understand me better now?" he demanded. "Any more tricks, and I'll flog you within an inch of your life! The book! Where is it? Take me to the book!"

Flash lowered his nose obediently. Only one desperate hope remained. He decided on it without even pausing to weigh the consequences in his mind. If it failed, the result would undoubtedly be a thrashing Flash did not even dare to contemplate.

Pulling on the lead that held him, Flash started forward in the right direction.

He was running a risk, but there was no other course. He was actually quite near to the spot where he had remained on guard, waiting for the return of his mistress, when he strained suddenly at the lead in an attempt to approach one of the trees. Where the ground was slightly disturbed Flash started to dig with his forepaws.

"Ah-ha, my bonnie fellow!" came Oscar's triumphant approval. "So the whip's taught you a little common sense, after all! That's the spot, is it?"

The man was off his guard at last. The threatening whip was lowered. Oscar was actually bending down to see what Flash might bring to light out of the soil.

Without the slightest warning Flash whirled around. As quick as light, giving the startled fellow no time whatever to collect his thoughts, he darted between his legs.

"Hi!" yelled Oscar in a bewildered howl.

"Come on, you brute!" snapped the man, and kicked open the door. Flash growled, shrinking back. And yet he realised that he had no choice but to obey!

It was a neat trick that Flash had been taught to perfection. A swift twist of his powerful frame, and he had upset the man's balance. Throwing out startled hands to grasp at a branch of the tree, Oscar lost his grip on the leash.

In an instant Flash was off.

He had regained his freedom at last. Like a saffron streak, he shot amongst the trees, the man Oscar bellowing in rage as he sought to follow him.

The threatened book, object of the last order that Valerie had given him, was uppermost in Flash's mind; but he was too clever to go straight to it.

In a wide circle Flash led the man as far away from the spot as possible before, doubling suddenly in his tracks, he shot amongst the bushes and vanished from Oscar's sight altogether.

Two minutes' breathless running brought Flash to the very spot he sought.

It was here he had been captured. The men, the moment they used their wits, would realise that Flash had been left there for a good reason. The book must be placed somewhere; it would never be safe until Flash had found a new hiding-place.

But he was muzzled. What was he to do about that?

Desperately Flash rubbed his head against the tree-trunk, shook himself angrily, snapped impatiently at the wires that guarded his impotent jaws so tantalisingly. It was all to no purpose.

But what was that? There was a broken stump projecting from the ground. Flash caught the muzzle wires upon it and strained desperately. No good! It only hurt him. He jerked forward, then suddenly back.

Good! It had moved: that was the right idea! Bracing his feet against the earth, Flash tugged as hard as he could. It was a tight fit; it hurt his ears as it dragged over them. But nothing mattered now. A last tug, and he could have barked with sheer joy. He was free from the hideous thing.

In another moment Flash was digging at desperate speed. He had made no mistake. Oscar was still crashing furiously in the distance as Flash guarded the vital book to light. His white teeth snapped upon it. His! Safe

in his own keeping again! The book that Valerie had told him to guard!

Like a greyhound he raced off with it. A new hiding-place? That was easy for Flash. He found a shaded dell where he could dig amongst the piled-up masses of leaves and easily cover the spot again. It was soon done. Flash moved back critically to inspect his work. His ancestors in the wilds had learnt to bury and leave no visible trace.

Flash turned away. The terrible responsibility was off his mind. The book would be safe until he could lead Valerie to it. He must find her now. He knew he could pick up her scent somewhere in the wood. He would follow it until—

There was such a sudden jerk at Valerie's neck that he almost fell. Until that very moment he had forgotten the trailing leash he had wrenched from Osear's hand.

It had betrayed him when he least expected it.

Desperately Flash tugged and tugged to free himself from the spot where its knotted end had caught amongst the stiff stems of some bushes, from which the tops had recently been cut.

It refused to give.

And despair entered Flash's heart as he knew that he was a prisoner again—a prisoner waiting to become the hopeless, helpless captive of anyone who chanced to wander this way, and discovered his plight.

### THE PERILOUS PIT!

"GOOD gracious, Miss Drew! What ever's the matter?"

With a sharp start of surprise Valerie Drew turned as she heard that voice. A flood of painful dismay filled her as she unexpectedly beheld Malo Kalendo at her side.

Valerie recognised her instantly—this girl with the big, astonished eyes. Her memory did not fail her there. As though it had all happened only a few moments ago, Valerie recalled the confident promise she had given to the sweet, trustful ambassador's daughter that the vital code book should safely reach her father in London.

"I—I've had an accident," Valerie confessed humbly.

More astonished than ever, Malo Kalendo appeared at those surprising words. And Valerie could feel the colour stealing into her own cheeks as she realised all that her disturbing admission meant.

The vital book was lost; Flash was lost as well. Jointly Valerie and her faithful four-footed assistant had undertaken a task that had proved too much for them.

"How?" A sudden sharp fear was reflected in Malo's eyes as she asked the question. "Miss Drew, surely it cannot be possible that—that the book—"

Her voice tailed off in a gulp. She had guessed. In a flood of realisation that robbed her of speech, she gazed, white-checked and fearful, at the girl detective who had apparently let her down.

Desperately Valerie was striving to summon back to her aching brain those memories that had fled after the blow she had sustained. It was maddening to know that she could remember everything, except just the one vital thing that mattered more than anything else. A tree was struck by lightning," Valerie heard herself saying, in her self-defence. Yet it was more than that: even talking about it might assist her reluctant memory. "We were coming through the woods together. The men were about. I hid the book; left Flash to guard it. Then a branch hit me—"

"Oh, poor Miss Drew!" Malo Kalendo exclaimed, in genuine concern. Her arm was instantly about Valerie's shoulders. "I can see how you've suffered. You must come back to the house. Rest—"

"No; please! I'm quite all right, except that I can't remember everything!" Valerie pleaded desperately.

Malo was not cross with her. Not a word of reproach had she breathed. It was that impulsive, kindly consideration that stung Valerie as keenly as the lash of Osear's cruel whip had tortured Flash. A task had been entrusted to Valerie, and her failure meant that ruin and disgrace stared Malo in the face. Yet the girl's first words were of

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## THE SCHOOLGIRL

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sympathy, her first thought was for Valerie's comfort.

"It could happen to anyone," Malo insisted. "Please!" entreated Valerie; and her face was set; her violet eyes were narrowed at the supreme effort at concentration she was making to force her brain to work. "We were coming through the woods. I—I remember we found a tiny valley, then—then—yes, a big tree—"

"A very big tree?" Instantly Malo's expressive face lit up. "The biggest tree in the wood?"

It seemed that a miracle had happened to Valerie. She gazed at Malo with shining eyes. It was all getting clearer; the obscuring mist was dissolving in her brain.

"Can you find the big tree?" she asked breathlessly.

"Yes; at once!" Malo agreed. But eagerness changed to a sudden diffidence on her expressive face. "But if the book is lost—"

"No, not lost; buried," Valerie assured her. "In a rabbit-hole. A fox whippers; as she suddenly threw an apprehensive glance around her lest there might be listening enemies still about. "If we can find the place, I can show you—"

"Quick!" Malo's look of relief was almost pathetic. "I'll lead the way. I did not understand at first. You are so brave, I

admire you so much, Valerie Drew. If it doesn't distress you—"

"No; I'm fine now!" Valerie assured her. They hurried through the wood together. Yes, it was really like a miracle. All that baffling haziness was drifting behind Valerie now. She recognised the path they were on. Ahead of her, through gaps between the crowding saplings, she was suddenly able to see the stout trunk of a mighty tree that grew high above the others. She knew it instantly. Recollection returned in a flood that momentarily almost overcame her. "The tree," she whispered. "I'd know it anywhere. The book was in a hole just beneath it. And Flash—"

She checked her utterance abruptly. Flash had been left on guard; but he was there no longer.

Filled with a poignant disquiet, Valerie ran towards the tree. She had found the place at last. She knew that her faithful four-footed helper would never desert of his own accord. Something had happened to him.

Towards one spot at the base of the mighty tree her eyes went as though drawn by a magnet. At the sight that met her bewildered gaze she suddenly stopped dead, a paralysing chill striking to every muscle of her body at the discovery she had made.

The hole had been recently reopened; earth was unevenly scattered on all sides. Dazedly she stared at the impression in the soft ground where a book had recently lain—and that was all.

"Valerie!" cried Malo chokingly, as the dreadful discovery told its story only too well. For the moment Valerie was unable to speak. A burning sense of guilt consumed her. What a mad idea it had been to bury the book here! Maddier still to leave Flash on guard, informing anyone who chanced to come along that the earth held some vital secret he was expected to protect. She had never experienced a more bitter mood of self-reproach to think—

"But no," Valerie had seen it at last—the one tell-tale mark in the loose soil that her bewildered eyes had been too pained to observe before. "Look!" An electric thrill ran through her as she pointed with a shaking hand to the imprint of a paw in the loose soil. "It was Flash!"

"Flash?" Malo repeated dazedly. "Yes; he understands so much." There was a throb of pride in Valerie's voice. "Flash has dug the book up again. There was danger. If only we can find him—"

She broke off, her lips suddenly hardening. The whistle that Flash always instantly obeyed rang through the woods.

And silence reigned as its echoes died away. Tense, each of them filled with the same anxious bewilderment, the two girls faced each other, waiting for the response that did not come.

Where was Flash?

Ph-e-e-eep!

Faint and distant, yet sending a thrill through Flash that made him want to leap with joy; the echo of that whistle came to him as he gnawed savagely, desperately, at the leather leash that still held him prisoner.

Yet acting from a sense of caution that cost Flash a tremendous effort, he did not even bark in reply.

For there was peril!

Flash was crouching amongst the stumps of cut-down bushes, when he chanced at the leash, fearful of the fate that would instantly threaten him if he made the slightest sound to betray his still helpless presence.

The two rascals who had first captured him were within a few yards of the spot where he crouched.

"I tell you it was the dog I saw," one of them was saying. "I was at the top of a tree. I could see him running in that direction. He came back again. He went to that dell—"

"To bury the book?" the other asked swiftly.

Book!

Flash heard the word, and knew it. It told him everything. The rest of the conversation had mattered nothing. Flash was not concerned with how humans found things out. Scent guided Flash; sight directed people.

"Of course, he must have taken the book there!" the bearded man declared, with con-

viction. "He's just the sort of dog that loves burying things. It's in that dell we'll find the book!"

Book—and bury! Two words that led Flash in no doubt whatever as to what was in the minds of the men.

With a raging anxiety that almost drew an irrepressible whine of dismay from Flash, he saw them making quickly in a set direction.

Towards the very spot where his prize was hidden beneath the leaves.

Crouch! went Flash's desperate teeth upon the earth.

It was almost through at last. He gave a last fierce bite, and jerked sharply back. The chewed leather parted suddenly.

Ph-e-e-p! again came the echo of Valerie's call.

Softly, joyously, Flash whimpered to himself. It was hard to resist that summons to the side of his adored mistress he had missed so terribly, yet this was a case where, for the moment, Flash was forced to disobey.

Soundlessly, crouched low to the ground, he crept in pursuit of the two men.

Did they really know his secret?

Yes—there could be no doubt at all about that. They were making for the dell. They couldn't know the actual place, but that did not matter to Flash.

All the suspicion of his nature was aroused. He knew the exact spot where he had buried his prize. He was filled with fear that they would go straight to it.

"Stephan! Look out!" howled the moustached man, a moment later.

Something like a brown streak had shot past them. Straight to the pile of leaves in the dell, impelled by mighty, bounding leaps, went Flash. The debris was thrown aside by one impetuous thrust of his nose.

"He's got the book!" yelled the bearded man incredulously.

He picked up an enormous stone and threw it at Flash with all his strength. In the nick of time Flash sprang away, the stone missing him by inches. Then he leaped into the undergrowth. Even as a fresh volley of missiles whizzed towards him, Flash was streaking for safety.

Still Flash—still undefeated!

"I demand that book!"

Rigid with defiance, but with a glint of something like satisfaction in her violet eyes, Valerie Drew faced a fierce, determined rascal who had appeared so suddenly amongst the trees the second time she whistled for Flash.

In her eagerness Valerie knew she had been indiscreet. Her whistle had not brought Flash; it had merely betrayed her presence to this eagle-looking rascal who still carried a cruel dog whip, a horrifying sight to Valerie at any time. But there was consolation in his words.

It told Valerie that Flash had been too clever for all the plotters. Flash was evidently free. The book was safe wherever Flash had put it.

"You can get away!" Valerie told the man, with cold contempt. "You'll never get what you've been after, but the police will have you if you're not soon out of this wood!"

A gasp came from Malo Kalendo at almost the same moment.

"Valerie—I saw something!" she whispered tensely. "Right over there! It looked like your dog—running in circles—"

"Sssst!" Valerie breathed, in desperate warning.

But it was too late. A light had leapt into Oscar's reddish eyes. He, too, stared in the same direction. Then, in a moment, he did something that surprised Valerie enormously.

Springing to one side, he stooped down and prized with his hands at what appeared to be a buried plank. As he tossed it aside Valerie saw a hole beneath. Like a madman Oscar was tugging at other planks.

Within a few seconds he revealed to Valerie's astounded gaze an ancient pit, fully eight feet deep, which the planks—put there for safety's sake—had masked until that moment.

"Something you didn't know I knew about!" Oscar panted, as he straightened up suddenly. "And mighty useful at this moment. The first stroke of luck I've had—and now you're going to help!"

A cry of fear left Malo Kalendo's lips as the rascal, springing suddenly forward, grasped Valerie Drew's wrist.

"Don't you dare to touch Miss Drew!" she cried, white to the lips. "You'll suffer for this!" The last—

"Bah! I'm not going to hurt her!" Oscar sneered. His eyes gleamed, he glimpsed the distant figure of Flash. "Whistle again, clever Miss Drew! Shout out!"

But Valerie, even though the man dragged at her wrist until she was forced to the far side of the pit, was dumb.

She had seen through the man's desperate scheme. He intended her no personal violence at all; he was merely too cunning for that.

She was merely the bait—and the pit was for Flash.

"Hi, hi! I'll teach you!" Deliberately the cunning rascal switched the whip in the air, as though he was actually threatening Valerie with it. "Who isn't afraid of me?"

Valerie's haunted eyes went to the approaching shape of her beloved pet.

He was running straight towards the spot, that valuable book still gripped between his white teeth.

Flash had heard—and seen! His eyes were shining with rage; the hair on his neck bristled with fierce indignation as he saw her apparently struggling with his old enemy, Oscar.

"Flash!" The warning burst from Valerie desperately. "Keep back! Stop, old boy—it's all a trick! Keep back, Flash!"

But it was more than even Flash could be expected to do at a moment like that.

Flash knew nothing about the treacherous pit that the cunning rascal had uncovered when this reckless plan sprang into his mind.

Desperately he raced straight towards Valerie. And Valerie's anxious struggles to move to one side, so that the pit should not be in Flash's direct path, only made him still more determined.

Crash!

In one horrifying instant the disaster was complete. Flash leapt, landed on nothing, and disappeared.

Eight feet below the level surface of the ground, Flash, all in a heap, was dazedly picking himself up in the pit.

"And the book's as good as mine!" Oscar muttered, in throbbing triumph.

He stooped, as he spoke, to seize an enormous lump of stone. His mad, desperate purpose was clear to Valerie. He intended to drop it on Flash. In a cool moment probably even Oscar could not have contemplated such a dreadful thing. He was beside himself.

There was only one thing to be done. Even as Valerie saw that the man was inadvertently standing on the end of one of the old planks she sprang forward. Snatching at the other end of the plank she tugged upwards with all her strength.

"Ooooooh!"

It was a howl from Oscar. He dropped the

rock, swaying desperately, with wildly waving arms, seeking to keep his balance. It proved impossible.

With a shriek of wild dismay Oscar tottered backwards and fell into the pit.

Almost sick with fear at what might have happened to Flash, Valerie ran to the steep edge of the treacherous hole.

Flash, the book still grasped in his faithful mouth, was safe. Oscar was just in the act of trying to stagger to his feet.

"Up, Flash! Jump!" commanded Valerie breathlessly.

Flash saw his amazing opportunity instantly. He leapt on to the bent back of the bewildered man even as he was straightening himself up. A second wild spring he made for the top, and Valerie just managed to grasp his collar. With a pant of joy Flash scrambled out of the pit.

But Oscar was still hopelessly, helplessly in it.

"Run home, Malo!" Valerie directed breathlessly. "And we'll make for the road. I know the shortest cut now. I can see the other two men right over there. They'll never catch us now. Come on, Flash!"

Oscar was roaring with rage, making savage but quite unavailing efforts to climb the slippery sides. He was caught in his own trap, a fate he well deserved.

With Flash bounding at her side Valerie headed for safety. It was only a short while before the road came into sight. She heard the hum of an approaching car, and called eagerly for it to stop.

Luckily the car did so.

Less than a minute later Valerie was on board, heading for the station. The valuable code book was in her hand, and Flash, overjoyed at the wonderful re-union with his beloved mistress, was fairly smothering her with his caresses.

A demonstration that Valerie Drew naturally enough did nothing whatever to discourage.

Valerie's trunk call from London that evening was through at last. With a smile she listened as she heard a pretty, eager voice answer the telephone at the other end.

"Miss Malo Kalendo?" she asked. "It's Valerie Drew speaking. I had no further trouble at all, I'm glad to say, and your father was naturally very glad to have the code book again. What's that? Oh, don't let that worry you, Miss Kalendo—I'm feeling fine again now. And Flash?" She looked down at her pet, his green eyes shining, and his bushy tail waving joyously. "Flash, Miss Kalendo wants to know how you're feeling?"

And Malo Kalendo excitedly holding the receiver at the other end, could not help laughing as she heard Flash's reply come booming over the wires:

"Whoof! Whoof!"

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

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That came Dawn's way when she had to choose between her father and another. These are the ingredients of the gripping complete story in next Wednesday's issue, featuring Dawn Dallas—better known as

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