

MEET PATSY NEVER-GROW-UP IN THIS ISSUE!

SCHOOLGIRLS' WEEKLY ^{2^d}

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EVERY WEDNESDAY.

May 25th, 1935.



**"Parachutist"
Flash Descends
For Help!**

A dramatic incident
from this week's
grand Complete Girl
Detective Story.

The CASE of the DARK TOWER



VALERIE ACCUSED!

"IT'S odd, Flash!" Valerie Drew murmured, as she paused after plying the knocker of the cottage door for the third time. "I felt certain we'd find this Mrs. Addison in. This is going to be a difficult case to handle if we can't ask her a few questions."

Flash looked up at his beloved mistress, his intelligent head cocked knowingly on one side, one ear raised and the other drooping.

"Whooof!" he added, in emphatic confirmation.

There was perplexity in Valerie's violet eyes as she contemplated the next step.

Though she had not met Mrs. Addison, she felt sorry for her. Mrs. Addison was an elderly widow who lived all alone in this cottage, and recently she had suffered a peculiar form of persecution. Some mysterious stranger, Valerie had been told, was constantly haunting the cottage garden and spying on her movements.

These facts in themselves suggested a mystery out of the ordinary, and the problem was one that appealed to Valerie's sympathetic nature. But there were even more unusual features to this, her latest case.

A wealthy woman, a Miss Marshall, who lived in an odd, remote little house adjoining a queer old tower on the cliffs, had called for Valerie's assistance. Miss Marshall, it appeared, took a sympathetic interest in the old cottager, and frequently helped her with money and gifts of food.

Strangest of all were the instructions Valerie had been given.

She was to work as secretly as possible. She was not expected to make a capture, or even try to expose the mysterious stranger. All she was to do was to find out the identity of the unknown spy, and leave Miss Marshall to do the rest.

"Come on, boy!" instructed Valerie crisply.

as she suddenly made up her mind. "If we can't ask questions, we must use our wits and see what we can find out for ourselves. There may be some footprints to be found."

Flash gave a joyous little bound as Valerie turned from the door, crouched for a moment or two, watching her with brightly gleaming, green eyes, then started to run around in little circles, sniffing eagerly.

"Whew! This is odd, anyway!" Valerie suddenly murmured, her violet eyes narrowing

Alone, Valerie might have spent a long while tracing their winding course.

Flash was scarcely in doubt for a moment. Valerie's keen eyes, picking up a solitary impression here and there, told her as she quickly followed him that he was making no mistake—until suddenly, in a depression in the ground some two hundred yards from the cottage garden, Flash pulled up, sniffed around in a circle, and looked up at her inquiringly.

"And no wonder!" Valerie breathed, as she stooped to examine the ground. "The trail doesn't go any farther. Whoever made it stopped here for some time. My goodness, it even looks as though there's been an attempt to obliterate these spike-prints!"

As a tiny fragment of something white, lying in a patch of grass close at hand, caught her attention, Valerie stooped to pick it up. It was a piece of paper. She was conscious of a distinct and unexpected thrill as she read the single word written on it.

That word was "expose"!

In an instant an exciting theory leapt into Valerie's mind. Had the person she had just tracked come to this remote spot to tear up a letter and cast it to the winds?

"Flash!" Valerie called her pet to her side and held the paper to his sensitive nostrils. "Find, boy!" she instructed encouragingly. "Papers, old boy—paper like this! Find them, boy!"

"Whooof!" bayed Flash, as he leapt joyously to obey.

Backwards and forwards, sniffing, bounding, darting hither and thither in quest of scattered scraps of paper! Each time he found one, he raced like a greyhound to drop it at Valerie's feet ere he dashed off again.

Several times, of course, he made mistakes; in his eagerness, he brought scraps of paper that were obviously not those she sought. But Valerie was too wise to say even a word that

Enthralling COMPLETE Girl Detective Story.

at the unexpected sight that suddenly rewarded her keen scrutiny.

She had found a trail of footprints in the soft ground which instantly betrayed an odd peculiarity. In the soles of both shoes there had been two businesslike spikes that left a distinct impression in the ground.

"Queer!" Valerie reflected shrewdly. "An old lady doesn't wear spikes in her shoes, as a rule. I think these are going to be worth investigating."

As she started to follow the unexpected trail to the bottom of the garden Flash bounded after her. He ran, his keen nose almost touching the ground, sniffing his hardest.

"Good old fellow!" Valerie softly applauded, as, reaching the little gate at the bottom of the garden, he led the way eagerly across the undulating patch of waste land beyond.

Already his help was invaluable.

The grass on this patch of neglected ground was thick, and it was only here and there that even the spikes had left any lasting impression.

might damp her pet's enthusiasm. And well her confidence was rewarded.

The task of searching the waste land was one that, unaided, might have occupied Valerie for a whole day. Her agile pet, with his leaping enthusiasm, accomplished it in less than half an hour.

And Valerie, able to give all her concentration to the puzzle whilst Flash raced around seeking the scattered fragments, found herself gradually building up a letter that astonished her more and more with every piece that fitted into position.

"My goodness!" she ejaculated, in breathless bewilderment, as Flash, after an unusually long search, brought her the last vital fragment for which she was waiting.

And no wonder!

The astonishing message that Valerie Drew had reconstructed from those castaway scraps of paper read as follows:

"Your game will soon be up! Unless the money is forthcoming by Thursday, the 15th, I shall expose you to the world!"

For some moments Valerie sat studying that message with narrowed, violet eyes.

The case had taken a most amazing turn, for to-day was Wednesday, the 14th!

Tap, tap, tap!

With her breathlessly happy pet at her side, his red tongue lolling from his mouth, Valerie stood at the cottage door, again trying to attract the attention of the occupant.

It was possible that Mrs. Addison was deaf, but a worse fear was growing already in Valerie's mind. Perhaps the poor old soul was even ill, unable to drag herself as far as the door.

With a toss of her red-gold hair, she turned from the door and quickly walked round the little building.

It was a strangely secretive home, for there were heavy curtains at all the windows, and the interior must be in semi-darkness. It all added to the mystery and disturbance in Valerie's mind. With every passing moment she felt that the need for some decisive action grew more imperative.

Suddenly she paused. At the rear of the

cottage she had found, next to the back door, a small window which yielded when she gave it a sharp push. Valerie was able to brush the curtain aside and peer into part of the cottage at last.

All she could see, however, was the inside of the door, with a long, slanting balk of wood thrust tightly against it to make it impossible for anyone to push it open.

The window was too small for Valerie herself to get in through it.

"Here, boy!" she called to her pet. "In you go!"

Flash pawed instantly at the sill and made a scrambling jump. With Valerie's assistance he managed to wriggle through the aperture and dropped inside the cottage.

"Now, Flash!" Valerie instructed, pointing eagerly to the slanting piece of wood. "Seize it! No, not there, old boy—lower down! There! Seize it!" And as Flash understood and bit at the wood close to the ground, she added: "Now worry it!"

Flash did so with alacrity. The balk of wood stirred, and then slipped. Even as Flash leapt away from it, it fell to the ground.

In a moment Valerie was at the door. Her luck was in at last. The door opened at once to her touch.

Scarcely knowing what to expect, her sympathetic heart prepared for some discovery that might be even of a tragic nature, Valerie Drew entered the mystery cottage.

The scullery was in a state of considerable untidiness and neglect, but did not otherwise present any unusual feature. Opening from it was what was evidently the bedroom. A swift, shrewd glance round the room showed Valerie no visible occupant, but a scene of most amazing disorder.

Valerie's eyes narrowed as, with lightning inspection, she cast her eyes over at least seven or eight dresses thrown carelessly upon the bed. The room was dim, on account of the drawn curtains, but, even so, Valerie could see that some of the clothing was of very good quality, and appeared to be quite modern in design.

"Odd things for an elderly cottager to have lying about the place!" Valerie reflected, more puzzled than ever.

But she had still to find Mrs. Addison. Paus-

ing only to glance under the bed and make sure she had not overlooked any vital detail, Valerie made her way into the living-room.

Flash padded eagerly around it, sniffing in all the corners and at the chairs, and then returned to her side.

The room, save for a few poor sticks of furniture, was empty.

Valerie Drew had received no response to her agitated knocking for a very good reason.

Mrs. Addison was away from her strange home. Although she was reported to be a woman who suffered from delicate health, and seldom went out, she was missing to-day. Valerie had gone to a lot of trouble merely to break into an empty house.

"Well, Flash, old boy, I've at last satisfied my conscience!" Valerie murmured, stopping to pat her faithful pet's head. "Now we'd better get out again. As long as the old lady isn't ill I'm satisfied. I've no right to stay here and examine her stuff—"

She bent over, startled, as a key suddenly grated in the lock of the front door. It was an awkward position for Valerie. Not wishing to startle the returning cottager, she turned and called out, even as the door began to open:

"Don't be alarmed, Mrs. Addison! It's me—Valerie Drew! I made my way inside because I was afraid you might need assistance."

The words died in her throat as she saw not the elderly woman she had expected, but a youngish lady, in a smart tweed costume. She was none other than Miss Marshall—the very woman for whom Valerie was at present working!

"Miss Marshall!" Valerie ejaculated incredulously. "I didn't know you had a key. I thought— Come here, Flash!" she added, in sudden sharp command.

Flash, usually quick to take his cue from Valerie, had surprised her. Though he had never met Miss Marshall before, he had started to run towards her almost as though she was an old friend.

There was little opportunity, however, for Valerie to be astonished.

With a swiftly indrawn breath Miss Marshall stepped into the cottage.

In an instant it was clear to Valerie that she was in a towering rage. Angry colour had leapt to her cheeks, and her eyes were gleaming. There was a tremor in her voice as she pointed to Valerie.

"How did you get in here, Valerie Drew?" she demanded.

"I was unable to make Mrs. Addison hear me," Valerie replied. "I was afraid she might be ill. Feeling I ought to do something, I managed to open the back door—"

"You managed to open a door!" Miss Marshall burst in, in tones of shrill indignation. "So that's the sort of girl detective you are, is it? Detective, indeed! I've never had a bigger shock in my life! Let me tell you, Valerie Drew, you're nothing better than a common housebreaker. You'll get out of here, this instant!"

BENEATH THE CLIFFS!

"GET out?" Valerie repeated disbelievingly.

She was astounded by this amazing reception, scarcely able, for the moment, to credit her own hearing. A housebreaker, indeed! Valerie had been called many things in her time, but never that!

At her side she could feel Flash bristling instinctively as he sensed the sudden hostility that charged the room.

"This instant!" Miss Marshall repeated peremptorily.

Valerie Drew, wounded and indignant, stood her ground.

"I understood from you, Miss Marshall," she said, her eyes narrowing, "that Mrs. Addison was seldom out of the house. I was, therefore, justified in wondering if anything had happened to her."

"I could have told you the reverse!"

"Then where is she now?"

"That is no business of yours."

Valerie drew herself up stiffly.

"On the contrary!" she disagreed. "You see, Miss Marshall, I happen to have read a letter making a very strange threat against



Again—again—again the light flashed. With a thrill the watching Valerie realised that it was a signal!

Mrs. Addison, if she doesn't pay some money by to-morrow!"

She was watching the woman's face tensely as she spoke, and the startled expression that swiftly crossed Miss Marshall's features well repaid Valerie's study.

"Have—have you even been searching through papers in the house?" she asked, in a choking voice.

It was an astounding charge, which Valerie naturally instantly resented.

"I've touched nothing in the house," she coldly replied. "I only entered a few moments before you. I pieced together a letter which I found on the waste land in the course of my investigations."

Miss Marshall drew a deep breath of almost audible relief.

"Oh! Oh, yes." She appeared now to be thinking at lightning speed. "Ye, Mrs. Addison told me about that letter, of course, and I advised her that there was no need to bother her head at all. It was obviously just a stupid practical joke." She paused, and again that electric tension grew in the air as the two stood watching each other. "Well," said Miss Marshall abruptly, "I'm waiting for you to get out!"

An odd smile—an expression that was certainly not one of amusement, came over Valerie's face.

"I'm not in the habit of deserting a case when I've started on it," she answered, a sharper note creeping into her voice. "Unless you withdraw your accusation—"

"Good gracious! But I engaged you!" spluttered the woman. "I'm discharging you now. You're no good! You're just a meddling nosy parker, who's entirely exceeded her instructions!"

Valerie stayed where she was, and the surge of anger she felt at those bitter, unjustified words were reflected in the gleam that came into her violet eyes.

"Supposing I am not willing to be discharged?" she asked, the stern ring in her voice giving only a hint of the depth to which her feelings had been wounded.

"That do you mean?"

"There's far more in this case, Miss Marshall, than you appear to imagine," Valerie bluntly replied.

"Indeed!" In a moment the rich flush of anger mantled the woman's cheeks. She stood aside from the door and pointed to it with a hand that shook with rage. "Get out!" she ordered. "And if you're not out of this town altogether inside three hours I'll go to the police station and have you arrested for attempted burglary!"

"Come on, Flash!" said Valerie, in her quietest voice.

Without even a last glance at the angry woman, she walked across the cottage living-room and stepped outside.

What did it all mean?

Already Valerie knew instinctively that the apparently simple case on which she had originally been summoned by Miss Marshall was submerged by some bigger and vastly more baffling mystery.

"There's something about Miss Marshall herself that she doesn't want me to guess, Flash, old boy," Valerie shrewdly told her pet, whilst he looked up at her with green, wondering, trusting eyes. "For my own sake, starting to clear our names, I've got to find out what it is. There's some very odd reason for Mrs. Addison keeping out of the way to-day, and giving the key to her rich friend."

Valerie was walking in the direction of Miss Marshall's own house as she ruminated. Reaching it, she stood, for many minutes, deep perplexity reflected in her own eyes, staring at the modern little residence that nestled right at the side of the gaunt old tower.

Why should anyone build a house in such an isolated position? What particular attraction had Miss Marshall found in this tower?

Valerie regarded it critically. So far as she could see, only the flat roof of it was used. She could discern a few chairs, and a table that had an enormous sunshade set over it. It seemed to her that Miss Marshall had gone to a great deal of trouble to have a private and quite unnecessary roof garden in such a lonely spot.

"It may be," Valerie reflected shrewdly, "that Miss Marshall has some very unusual



reason for wanting to live in this particular place."

She walked around the grounds of the house and reached the edge of the cliffs. The descent was almost vertical; for many hundreds of yards there appeared to be no way of getting down to the golden sands so many feet below.

More mystified than ever, Valerie turned away. The conviction was growing on her she was confronted by a mystery of a particularly baffling nature to which she had scarcely, as yet, obtained a useful clue at all.

According to the threat made against her, she had only three hours in which to stay in the town.

Valerie made the most of them. She pressed inquiries concerning Miss Marshall and Mrs. Addison in all directions. Little was known about either of them, however; it appeared that they were both women who kept very much to themselves, and were certainly never seen together.

But there was one item of information Valerie gleaned that caused an unusually thoughtful expression to come over her face. It was to the effect that Mrs. Addison regularly did the laundering for a Madame Dupont, who kept a prosperous "perfume parlour" in the town, and was frequently seen staggering to the shop with a heavy basket of clothes.

Was there any significance to be drawn from this information, which seemed to concern the only activity for which Mrs. Addison was known?

Despairing at last of learning any more, Valerie made her way to the shore and walked along the sandy beach. And it was just as she judged that she must be beneath the very spot where the old tower and Miss Marshall's modern house stood together on the cliffs, that she made a discovery that thrilled her immediately.

In the face of the cliffs was a solitary cave. Instantly Valerie made for it, hoping some sensational discovery might reward her at last. But, alas, the cave proved to be one of the smallest she had ever seen. Scarcely ten feet from its mouth it was completely blocked by enormous boulders.

By then her three hours were up, and for safety's sake Valerie intended to lie low until darkness descended, to make it appear that she had really taken alarm and quitted the town. But only a woman who didn't know Valerie Drew would really believe that!

Softly, making scarcely a sound as it drove so smoothly and evenly through the calm sea,

Into the cave raced Valerie and Flash. Ahead, a boulder had swung back—revealing a secret stairway!

an electric launch stole out of the harbour late that evening.

At the tiller was Valerie Drew, whilst at her side sat Flash, sniffing eagerly and interestedly at the night breeze.

There was no moon, and the night was practically pitch dark in consequence. Yet Valerie, the moment she had cleared the harbour, put out all the lights of the vessel she had hired, and purred away merely a dark shadow upon the glassy surface of the tranquil sea.

It was by the flashing of a distant lighthouse that Valerie intended to follow the course she had previously decided upon whilst it was still light.

Her purpose was to keep observation on Miss Marshall's house from the sea!

Scarcely a ripple to break the silence that reigned as the silent craft hummed on its way; only the occasional cold touch of Flash's affectionate nose against her cheek to tell her she was not utterly alone on her strange mission.

But Valerie knew what she was doing. She knew the speed of her craft, and by means of a map she had worked out how many minutes she must travel before she reached her destination.

A glance at her luminous wrist-watch told her that she was there at last. She shut off the motor, and the craft lay placid upon the smooth, dark expanse of sea.

For a while—for ages, it seemed—nothing happened. And even Valerie was almost beginning to despair when, all at once, a bright light gleamed startlingly on the top of the cliffs.

It disappeared after a few moments, then shone again. Again, for the space of several seconds, there was blackness, then three further sharp flashes rewarded the girl detective's tense vigil.

It was a signal to someone at sea.

Scarcely daring to breathe, Valerie waited. And suddenly, at a low growl that caused her to pat Flash's head warningly, she knew that some unexpected sound had reached his keen hearing.

A few moments later Valerie heard it herself—the soft purring of a motor-boat drawing steadily towards her.

Like her own craft, it was travelling without lights.

Smugglers?

There could no longer be any doubt that the theory in Valerie's shrewd mind was correct.

The lonely house on the cliffs, built against the ancient, dorelet tower, was being used for purposes of defeating the Revenue. But how? Valerie had still to find that out, and it might not be easy. The schemers had apparently not been suspected by anyone until threatened by the writer of that torn-up letter Valerie had found.

Now Valerie could easily understand why she had been called in whilst Miss Marshall sought to impose such restrictions on her activities.

If Valerie, as instructed, had merely found out the name of someone who was watching Mrs. Addison's cottage, and had given the information to Miss Marshall, she would actually have been helping crooks to carry on with their illegal activities!

R-R-R-R-R!
The motor-boat was drawing steadily nearer. It was a moment of intense trial for Valerie's nerves. If she herself were in its direct path, her flimsy craft might be cut clean in two at any moment. Yet she wanted to be certain before she acted.

Suddenly she grasped the electric torch at her side, and her hand tightened upon it as she directed it towards the approaching sound. She judged that her moment had come. Her finger touched the switch; a powerful beam of light like a tiny searchlight, leapt across the water.

Not ten yards from her was the oncoming motor-boat, two heavily muffled men crouching in the stern.

A joint cry of consternation burst from the occupants of the boat as the light dazzled upon them. In a frenzy of fear the pilot threw the torch to the rear. The motor-boat spun round, sending a wave that rocked Valerie's craft, and headed at top speed out to sea again.

But Valerie did not even contemplate pursuit. She had seen enough. The boat had been proceeding straight towards the shore. It had evidently been their intention to make a landing beneath the very spot where the signal lights had shone.

Valerie was ready for that.

She had already fixed the position of the house by a star overhead. Setting her course, she sent the electric launch skimming shorewards until it grounded on the sand. Flash took a leap over the bows, and Valerie followed nimbly. There was no need to bother about mooring the boat. The tide was going out, and would leave it high and dry.

Holding her torch in reserve until the last possible moment, Valerie made towards the cliffs.

"Why, Flash," she suddenly murmured in bewildered tones, "we're going right towards that little cave we saw this afternoon. Surely we didn't overlook something important?"

The cliffs loomed darkly in front of her. Her moment had come. Pressing her finger on the switch, Valerie sent the powerful torch light shining towards the cave. The opening of it stood out blackly in the white cliff, and Flash bounded forward. His soft bay of suppressed excitement told Valerie instantly that he had already seen something.

Running after him, she entered the cave, and for an instant a feeling amounting almost to consternation overcame her.

The cave was no longer the small thing she had at first believed. One of the enormous boulders she had seen, one that was evidently wonderfully balanced, had moved since she was last here.

Beyond that boulder the cave stretched right into the heart of the cliff, whilst at the end of it Valerie, even from this distance, could just discern the foot of a stone staircase leading steeply upwards!

PARACHUTIST FLASH!

"SOFTLY, old fellow! Careful!" Valerie Drew whispered tensely. "Whatever you see, don't bark!"

They were ascending the amazing staircase that had been cut out of the solid rock in the heart of the cliffs.

To a girl of Valerie's keen imagination at least one problem was instantly explained by this startling discovery.

There was now little doubt as to why Miss

Winnie the Wanderer

returns to these pages

Next Wednesday

in another fascinating out-of-doors story which you are certain to enjoy. Order your copy of

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without delay!

Marshall had built her cliff-top residence in such a lonely position.

The secret staircase was probably as old as the tower itself, and might have existed for many years entirely unsuspected. Miss Marshall, discovering it, had realised how well it would serve for modern smuggling operations. Buying the adjoining land in order to build a small house for herself was an obvious move to keep curious people from suspecting her secret.

With constant backward glances to make sure that Valerie was still safely following him, Flash led the way until, halfway up, he suddenly pulled up abruptly. His sensitive head was jerked sharply back from the wall as though something had pungently offended his delicate sense of smell.

"Perfume!" breathed Valerie, as she glimpsed the shattered remains of what had once been a delicate little phial. "I know you've never been keen on that sort of scent, old boy. So it's perfume they've been smuggling up here!"

And instantly, in a bewildering flash that momentarily made Valerie almost dizzy with excitement, she linked up this discovery with what she had learnt that afternoon.

The missing, mysterious Mrs. Addison did "laundering" for Madame Dupont, and was often to be seen carrying a heavy basket of "clothes" into her perfume parlour!

Was it laundering that Mrs. Addison had been doing? Was she a poor, elderly cottager who needed gifts of vegetables from Miss Marshall's cliff-top garden?

Was there, in point of breathless fact, any Mrs. Addison at all?

"On, boy!" urged Valerie, filled now with an almost overmastering excitement to get to the end of this bewildering and thrilling quest.

A few more steps brought her to the top of the stairs. A circular slab, delicately balanced to make it an easy matter to move if it had been swung from the spot where it usually guarded the head of the secret staircase.

Ready now for any emergency, Valerie shone her torch around the dim, grimy walls of the old tower. The place proved to be empty. The litter that stood around was thick with dust, showing that this floor, at least, had not been used for years.

"May as well see all we can whilst we're about it!" Valerie reflected swiftly.

An old wooden staircase led to the first floor, and continued to the floor above. Even there, however, there was nothing to reward Valerie's keen, curious gaze. Only the flat roof remained to be explored.

"We'll look at that, Flash, before we decide anything else!" Valerie whispered to her pet. "But steady, old boy; don't go too near the edge. It would be a nasty drop if you fell over from such a height."

With Flash scampering eagerly ahead of her, Valerie ascended the top flight and reached the flat roof at last.

It was practically what it had appeared to be from the cliffs—merely a roof garden on which its owner could enjoy complete solitude.

"In your dog's interests, hold him tightly!"

a grim voice startlingly addressed Valerie at that very moment.

Horrified and dismayed, Valerie's hand dropped instinctively to her pet's collar even as her astonished Alsatian turned snarlingly at the sound of the voice. Dimly outlined against the dark sky, Valerie could just discern the figure of a woman who held something in her hand.

"It's a dog pistol!" Miss Marshall grimly informed the girl detective. "It's specially made to render a savage animal unconscious for several hours."

"You can put that thing down, Miss Marshall!" Valerie replied, making a supreme effort not to betray by the slightest tremor of her voice the deep emotion she experienced at that moment. "Flash will stay here until I tell him to move. I warn you to be very careful what you do. Your little game happens to be up at last!"

"Not yet, Valerie Drew—though I give you credit for being far sharper than I thought you were!" the woman retorted. "I was a fool, I know, ever to take a chance by employing you at all. You've put me out of business, but the blackmailer you couldn't catch intended to do that as well. I'm still getting away with the fortune I've made."

She leapt even as she spoke, for the staircase had led down into the tower. The danger was past; Valerie's hand dropped from Flash's collar. But it was too late.

A heavy trapdoor fell into position, and there was the sharp sound of bolts being shot into position. Valerie did not even have to tug at the ring to realise the dreadful truth.

She was a prisoner on the roof of this lonely, isolated tower.

"Hold, old boy! Tightly! Don't let go until I give the order! As tight as you can, especially when you jump!"

In spite of everything, the famous girl detective had still not acknowledged defeat!

Valerie was teaching her clever pet an entirely new trick—a trick that was, indeed, as original as anything he had ever learnt in all his talented life.

The trick was connected with the big sun umbrella that had undoubtedly so often deluded people into believing that Miss Marshall was resting on her roof garden when actually she was secretly engaged elsewhere.

One of them must, without doubt, escape from the roof to take a message for help, and the only one who could do that was Flash.

By gripping the shaft of the sun umbrella with his powerful teeth, and letting its wide expanse act as a parachute, he would be able to glide safely to the ground.

It had to be Flash, simply because he was naturally so much lighter than Valerie. And, risky though her scheme might possibly appear at first sight, Valerie was actually taking up to the top with the life of her precious pet.

She was well aware of the area of silk employed in an ordinary parachute to support the weight of a man. A swift, shrewd calculation had told her that the area of the sun umbrella bore just the same proportion to the weight of Flash.

But the great thing was to make sure that Flash understood exactly what was required of him before she ordered him to leap into space, clinging to the umbrella shaft.

The message for help was already attached to his collar, but Valerie rehearsed him again, and again until she was confident that her intelligent four-footed friend understood his part perfectly.

And then the great moment!

Valerie would not have been human if she had not experienced a sharp, painful doubt, a moment of terrible anxiety, as her pet launched himself into space, and the umbrella was suddenly called upon to check his rate of fall.

But all went well; Valerie had made no mistake. Gently and safely, Flash floated silently down to the grassy cliff top. A moment later, his landing perfectly accomplished, he was racing away towards the distant town.

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more than she could bear. To think that Tommy would ever have become like this towards her!

Impulsively Fay stepped forward. "Yes!" she cried, in passionate tones. "Tommy, if only you believed in me!"

"How can I believe in you when the Head herself caught you?" Tommy demanded. "It was a man, going to do."

"Yes," said Kitty, her nose in the air. "And as a result the town's always out of bounds now. No one's allowed to go there." "So we've a lot to be grateful to you about, haven't we?" demanded Molly.

Fay breathed hard. "I'm sorry to hear about the town being out of bounds," she replied, striving to keep her voice even. "But it's through no fault of mine. I—"

A chorus of scornful laughter interrupted her.

She bit her lip. "Tommy," she said earnestly, "I'm going to make you all sorry for this—not that I blame you in my heart. But I am innocent, and I'm going to prove it, and get back to Ravenhurst."

She saw Tommy hesitate. Her heart leapt, for she felt that she had, with those words, broken down Tommy's conviction that she had been guilty.

But, before her old chum could speak, Kitty and Molly turned away, their arms linked firmly in Tommy's, leading her towards the playing fields.

Tommy half-turned. Fay stood waiting, hoping against hope that Tommy's better nature would assert itself.

She was doomed to disappointment, for the three girls, walked on, to disappear around the corner of the building.

"Say, come on, Fay! Guess this won't do you any good."

Mr. Tongs slipped his arm in Fay's, and they walked down the tree-lined avenue to the gates, thence on to the road, watched by a silent, curious crowd of girls.

"I can't say how sorry I am," the producer said humbly, as they got into the car. "This is my fault entirely. And I don't see what we can do about it, either."

Fay turned to him, her eyes flashing. "There's a chance!" she breathed excitedly. "I've just thought of a plan. It's a desperate one, but it's worth trying. I must have your help, though."

"Command me!" Tongs said sincerely. "Guess it's up to me to do what I can about it."

Fay sat silent for a few moments.

The plan that had just occurred to her was a daring one, and, for a space, rather took her breath away.

But the more she thought of it the better she liked it.

"I'll mean playing a trick on the Head," she said, to the producer. "But that's permissible, under the circumstances."

"I should say it was," he agreed. "There's been a dirty enough trick played on you."

"This won't be a dirty trick," Fay smiled. "But it's my one chance to get back to Ravenhurst."

"What's your idea?"

Fay expounded to him the plan that had come to her, and he nodded in agreement.

"So, you see, Mr. Tongs," she concluded, "I must get my twin sister Joyce from Wincombe."

"How are you going to work that?" he asked dubiously.

"It's got to be done," she said grimly. She's very popular in the school, with the Head as well as the girls. We'll manage it somehow."

"All right. Then we'll motor across the moors. I'll come right now," Mr. Tongs declared, stepping forward and giving the driver instructions. "We'll get this business settled for all."

Fay's spirits rose again as the car sped across the picturesque moors. Her plan was sound one, she felt convinced.

Once back in Ravenhurst, then for the final parting of her name. But to get back into school, it was essential to take Joyce here, as well.

Everything depended on Joyce.

If her headmistress refused to allow her to go to Ravenhurst—and that was quite possible—then Fay's plan must fail.

Fay clenched her hands as she thought of this possibility.

She'll have to come, even if we take her by force, she told herself once, when doubts were assailing her. "Yet, we mustn't get her into a bother with her school. Oh, I wish we were there!"

"Hallo! A moorland mist! Just look!"

Fay started from her thoughts as Mr. Tongs' voice broke into them.

Looking up she saw one of those strange, ghastly white mists creeping slowly across the moor towards them.

It was just like a mighty cloud of foam, swirling this way and that.

"We'll be into it in a moment," she exclaimed. "It won't last long."

The car was slowed down as they plunged into the ghostly pall. Simultaneously another car, travelling in the opposite direction, came plunging through the mist towards them.

The chauffeur saw it in the nick of time, and swerved violently, throwing Fay and the producer violently to one side.

The other car flashed past, and, as it did so, there came a sound that brought Fay to her feet with a cry.

"Did you hear that?" she gasped.

Mr. Tongs nodded.

"I did. It sounded like a scream!"

"It was a scream—a girl's scream, and it came from that car," Fay declared. "And what's more, it sounded to me like—like Joyce!"

The mist was swirling all around them now. The chauffeur couldn't see three feet ahead.

"Only thing to do is to stop," he announced. "Too dangerous to go on!"

Fay sat chafing.

Had Joyce been in the car that had flashed past them? Was it possible?

She thought of her own experience of the previous morning, when she had been bundled into a car and rushed off along the road.

It couldn't have been Joyce," she thought then. "For her safe in school. I wonder what she's doing, though! Perhaps just someone squealing with excitement at the narrow escape the car had of colliding with us."

Fay dismissed the incident with these thoughts, and sat as patiently as she could, waiting for the mist to roll by, which it did in a very few minutes.

Then they were speeding on once again towards that distant school—and Joyce!

The ancient building came into sight eventually, and Fay could scarcely restrain her excitement. She braced herself for the interview with the Head.

With a squealing of brakes the car came to a standstill before the main entrance to the school, and almost before it did so Fay had opened the door and leapt out on to the steps.

She ran into the hall, and then came to a sudden stop.

Coming towards her was the Head and three mistresses, together with several of the senior girls. On the faces of all was concern.

"Ah, here she is!"

The Head came towards Fay, and looked at her strangely.

"My dear Joyce," she cried fervently, "how did you manage to get out of that car, after all? Please tell us what happened!"

Fay stared at her in amazement.

"I don't understand!" she gasped. "I'm not Joyce!"

"Not Joyce! Don't be absurd! Yet you're not wearing the school blazer and hat!" one of the mistresses cried blankly.

"I'm Fay—Joyce's twin sister!" Fay exclaimed. "I've just come from Ravenhurst. Please, I want to take Joyce back with me, just for this afternoon!"

"My dear, dear girl, this is altogether amazing!" the Head exclaimed, in a puzzled tone. "I can scarcely believe that you are not Joyce!"

"It's true. I'm known as Fay Beresford, and I have come from Ravenhurst. I must take Joyce back with me!"

"I'm afraid you won't be able to," the Head returned grimly. "Joyce was taken off in a car outside the school not half an hour ago!"

Joyce taken off in a car. Fay's racing brain rang with the thought. She screamed she had heard from the car, she screamed she had thought was in Joyce's car.

It was true, then. That car had contained her twin sister, Joyce, who had been carried off, no doubt by Mr. Frobisher.

And that meant an end to Fay's plan to get back to Ravenhurst. For without her twin sister, her idea was impossible.

She turned and ran back to the car. There was only one hope—that she could follow and try to find Joyce. But that she could not do, for the car had obtained a start.

It may have been delayed by the mist, but she would have been delayed by the mist, whilst there was that possibility. Fay intended to act.

"Quickly!" she panted to the chauffeur. "Back across the moors the way we came, must overtake my sister!"

Another desperate race ahead! And a vital one, too! Unless Fay can rescue Joyce from Frobisher's hands, everything will be lost. Whatever happens, you must not miss next Wednesday's dramatic chapters of this powerful serial.

"THE CASE OF THE DARK TOWER!"

(Continued from page 164.)

All might still be well if only he could get the message through in time.

"Well, Madame Dupont, that's fine!" Miss Marshall declared, in tones of great satisfaction. "We've cleared two thousand pounds easily, and we'll just have nice time to catch the night boat. To-morrow, when clever Valerie Drew is found on the roof, we'll be in another country."

The madame Dupont of the perfume parlour, which had for so long been making a tremendous profit out of its smuggled stock, smiled in agreement.

They were both in Miss Marshall's house, a place that was now in a state of terrific disorder, for which neither of them cared.

Thump, thump! came a startling banging on the front door.

Madame Dupont dropped the bag she was holding; her companion perceptibly changed colour. Horror dawning in their eyes, they exchanged bewildered glances.

"Perhaps it's only some passing stranger," Miss Marshall quavered, trying to make her voice sound reassured. "It can't be anyone else. I—I'll just go and see."

"Yes, yes. We—must answer it," the other agreed.

Miss Marshall led the way. She stiffened with resolution as she reached the door, turned the handle, and threw it open. And in that instant a dismay that almost paralysed her swept over her as the light fell on the party outside.

They were none other than Valerie Drew and her three stalwart policemen.

"It's not quite the ending to your case that I anticipated when I started on it, Miss Marshall," said Valerie Drew dryly. "Your double part is finished—You played the part of Miss Marshall and Mrs. Addison just a little to long. Your biggest mistake was in keeping on your spiked shoes, used when climbing the secret cliff staircase, when you went to the waste land behind the cottage to tear up that backmaker's letter. I'm afraid he escapes, and the two men in the motor-bomb are free so far. But you—"

"Are you wanted on a charge of smuggling perfume on an excessive scale, madam?" one of the police put in sternly.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

See pages 140 and 153 for details of Next Wednesday's magnificent LONG Complete Girl Detective story.

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