

Six Exciting Stories For Schoolgirls Inside

No. 172. Vol. 7.

EVERY FRIDAY.

Week Ending February 4th, 1939.

# GIRLS' CRYSTAL <sup>2<sup>D</sup></sup> WEEKLY



**"STOP! YOU MUSTN'T SELL THAT  
CUCKOO CLOCK TO THEM!"**

Why was Stephen Ross so desperately anxious that Doreen & Co. should not obtain possession of the quaint old clock?

(See "Their Quest at the Winter Sports.")

# The GIRL WHO HAUNTED GREY GABLES



By RENEE FRAZER

## TRAPPED BY GERALD

**N**ORMA ROYSTON, living in the Cornish village of Clovellyn, looked after a small shop, whose owner, Ben Tregellis, had mysteriously disappeared, leaving his small grandchildren, Elsie and Martin, in her care.

Norma believed that Grey Gables, a large house near by, contained a secret connected with her dead father.

The owner, Mr. Penhale, was her enemy; but Gerald Graham, a boy who lived there, was very friendly to her.

To carry out her search at Grey Gables, Norma had to impersonate the ghost of Lady Rowena, which was supposed to haunt the place.

Gerald gained possession of Norma's "phantom" costume, and she went to Grey Gables one night to recover it.

She entered the house through a secret tunnel from the seashore, and found the costume.

Norma donned it and made her escape. But Gerald suddenly appeared and caught her. Grimly he reached out to snatch off her veil!

**W**HITE to the lips, Norma stared through her veil into Gerald's sternly accusing eyes.

"So, my fine Phantom," remarked the boy, "the game is up! We'll find out now just who you are—and why you have been doing your best to terrorise my uncle and cousin."

Frantically, Norma struggled to free herself, her heart beating madly.

Gerald mustn't find her out—he mustn't! How could she hope to explain—to make him understand the motives that had prompted her reckless masquerade?

Her hand was clenched on Ben Tregellis' torn and battered cap—her only shred of evidence; yet the touch of it lent her desperate courage.

A hollow, mocking laugh escaped her lips—almost bloodchilling in its effect.

Gerald's grip momentarily relaxed—and Norma, seizing her chance, sprang backwards to the secret cavity screened by the effigy of the Black Knight.

She stood there for an instant, her hand outstretched in accusation.

"Stand back, Gerald Graham!" she exclaimed. "Who are you who dares to judge another—when tyranny and black injustice lurk on your very doorstep? Back, I say!"

Norma's acting was superb—and the pent-up anger in her voice was not entirely assumed.

The discovery of the old seaman's battered cap—and the thought of the

two helpless youngsters waiting their grandfather's return—caused her blood to boil.

Gerald was obviously taken aback as he stared at her, his boyish face a trifle pale.

"I say, what are you getting at?" he demanded. "You seem to have got some grudge against me, but I'm hanged if I know what it is."

Norma shook her head, realising that she was treading on dangerous ground.

"Not against you, young man!" she replied huskily, "but against those whom you call your kith and kin—the scoundrel, Richard Penhale, and his daughter."

Gerald crimsoned, taking a quick step towards her.

"Just a minute!" he cut in. "You can't go about calling my uncle names. You've done him enough harm, as it is. What harm has he done you?"

Norma backed away till she stood in the shadow of the secret tunnel; her voice was magnified by the hollow echoes.

"He cannot harm a ghost," she replied. "I am but the spirit of the past—the shadow of retribution. The harm he has done was directed at another—an old sailor, who vanished by night, leaving no word for the two helpless children, who vainly awaited his return."

"Ben Tregellis!" exclaimed Gerald,

Norma saw Gerald's eyes fixed on her bandaged hand. Surely now he must suspect that she had been playing the part of the phantom Lady Rowena!

starting. "Look here, whoever you are, you've got hold of the wrong end of the stick. Tregellis was a bad lot; he set out on a smuggling expedition when Clovellyn got too hot to hold him. He hated my uncle because he is a magistrate."

"Maybe he had cause for his hatred," replied Norma, her voice shaking. "Have you seen this, Gerald Graham?" She held out the battered cap. "This was left by the old sailor on the night he disappeared—and it was left here, in Grey Gables! Your uncle was the last man to see Ben Tregellis alive."

Gerald sprang forward, his hands clenched.

"Look here, what are you hinting at?" he demanded. "Are you trying to suggest that my uncle—that my uncle was—"

Norma took her courage in both hands as she slowly backed down the hidden staircase.

"I suggest that your uncle caused Ben Tregellis to disappear—because the old sailor knew too much of his scoundrelly plots! That is the truth—and I shall haunt Grey Gables until justice is done!"

She turned and raced down the narrow stone staircase, Gerald following hot on her heels.

Norma half-regretted the rash impulse that had prompted her dramatic accusation. At first, she had merely intended to play for time—and to give credence to her ghostly role; but the discovery of the cap had fired her imagination and her anger.

Gerald was not to blame; but he was a Penhale—and his defence of his scoundrelly uncle had aroused all the dormant fighting instinct inherited from her sailor father.

Her one thought, now, was to escape with her Phantom costume—and the vital clue she had discovered at such hazard.

But, quickly though she ran, she was conscious that Gerald was overtaking her.

The dim, yellow glare of the boy's lantern alone dispelled the murky darkness. Norma saw the passage branch ahead—and for the life of her she could not remember which banch led down to the cave.

There was no time to stop and decide; Gerald's footsteps were close behind. Norma made a dive for the right-hand fork, and ran for dear life.

"Come back!" shouted Gerald, and added something that was drowned by the echo of their footsteps.

Norma paid no heed; she raced round

the corner—to find herself in pitch darkness.

For a moment her heart misgave her—but it was impossible to turn back now. She stumbled on, groping her way through the darkness.

Then suddenly a dull glimmer of light showed at a bend in the passage, where another tunnel crossed it. Norma could see a pile of fallen masonry—but she did not stop to think what it might portend.

Her eyes were strained towards the welcome glimmer of light. Recklessly, she quickened her pace; and then—

A horrified cry escaped her lips as her foot trod on air; she had a momentary glimpse of a dark, well-like cavity—a glimmer of brackish water far below.

She flung out her hands, clawing wildly at the crumbling brickwork. For a moment that seemed an eternity she hung suspended, her fingers gradually slipping, a dreadful faintness sweeping over her.

A shout echoed in her ears—footsteps. Powerful hands caught her by the wrists, dragging her to safety.

"I warned you," gasped Gerald, his boyish face pallid in the yellow glare of the lantern. "I called to you, but you wouldn't listen."

A choking sob escaped Norma's lips as she fought against her faintness.

The boy was staring at her strangely as his eyes attempted to see through her veil. Norma's spectral robes were dishevelled and torn; a tendril of dark hair was revealed beneath her strange head-dress.

Gerald drew a sharp breath. "I thought as much!" he cried. "You—you are a girl!"

### GERALD'S CHIVALRY

GERALD'S word acted on Norma's dazed senses like a shower of icy water.

Her faintness left her; she was conscious only of a sharp sense of despair.

It was useless to keep up the imposture any longer. In a moment Gerald would know her identity.

And he would hate her—scorn her for her masquerade—for her deception.

It would be the end of their friendship; the gay camaraderie that had helped to lighten her secret quest.

She waited, her eyes closed—waited for Gerald to snatch aside the veil that concealed her face.

• But she waited in vain.

When Gerald spoke, his tone had undergone a curious change. The hard note was absent; his voice shook slightly.

"A girl!" he repeated. "I—I'm sorry. If I'd known, I wouldn't have been so rough with you when I discovered you in hiding."

Norma opened her eyes in bewilderment. Gerald's boyish face was crimson with frank discomfiture.

In spite of the fact that he believed her to be his enemy, his natural chivalry revolted at the thought that he had treated her as one of his own sex—had been prepared, if necessary, to trap her by force.

He made no attempt to pull aside her veil.

"I expect you've got some reason for acting as you have done," he went on gruffly. "I haven't the foggiest idea who you are, and I shan't ask questions—yet. You're dead beat. And—I say"—his face grew concerned—"you've cut your hand—a nasty cut, too. Here, let me bandage it."

He pulled out his own handkerchief, tying it deftly round her injured hand.

Norma, her heart thumping, made no attempt to resist; she was thankful that she wore no rings—or anything by which he might have identified her.

Yet his chivalry cut her to the heart.

She felt an overwhelming desire to snatch off her veil—to throw herself at his mercy; but a cautioning instinct restrained her.

Her secret task was not yet finished. She had touched only the fringe of the strange mystery hinted at in her father's diary—a mystery that linked her fate with that of the old vanished sailor and his two adorable grandchildren.

She must sift that mystery to the bottom before her task was completed.

Gerald had it within his power to wreck everything, but quixotically, he was withholding his hand.

Why? Just because she was a girl? Or because—

The boy's hand tightened on her arm, bringing her wandering thoughts back with a jerk to the present.

"Come," he said gruffly, "we'd better get out of here. Feel all right—well enough to walk with my help?"

Norma nodded unsteadily, not daring to look up. Gerald picked up the lantern, holding it above his head.

"We're quite near the opening," he said. "There's more than one entrance to these passages. This one leads out to a ruined tower on the edge of the cliff. Mind the steps."

He assisted her up a flight of crumbling steps, and into the welcome freshness of the night air.

The yellow gleam of the lantern revealed the ruined walls of an old tower, the pale moonlight streaming through wide fissures in the ancient masonry.

Norma had noticed the tower at a distance, and had wondered vaguely about its history.

Gerald helped her to a moss-grown seat just inside the ruined doorway.

"Stay here for a bit," he said. "You'll feel better in the fresh air. There's a brook near here. I'll get you some water. I shan't be a minute."

He left her, thrusting his way through the bushes.

Norma watched him go, fighting against her weakness. For an instant she felt tempted to call after him, but she bit her lip, remaining silent.

After all, Gerald was a Penhale; in spite of his honesty and his chivalry—or

because of it—he was staunchly loyal to his uncle and cousin.

She dared not confide in him, much as she longed to.

Her secret compelled her to repay his chivalry with seeming ingratitude.

The keen, salt tang of the air helped to revive her—to lend her new strength.

Unsteadily she rose to her feet, stepping out into the moonlight.

But she could not go without leaving some little message—something to show her gratitude.

Picking up a scrap of chalk, she scratched a message on the grey stone wall of the tower.

"Thank you! I shall never forget what you have done to-night."

After a moment's hesitation, she signed it:

"ROWENA."

Then, hearing the sound of the boy's returning footsteps, she slipped silently away into the shadows.

Divesting herself of her phantom robes, she made her way back by a devious route to the village.

It was not till she was actually indoors that, with a start, she remembered something.

She had left behind her the vital clue she had discovered at Grey Gables—Ben Tregellis' cap!

THE morning found Norma pale and tired—but conscious of an almost feverish excitement.

Her hand still throbbed painfully from the gash it had received. She put on a fresh bandage, and made light of it when the children questioned her.

"It's nothing," she said lightly. "Just a scratch."

Young Martin was still agog with the party of the previous night.

"Elsie an' I have decided to write to gran' dad an' tell him all about it," he declared. "We'll keep the letter as a sprise for when he comes home. Do you expect he'll be back in time for Elsie's birthday—that's next week?"

Two pairs of trustful young eyes regarded her anxiously.



"Something dreadful's happened," the footman cried. "That phantom figure has been around here, and it's broken into Mrs. Merrivale's room and stolen her jewel box!"

Norma felt a pang at her heart, as she avoided their questioning glances.

What could she say?

She thought of a torn and battered cap, and her hands clenched at her sides.

"I don't know, dears," she said unsteadily. "I—I'm going to try to get in touch with him. I'm certain that he'll be home very soon, now—perhaps in time for Elsie's birthday."

They seemed satisfied, but for how long could she hope to conceal the truth?

She had long suspected the suave Mr. Penhale of being a scoundrel—but now her suspicions had become a certainty.

He and his daughter had deliberately deceived the villagers into believing that old Ben Tregellis had set off on a smuggling expedition.

When all the time—

Norma shrank from the train of thoughts opened up by her discovery. She could do nothing—without further proof.

And how could she hope to obtain that proof?

Her chance came in a strangely unexpected manner.

Norma was busy in the shop that afternoon; her obsession with the mystery did not prevent her from carrying out her usual duties and attending to her customers with a show of cheerfulness that reflected to her credit.

Money was still a paramount question—a practical issue that must be faced.

The squire's order had been a big help—enabling her to pay the more pressing bills; but the everyday needs of the two orphaned children—the rent of the little shop, and other expenses, made an inroad into her small profits.

She was busily checking her accounts when she heard the tinkle of the shop bell.

She looked up with a slight start—and dropped her pencil in a rather flustered fashion as she observed the unexpected caller.

It was Squire Guthrie.

"A surpriso visit, eh, Miss Royston?" he inquired, his eyes twinkling, as he placed his hat and stick on the counter. "I've just called in for a little chat."

Norma's heart was beating quickly, as she hurried to pull forward a chair. Why had the squire called on her? Was it about the alarming happenings of last night?

His next words put her at her ease.

"To start with," he said heartily, "I want to congratulate you on your performance last night, Miss Royston. In spite of the unfortunate hitch in the matter of the costume, the song went down splendidly. A number of my guests have spoken to me about it."

Norma flushed with mingled relief and pleasure, and managed to murmur something in reply.

"And that brings me to the real purpose of my call," went on the squire briskly. "Mrs. Merrivale, one of my neighbours, was greatly impressed; she is the social organiser in this district—and she is arranging to hold a concert at her private house, in aid of the local hospital. She is particularly anxious that you should take part, and I offered to obtain your co-operation—and Gerald's, of course!"

The squire smiled benevolently, as he patted Norma's shoulder, mistaking the reason for her nervous start.

"It won't be a very big affair," he said. "Just the neighbours and the villagers. As an added inducement I'll mention that there may be a little business transaction in connection with the concert decorations. Mrs. Merrivale asked me to recommend somebody to

supply them—and I took the liberty of suggesting yourself."

Norma flushed with gratitude.

"It's awfully kind of you, Mr. Guthrie," she faltered, "but—"

"But what, my dear? Come! Surely you'll accept?"

Norma bit her lip nervously. It was a tempting offer, and she could not really afford to turn it down; yet the thought of having to meet Gerald again, so soon after last night's encounter, caused her heart to thump uneasily.

Almost it was on the tip of her tongue to refuse—when the squire, quite unintentionally, helped to clinch her decision.

"The house is not far from the village," he explained. "In fact, its grounds adjoin the Grey Gables estate. There is a rumour that the two houses were once connected by a subterranean passage—but that is possibly an old-wife's tale."

Norma caught in her breath sharply, her pulses quickening.

Was this the chance that she had hoped for—the chance of probing the secret of Grey Gables, without the knowledge of the ever-curious Gerald or his scheming uncle?

It might well be—if she used her wits and her eyes!

"Thank you, Mr. Guthrie," she said quickly. "I'll accept—with pleasure. Perhaps—perhaps I had better call on Mrs. Merrivale this evening to make arrangements."

"You're a good business woman, young lady," remarked the squire, his eyes twinkling. "I'll phone Mrs. Merrivale—to tell her that you'll be calling after tea."

Early that evening, Norma set out for Highcliffe Towers—an old and imposing house, overlooking the bay.

Mrs. Merrivale welcomed her warmly; repeated her compliments on Norma's singing, and explained that the concert was to be held in a week's time.

The date coincided with little Elsie's birthday.

"Of course," explained the hostess, "we shall have several rehearsals; and I shall want the stage decorated. Squire

Here are three of the  
**MOST FAMOUS SCHOOLGIRLS  
IN THE WORLD**



Barbara Redfern, Bessie Bunter and Mabel Lynn, of Cliff House. You can meet these delightful characters, as well as scores of others, just as fascinating, in the superb COMPLETE Hilda Richards story which appears, every week, in our sister-paper

**THE SCHOOLGIRL --- 2d.**

Buy a copy to-day!

Guthrie assured me that you were the very person for the job—capable as well as talented!"

She smiled charmingly as she led Norma to the concert hall, in which was a grand piano partly screened by curtains, and a stage complete with scenery.

"Now, I'll leave you to make your plans, my dear—as I have some other business to attend to. Ring for the servants if you require anything."

The good lady bustled away—and Norma was left on her own.

She crossed to the stage, and looked round her eagerly—admiring the fine old panelled walls, the carvings, and the raftered ceiling.

The hall was certainly very old—as old as the big great hall of Grey Gables.

Into her mind flashed a recollection of the rumours connecting the two houses.

Before she started work, it would do no harm to have a quick look round.

Her heart beating quickly, she walked round the hall, tapping on the panels, and examining the family portraits in their gilded frames.

She had almost reached the recess concealing the grand piano, when her heart gave a violent jump.

From behind the curtain came the soft tinkle of an old-world tune—and a baritone voice singing the words:

"What seek ye, fair maiden, so wan and so weary—

What mysteries lie hidden behind your dark eyes?"

Norma spun round with a start as the curtains were jerked back.

Seated astride the piano-stool, a glimmer of laughter in his grey eyes—was Gerald!

**A NEW SHOCK FOR NORMA**

"HALLO!" remarked the boy quizzically. "Fancy meeting you!"

Norma was breathing quickly, her face rather flushed, her hands clenched.

"Gerald!" she gasped. "I—I didn't know you were here."

"Sorry," said Gerald, with an apologetic grin. "I wanted to surprise you. I'm to be accompanist at this concert affair—and I came along to try out the piano. One of the servants let me in."

Norma had slightly recovered from her first shock, but her face was still rather pink.

"You—you might have told me—" she began.

"I offer my humble apologies," said Gerald gravely, as he rose to his feet. "Aren't you glad to see me?"

Norma smiled faintly in spite of herself; Gerald's good humour was infectious.

"Of course I'm pleased to see you," she remarked lightly, "but I'm really here on business. I've got the contract for decorating the hall."

"Good for you!" declared Gerald. "May I watch—if I promise to be good?"

Norma, trying hard to appear composed, produced a tape measure, and proceeded to take measurements of the stage.

Gerald perched himself on the edge of the grand piano, and looked on with assumed gravity—occasionally making a humorous suggestion.

"Let me help!" he said as Norma struggled with a pair of steps. "That's the idea. I'll hold 'em steady. Whoa—mind how you go!"

He grabbed her arm to steady her, and his glance fell on her bandaged hand.

(Please turn to the back page.)



# The Golden FINGER-PRINT

## THE STOLEN DRAWINGS

**E**GYPTIAN gallery, sir? First door on your right, and up the stairs."

Noel Raymond nodded to the grey-haired attendant who sat in his glass desk at the entrance of the Stanley Museum.

"Thanks!" replied the young detective, smiling. "Hope I'm not too late. At what time do you close?"

"In about half an hour, sir—as soon as it is dusk. That's regulations."

Noel glanced at his watch.

"Just about time for a quick stroll round. I suppose I'm the last visitor here?"

"There's a party of young ladies up-stairs now, sir," said the attendant. "From the local art school, I believe."

Noel noticed how tired the man looked. No doubt he'd be glad to lock up for the night.

"I shan't over-stay my time," promised the young detective. "First on the right, you say, and up the stairs? I'll find my way all right!"

Noel had an hour or two to spare before catching his train back to town, and the local museum had struck him as a good place in which to while away the time.

The young detective was genuinely interested in antiques—and he had heard that this little museum housed the world-renowned collection of ancient relics discovered by Professor Stanley, the great Egyptologist.

As he mounted the stairs, Noel wondered curiously why a party of young girls should have taken the trouble to visit the museum so late in the evening. He could hear their voices now, and a hushed ripple of laughter from the direction of the gallery.

And then, abruptly, shattering the silence, came a girl's piercing scream.

The young detective drew in his breath sharply; his face paling, he leaped up the stairs, racing into the gallery.

A buzz of startled voices greeted him—the sound of hurrying footsteps. Rounding a massive statue of the cat-goddess, Bast, Noel came upon the girls, clustered in an agitated group.

They were surrounding one of their number—a fair-haired, attractive girl, her face deathly pale.

Beside her lay an overturned easel and board.

By PETER LANGLEY

"My drawing!" she sobbed. "Someone—someone snatched it from me. I thought I heard a laugh—but when I looked round there was no one in sight."

"That's just what happened to me yesterday evening!" put in one of her chums excitedly. "You know I found my sketch, later, torn to pieces at the foot of the stairs."

"But what can it mean, girls? It's almost uncanny——"

Noel stepped forward, his eyes alight with interest.

"Excuse me," he remarked. "I wonder if I could be of any help?"

The girls stared at him, a trifle doubtfully at first, but his easy manner and boyish smile helped to reassure them.

"Are you—are you an official of the museum?" inquired one of them—a girl with auburn hair and turbulent grey eyes.

Noel smilingly denied the fact, handing them his card.

"A detective!" exclaimed the last speaker, in excitement. "Girls—what luck! This is Mr. Noel Raymond, the famous London detective!"

A thrilled murmur greeted this information. A dozen pairs of wondering eyes were turned towards Noel.

"Let's get this clear," remarked the young detective gravely, as he glanced at the fair-haired girl. Her pale face and trembling lips revealed only too clearly the scare she had received. "You say your drawing has been 'stolen'?"

The girl nodded, struggling to regain her composure.

"I was drawing the image of Bast,"

When Eva Grayland's drawing disappeared in the museum, the other art students thought it was just an act of spite by one of her rivals. But Noel Raymond knew differently. He realised that someone was determined no sketch should be made of the figure of the Egyptian goddess.

she whispered. "It—it was almost finished, when I heard someone laugh—a horrid laugh! I looked round, and my easel fell over with a crash. Look!"

She pointed to the overturned easel. Noel stepped forward, and his eyes narrowed as he picked up the fallen drawing-board. The drawing-pins were still in place, and attached to one of them was the torn corner of a sheet of stout cartridge paper.

"And you saw no one?" he asked.

"No one," replied the girl, in a whisper. "Only—a shadow—and that might have been a trick of the light. Mr. Raymond, there's something—something weird about this museum." Her voice rose sharply. "It's happened before!"

"Steady, Eva," put in the auburn-haired girl, resting a hand on her chum's shoulder.

"You tell him, Julie," whispered the other.

Julie Manders raised her grey eyes to Noel's face.

"We're all students of the Rodwell Art School," she explained frankly. "Professor Stanley—who endowed this museum—is a friend of our principal. He's offered a valuable money prize to the girl making the best drawing of the museum exhibits, and the day after tomorrow is the closing date for entries. We've all been working very hard, but things have been going wrong."

"You mean your drawings have been tampered with?" asked Noel.

Julie nodded quickly.

"Yes; but not only that. Girls have been scared—like Eva here. She's one of our best artists. You've heard what happened just now, with all us girls in the gallery—and no one saw anything."

The girls drew more closely together, throwing uneasy glances into the shadows.

The young detective lit a cigarette, staring round him in the fading light.

The girls' strange story had awakened his keenest interest, and there were ample witnesses to vouch for its truth.

On the face of it, the tampering with the drawings seemed like an act of petty spite or jealousy; but Noel felt convinced that there was more behind the attempts than that.

He glanced keenly at the group of youthful students. Some looked frankly scared—others excited; the majority were obviously ill at ease as they held tightly

to their drawing-boards and sketch-blocks.

The most mystifying aspect of the whole affair was the escape of the culprit, without having been seen even by the unfortunate victim of the attack.

"The attendant assured me that you girls were the last visitors in the museum—apart from myself," explained Noel. "Is your party complete?"

There was an exchange of hasty glances.

"One girl isn't here," said Julie Manders, her grey eyes clouding. "Lucille Carter. She came along with us this evening, but—well, there was a bit of a tiff, and she decided to go home."

There was a rather awkward silence, and Noel tactfully changed the subject. A girlish quarrel was outside his province. Through his magnifying-glass he examined the torn paper pinned to Eva's drawing-board.

There was a faint mark of a fingerprint, but it was unlike any other fingerprint Noel had ever seen before. It was golden in colour.

"Are any of you girls using paints?" he asked casually. "Gold paint?"

There was a general shaking of heads. "No—only pencil," explained Julie. "It's black-and-white work. Would you like to see?"

She held out her own drawing—a clever copy of an Egyptian urn, with the bas-relief figures and hieroglyphics painstakingly introduced.

Noel murmured some suitably flattering remark; Julie shook her head.

"It's not a patch on Eva's work," she declared, as she slipped a hand through the arm of her fair-haired chum. "You ought to have seen her drawing of the cat-goddess, Bast; it's the most difficult figure to draw, and only one other girl tried it. Her drawing was destroyed, too—yesterday evening."

"In the same way?" asked Noel quickly.

"Exactly the same way," replied a freckle-faced girl, at the rear of the group. "I was sitting here, in this alcove—just where Eva was sitting this evening—when I thought I heard someone whisper my name. I looked round quickly, thinking one of the girls was ragging. When I turned back again my drawing had gone. Ugh! I can tell you it gave me the creeps!"

Noel frowned.

"Will you show me just where you were sitting when this happened?" he asked, turning to the fair-haired Eva.

Rather pale, the girl complied, drawing up her chair and easel in the shadow of the grotesque stone figure of the cat-goddess.

Noel observed that, in the position she had taken up, she was practically screened from the rest of the gallery by the angle of the wall forming the recess.

Directly behind her was a shelf containing several gargoyle-like plaster masks; in a dim corner were ranged a number of upright mummy-cases, some of them open to reveal their swathed and gilded occupants.

There was a skylight in the roof, but no sign of a door or other means of access, excepting the main entrance to the gallery.

"Strange!" murmured Noel thoughtfully, and his glance again sought the gilt finger-print in the torn corner of the missing drawing.

There came a stifled sob from the fair-haired young art student.

"It—it's that hateful statue!" she breathed, pointing to the massive stone figure of the goddess towering above her. "It's ill-omened—Lucille said so."

"Lucille's jealous!" cut in Julie scornfully. "She knows you're the best artist among us, and she's scared you'll win the prize. You saw how pale she went when I suggested it."

Noel looked keenly from one to the other.

Jealousy? Rivalry? Was it possible that a girl would go to such spiteful lengths in order to win a prize?

Impatiently he thrust the momentary suspicion aside; yet he could not entirely banish the thought of the absent girl.

Had Lucille Carter really gone home?

In the fading light he made a hurried tour of the gallery, while the girls stood in a whispering group.

There was a curious expression on the young detective's face as he rejoined them; his eyes were troubled. Grasped in his hand was a girl's handkerchief.

"I'm afraid there's nothing much we can do now, young ladies," he said briskly. "It's getting late, and the museum closes at dusk. But I promise you I'll make inquiries. Before you go, I'd just like to have a look at the other drawings you have done."

Nothing loth, the girls handed him their drawings. Noel glanced through them swiftly, collecting them in a pile.

Some of them showed considerable talent, while all went painstakingly into detail of the subjects they portrayed.

"These are not the finished work?" he asked, as he turned to Julie.

"Oh, no!" she replied. "They'll have to be inked in and finished properly to-morrow—but they've taken us hours to do. Eva's was the most nearly finished—and hers has been stolen."

Her grey eyes flashed indignantly.

"I'd just like to meet the thief!" she added, under her breath.

Noel smiled grimly.

"You'd better look after the rest," he said. "I'll tie them up for you. You won't be working on them again to-night?"

"No—not till to-morrow evening. I'll leave them with Mr. Fredley, at the art school, and he'll lock them in his safe."

Noel deftly secured the bundle with a length of stout string, and Julie hurried to fetch her portfolio.

As she took the bundle of drawing-sheets from Noel there came a startling interruption.

A low, mocking laugh, indescribably eerie, echoed through the gallery.

A frightened gasp arose from the young students; the portfolio of drawings slipped from Julie's hands.

Noel spun on his heel, his lips tightening; his glance flashed in the direction of the black stone sarcophagus raised on a platform in the centre of the main gallery.

His keen eyes had observed a vague shadow move swiftly behind it.

In one bound he crossed the hall; there came a stifled cry as he grabbed the slim figure crouched in the shadows behind the sarcophagus.

A girl stumbled out into the dim light—a tall, strikingly attractive girl, whose pale, defiant features were framed in a mass of raven-black hair.

"Lucille!" came the accusing cry.

Julie Manders started forward, her eyes flashing.

"Lucille—so it was you! We might have guessed it. What have you done with Eva's drawing?"

The girl drew herself up in Noel's grasp, her lips trembling defiantly.

"I—I don't know what you mean!" she stammered. "I haven't touched Eva's drawing."

"That's a fib!" exclaimed Julie.

"You're jealous—I've suspected it all along. Why did you pretend to go home—and then hide here in the museum?"

The other girl's lips tightened. "Just a minute!" put in Noel quietly. "Lucille—I'd like to see your hands."

The girl stared at him, her dark eyes a shade scornful.

"Who are you?" she demanded, backing away.

With a swift movement Noel grasped her hands, staring at the slender fingers. There was no sign of any gold paint on them.

"Thank you," he said gravely. He turned to Julie and the others. "I'm afraid, girls, that you're jumping to conclusions," he said. "Lucille did not touch Eva's drawing!"

An incredulous murmur greeted this statement. Julie tossed her head.

"Well, I'm certain that it must have been Lucille," she declared. "All the rest of us were here—in sight of one another—and no outsider could possibly have come in. I think it was a mean, hateful trick! Come on, girls—let's go."

Turning her back on Lucille, she crossed the room to pick up her portfolio.

Then a choking cry was torn from her lips as it fell open in her hand—revealing that it was empty.

"The drawings!" she gasped, white to the lips. "They—they've gone!"

#### NOEL'S MIDNIGHT VIGIL

HERE was a moment's stunned, incredulous silence as Noel sprang to Julie's side, snatching the empty portfolio from her nerveless hands.

"Do you still accuse me, Julie?" Lucille asked quietly.

Julie clenched her hands.

"You—you know something about it," she gasped. "You laughed to distract our attention!"

Noel crossed to the double-doors and closed them; torch in hand he made a swift detour of the gallery, probing into every dim corner.

He returned slowly, a thoughtful expression in his eyes.

"Don't worry about your drawings, girls," he said. "I promise you that you'll have them by to-morrow evening. But I want to ask Lucille a question." He glanced at the dark-haired girl. "Lucille," he said, "who is it that you are shielding?"

The girl started violently, her face turning a shade paler.

"I—I don't know what you mean," she breathed.

"I think you do," said Noel. "For your own sake, Lucille—will you answer my question?"

"No!" replied the girl brokenly.

"No!"

Turning, she darted from the room.

"You see," said Julie. "Her manner is proof of her guilt."

"Not necessarily," replied Noel. "I've a little theory of my own to account for the stolen drawings. I suggest that you girls leave this affair in my hands; I have decided to postpone my return to London till to-morrow."

"You will find our drawings?" asked the freckled-faced girl anxiously.

"Don't worry," said Noel. "With the exception of Eva's drawing of the cat-goddess, I'm convinced that they're perfectly safe. I'll get in touch with your art school in the morning—and I may have good news."

He shook hands with them as they

trooped out of the hall. When they had gone he took out the handkerchief he had found—a dainty, lace-edged handkerchief embroidered with the initials "L. C." Lucille's, without a doubt—and yet it smelt unmistakably of strong tobacco!

It was not Lucille who had dropped that handkerchief; yet how had it come into that other person's possession?

And who had been responsible for the disappearance of the drawing-sheets from Julie's portfolio?

The young detective's active mind was trying to sort out the complex mystery. Crossing to a show-case in the corner of the room, he took from behind it a certain mysterious bundle that he had deposited there a few minutes earlier.

With a grim smile he made his way downstairs.

The grey-haired watchman was dozing in his box; he roused himself with a start as Noel touched his shoulder and mumbled an apology.

"It's time I locked up, sir," he muttered, glancing at his watch.

Noel noticed how drawn and pale the man's face looked.

"Listen," said Noel, producing his card. "I'm a detective—and I'm investigating a little mystery here. Who's responsible for the museum?"

The attendant looked startled.

"I hope it's nothing serious, sir," he muttered. "I'm actually in charge—under Mr. Lucas, the assistant curator."

Noel reassured him.

"Who's the chief curator?" he asked.

"Professor Stanley, sir—who owns most of the things here. But he's an invalid, and not able to leave his house in Sussex."

"Can I get in touch with Mr. Lucas, the assistant?" asked Noel.

"Well, sir—I don't know. He told me he was staying in town for the night, and would be back to-morrow. Is there anything I could do?"

Noel reflected.

"I merely want permission to remain in the museum—for to-night," he replied.

"In the museum, sir? But that's something no one in these parts would like to do. Those old Egyptian things—they're not good to be left alone with after dark. Once I've locked up for the night, I stay in my office—with the lights full on."

"I don't blame you," said Noel gravely. "But I've a reason for my request. I realise that it's against regulations—but I'll see that you don't get into trouble."

After much persuasion, the watchman gave his consent.

Noel left the museum, promising to return in half an hour's time.

He came back promptly to time, carrying a vacuum flask, a packet of sandwiches in his pocket, and a roll of blank drawing-paper.

The watchman had already locked up downstairs, but he admitted Noel into the Egyptian gallery, handing him the key.

"If you should require me, sir—just ring the bell," he said, pointing to a bell-push near the door. "I'll be downstairs in my cubby-hole."

Noel thanked him, and waited till the attendant had departed.

Then he closed and locked the massive entrance doors, and commenced his preparations.

The girls had left several easels and boards in a corner. Noel erected one of them in the shadow of the massive stone statue of the goddess, Bast—in the position where the unfortunate Eva Grayland had been sitting.

Whistling cheerfully, he fastened a sheet of drawing-paper to the board, and produced a case of drawing-instruments.

After a careful search of the gallery, he took a tin from his pocket and sprinkled a quantity of fine powder over the polished floor. That done, he switched out the lights.

A pale shaft of moonlight streaming through the skylight in the roof fell directly on the massive statue of the goddess, throwing the rest of the gallery into deeper gloom.

Pulling up a chair to the easel, Noel set to work to make a careful drawing of the grotesque statue.

His purpose was two-fold. He particularly wanted a drawing of the ill-omened statue—and he was anxious to discover whether the mysterious terrorist would intervene.

The time dragged on, and the drawing progressed rapidly. Noel refreshed himself with coffee and sandwiches, and continued his task.

His hand shook slightly as he grasped the torch, examining the base of the statue and the pedestal on which it had stood.

Resting on the pedestal was a small, jagged piece of stone. Noel's eyes glinted sternly as he examined it. Obviously, it had been placed there previously so that the statue would topple over at a push.

But where was the miscreant who had done this thing? A swift scrutiny of the polished floor revealed an astounding fact. The powder he had sprinkled in the alcove and around the base of the statue was undisturbed.

Yet no one could have entered or left the gallery without leaving a trace of footprints.

At that moment there came a hammering on the outer door of the gallery. The watchman, surmised Noel; no doubt the man had been aroused by the crash of the falling statue.

He hurried to the door and unlocked it. It was not the watchman who stood



"Lucille," said Noel quietly, "I'd like to look at your hands." Carefully he examined them, but there was no sign of gold paint on them.

Then, as a distant clock chimed midnight, he stiffened, a cold chill running down his spine.

From somewhere in the darkness behind him came a soft, diabolical chuckle!

In spite of his iron nerves, Noel felt the hair creep on the back of his neck. Springing to his feet, he whipped out his torch, flashing it on the wall behind him.

But he could see nothing excepting a shelf containing a row of plaster urns and blankly staring masks.

He made a half-move to approach them, and his sharp ears detected another more ominous sound—a rumbling, scraping noise that came from the darkness of the alcove.

One glance he flung over his shoulder, and leaped backwards in the nick of time.

With a crash like thunder, the massive statue of the goddess toppled from its pedestal, smashing to splinters the easel and the chair on which he had been sitting a moment before.

His face deathly pale, cold beads of perspiration on his forehead, the young detective bent over the fallen statue.

there. The newcomer was a stranger to Noel—a middle-aged, rather flustered-looking gentleman, wearing an overcoat over his evening attire.

"Bless my soul, sir! Who are you?" he demanded, blinking at Noel. "What are you doing here?"

"I might ask the same question," rejoined the young detective, producing his card. "I am here by special permission. Are you connected with the museum, sir?"

"Most certainly!" replied the other sharply. "My name is Lucas. I am the assistant curator. I have only just returned from town. By whose permission—Good gracious!" he broke off, staring at Noel's card. "A detective?" His face paled. "Then something serious has happened, as I feared, when I found the watchman's office deserted. The watchman—Ford—has been acting very strangely of late—"

"Just a minute!" cut in Noel tersely. "Isn't the watchman at his post?"

"He is not," replied the curator agitatedly. "His office is in darkness. Would you kindly explain?"

Briefly, without loss of words, Noel described the events that had led to his strange vigil. Mr. Lucas was palpably agitated by the story, though his chief

concern was naturally on account of the fallen statue.

A hurried examination, however, assured him that it was unbroken.

"Thank goodness for that!" he declared, mopping his forehead. "Professor Stanley thinks the world of that image. There would have been serious trouble if it had been damaged. Where can Ford have got to?"

Noel was wondering the same thing.

"Has the man been employed here for long?" he asked.

"No, only for a few weeks; but I understand that he brought first-class credentials. Professor Stanley engaged him personally."

"Where does he live?" asked Noel.

The assistant curator shrugged.

"He has lodgings in the district, I believe. Perhaps I had better call at his address."

"I think it would be as well," nodded the young detective. "Meanwhile, I'll search the museum. For the time being, I think we'll avoid calling in the police."

The agitated curator departed on his errand, and Noel made his way thoughtfully to the watchman's little office. The desk was locked, but Noel quickly opened the drawers with a master-key.

The contents were disappointing, consisting mostly of official forms and documents that could have no possible bearing on the mystery.

Noel was about to relinquish his search when, at the bottom of one of the drawers, he came across a faded newspaper cutting.

It bore a picture of a distinguished-looking, dark-haired man whose features were strangely familiar. With a start, Noel recognised it.

It was a portrait of the grey-haired watchman, though appearing several years younger!

And the caption beneath the portrait read:

"James Carter, ex-museum official, wanted in connection with the Lanhurst Museum thefts."

"Carter!" breathed Noel, a catch in his voice. "I thought as much! That's Lucille's second name!"

His mind was working swiftly as he hastily scanned the report. Here was a vital link in the chain of evidence, though for a moment it completely shattered his theories.

The watchman's assumed name and his mysterious manner seemed almost conclusive proof of his guilt.

And Lucille—

"Confound it!" breathed Noel. "There must be some other explanation! Wait! I've an idea!"

He hurried back to the Egyptian gallery, switching on the light.

A curious acrid smell greeted him. His eyes narrowing, he stared round sharply.

Then, with a startled explanation, he crossed to the fallen statue.

Beside it lay a heap of smoking ashes, and as Noel scattered them with his foot, he saw that they were the remains of the missing drawing sheets, burnt beyond recovery!

A strange glitter in his eyes, Noel rose to his feet. Someone must have entered the gallery since he and the curator had left it.

He bent to scrutinise the ground, and his lips tightened. In the light powdered dust on the polished floor was a clearly marked trail of footprints, leading from the alcove towards the black stone sarcophagus!

In a bound, Noel reached the sarcophagus, and attempted to raise the massive lid. It required every ounce of

his strength; but at last the heavy lid fell back with a dull crash.

Noel flashed his torch inside, and a startled ejaculation was torn from his lips.

Lying bound and gagged in the sarcophagus was the figure of the grey-haired watchman!

## NOEL SPRINGS A SURPRISE

**A** GIRL'S broken cry rang through the gallery as Noel lifted the inert figure of the watchman in his arms.

Lucille Carter stood in the doorway.

"Father!" she sobbed.

"All right, Lucille," said Noel quietly. "I don't think he's hurt. I'm afraid he's been drugged, though."

"The beasts!" sobbed Lucille, between her clenched teeth. "Oh, the beasts!"

Noel swiftly loosened the watchman's gag, and felt his pulse.

"He'll come round very soon; better phone for a taxi."

Noel carried the unconscious man down to the office. Lucille rejoined him, stark distress in her eyes.

"I was afraid something like this would happen," she sobbed. "But he wouldn't listen to me. He wanted to prove his innocence—"

"Of the Lanhurst Museum thefts?" asked Noel. "All right, Lucille, I know. Your father was curator there, and left under a cloud. He assumed the name of Ford, I presume, while he attempted to establish his innocence?"

Lucille nodded, her lips trembling.

"I've been trying to help him by selling my drawings," she whispered, "but it's been very hard these last months. Father wouldn't tell me whom he suspected, or how he hoped to bring the scoundrel to book. I haven't dared to tell the other girls. How—how did you suspect?"

"Your father dropped a handkerchief—apparently one he had been minding for you," explained Noel. "I recognised the scent of the tobacco that clung to it. But, tell me, Lucille! Do you know anything about those missing drawings?"

"I don't—I swear I don't!" replied Lucille brokenly. "It's dreadful to think that the other girls suspect me—especially Julie. She—she used to be my chum—"

She broke off, with a little sob.

Noel rested a hand on her shoulder.

"Don't worry, Lucille," he said.

"Get your father home as quickly as you can, and call in a doctor. You can leave the rest to me."

"But—but the girls' drawings?" whispered Lucille.

Even at that moment she was thinking of her erstwhile chums.

"The drawings were safe," said Noel, with a grim smile. "Most of them. The bundle I handed to Julie to slip into her portfolio consisted of a pile of blank sheets! I'm afraid that Eva's drawing of the statue will have been destroyed by now; but there's still time to remedy that."

"But why should anyone have tried to destroy their drawings?" demanded Lucille.

Noel shrugged.

"That baffled me at first; but I've evolved a little theory. There can be only one reason. Someone—presumably the mysterious thief—is anxious that those drawings shall not be seen by Professor Stanley. Why? I propose to visit the professor this evening, and clear up that very point."

A few hours later Noel received Professor Stanley's verdict. The noted Egyptologist stared blankly at the sketches Noel handed him.

"These drawings, Mr. Raymond!" he exclaimed agitatedly. "They are all wrong! The hieroglyphics and figures portrayed show a strange discrepancy from the originals."

"You are certain of that?" demanded Noel.

"Naturally," replied the professor. "I could not possibly be mistaken."

Noel rose to his feet.

"I'm afraid, Professor Stanley," he said gravely, "that I have a shock for you. Many of the objects now in your museum are fakes—hastily made to replace the stolen originals!"

"Great Scott!" ejaculated the professor. "Have you informed the police?"

"Not yet," said Noel. "I want to catch the scoundrel red-handed. If you will give me carte-blanche I promise you that the mystery will be cleared up by to-morrow night—and another little mystery into the bargain!"

**I**T was the evening of the following day when Noel met Julie Manders and her friend, Eva Graham, by appointment.

"Well," asked Julie anxiously, "have you—have you solved the mystery, Mr. Raymond? Our drawings—"

"Are quite safe," replied Noel, "with the exception of Eva's. And there is still time to do another drawing before to-morrow. I suggest you try some other subject this time, Eva. The cat-goddess, Bast, has been damaged."

"I'll never dare to go into that dreadful museum again," Eva declared.

"But you must, Eva," urged Julie. "And I'll come with you. Will you come with us, Mr. Raymond?"

Noel shook his head regretfully.

"I'm sorry, but I have some urgent business to see to. I suggest you go to the museum in half an hour's time, and start work."

Noel took his departure, and half an hour later Eva and Julie entered the deserted Egyptian gallery. They had observed that the attendant at the desk was a new man—younger and more alert—but they thought nothing of the change.

They found the statue of the goddess, Bast, covered with a sheet, looking rather ominous.

Eva turned pale, but Julie reassured her with a laugh.

It was still quite early, and the last rays of the setting sun streamed through the daylight.

Eva elected to draw one of the Egyptian urns, and Julie arranged her chair and easel.

For a time the two girls became engrossed in the work, and the drawing grew apace.

Then, suddenly, the pencil slipped from Eva's fingers.

"Hark!" she whispered, with a nervous glance over her shoulder.

Julie had heard the sound, too, though she endeavoured to smile unconcernedly.

It was a sound resembling a hollow chuckle.

"I'll search the gallery," declared Julie, "just to see if anyone's hiding."

She was about to move away, when there came a terrified scream from her chum.

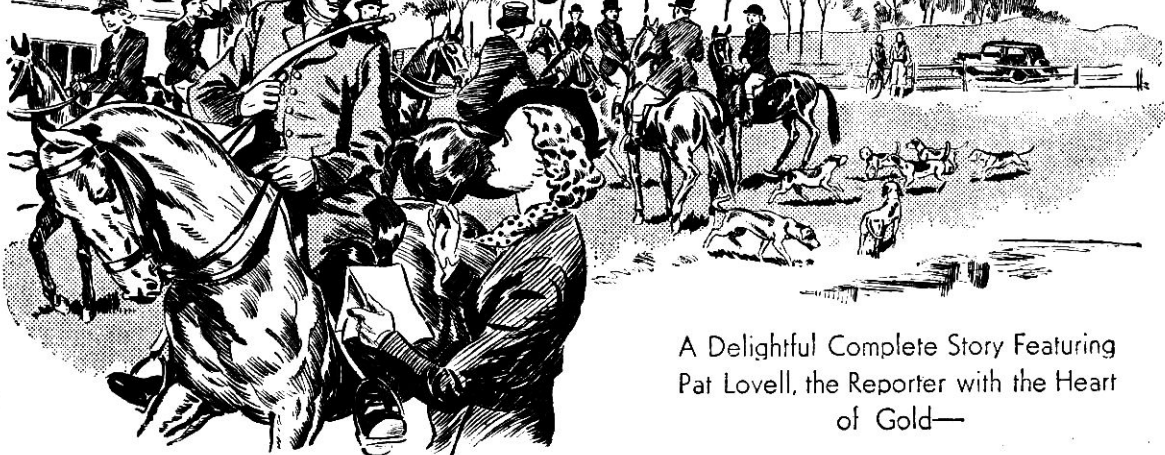
Julie turned, and her own blood ran cold.

Reaching out from one of the open mummy-cases was a claw-like gilded hand—apparently belonging to the embalmed Egyptian king!

(Please turn to the back page.)



# The Fox Cub Pat Protected



A Delightful Complete Story Featuring  
Pat Lovell, the Reporter with the Heart  
of Gold—

By ELIZABETH CHESTER

## TALLY-HO!

**P**AT LOVELL, sitting in the rear seat of a taxicab, leaned forward and chanted to herself: "Tally-ho — tally-ho!" And then, for the tenth time at least, she broke into the refrain of "D'ye Ken John Peel."

For Pat was on her way to a hunt meet. She was not in riding habit, and she had no horse with her—in fact, Pat was not intending to follow the hounds on horseback. Her job was only to report the meet and to obtain from the master of foxhounds his view of the correspondence in the "Midshire Gazette" declaring that fox-hunting was a cruel sport.

Pat Lovell was a girl reporter on the "Gazette," and as this was the first meet she had attended she was thrilled with excitement. There were other reporters present, a number of cars, and a throng of people. In the distance, outside the Merry Huntsman Inn, were men in pink coats, top-hats, and white breeches; women in smart hunt clothes; splendid horses, and foxhounds baying excitedly.

"Tally-ho!" called Pat, thrilled, getting the exciting atmosphere.

Then the taxicab was brought to a halt by a rearing horse; and the rider—a red-faced, middle-aged man—slipped from the saddle.

His groom, jumping forward, held the horse; and Pat smiled.

"I bet he feels a fool!" she murmured, not without sympathy.

The man wheeled and shook his riding crop at her taxi-driver.

"Stop!" he roared.

The taximan stopped.

"Anything wrong?" asked Pat, looking out.

"Yes, you've scared my horse; you caused me to dismount!" barked the ill-tempered man. "You ought not to come along this road farther than the gate."

Pat's eyes glimmered.

"You ought to have hung on to your horse," she said gently. "I saw you slipping. Perhaps I should have shouted. I do hope that you didn't hurt yourself when you fell off."

"I didn't fall off," said the red-faced huntsman nastily. "You'd better get out of the car and walk. It's you people clattering up the place sight-seeing who spoil the hounds' scent."

It was an extremely high-handed manner, and Pat did not like it.

"I'm sorry. Is this a private road,

then?" she asked meekly. "I thought it was a public highway."

"Don't argue with me!" said the huntsman, flicking his crop in the air. "Cars ought to be banned; and you sightseers ought to have more sense."

He turned away, and Pat rapped on the window of the taxicab.

"Drive on, MacDuff!" she said.

But the taximan could not proceed, because another horse backed across his path, and the hounds were crossing; so Pat, not wishing to make trouble, stepped from the taxicab and paid the man off.

She moved forward among the throng and made notes. She knew a good many of the county people by sight, and jotted down their names in shorthand. There was Colonel Clave, Lord Tankfel, and others of aristocratic Norman blood; a countess, a knight; the local bank manager, the squire, a few yeoman farmers, and others whose names and doings made news.

But Pat had to find the M.F.H., whom she did not know by sight.

"There he is," said a villager "in the know." "That gent there—Mr. Carsden."

"There!" said Pat in dismay, indicating the red-faced man who had so roundly rebuked her.

"That's him," nodded the villager. "And you be careful how you speak to him, miss. He doesn't half bark. I bet the foxes are more afraid of him than they are of the hounds!"

Pat gave a soft whistle of dismay, and then braced herself. It was not likely that the M.F.H. would be really delighted to have another chat with her, but the editor's orders could not be disobeyed.

"Hem!" said Pat, drawing near to the M.F.H.

But another man in corduroy trousers and worn sports coat had sidled up to the M.F.H. with something important to say.

"It's all right, sir," he said. "I got it."

"The cub? Good, good! Where is it?"

"In the shed just beyond the old oak. I'll set it free when the hounds are within scent."

"Good man!" said the M.F.H. jovially. "We shan't have a wasted day, then."

Pat, hearing that conversation, guessed that the cub was a fox cub, and indignation filled her; for anything

more hateful than keeping a cub prisoner, to be freed at a moment when the hounds could harry it, she could not imagine.

But the M.F.H. was obviously delighted.

He turned, and almost fell against Pat.

"Great Scott! In the way again!" he frowned.

"Excuse me one moment, please. I have an important message for you, sir," said Pat in her meekest tone.

"What is it?"

"I want to know if you have read the correspondence on fox-hunting in the 'Midshire Gazette,'" said Pat.

The M.F.H. drew up. His red face reddened further and his eyes seemed almost to bulge; while his dark brows, knitting, gave him a most ferocious mien.

"The 'Gazette'—it ought to be stopped!" he thundered. "The 'Gazette' will be publicly burned at the hunt ball next week!"

"Oh!" said Pat. "Um! Then—er—you disagree with what has been written?"

"Disagree? It's the utmost twaddle and rubbish! If I catch any farmers putting wire across my land there'll be trouble!"

Pat jotted down notes.

"Are you a reporter?" asked the M.F.H. sharply.

"Yes; I am interviewing you for the 'Gazette,'" said Pat eagerly. "Is it your opinion that the fox likes being hunted?"

"What? Of course! The fox has been hunted for years. It's fun for them—a race, excitement. It's natural for a fox to hunt and be hunted. The fox doesn't consider the feelings of chickens, does it?"

"Nunno!" admitted Pat. "But, then, the fox is a simple, uneducated, uncivilised creature, and knows no better."

"Don't argue with me; I'm in a hurry. You can say that I consider that modern people are namby-pamby, soft-brained, chicken-livered, and squeamish," said the M.F.H. "And that the Press of to-day fills its columns with twaddling rubbish."

"Thank you!" said Pat, jotting it down in shorthand.

The M.F.H. nodded and strode away,

only to be stopped a yard farther on by a pale-faced, distressed-looking girl. "What is it—what is it?" he asked in weary petulance.

"My pet fox—it's lost, and I think one of your men has stolen it," said the girl.

"I know nothing about your fox," was the brusque answer.

And he strode past the girl to rejoin his groom and horse, leaving her with pale, anxious face, biting her lip.

Pat Lovell scented news at once, and hurried to the girl's side.

"I heard you say something about a fox. Have you a fox?" she asked eagerly.

The girl turned to her, glad to find someone in whom she could confide.

"Oh, it's awful. Poor Nix," she said. "I caught him in a trap last year, with a broken leg. I nursed him, brought him round, and he was such a darling. A pet, just like a dog. And now—"

"Now he's gone?" said Pat, with sympathy. "I am sorry. Do tell me more about him. I'm a reporter, and I'm sure my editor would be interested. Not many people make pets of foxes."

The girl was excited when she heard that Pat was a reporter, and naturally the idea of being given space in the paper which she read every night appealed to her very much.

She told Pat her name, Celia Blake, described where she lived, how she had found the fox, how frightened it had been, how the leg had healed, how it had fed from a saucer, how good it had been; there was no concealing that she really had grown to love her pet.

"But when did it escape?" asked Pat.

"This morning. But it didn't escape. It was stolen—set free; and I'm terrified they'll hunt it," Celia Blake added. "Poor Nix—he won't understand. He's been a pet, and I'm sure he can't run as fast as other foxes. They'll catch him, and—and the hounds will tear him to pieces."

Tears filled her eyes, and Pat herself felt a lump rising in her throat.

"Oh, they mustn't do that!" she protested.

But, even as she spoke, Pat knew that the hounds would not distinguish between one fox and another.

"If I don't find him before they move off," said Celia wretchedly, "I shall go crazy—"

Pat, frowning, biting her lips, wondered what on earth could be done, and glanced at the M.F.H. with an idea of making some appeal to him. As she did so, she saw the man in the corduroy trousers approach him again, and then turn aside to enter a shabby car.

Of a sudden something jumped in Pat's mind. She turned to Celia, and took her arm.

"Your fox—it's in the shed beyond the old withered oak," she cried. "That man stole it. My golly! I see it now—I understand what he meant."

Celia went limp for a moment.

"But that's miles away," she cried. "Three miles—"

"Never mind how far it is," said Pat, in determined tones. "We've got to get to it before the hounds do, before that man lets your fox free."

And Pat turned, took Celia's arm, and ran her towards where the taxicab still waited.

### ROUGH-RIDING FOR PAT!

"NO, miss. I can't do it. Can't turn till they've moved off," said the man. "And I know the shed you mean. It's a good way from the road, over the ridge. I couldn't take my taxi there."

Pat's hopes were dashed as soon as they had risen, for if the taxi could not take her, she had no other means of transport, and it was quite obvious that she could not run three miles before the hunt caught her.

"A horse?" asked Celia.

"A horse! I'm afraid I'm not much of a rider," demurred Pat. "And I'm not in riding kit. I'd fall at the first fence. A bike perhaps—"

There were several cyclists standing near, watching, and Pat weighed up the possibility of hiring a cycle for the rest of the afternoon. But even cycling would not be fast enough.

"A motor-bike?" she mused.

There were several youths with motor-cycles who had come to see the fun, and Pat knew then that she had to invoke their aid.

"Excuse my butting in," she said to a couple of them, smiling as she interrupted their comments on the meet. "But I am a reporter on the 'Gazette.' I wonder if you could help me."

The two lads brightened at once.

"Reporter?" said one, with a ginger mop of hair. "What-ho! Want to follow the hounds?"

"I want to get ahead of them," said Pat, thinking it unwise to tell the whole story. "I want to be first with the news; and your two bikes look terrifically fast."

She knew that a little flattery would help just now!

"Oh, mine will do eighty!" said the ginger-haired lad.

"Downhill," scoffed the other, a short, wiry chap. "Why, I passed you the other day at seventy-two—"

"I was coasting—"

"Then you're both pretty clever riders," said Pat solemnly. "Can you take me and my friend to the shed near the old oak?"

There was a slight argument as to where it was, and how to get there, but they agreed instantly to give Pat and Celia lifts. The idea of taking part in a news scoop appealed to them, and more especially the prospect of having their names and photographs in the "Gazette."

"Hop on," they said together.

The motor-cycle engines started with mighty roaring that caused the M.F.H. to dismount again, and brought a volley of angry abuse from men and hounds.

But the motor-cyclists were thick-skinned, and grinning, they toddled their way through the throng.

Pat, looking back, made quick mental notes in case she had missed anything of the start. Pink jackets, women in black—spanking shining horses, the baying, liver-and-white hounds, the velvet-capped huntsmen.

It made a grand, colourful picture, and the "Gazette" photographer was clicking his camera merrily. But soon there would be the thunder of galloping hoofs, the sound of the horn; the hounds in full cry—

Away went the motor-cycles, taking the road, which was inevitably longer than the cross-country route that the hunt would follow.

Never had Pat travelled so fast on a motor-cycle in her life. The wind screamed past. She said "slower" a dozen times, but had to swallow her own words, wind and grit.

The exhausts shattered the air, and the riders, crouching low, were trying to live up to their names.

"Oh, g-gig-golly!" gasped Pat, as the machine leaped a hump across the road, and settled down again a second before she said it. For a moment she had been sitting on nothing—and then on a seat that seemed to kick her like a mule.

Which way to lean on the bends she was not quite sure, but she soon found out, by nearly coming off at one. Then grimly she leaned inwards as the hurtling sports-machine clipped past bends at sixty-five miles an hour.

A screech of brakes; the slithering of the rear tyre; a snaky movement that sent Pat's heart into her mouth, and the machine was stopped.

"We're here," yelled the ginger lad.

"Good, good, good!" said Pat.

"I think so, anyway," added the ginger one, yelling because he was half-deafened by his own exhaust.

"I hope so," said Pat fervently.

The other machine slithered up with locked wheels, stopping—in accordance with a point of honour—just ahead of his rival.

"Beat you to it," said Ginger, grinning.

Celia dismounted, looking shaky, glanced about her, and then pointed across the field.

"There's the shed!" she exclaimed.

It was a mile away over the field, and Pat, standing on the near-by gate, could see the hounds in the distance, and the pink jackets of the men.

"Oh golly—touch and go!" she gasped. "The gate's locked."

Ginger examined the lock, and found a long-handled spanner. Using full leverage, he snapped the chain and opened the gate.

"Where are you making for? That shed?" he asked.

"Yes—can the bike go over the field?" asked Pat.

"Yes—easy."

Pat remounted, and with Celia in position, too, the machines moved off. The ground was rough, and the machines danced and jumped, but the two boys, determined to make a race of it, grimly held their speed.

Pat banged and bumped, tried to yell warning as she saw a ridge ahead. But Ginger saw it, too, and slowed to little more than walking speed.

The machine leaped the bump; Pat rose, and sank again just a moment after the machine moved on. With a sensation of horror she knew she was off.

Down she went, over and over on the soft, muddy ground. But Ginger, unaware of the mishap, seeing level ground ahead, shot forward.

When Pat, muddy and bruised, picked herself up, she saw Celia flat on the ground twenty yards ahead. Running to her, she heaved a mighty sigh of relief as the girl rose unhurt, save for mud and a bruise or two.

"Oh, the chumps!" said Pat. "And hark! The hounds—"

The hounds were coming! The horn could be heard.

"Tally-ho!"

But now both Ginger and his friend had come to grief, too, the motor-cycles careering on until they collapsed like their owners.

"Oh, oh—only half a mile, and we can't do it!" cried Celia in distress, as she ran forward as hard as she could go.

The hunt was coming on, horses clearing hedges in perfect rhythm, at full gallop, hounds stretching themselves.

And now Pat pointed to an old car that had stopped in the lane half a mile away across the field.

"There's the man. He's going to free Nix."

A horse grazing in the field was cantering round, excited by the hounds' war-cry, and Pat, seeing him approach, ran in his path, stretching her arms.

The horse slowed. He was a quiet old fellow, but he could canter faster than Pat could run.

"Come on, Celia!" she cried.

At the third spring she was across his back, and swung a leg over; Celia, helped by Pat, followed, and the horse was patted to life.

Pat clung on. She had never ridden bare-back before, and now she did not feel that she would be able to do so for long. Bounced and jolted and bumped though she was, however, she was thrilled by the hope of success.

"Two hundred yards only—" she called.

But now the man in corduroys was at the shed door.

The two girls flung themselves from the horse, rolling over, not caring now how much more muddy they got; and Celia sprang at the man.

"Don't unlock that door!" she cried in fury. "That fox in there is mine, you thief. You stole him!"

The man, quite startled, wheeled, his eyes wide.

"What's that? What's that?" he said, unhitching the padlock.

Pat knew that if there were a struggle he was a match for them both. And once the fox was out, it was surely doomed. If the man could hold them, he could prevent their capturing the fox; and as soon as the door was opened it would run.

Pat, thinking quickly, stepped behind him as he faced Celia, and snatching the brim of his hat in both hands, pulled it down over his eyes.

The man's hands went up instinctively to raise his hat, and Pat pulled the door ajar, hearing the whine of the imprisoned Nix, whose cold snout peeped through.

Hearing the hounds, he was quaking and quivering, his instincts stirred, despite the year he had spent in a friendly home.

"Oh, Nix," said Celia shakily, her eyes glistening. "I've got you."

Next moment she stumbled, as the man, pushing aside Pat, hauled the door wide. Nix, though licking at his mistress' hand, suddenly rushed past her. For the hounds were very near now, their cry clear and threatening.

Out he ran, just as the boys arrived on their motor-cycles.

"Quick—after him!" screamed Celia, and flung herself on to the pillion of the machine she had ridden before.

And as the machine roared off after Nix, the hounds swept into the next field.

"About six thousand revolutions per minute," yelled Ginger, in an aggrieved tone.

"How lovely! Buck up!" said Pat.

The motor-cycle shot away, and Pat clung on, shutting her eyes and gritting her teeth. She only opened her eyes once, to look back at the shed where the hounds had gathered in frenzied excitement, while in the midst of them the man in corduroy trousers was waving his arms and shouting at the M.F.H., and pointing after the motor-cyclists.

"They'll be after us in a minute," muttered Pat. "And if Celia hasn't caught Nix—if he's gone to earth—Oh golly!"

It would not be long before the hounds were persuaded to leave the shed; and despite the motor-cycle fumes, they still might pick up the trail; but Pat, now suffering from some reaction from her excitement, wondered if the M.F.H. had recognised her.

What would her editor say? Would he approve of this? Suppose she were reported by the master?

Pat Lovell began to see that her impulsive eagerness to help Celia and Nix might not end quite so well as she

Ginger made it, quite glad to be on the road again, and he pulled up at a line of shops in the small village.

First of all Pat put through a telephone call to the "Gazette" office, to give a hurried resume of her notes for the evening edition, with a list of those attending, and an account of the hounds halting at the shed—as though there were a fox there.

"Get in at the finish if you can," said the editor, over the phone. "This hunting business has brought a lot of letters. Some say we oughtn't to report the meet; but we'll report it. There's nothing much else of local note, so I want a good story."

"You shall have it," said Pat.

From the telephone box she went to a butcher's shop, ordering liver and pieces of the cheapest quality. She was given a bagful that was almost as much as she could carry.

That done, she bought an indelible pencil at the stationery shop, and rejoined Ginger.

"Finished?" he asked, rather coldly. "Sure you are a reporter, and not just cadging a lift for the thrill of it?"

"Certain on both counts," smiled Pat, and showed him her Press card.



"Your pet fox!" Pat gasped. "It must be in that shed beyond the old withered oak. And we've got to get it before that man lets it free!"

## HOAXING THE HUNT

PAT snatched at Ginger's arm.

"Stay. Make as much noise and scent with that fearful engine as you can," she shouted.

"What! It'll put the hounds off the scent," he protested.

"Does moving that lever make the engine make more noise?" asked Pat, pointing to a lever on the handlebars.

"That's right, but—"

Ginger's arguments were drowned: for Pat pushed the lever hard, and the whole machine shook; the earth shook; the air was filled with ear-shattering sounds that drowned even the hounds' cry, while fumes saturated the sweet country air with the savour of burning oil.

The hounds, panting into range, recoiled; the horses shied, and two riders dismounted unintentionally. Then only did Pat mount the pillion.

"Now catch the others if your machine is fast enough," she said.

"Might have bust my engine," grumbled Ginger. "Do you know how many revs it was doing then?"

"Three million. Jolly good," said Pat. "Fine engine. Buck up!"

had thought. For the M.F.H. was a man of great importance in the district, and so were the other followers of hounds.

The editor might not appreciate the fact that his paper was to be publicly burned, and although he had told Pat that he personally agreed with those who had written letters protesting against the sport of fox-hunting, he was not sure that it was wise to appear one-sided.

That was why he had wanted the M.F.H. interviewed.

"Mmm!" mused Pat, as she bounced on the motor-cycle pillion. "Not so funny if he recognised me."

As representative of the "Gazette," anything that she did would be counted as an official action of the paper; and she was quite, quite sure that her editor would not want it stated that the "Gazette" had ruined the meet.

"Just a minute!" said Pat, as Ginger, having lost his friend's trail, slowed. "Is there a village near here?"

"Half a mile away."  
"Good! Can you make it?"

"Report to the 'Gazette' office directly you leave me, and a photographer will take your picture."

"Will he? Gosh!" said Ginger, smirking. "Front page?"

"Now, quick as you can, to that third field!" urged Pat. "And we'd better stop at that cottage on the way to borrow a spade. Only mum's the word, Ginger. Word of honour, or no front-page picture!"

"Honour bright!" said the ginger-haired one. "But my name's not Ginger; it's Charlie."

Meanwhile, Celia and the other boy were trailing Nix. It was no easy task, for, although they could better his speed, he weaved in an amazing manner, and went amongst the undergrowth and trees.

It was a mile farther on that they caught him on a straight stretch, tongue lolling, and Celia called to him excitedly. Out of sound of the hounds' cry, he went to her, and she gathered him in her arms.

"Please, please be a brick, and take me to my home. It's only about a mile and a half from here," she begged

the boy. "This fox is my pet. I've had him for a year."

"Have you really? Gosh, what do you feed him on? Does he bite?"

And the boy, eager to know what it was like to have a fox for a pet, gladly gave her a lift home.

But as Celia lived in a cottage that abutted open fields, her troubles were not over; for as her father had warned her, the hounds might scent the fox, and gather round the house.

"I'll lock him in," said Celia. "They'll never get him now."

Two miles away the hounds were again in full cry, the hunt well on the move. And in the van rode the M.F.H., angry and resentful.

"It was that girl reporter, was it?" he glowered to the man riding beside him. "I'll go and see her editor. That girl will be sacked before she's a day older. It's monstrous!"

"Which way?" asked the other, as the hounds seemed to hesitate.

The M.F.H. pointed towards the distant fields, where Celia's cottage stood. For that was the way that the fox would go.

It was not cruelty that urged him on; for he did not consider fox-hunting cruel. In his opinion foxes were no better than rats, and should be hunted and destroyed. He would have refused to believe that anyone could make a pet of a fox. And, odd though it sounded to many other people, he sincerely believed that a fox preferred the chance of running from pursuers to being shot—that, at least, the hunt gave him a chance of life, according to his cunning and speed. The gunshot gave him none.

So, with no scruples, he steered the hounds to the right course, and they presently picked up the scent, filling the air with their cries.

But a mile farther on the air was charged with the fumes of the motor-cycles, and presently the hounds swung sideways, and, noses to the ground, quickened their pace.

"Gone to earth!" came a shout.

And sure enough the excited hounds, baying and scratching with their paws, gathered about a burrow in the ground.

A cheer rose from the hunt, and men and women dismounted to cluster round, while spades were brought forward.

There were one or two spectators, farm labourers, motorists from the near-by road, and one reporter, Pat Lovell.

Notebook in hand, Pat approached, and met the M.F.H.'s eye.

"Ha! Thought you'd spoil our sport, eh?" he said grimly.

"Oh, no! You've had a lovely ride, surely?" said Pat.

"Lovely ride! We've run the fox to earth," said the M.F.H. "And as a reporter, you can stay and watch. Squeamish, eh?"

"Not at all," said Pat. "We wish to give a full report."

"Oh, you do; then you can stay here and report!" said the M.F.H. grimly.

"I'll report everything that happens," said Pat.

"If that's a promise—good!" he said.

An excited yell came now. "The fox!"

A burrowing hound drew out his head, and with growls the others rushed to seize the trophy.

But it was not a fox that came out, but a large bag of meat, and with it a sheet of plain paper, which a huntsman managed to get hold of.

"Meat!" gasped the M.F.H. "Liver—scrap—"

## Your Editor's Corner



"Girls' Crystal" Office,  
The Fleetway House,  
Farringdon Street,  
London, E.C.4.

MY DEAR READERS,—Don't you just adore circuses?

I went to one this year, and saw lots of you there, thoroughly enjoying your young selves. And I couldn't help wondering which item of the programme you were enjoying most.

There were the jugglers, the clowns, and the daring bareback riders. But I expect that, like me, you were most excited when you saw the animals come in the ring.

The sea-lions always make me roar with laughter, and I believe it is true that they like performing.

And I think they well deserve the fish they each get at the end of their turn, don't you?

Then didn't you simply hoot with laughter at the dog's football match? Full marks to their clever trainer for this. I've never seen keener footballers than these dogs—even at the Cup Finals. And though there were quite a few little passes that might have been called "fouls" if the players had been human, I don't think I ever enjoyed a game more.

As for the goalkeeper—a sturdy bulldog—I take off my hat to him. I cannot help feeling that he would be worth an easy £100 or so in transfer fee!

The elephants certainly looked as if they were having a jolly good time, too—especially the baby one who was clowning about for most of the act.

But for sheer thrills, I think there is nothing quite like the high-wire acts, when you have to crane your neck to look right to the top of the tent to watch the trapeze artistes swing and curve with such ease and grace.

As a small boy, I always longed to swing on a trapeze—but, alas, that ambition was never realised!

### A THRILL FOR PAT!

But Pat Lovell, our cheery young girl reporter, finds herself doing just that in the complete story which features her next Saturday. Don't miss "Pat's Trapeze Thrill!"—you'll revel in it.

"Mystery at the Snowbound House!" is the intriguing title of the complete tale of Noel Raymond, the popular young detective—a story which is full of baffling surprises.

Another complete story in which Kaye of the Kennels and her wonderful dogs play a big part will also appear, as well as instalments of our three splendid serials.

So that makes six grand stories in all. Mind you order your GIRLS' CRYSTAL in advance to make sure of reading them all!

Your sincere friend,

YOUR EDITOR

"In a bag—"

"It's a hoax!"

"May I see what's written on the paper, to report it?" asked Pat politely.

The M.F.H., his face bright red, crumpled the paper; but all the same Pat jotted down the message on it:

"The End of the Meat."

"Is that the right way to spell meet?" she asked a huntsman; but he did not reply.

The hounds had their fill. It was a joyful, unexpected meal, and they were hungry. Naturally, after it, they would not feel like more hunting; but they had had a good run, and were quite happy.

The hunt had had a good run, too, but did not seem quite so happy. At least, the M.F.H. did not.

"A hoax—a hoax!" he said, through his teeth. "I'll find out who did this! I—By gosh!"

He looked about him for Pat; but Pat had slipped away to the road; where Ginger waited, and in record time reached the office with the news.

IT was a good story, fit to be sent to the London papers. But there was another story, too—that of Celia and her pet fox, Nix, which had been rescued from the hunt with the aid of daring boy motor-cyclists.

Ginger and his pal, with machines gleaming and shining, reported at the "Gazette" office with fixed broad grins that came out well in the photographs. And gladly they gave a brief account of their chase.

Both youthful motor-cyclists rushed to buy a copy of the "Gazette" when it came out that evening. They didn't bother to look at the political news that splashed the front page, or the story about the film star who was going to marry again, or the news of a big fire in London.

Ginger and his pal flicked over the pages until they came across their own photographs, and the account of the hunt. Then they clapped each other on the shoulders in glee as they read about the part they'd played.

As a protest meeting against fox-hunting had been organised in the town hall, and the matter of Nix was raised, the M.F.H. decided to deny that the tame fox had been chased, and exonerated himself from any blame in the matter of the pet being set free.

As to the hoax, it brought a bagful of delighted letters to the paper, and made the editor himself roar with laughter.

"If only it wouldn't get the perpetrator into a scrape, I'd like to find out who played that clever little hoax," he said to Pat.

"Yes," smiled Pat. "But don't you think it would be better to let it remain a mystery?"

"Yes, yes," nodded the editor. "We don't want to get mixed up in it too much. In reporting it, we only did our duty to the public."

"Quite," said Pat solemnly. "But it was a bit of luck, wasn't it?"

And on the whole, it was best to let the editor think that it was; but Celia, who knew better, overwhelmed Pat with gratitude, and Nix, although he may not have understood, licked her hand.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

Don't miss Elizabeth Chester's grand story, featuring Pat, the cheery girl reporter, that appears in next Friday's GIRLS' CRYSTAL. Order your copy as soon as possible.

# Their Quest AT THE Winter Sports



By DAPHNE GRAYSON

## THE CHUMS' DECISION

**D**OREEN CARSDALE and Jean Hinton had been having a wonderful time at St. Lauritz, in Switzerland, with Doreen's Aunt Elizabeth.

There they met Sylvia Drake, who was staying with Mr. and Mrs. Ross and their daughter Irma. Though the Rosses said that Sylvia was their ward, the chums discovered that they were not legally her guardians at all. The Rosses soon showed themselves to be Sylvia's enemies.

Sylvia's cousin, Douglas, was hiding from the police in the lonely Mill Grimelle. He told Sylvia that it was vital for her to win the St. Lauritz skating championships; and Sylvia did win the first part of them, despite the Rosses' interference.

Then Mr. Ross reappeared. He said that he knew where Douglas Drake was hiding—and unless Sylvia withdrew from the championships he would inform the police!

**W**ITH eyes that had suddenly become wide and agonised, Sylvia stared back at Mr. Stephen Ross.

"Well, what is it to be?" he asked harshly. "You've got your choice—now make up your mind!"

Sylvia's lips quivered, and with a despairing cry she turned to Doreen.

"Oh, Doreen, what am I to do?" she appealed.

"I'm asking you, not her!" Stephen Ross snapped. "This is your affair—and ours!"

"And ours!" Doreen cut in curtly. "But your bluster doesn't frighten me. I know you're only bluffing!"

"Bluffing, am I? I'll soon show you! Unless Sylvia does as I ask, her cousin will go to prison!"

"Where is he hiding?" Doreen flashed.

The man's eyes narrowed. "I know, right enough, and if Sylvia isn't sensible, I'll prove it! Come on, now, which is it to be? Is Sylvia going to withdraw from the skating championship, or is her cousin to be arrested?"

Again Sylvia turned a haggard face to Doreen. More and more she had come to rely on this friend of hers, and

now in this dreadful situation she felt incapable of coming to a decision.

Doreen always seemed to know what to do for the best. But for once Doreen was shaking her head; her shoulders seemed to droop suddenly in despair, as if she knew Mr. Ross held the whiphand.

"Oh, Sylvia," she groaned, "we're helpless! If Mr. Ross knows Douglas is hiding at that chalet in the mountains—"

Sylvia stared in amazement at her friend. Jean gave a gasp. But Doreen's gaze was fastened on Mr. Ross—she saw the look of triumph that flamed into his eyes.

"I'm glad you realise you're helpless," he said. "Sylvia, I shall keep my threat. You can save your cousin from disgrace and prison. You've only to come with me now and withdraw your name from the championship—"

He broke off. For suddenly Doreen was laughing—laughing defiantly in his face.

"Sylvia will do nothing of the sort!" she cried. "Sylvia will not withdraw from the skating championship. You've been cunning, Mr. Ross, but not quite cunning enough. We're taking no notice of your beastly ultimatum! You're bluffing, and we know it!"

And she laughed again. Deliberately she had set the trap, and Stephen Ross had fallen into it. He didn't know where Douglas Drake was hiding—he couldn't know, otherwise he would have given the lie to Doreen's statement that the hunted man had taken refuge in the secret chalet in the mountains.

From the moment Mr. Ross had first made his demand Doreen had suspected

---

Eagerly the chums set off to the antique shop. They felt sure that among its treasures was a cuckoo clock which contained an all-important secret. But—unfortunately, others were after that secret as well!

---

he was bluffing. Now she knew it for a certainty.

The man's face suffused with rage.

"I tell you I'm not bluffing—"

Doreen turned to Sylvia.

"Give him your answer!" she cried. Sylvia, too, was laughing now. Relief mingled with admiration shone in her eyes. Only too clearly she had seen how Doreen had tricked him and exposed his bluff.

"Doreen's right," she said. "I refuse to withdraw from the championship!"

"You fool!" Mr. Ross shouted furiously. "You're throwing away your cousin's freedom. I shall keep my threat. I give you one more chance."

"The answer is still no!" Sylvia told him grimly.

"Very well!" The words were ground out. "Sylvia, you refuse my offer—then your cousin must suffer! I shall go to the police now. He will be under arrest within an hour—and you could have saved him!"

Desperately he was still bluffing, hoping that even now one of the girls might inadvertently play into his hands.

"Good-afternoon!" Doreen said coolly. "Come on, Sylvia—let's get back to the lake. Time for you to do some more practice if you're going to win the championship!"

Scowling and furious, Stephen Ross strode away. Doreen chuckled. But momentarily Sylvia looked anxious.

"Doreen, you're sure he was bluffing?" she asked, her former fears returning. "He won't be able to have Douglas arrested?"

"I'm positive," Doreen told her friend. "It was just a trick on his part. He was hoping you'd fall for it and withdraw from the championship. Or if you didn't, he thought that one of us might reveal where your cousin was hiding, in which case he could then have enforced his ultimatum."

"But Irma was at the mill—we saw her there."

"Perhaps they suspected Douglas might be there, but they obviously don't know for certain. And it is just as obvious that Douglas won't show

himself. Now, stop worrying, Sylvia." Doreen added, with a reassuring smile. "Hallo, here's Tony beckoning us, and he looks excited about something. Let's go."

Tony Semers was excited when they rejoined him on the lake. Eagerly he grabbed at Sylvia's arm.

"You're wanted," he said cheerfully.

"And put on your prettiest smile."

"What's up?" Doreen inquired.

"Photographers!" Tony said.

"Hordes of them from all the local newspapers. They want pictures of the future skating champion of St. Lauritz. Come on, Sylvia!"

The sparkle returned to Sylvia's eyes as, a few moments later, she found herself facing a battery of cameras.

"And now I'd like one taken with my friends," Sylvia said when she had been snapped.

The photographers were delighted to oblige. So with Sylvia in the centre of the group, and Doreen and Jean, and Tony and Jack Huntley ranged on either side of her, the picture was taken.

"Jolly good!" Tony grinned. "We'll have to look out for our picture in the newspapers to-morrow."

"Rather!" Doreen laughed. "And now I think we'll be getting back to the hotel. Sylvia was going to put in some practice to-day, but she looks a little tired."

"O.K.!" Tony said. "See you later in the recreation-room, if you're agreeable."

"We'll be there," Doreen promised. So back to the Crestina the girls went, and up to their room. They were all three sharing it, now that Aunt Elizabeth had taken Sylvia under her wing.

"Close the door," Doreen said quietly as they entered. "I just want to have a little chat."

"Doreen, what about?" Sylvia asked in quick anxiety, seeing the rather serious expression on her friend's face.

"Oh, nothing to get worried about," Doreen smiled. "But I've been thinking. The Rosses are obviously getting desperate. The championship is on Saturday—the day after to-morrow. We must warn your cousin to be extra cautious. If they should find out that he's hiding at the mill, then they can use that as a lever to get you out of the championships. We were going to see him to-night in any case, but now I suggest we go before dinner. It'll be dark then, and no one will see us."

"Yes, yes!" Sylvia was at once excited. "Once we do see him then he'll be able to tell us everything. And if we could only help him find the proof of his innocence—"

"That's another reason why we should go earlier," Doreen nodded. "The sooner it's found the better. He says it's in the mill somewhere— What was that?" she added, spinning round, and in a flash had whipped open the door.

No one was outside. The corridor was deserted. Doreen gave a sigh of relief.

"False alarm," she declared. "Thought I heard something, but I couldn't have done. My hat, we've got to go carefully now, girls. The Rosses mustn't suspect a thing. We'll have to make sure they don't follow us to the mill. Right." She smiled again. "Well, that's that. We'll just tivate ourselves, and then go downstairs again."

Ten minutes later the three girls went out of the room. Their footsteps died down the corridor.

And two minutes later there came a faint scraping sound in the room.

The big wardrobe, standing close against the wall, moved a few inches. From behind it emerged the figure of a woman.

It was Mrs. Ross!

Crossing to the door, she opened it and peered out cautiously. A moment later she was hurrying agitatedly down the corridor.

### HER COUSIN IN DANGER!

"CANNON! Good shot, Doreen!"

Tony Semers applauded.

"Now pocket the red!"

"But it looks miles away!"

Doreen said, peering down the length of the billiards table. "Well, here goes—"

She pushed the cue, and her ball just touched the red, but that was all.

"Hard luck," grinned Tony. "But you're coming on fine. That's two more points. Mark them up, Jack! Your shot now, Jean!"

The three girls were being initiated into the mysteries of billiards in the cosy recreation-room at the Crestina.

Tony was no youthful prodigy at the game, but he'd had breaks of twenty to his credit and he had offered to take on the three girls single-handed, while Jack Huntley scored.

So far the scores were fairly level, for while Tony had run up a break of fifteen soon after the start, Doreen & Co. had had beginners' luck, fluking a number of points and bringing chorles of delight from Jack.

"It's awfully fascinating," Doreen said, as she watched Jean make a shot.

"There, what's that count?"

Tony gave an incredulous gasp, his eyes almost popping from his head.

"My hat, that's five points!"

"Ten!" shrieked Jack, and almost doubled up with laughter.

For Jean, striking more or less blindly at the ball, had scored first what was known as a cannon. That perhaps had been intended theoretically, even if Jean herself had not expected it to work out in practice.

But then all three balls, whizzing across the table in all directions, had one by one sunk into the pockets. Jean, with a phenomenal fluke, had cleared the table!

"Oh, bravo!" cried Doreen triumphantly.

"My hat!" Tony was still staring blankly at the table. "Here, I can't compete against this—"

"Mam'selle Drake! Mam'selle Drake!" shouted a voice at that moment, and into the recreation-room came a diminutive, uniformed page-boy.

"Is Mam'selle Drake here, please?"

Sylvia, with a little gasp of surprise, swung round.

"Yes, here I am," she called.

The boy came trotting up to her.

"You are wanted on the telephone, mam'selle," he said, beaming round at the group as if he hoped they had noticed how good his English was.

"Goodness, I wonder who it can be?" Sylvia exclaimed, staring at Doreen.

"A gentleman, mam'selle," the boy informed her. "He would give no name, but said it was urgent!"

"My hat!" Sylvia looked excited suddenly. "Surely it can't be—"

"Come on. Answer the phone and you'll soon know," Doreen cried, and the same thought had occurred to her.

Could it be Douglas Drake who had telephoned?

Together Doreen and Sylvia hurried

away, leaving Jean to make her next shot.

They reached the telephone cabinet.

"Squeeze in with me, Doreen," Sylvia said excitedly, and picked up the receiver. "Hallo!"

"Is that you, Sylvia?" rasped a harsh voice over the wire.

Sylvia's face fell.

"It's Mr. Ross," she said, turning.

Doreen's eyes gleamed.

"What's he want?"

"Listen," went on the voice of Stephen Ross. "I'm giving you one last chance. I tell you I know where your cousin is. If you don't withdraw—"

"I refuse!"

And slam! went the receiver as Sylvia rammed it back on to its hook.

"Good girl!" Doreen approved.

"Still trying to bluff you, eh? We'll just finish our game with the boys, and then we'll make a start for the mill. It's getting dark already."

Sylvia nodded eagerly. They went back to the recreation-room. Jean had failed to add to her score, and now it was Sylvia's turn.

The game proceeded merrily, with the girls still fluking and piling up points, until Tony ruefully had to admit defeat.

"I've never known such luck!" he expostulated. "Stop grinning, Jack! All right, you can crow, girls! Look here, I'll take you on at table tennis—"

"Another time," Doreen told him.

"Sorry, but we've got to go."

"Shame!"

"But we'll see you at the dance to-night."

"Good egg!"

Doreen & Co. hurried away. Up to their room they raced. Warm though it was during the day at St. Lauritz, the nights were bitterly cold, and for their trip to the Mill Grinnelle they would need their thickest coats.

Doreen switched on the light as she burst into the room, was moving across to the wardrobe, when suddenly she stopped and stooped.

"Hallo! Whose hanky is this?" she asked, retrieving the tiny square of cambric she had seen lying on the floor.

But even as she was about to examine it, Sylvia suddenly snatched it away.

"Great Scott!"

"Why, is it yours?" Doreen asked.

But Sylvia's face had gone pale. She was staring fixedly at the little green hanky.

"No. But look at these initials in the corner!"

"A. R.——" Doreen began.

"Agnes Ross," Sylvia said grimly.

"Golly, then what's it doing in here?" Doreen's gaze swept round the room; came to rest on the wardrobe.

"That's been moved!" she cried.

"Moved? But why—what—"

"Golly!" Doreen exclaimed; and now there was consternation in her voice.

"Mrs. Ross has been in here!"

"But there was nothing she could take," Jean said. "Nothing that would be any good to her."

"Don't you see? She might have been hiding behind that wardrobe when we were talking. She might have heard everything we said."

"You mean she heard us talking about Douglas, and the mill?"

"Yes."

Sylvia felt herself tremble.

"Then she'd know where he's hiding. She could have told Mr. Ross before he phoned me. He wasn't bluffing—"

Doreen made a dive for the wardrobe, opened it, and grabbed feverishly for her coat.

"Come on!" she cried. "We've got to race to the mill. We must warn Douglas—"

"Oh, I shouldn't have refused to withdraw from the championship!" Sylvia cried, an agonised light in her eyes. "The Rosses will tell the police! Douglas will be arrested!"

"Hurry! We may be in time yet!" Doreen said frantically. "We've got to be in time. Perhaps it's a false alarm. Perhaps we're mistaken."

But there was a terrible doubt in her mind—in all their minds.

Out of the room they rushed, scrambling into their outer clothes as they flew down the stairs.

Down the snowy drive they tore, and, hailing a passing sleigh, they sped to the old water-mill. As they neared their destination, Doreen gave a sudden cry:

"Look! There's a sleigh ahead of us! It's pulled up at the side of the road!"

Her chums stared apprehensively as they saw that the sleigh had halted by the path leading to the mill.

"What's it doing there?" Sylvia gasped. "Who—"

Her voice trailed away as she saw figures moving over the snow—coming from the direction of the old water-mill. One of them was her cousin, and on either side of him marched two men, who gripped his arms. Two men in the uniform of the Swiss police!

"We're too late!" Sylvia cried tragically. "Douglas—he's been arrested!"

### THE MYSTERY VERSE

**D**OREEN'S brain reeled under the shock of this blow. Suddenly stricken silent, she stared across the moon-bathed snow towards those approaching figures.

Douglas Drake arrested! All his efforts—and their efforts, too—to evade capture had been in vain.

Doreen's thoughts raced. She was still convinced that Mr. Ross had been bluffing when first he had delivered that ultimatum to Sylvia. But very evidently he had known that second time when he had telephoned to the Crestina—and they had hung up on him before he could tell them that he held the trump card.

The same thought must have occurred to Sylvia in the same moment. A groan broke from her lips. Her face was pitifully pale. She was trembling from head to foot.

"It's my fault—my fault!" she cried. "I could have saved him!"

"Mine, if it comes to that," Doreen said huskily, finding her voice at last.

"I persuaded you, Sylvia. But we weren't to know. We couldn't know that Mrs. Ross had spied on us. The cunning rotters! But—but, Sylvia, there's still one hope. Perhaps Douglas has found that proof of his innocence."

"Oh, yes! Yes, there's that!" Sylvia cried. "And if he hasn't, then we'll find it for him. Somehow we'll find it, even if it means searching night and day. But look; he's seen us!"

Now Douglas and his escort of gendarmes had reached the road. The girls' sleigh raced up at almost the same moment. Swiftly they piled out, and ran towards him.

"Douglas!" Sylvia cried.

They saw him smile. His face was haggard, but there seemed to be a curious brightness in his eyes as he stared back at the girls. He opened his mouth to speak, but instantly one of the gendarmes rapped out something in French. Then he was being hustled into the waiting sleigh.

"Douglas," Sylvia panted again, "have you found—"

But then she found herself confronted by the second gendarme. He held out his arms, barring the girls' way as they would have rushed towards Douglas.

"Stand back!" he commanded. "You cannot speak to the prisoner."

"But I must! He's my cousin! Oh, let me pass!"

"No!"

There was a jingle of harness. Already the sleigh was on the move, was swinging round in the road. For a moment longer the gendarme held back the girls, and then, as the sleigh swished past, he took a running leap and boarded it.

Helplessly Doreen & Co. stood in the middle of the road. They saw Douglas turn. He had one arm free now, and he raised it over the back of the sleigh.

Then suddenly Doreen tensed, her eyes widening.

For as Douglas waved his hand, she saw something small and white drop from it, and fall to the snow.

very neat, and in a different style from the word above it.

"Mid 'treasures' old, 'treasures' rare,

To be sold, search you there.  
Time passes swiftly, night and day,  
A feathered friend chirps the hours away.

Something missing rhymes with late,  
A little thought decides your fate!"

"But—but—" Sylvia broke the silence that had fallen over the three girls after reading that amazing verse.

"Oh goodness, what's it all mean?" Doreen's brow puckered. Bewilderedly she stared at the piece of paper.

Then suddenly her eyes began to gleam. "I think I've got it!" she cried. "You mean you can understand it all?"

"No; I'm not a magician! But it's a clue—a clue to the whereabouts of that proof your cousin is looking for!"

"But—just how?"  
"It's just guesswork, of course,"



"You are wanted on the telephone, mam'selle," said the small page-boy. Sylvia looked startled. Could the call be from her fugitive cousin?

"Golly, what was that?" she exclaimed. "No, wait until the sleigh is out of sight!"

Tingling, suddenly excited, they waited. The sleigh vanished round a bend, and in the same moment all three girls were racing forward.

"Here it is!"

Doreen had had her eyes riveted on the spot where she had seen that small object fall. Now she jerked to a standstill, dived a hand downwards. It was a crumpled piece of paper she picked up.

"It must be a message—from Douglas!" Sylvia gasped excitedly. "What's it say?"

With trembling eagerness, Doreen was smoothing out the paper.

"Yes, there's some writing— Oh, great Scott!" And she gave a gasp, stared in utter amazement.

Sylvia and Jean, on either side of her, blinked incredulously.

The sheet of paper was faded and yellow, as if it had been lying in a dark place for some considerable time. Scrawled across the top of it, in pencil, was one word: "Find," while below that was some more writing, in ink,

Doreen said excitedly. "But don't you think your cousin might just have found this piece of paper? He knew it was a clue. Then he was arrested. But seeing us he saw that there was still hope. As he was being hustled into the sleigh, with the gendarmes more intent on keeping us back, he managed to write that one word 'find' across the top. He knew we'd see him drop the paper, and now he's hoping that we'll be able to decipher it and find the proof he needs!"

Sylvia gripped her friend's arm. "I believe you're right!" she exclaimed. "But the verse—it's so meaningless. How can it possibly connect up with something that will prove Douglas' innocence?"

"That's what we've got to find out!" Doreen said grimly. "And somehow we'll do it. Here, let's go along and see Madame Marie. We must tell her about Douglas, for one thing, and perhaps she can help us."

But on reaching the Frenchwoman's little cabin near the mill, they discovered Madame Marie to be out. For a moment Doreen was nonplussed, then:

"Come on, back to the hotel!" she

cried. "We've got to get busy deciphering that message!"

They had told the sleigh driver to wait for them. On the way back to St. Lauritz they looked again and again at the piece of paper, desperately trying to make sense of that cryptic verse.

The more Doreen thought about it the more she was convinced that in those words was the key to the whereabouts of the proof that would clear Douglas Drake of the charges made against him.

But what was the key? It bewildered them, baffled them.

"Great Scott, it's hopeless!" Doreen muttered. "But it must make sense somehow—and we've got to find how!"

They reached the Crestina without having made the slightest progress in solving the verse. Awaiting them on the steps were Tony Semers and Jack Humbley.

"Sylvia, what do you say to asking the boys to help us?" Doreen asked abruptly. "They'll have to be told something of the truth, I'm afraid."

"Oh, anything—anything, so long as we can find out what it means!" Sylvia said at once.

Tony grinned. "What's this about wanting help?" he asked cheerfully. "Just say the word, and we're your slaves!"

"Are you any good at deciphering cryptic messages?" Doreen asked.

"Cryptic messages?" Tony stared, then chuckled. "Just my line! I was the code expert when we ran a secret society at school."

"It's serious, Tony—dreadfully serious," Doreen said. "A man's honour is at stake! Sylvia's cousin, in fact. We've got to prove his innocence of—of something, and we believe we've got a message which holds the vital clue. Let's go along to the lounge and we'll show you—"

"Yes, of course." Tony was looking startled. "Which reminds me, there's someone waiting to see you in the lounge—a queer old Frenchwoman who calls herself Madame Marie."

"She's here? Goodness, we went to see her!"

And Doreen rushed into the hotel and along to the lounge.

It was a very agitated and fearful Madame Marie who awaited them. She had been in St. Lauritz, she said, and she had seen Douglas being taken into the police station. Distractedly she wrung her hands. What could they do?

In a moment Doreen was telling her about the message, was showing it to her and the boys.

"Surely between us we can decipher it," Doreen said. "Let's sit at that table over in the corner there behind those palms."

They all sat round the table.

"Didn't you say that this proof was somewhere in the mill?" Doreen asked Madame Marie.

"Oui, mam'selle."

"Then that's a start." Doreen stared at the paper. "Now, treasures old, treasures rare! What the dickens can that mean? Why should 'treasures' be quoted? Rather suggests they're not really valuable. 'To be sold.' Oh goodness, where can selling things come in? 'Search you there'—that's more definite. Search in treasures old and rare—is there anything at the mill that could be called treasure?"

Madame Marie shook her head. "Practically everything at the mill was sold some time ago," she said. "One or two pieces of furniture were left, but the M'sieur Douglas and I have already searched in them."

"But everything else was sold?"

Doreen frowned. "Where were they sold?" she asked.

"To an antique dealer here in St. Lauritz."

Doreen gave a violent start.

"My hat! I wonder—"

"Gosh, that's it!" broke in Tony suddenly. "An antique shop—where they sell any old junk, some of it valuable, and some of it not!"

"Just what I was thinking!" Doreen said excitedly. "Yes, it would fit. Madame Marie, do you know the shop?"

"There is only one antique dealer in St. Lauritz!" the Frenchwoman replied, her eyes gleaming.

"Golly, we're getting on!" Doreen cried. "If we go there— But wait a moment. What have we got to look for? If a whole houseful of stuff was sold—"

"Let's work out the next bit!" Jack said. "Time passes swiftly—"

"And something about a 'feathered friend'—"

"A bird!" Doreen said swiftly.

"Yes, that's possible. 'But what's a bird got to do with time and something hidden'—"

"A stuffed bird!" Tony exclaimed, but then shook his head. "No! a stuffed bird could hardly chirp the hours away."

Desperately they racked their brains. Now the lounge was deserted. Everybody else had gone in to dinner. But still the six of them sat there, staring and staring at the piece of paper with its baffling words.

A silence fell over the room, broken only by the ticking of a clock. Then suddenly—

Cuckoo—cuckoo—cuckoo!

"Shut up, you!" muttered Tony, glaring round at the clock on the wall.

"My hat, eight o'clock!"

But suddenly Doreen gave a shout.

"Got it!" she cried. "A cuckoo clock!"

"You're right!" Tony whooped.

"That's it!"

On the wall of the lounge, the clock was still "cuckooing." But in doing so it had given Doreen inspiration—had suddenly brought home to her what those words in the message were meant to convey.

"Madame Marie, were there any cuckoo clocks at the mill?" she asked excitedly.

The woman nodded.

"There were two. Every house in Switzerland, as perhaps you know, possesses a cuckoo clock—"

"Then we've got it!" Doreen cried. "We've got to search in a cuckoo clock at the antique shop!"

"But there's this other bit about missing rhymes!" Jack put in, staring down at the paper.

"I don't see that that matters," Doreen pointed out. "We know what we've got to look for, and where to look for it. Where's the shop, Madame Marie?"

"Not far from here."

"Then come on!"

"But it will be closed, mam'selle!"

"Golly, I'd forgotten that! Then we will go first thing to-morrow morning."

"You bet!"

Excitedly, they looked at each other. Sylvia's eyes were shining. If they had solved the message correctly, then on the morrow the proof of her cousin's innocence would be in her hands!

**"YOU'LL** be back as soon as you can?"

Doreen laughed.

"What do you think? We're going to run all the way, there and back! But it's better you should get in some more practice, Sylvia. You simply must win the championship!"

"I know." And Sylvia smiled.

It was the following morning—immediately after breakfast. Doreen and Jean, with Tony and Jack, were just about to set out for the antique shop.

But Sylvia, desperately though she would have liked to go with them, had decided that she would remain behind to put in some skating practice.

Douglas had said she must win the championship—and Sylvia was determined, if human efforts counted for anything, that she would win.

A minute later they all set out, Sylvia making her way to the lake, the others hurrying towards the shopping centre of St. Lauritz.

"Golly, I hope we're on the right track!" Doreen said.

"Well, we'll soon know." Tony said.

"Look, here's the shop, and it's just opening!"

The proprietress, having just removed the shutters, stared in surprise as the five friends rushed in. Then she beamed.

"Bonjour, mam'selles!"

"Bon jour!" Doreen said hastily, and then rushed on: "Have you any cuckoo clocks which you bought from the Mill Grinelle?"

"Ah, oui!"

"Oh, thank goodness for that! Could we see them, please?"

"This way, mam'selles!"

The woman led the way into the depths of the shop. She reached up, taking a clock down from among an assortment of other articles that stood on a shelf. Eagerly, Doreen & Co. bent over it. But, even as they did so, the door of the shop suddenly crashed open.

Doreen turned. Then her face paled.

For hurrying into the shop came—

Mr. Ross!

"Hold on!" he cried. "Don't let these youngsters have that clock! I'll buy it from you—and I'll pay you any price you like for it!"

What will happen now? Will Stephen Ross prevent Doreen and Co. from obtaining possession of the vital cuckoo clock, and does it really contain the proofs of Douglas Drake's innocence? See next Friday's **ENTHRALE** instalment.



**A Book of Jolly things YOU can Knit!**

How would you like to knit a lovely present for daddy, mummy or your school-chum? Well, even a very little girl can make a "pixie" hood for herself, a scarf or shawl, a "Dusky Sue", tea-cosy, and "Bunny" bed-room slippers, etc., with the help of this book.

**BESTWAY KNITTING BY YOUNG FOLK**

KNITTING BOOK No. 51

6d at all Newsagents and Bookstalls, or 7d post free (Home or Abroad) from **BESTWAY**, Bear Alley, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4





# Kaye of the Kennels

Brutus, Kaye Chalmers' lovable St. Bernard dog, plays a large part in this charming complete story.

By IDA MELBOURNE

## THE POACHER'S ACCUSATION

"WARE, Brutus! Here, Brutus!" Kaye Chalmers gave that warning shout, as she walked through the woods with her St. Bernard dog Brutus. Brutus had run ahead of her, as he usually did, and as he was a big dog, he needed all the exercise he could get. Ordinarily, Kaye would have let him forge on; but only a moment ago she had heard the report of a gun.

"Poachers, Brutus! Here!" she ordered.

Brutus, who was sniffing ahead somewhere, came trotting back, looking surprised, wondering why he had been recalled. For he knew nothing about poachers, and little about guns.

"If you get in the way, or start to chase rabbits, you're as likely to get shot as not," warned Kaye, fondling his great head. "And you wouldn't like that!"

At times, Kaye spoke to Brutus as though he were a human being, a young child; and he certainly had the appearance of knowing what was said to him.

With a most solemn expression he walked at her side.

But his solemnity did not last long. A rustling amongst the bushes ahead made him prick his ears, and with a roaring bay, he charged forward.

"Steady!" warned Kaye.

But Brutus had already paused, for through the bushes, wearing a most guilty look, came a beautiful Alsatian dog. His head was down, his tail was tucked between his legs, and he ran with loping gait, glancing now and then behind him.

"Whoa!" said Kaye. "What's wrong?"

The Alsatian slowed, looked once at Brutus, and then at Kaye. His eyes were keen and intelligent, and an instant light of recognition came into them.

"It's you, is it, Gerry?" said Kaye. "Well, well! I haven't seen you since you recovered from distemper, old chap!"

The Alsatian, although he had not seen Kaye for many months, fawned upon her, wagging his tail.

Kaye Chalmers was a friend to all dogs, and many dogs in this district had reason to be grateful to her, for Kaye ran the Chalmers' Kennels, where sick

dogs were tended. Gerry, the Alsatian, was one of them.

"Well, what's wrong?" asked Kaye, stooping to him. "Why were you running? Where's your mistress? I hope you haven't taken French leave?"

The Alsatian lolled his tongue and looked back.

Almost as though in answer to that look there came a cry of pain from a child.

"Hallo! Help wanted!" Kit exclaimed. "Come on, Brutus!"

There were dangerous places in the woods, and Kaye instantly thought that some small child had fallen down some unguarded steep place, tripped, or perhaps slipped when climbing a tree.

She ran at top speed, with Brutus slightly ahead of her, and it was he who came first upon the scene of the accident.

A man in shabby clothes was carrying a small boy whose hand was bleeding and wrapped in a handkerchief. The boy was sobbing bitterly.

In the man's hand was a large metal object, which looked to Brutus like the jaws of some strange animal. But Brutus had no chance to study it, or to draw near and sniff, for the man, hearing Kaye's voice, threw the object away.

When Kaye, a second later, came on to the scene, that mysterious object was out of sight.

"What's happened?" Kaye asked anxiously.

The man turned to her. He was alarmed, yet gruff and angry, and his answer was curt.

"A dog's bitten him!" he snapped.

"Oh!" murmured Kaye. "I thought for a moment he had been shot. I heard a gun fired."

And, looking at the man, she decided that he looked a poacher himself. His face was vaguely familiar, but she could not at the moment place it.

"A gunshot—does it look it?" he asked, showing the boy's lacerated hand. "It's a dog bite. I saw him bitten."

"Poor kid! My goodness, you'd better have that wound dressed as soon as you can," advised Kaye. "Where is the dog?"

"Run off," said the man gruffly. "It was an Alsatian."

"Alsatian? My goodness— not Gerry?"

"Is he your dog? 'Gerry, eh?' said

the man keenly. "I'll see I get damages from you for this."

"No; he's not my dog," said Kaye. "I just happen to know his name. I saw him run by."

"Then you're a witness," said the man.

And away he went through the wood, his heavy steps crackling on the dried twigs and rustling the fallen leaves.

Kaye did not move. In deep thought, she watched the man move away, and tried to place him, being sure that she had seen him before.

Then, turning aside, she noticed the butt of a gun projecting from a bush. At once the truth jumped to her mind, and remembering the shot she had heard, she knew that he was a poacher.

"Jem Wilkins," she mused. "Yes, that's the man. And just the kind to make trouble."

Calling Brutus, who had been hunting in the bushes, Kaye hurried back then to find Gerry. It seemed hard to believe that he had actually bitten the child, for he was a gentle, nice-natured dog. But Kaye remembered his guilty look, and the way he had run.

If the child had teased him, Gerry, no less than any dog, might have lost his temper. But that would not excuse him unless there had been very great provocation indeed.

"Gerry! Here, boy!" said Kaye, and when the Alsatian approached her, she took his collar. "What happened?" she asked. "Were you teased?"

Then, a sudden thought striking her, Kaye opened Gerry's jaws. He made no protest, did not turn his head, and seemed to understand that, as a dog nurse, she could be permitted to take these liberties.

"Funny!" commented Kaye to Brutus. "No sign of blood, and yet the bite certainly did draw blood."

There was nothing Kaye could do further in the way of investigating, so she took Gerry down to her home. Having put him in a spare kennel, she rang his owner, Laurel Filmore.

Kaye decided not to mention the biting incident on the telephone, for Laurel would only be worried during her journey to the kennels, and the whole thing could be far better explained when she arrived.

Laurel, who had lost Gerry in the woods, and had returned home, thinking that he might have done the same, was delighted to hear that he had been found, and she promised to hurry to the kennels just as quickly as her cycle could take her.

It was a glad moment when brown-haired, brown-eyed Laurel met Gerry

again, and quite amusing to see his pathetic concern and shame.

"So that is why he was so worried," smiled Kaye. "He knew he shouldn't have left you and gone off on his own. Forgive him, and watch his ears go up."

Laurel laughed, kissed his nose, and brought his favourite ball from her pocket. Up went his ears instantly, and he knew that all was forgiven.

But the time had come for Kaye to break the news, and she did it by degrees, explaining how she had seen Gerry running, ears back and tail down. Then she mentioned the boy's cry of pain, and, at last, the poacher's accusation.

Laurel went as white as a sheet. "Gerry bit the boy?" she gasped. "Oh, Gerry!"

All Gerry's misery returned. He crouched down, his ears went back, and his tail twitched, but did not wag. And when Laurel reproached him, almost with tears in her eyes, his own seemed to glisten, and he gave a sad, whimpering cry.

"He was teased; he must have been," said Kaye. "Don't worry too much, Laurel. Every dog is allowed one bite. After this he'll have to be more careful, even if he is teased, because it might mean his having to be arrested and taken to court."

She did not add that it might mean, too, unless great provocation could be proved, that a stern magistrate might sentence him to be destroyed.

"One bite!" echoed Laurel miserably. "And the second might mean—might mean—"

"Yes," said Kaye gently.

Laurel gulped and could not speak for a minute, and then blurted out in horror:

"Kaye, this isn't his first; it's his second!"

### KAYE'S DESPERATE RUSE

KAYE CHALMERS slipped her arms about Laurel's shoulder and gave her a consoling hug.

There was no need for words. Nothing she could say would help, for both girls knew what this might mean.

Gerry, wretchedly miserable, looked up at them, licked his lips, looked down, and then settled at full length, resting his head on his paws.

At that moment Kaye did not know whether to be sorer for Laurel or for Gerry. The dreadful doom hung over them both.

"Why did he bite before?" Kaye asked, when Laurel had more command of herself and was able to speak.

"The postman—that awful bad-tempered man. He used to sling his bag at Gerry when Gerry was only a pup. And then he did it when Gerry was bigger. The postman only got what he deserved, but, my goodness, the fuss he made! It was awful! Dad had a fearful job to stop his going to the police then."

"My goodness! I don't call that biting!" said Kaye indignantly. "Men like that deserve all they get."

"But the police would call it a bite," fretted Laurel. "And now—now this!"

A heavy tread sounded on the path, and Brutus leaped up, barking warning.

"Stand back!" snarled an angry voice. "I've had enough trouble to-day with dogs."

Kaye wheeled, and her heart sank as she recognised the voice of the poacher. Hands dived in pockets, scowling, he stood back from Brutus, who warned him not to come too near his mistress.

Calling Brutus off, Kaye asked the man to step forward. He did so; then

he gave a triumphant cry as he saw the Alsatian that Laurel was fondling.

"Ah!" he cried, pointing to Gerry. "That's the dog! Who's his owner?"

Laurel faced him challengingly.

"I am," she said.

"Well, there'll be a nice bill for you to pay. My poor lad has had a real bad bite. It'll take months to get better.

There'll be doctor's bills. And, what's more, if I don't get satisfaction I'm going to the police. Twenty pounds is the least I'll take."

"Twenty pounds!" breathed Laurel.

"That's the figure. And let me tell you it's a light let-off," he added, his small, cunning eyes roving from Laurel to Kaye. "If I was to tell the cops, they'd shoot that dog."

"That's enough!" said Kaye, as she saw Laurel's lip quiver. "No good can come of offering threats. First of all you'll have to prove your boy didn't tease the dog."

"Yes? Well, I'll prove it all right," sneered the man. "The dog leaped at him. The kid screamed as the brute's teeth closed on his poor little hand. I had to beat the dog off with my stick."

Laurel could not answer, for that story, if told in court, would be enough to seal Gerry's fate.

But Kaye answered, and in ringing indignation.

"That's a lie!" she said hotly. "I was standing near. The child screamed a minute or two after I first saw the dog. And you had no stick; you had a gun. You were poaching."

"Poaching? Don't try to twist things on me, my gel," he said angrily, clenching his fists, his face reddening. "I'm telling the truth."

Kaye faced him, and Brutus, with ominous mien, lumbered his eleven stone of brawn to within a foot of the man and measured him. Something in the way Brutus worked his jaws and licked his lips, as though preparing the decks for action, took the violence from the poacher's tone.

"No tricks, miss," he said. "I'm a poor man, and I deserve compensation."

Kaye's eyes glinted as she tried to hold his.

"Gerry didn't bite your child," she said sharply. "Some dog did, but not this one, and you know it. My goodness, you trickster, I see it now. The child screamed as soon as it was bitten. A child doesn't wait two or three minutes to cry out in pain."

Laurel gave a short cry.

"Then Gerry didn't bite him! It's not his second bite. He can't be put to sleep. Oh, Kaye, Kaye! Is it really so?"

The poacher wore a baffled, startled look; and his brow darkened.

"He knows," said Kaye.

The poacher swung round.

"Where are you going?" said Laurel quickly.

"Going? Why, to the police, that's where, to lay information. Your dog bit my boy, and you can't wriggle out of it."

His heavy steps grew fainter; the gate slammed.

"My goodness!" gasped Laurel, terrified. "He's really going to do it! Kaye, did you mean what you said? You weren't making it up? Gerry didn't bite the boy?"

Kaye looked down at Gerry, who lay there sad and worried, and patted him.

"No, Gerry did not bite the boy. I was a fool not to have thought of it before. But we can't prove it—yet."

"If ever," said Laurel shakily. "Oh, Kaye, the police will come for Gerry! They'll take him. I may never see him again, except in court. Kaye, Kaye, they mustn't take him, they mustn't!"

"If you hide him, it may make your case look worse," said Kaye sadly. "I'm dreadfully sorry, Laurel, I know how you feel. I'm sure that man picked upon Gerry because he saw him near; it might as well have been Brutus, only Gerry was first on the scene."

"Then where is the dog who really bit the boy?" asked Laurel.

Kaye could not answer that yet; but, if there was another dog, as certainly seemed to be the case, she meant to find him.

"Strike while the iron's hot," decided Kaye. "You take Gerry home, Laurel. I'm going with Brutus to find if there's another large dog living near there!"

Giving what encouragement she could to Laurel, Kaye hurried back to the wood with Brutus.

THE poacher searched the bushes.

And his search was almost frantic; for he heard Brutus' deep bay in the distance. The thing he sought was the strange metal object which Brutus had seen him fling into the bushes.

A moment before Kaye and Brutus returned to the scene the poacher found it; and not waiting to be caught with it, he ran towards his cottage a few hundred yards away.

Brutus, racing ahead, would have followed him but for Kaye's alarmed call; but Kaye had no wish to run the risk of his being shot.

Kaye searched the spot carefully, hoping to find the marks of dogs' feet; but it was a grassy spot, and her task was almost impossible. Convinced that some other dog must be to blame, and that it was an animal the poacher had some reason to shield, she went to the cottages that stood at the edge of the wood.

Had there been another dog there, Brutus' bark would have brought a reply; but to her surprise, no answering bark came.

Brutus did not know what it was Kaye sought, but he was searching himself for that odd object the man had flung away. He found the spot where it had been, realised that it had been moved, and lost interest.

Kaye loitered near the cottages, and then, guessing that the poacher would be on his guard and take care to keep his dog silenced—if indeed he had one—decided to return later when he would be less prepared.

From his window, the poacher watched her.

"There she goes, son," he muttered. "I've diddled her all right; and if you tell your story properly in court, we'll have some money, then I'll be able to buy you that second-hand bike you want."

The boy, looking pale and frightened, tenderly held his newly bandaged hand.

"Yes, dad. That spring trap didn't half hurt me, though—"

"Sssh! You dare say anything about a spring trap again. It's against the law to use them," snarled his father.

"You weren't bitten by a rabbit trap, but by a dog. Understand? A dog! That's what you've got to tell the magistrates."

"Yes, dad," quavered the boy.

Kaye, meanwhile, was telephoning the doctor. She learnt from him that the bite had been severe, and had been made by a large dog. Then from Laurel came an urgent call. The police had issued a summons; and Gerry had to appear in court to face a charge of being a dangerous dog, not under proper control.

Kaye, knowing how black the case looked against Gerry, nevertheless did her best to cheer up Laurel. Her own

evidence that the cry had been heard when she was herself fondling Gerry might help.

And then a startling idea came to Kaye! The poacher was a rogue, and ready to lie. By a lie, therefore, he might ruin his own case. In court, he would have to identify Gerry. If he had seen Gerry biting his boy, and had pulled him away, he would know the look of the dog. If not, then he could be fooled.

"Laurel, wait. You've still got Gerry?" she exclaimed. "Good. I've got a trick to play on the poacher. I'm coming along now, quick as I can."

And Kaye, hurrying into the kennels, fetched a tin of special dye used to touch up the coats of black dogs who had gone grey too young to please their owners!

A touch of that dye skilfully applied, and Gerry would look a different dog!

### THANKS TO BRUTUS

**I**N the police court there was silence as Laurel led in her Alsatian. Very different Gerry looked now, for there was a black fringe of hair on his neck, and black feathers to his tail and legs. Laurel's tear-brimmed eyes sought Kaye's, and Kaye nodded. It might be the way out!

Now Gerry was in the dock, standing up, looking across at his young, tearful mistress, swinging his tail, lolling his tongue.

"Powerful-looking brute," muttered a magistrate.

The witnesses appeared. First the poacher, and then his small son, and almost word for word they told the same story; and not even the solicitor, cross-examining them, could alter it.

But Kaye whispered to the solicitor, and he recalled the father.

"You are sure that is the dog? Alsatisans look much alike," said the solicitor.

"Ah! I'd know that one all right by his black fringe," said the poacher, with a cunning smile.

Laurel looked up, eyes glinting and nearly called out; Kaye, too, had a hard job to hold her tongue.

"But, my good man," said the solicitor, "the dog had that fringe painted on only yesterday, as witnesses can testify. If the dog that bit your son had a black fringe, then this cannot be the dog."

Kaye cheered softly, and Gerry, seeing Laurel wave excitedly, barked.

"Silence in court!" said the usher sternly, but Laurel and Kaye were shaking and quaking, eager to whisper.

The justices frowned at the poacher. "Well," asked the chairman, "what have you to say?"

"Just this," sneered the poacher. "That's the same dog. Ask that girl!" And he pointed to Kaye. "Ask her if it is the dog she met in the wood, and the one she had at the kennel."

Kaye, horrified, tried to move away; but a moment later she was in the box with Gerry's eyes solemnly fixed upon her.

If only she could have said "no"! But Kaye could not commit perjury.

"Yes," she admitted, in a low voice. "That is the dog!"

His doom was sealed. But the poacher had something more to say.

"These's another witness. I'm not going to be called a liar," he said loudly. "Old Ben Jones, he saw the dog there; and he knows it's Miss Filmore's."

Kaye took the solicitor's arm and whispered.

"Old Ben's honest. If he was really near, he'd know if the boy screamed out

after Gerry had gone past. He might have seen Gerry farther away, too, and not just where they were. I'll get him. It won't take ten minutes on my bike. Please make them hold the case up!"

The solicitor nodded; he could keep the argument and cross-questioning going for ten minutes without the need of holding up the case, he said. So off Kaye went on her cycle. She freed Brutus from the tobacconist's shop, where he had waited, and made for the cottages by the wood.

Old Ben lived not far from the poacher, and he was an honest man.

With Brutus close behind, Kaye reached the cottages, and knowing which was Ben's, rapped on the door. His wife opened it, staring in surprise at Kaye, not expecting this visit.

"Old Ben?" she said. "Why, he be gone to market in Drayling, and won't be back till even, miss."

"Out! Oh goodness! And he's wanted as witness at the court!" gasped Kaye, with sinking heart. "He couldn't come back?"

But just where he was in Drayling, which was fifteen miles away, his wife couldn't say, and Kaye, in despair, knew that the last hope was gone.

"Oh, Brutus!" she groaned. "Poor Gerry! It's the end."

But Brutus was not there to sympathise. He was two hundred yards away, barking excitedly. And for once, when Kaye called he did not run to her. Again she called; but still he stood there, barking.

Kaye ran to him, quite cross because of his disobedience, but she suddenly realised that Brutus was excited about something. He barked, looked at her, and looked down at the ground.

"What is it, boy?" she asked.

He tried to explain that it was the strange thing the poacher had taken from the boy; but all he could do was to bark. And Kaye at last went to him.

"A trap! Brutus, you duffer!" she gasped, in alarm, and tugged at his collar. "If that had snapped it would have seized you, bitten you—"

She dragged him away and Brutus sighing, went. But only for a few yards. Then Kaye stopped, stiffening.

"My golly!" she said, and ran back to the trap, looking down at it, and noting the sharp teeth. "Brutus—you were trying to tell me— My goodness!" she ended. "We've saved Gerry! We've saved him!"

**I**T was just as the justices were muttering and deciding that Gerry, having bitten two people, was savage, that Kaye burst into the court. Indeed, they were about to pass dreadful sentence when, carrying the trap, she rushed in.

Chaos ruled for awhile in the court. But the poacher's pale, drawn face was really all the additional evidence Kaye needed; but, as though it were not enough, the poacher's son gave a cry of fright at sight of the trap, and the doctor who had dressed the wound, stepping forward to examine the sharp metal teeth, gave a low whistle.

"Does anyone doubt that this is what bit the boy?" asked Kaye. "And that that man had some reason for wanting to keep this hidden and blame an innocent dog instead? Don't forget, he wanted damages, too!"

When the justices had given their decision, Laurel turned gratefully to Kaye.

"Case dismissed!" she gasped. "Oh, Kaye, you saved Gerry for me!"

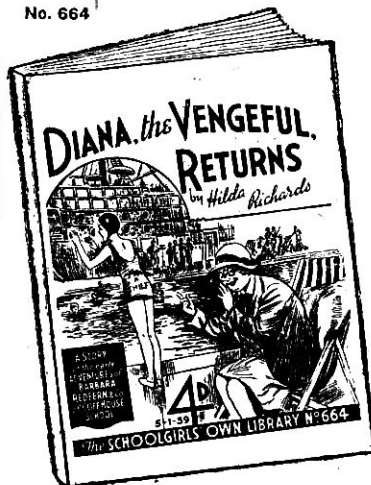
"It's not me you must thank," smiled Kaye. "It's Brutus. He deserves all the credit!"

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

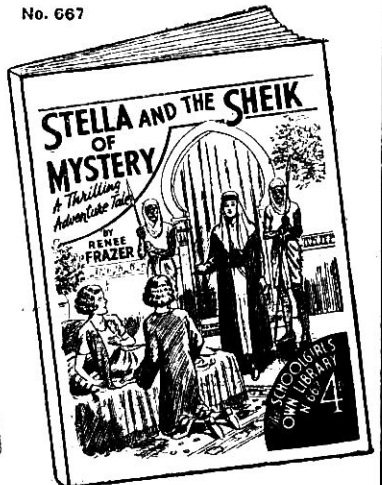
Another delightful story about Kaye and her pets next Friday. Order your **GIRLS' CRYSTAL** now.

## GRAND LONG STORIES YOU MUSTN'T MISS!

No. 664



No. 667



Also ask your newsagents for these other two January volumes of the

### SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN LIBRARY

No. 665. "Not Fit for Morcove," by Marjorie Stanton.

No. 666. "If Her School Friends Only Knew," by Joan Inglesant.

**NOW ON SALE—4d. EACH**

# HER UNKNOWN ENEMY AT School



By  
GAIL  
WESTERN

## THE MISSING PLAYER

**O**LIVE FRENCH, Fourth Form captain at St. Kit's School, and her chum, Letty Johnson, liked Jess Grant as soon as they met her.

Jess was an orphan girl, whom a mysterious Miss Dalton had befriended and sent to St. Kit's. Then Miss Dalton had disappeared.

All the Fourth Formers liked Jess, except Stephanie Warner and her cronies, who said that she was not to be trusted. Olive and Letty, however, believed that an unknown enemy was trying to blacken Jess' name.

They discovered that Jess had a double in the village, who was in league with this unknown enemy.

Then Jess heard from Miss Dalton, and went off to meet the mystery woman in Fenleigh. She was to join the hockey team, of which she was a member, later, at Trilton College, where they were to play an important match.

At Trilton, Olive and the rest of the team waited for Jess, but she did not arrive. Finally, they had to take the field without her; and the team were furious with Jess, for they were one player short.

Letty suggested to Olive that the unknown enemy might in some way be responsible for Jess' absence.

"MY hat, Letty, suppose you're right! Suppose in some way Jess' unknown enemy has been responsible for her not turning up!"

Olive caught in her breath. Her chum's startling suggestion had filled her with consternation. Could it possibly be true? She frowned anxiously, then shook her head.

"No, you must be wrong, Letty," she told the fat girl. "Jess went to meet Miss Dalton. Her secret enemy couldn't have stopped her from getting here."

Letty gave an obstinate shake of the head.

"I don't know so much," she declared. "If you ask me—"

But that was as far as she got, for from outside the pavilion came an impatient shout:

"Buck up, there!"

The rest of the team was waiting to start the hockey match. With a sigh Olive picked up her stick. There was no time now to speculate as to the reason for Jess' strange failure to turn up. But of one thing the Form captain was certain.

"Jess hasn't deliberately let us down," she declared. "What Cecily said was all nonsense. Either the bus has broken down, or else—"

"Are you two going to play, or aren't you?" demanded an indignant voice, and there was Cecily Savage, the St. Kit's left back, glaring at them through the dressing-room doorway. "We're going to have a job to beat them as it is, playing one short, without waiting until dark."

Olive and Letty followed her out of the pavilion. The captain of the home team met them with a sympathetic smile.

"Hard luck, having to play one short," she said.

"Thanks," smiled Olive, "but we'll try to give you a good game."

They tossed and, having called incorrectly, Olive led her team on to the field.

"We'll have to play only one back," she said. "Cecily, will you go forward, please. And don't lose heart, girls. If we pull up our socks we'll win yet."

For the sake of the rest of the team she forced herself to seem cheerful, but actually she knew they were up against a tough proposition. Last term Trilton College had beaten them five—one, and then St. Kit's had had a full team.

It would mean breaking bounds to go to the Mimosa Cafe. But Olive—even though she was Form captain—did not hesitate. She was ready to take almost any risk to help her new friend, Jess.

How would they fare with only ten players?

Ph-cep!

The whistle blew and the rival forwards bullied off. Olive, gaining possession of the ball, passed to Cecily, but that girl's mind was not on the game. She was still angrily thinking about the missing Jess. She muffed the pass, and like a hawk, the Trilton College skipper pounced on the ball and sped away.

Through the half-backs she dribbled; the goal loomed before her. Margery Wilson, the only back, charged forward, but she was right at the other side. She could never get there in time. There remained only Letty Johnson in goal.

Wham!

At terrific speed the ball came hurtling towards her. It struck her stick, rebounded, and Letty made a desperate leap for it. It was a fatal mistake. The rival forward knocked it from under her stick, and before Letty could regain the goal, the ball had twanged against the back of the net.

The game wasn't two minutes old, and already St. Kit's were a goal down!

But worse was to follow. Dispirited by this bad start, most of the team went to pieces. In vain Olive tried to rally them, and Letty, in goal, had to play the game of her life.

Again and again she was bombarded. From every angle the ball whizzed and hurtled. The fat girl, puffing like a grampus, leapt about like a cat on hot bricks, stopping the ball with her padded legs, her gloved hands, and her stick.

Most of those cannon-ball shots she prevented from going into the goal, but not all of them. When half-time came, Trilton were winning by three goals to nil. In the pavilion Olive faced the others urgently.

"Buck up, please," she said. "There's still time for us to win if only we keep our heads."

Cecily, busy sucking a slice of lemon, tossed her head angrily.

"Well, I like that!" she exclaimed. "You're the last one who ought to criticize, Olive French! It's you who're to blame for this mess-up. If you hadn't been fool enough to pick Jess Grant—"

"That's not fair!" It was Letty who sprang to the Form captain's defence. "You've no right to speak like that!" she cried stormily.

"I'll speak how I like!" was the irate answer.

"Oh, no you won't!"

Like two enemies the two girls faced each other. Olive, her face white with dismay, darted between them.

"For goodness' sake don't let's quarrel," she urged. "Time enough for the inquest when the game's over." Appealingly she surveyed the rest of the team. "Let's try to forget Jess," she went on. "Let's concentrate on evening-up the score."

Her words had a good effect. Cecily choked back her bad temper and, inspired by Olive's leadership, the St. Kit's girls took the field with some of their usual confidence.

The result was that the forward line took the initiative. Getting the ball, they clung to it, and Olive, receiving a line pass from Cecily, managed to score.

Three—one! Not so bad! Heartened, they attacked again, but the Trilton defence was not to be caught napping a second time. A hard hit sent the ball over the half-way line; one of the home forwards made a dash for it, and before either Letty or the solitary back could do anything she had dribbled it into the circle, and there came a delighted shout from the onlookers.

"Goal!"

"Good old Trilton!"

"Let's have another!"

Again Cecily and one or two of the others lost heart—with disastrous consequences. Again their rivals scored, and not content with five goals, they went on to hammer in a sixth.

Six—one! It was the biggest defeat St. Kit's had ever suffered.

Olive kept her head high as she led her team off the field. Hardly a word was spoken in the dressing-room. It was almost in silence that they travelled back in the school coach.

Cecily glared daggers at the Form captain, and muttered under her breath. But the rest of the team were too sporting to add to Olive's discomfiture. Nevertheless, she knew they held her responsible for their crushing defeat.

When St. Kit's was reached, Olive nodded to her chum.

"Let's hurry on and see if we can find what's become of Jess," she whispered. "I'm uneasy about her. I can't believe that she deliberately let us down."

They made tracks for their study, but Jess was not there. They looked in the Junior Common-room, but that also was empty. Then, in the corridor, they ran into Lorna Meredith, the popular Sixth Form prefect.

She smiled at the two Fourth Formers.

"Hallo, who are you looking for?" she asked.

"Jess Grant," Olive replied. "Suppose you haven't seen her, Lorna?"

Rather to her surprise the prefect nodded.

"Yes, I saw her pop into the wash-room a minute or two ago," she said. "I rather fancy she's only just come back from Fenleigh."

The chums stared at each other. They knew Jess had gone into the village to meet Miss Dalton, her mysterious benefactress; but surely she hadn't spent the whole afternoon there. Surely she hadn't forgotten the important match at Trilton?

With a word of thanks to Lorna, Olive and Letty hurried down the corridor. When they entered the wash-room, they saw the new girl standing beside one of the basins, drying her hands. At sight of them, Jess dropped her towel and stumbled forward.

"Oh, Olive!" she cried. "I'm terribly sorry I didn't turn up, but it wasn't my fault—honestly it wasn't!"

"Why, what happened?" demanded the Form captain.

Jess' white cheeks flushed with anger, and her eyes hardened.

"That letter I received was a trick!" she declared.

"A trick?"

"Yes, it couldn't have come from Miss Dalton at all. It was my unknown enemy who sent it. It was a deliberate plot to prevent me from playing!"

### STEPHANIE'S ACCUSATION

"I KNEW it! I guessed as much!" It was Letty who spoke; eagerly she clutched Jess by the sleeve.

"Tell us exactly what happened, old scout," she urged.

"Well, when I got to the station there was a saloon car waiting. A chauffeur was in charge, and he said Miss Dalton had sent him to fetch me. I told him about the match and he assured me there'd be plenty of time to get to Trilton College. In fact, he promised to drive me there. Of course, I suspected nothing."

Jess paused, and on tenterhooks her two chums waited.

"Well?" breathed Olive.

That glint of anger returned to the new girl's eyes as she continued her startling story. It seemed that, instead of driving to the house where he had said Miss Dalton was waiting, the chauffeur had headed for the open country.

And there, right in the heart of the marshes, miles from anywhere, he had pulled up and pushed Jess out into the road.

"Before I could get over the shock—before I could do a thing—the car had gone on," Jess declared. "I was stranded. Oh, it was awful! I hadn't the foggiest idea where I was. It took me nearly an hour before I met anyone to give me directions; another hour before I got back to Fenleigh. Of course, it was useless to try to get to Trilton College then. I knew the match must be over, so"—her voice broke—"so I returned to school."

For a moment or two neither Olive nor Letty said anything. Jess misconstrued their silence.

"Surely you don't blame me for what happened!" she gasped.

"Of course not, you chump. It's only that—"

Olive stopped and they all turned. With a crash the door had burst open. Headed by Cecily, the rest of the hockey team came surging in.

Cecily gave an angry shout as she saw Jess standing there.

"So this is where you're hiding, is it?" she cried. "Well, aren't you jolly well ashamed of yourself?"

Jess' head went back.

"No, I'm not," she answered. "I've done nothing to be ashamed of."

Cecily stared incredulously. She could hardly believe her own ears.

"Well, if that isn't the gilt-edged limit!" she panted. "You deliberately let us down. Thanks to you, we're disgraced—and yet you don't blink an eyelid!"

Jess flushed indignantly, but before she could speak Olive stepped forward.

"Not so fast, Cecily," she ordered. "You're talking a lot of rot. It wasn't Jess' fault she didn't turn up."

"Oh, then whose was it, pray?" scoffed the other girl.

"Her unknown enemy's!"

"Her unknown what?"

"Here, whose leg d'you think you're pulling?"

"I say, Olive, this isn't any joking matter!"

There came a chorus of angry protests, but calmly Olive faced the disgruntled players.

"It certainly isn't a joke," she agreed. "But it's true. If you chumps will only keep quiet for a jiffy I'll tell you exactly what happened."

Wonderingly the Fourth Formers gathered around, and so intent were they on listening to what the Form-captain had to say that none of them heard the door open. Nor did they see the slim, blonde-haired figure that slipped into the wash-room.

It was Stephanie Warner. With a sneering smile on her face she stood there. Not until Olive had finished did she speak, then she gave a jeering laugh.

"A likely story—I don't think!" she commented.

Olive glared at her.



Cecily gave an angry shout as she saw Jess with Olive and Letty. "So this is where you're hiding. Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" she cried. Jess' head went back. "No, I'm not," she answered. "I've done nothing to be ashamed of."

"What do you know about it?" she demanded.

Stephanie tossed her head.

"More than any of you think. As it happens, I was in Fenleigh myself this afternoon—in the Mimosa Cafe," she added, looking pointedly at Jess.

Jess regarded her in bewilderment.

Stephanie grinned maliciously.

"Yes, you didn't suspect I was sitting there in the corner, did you?" she jeered.

Jess flushed.

"What do you mean? I wasn't in any cafe. Why, I didn't even know there was a cafe called the Mimosa in Fenleigh. What are you getting at?"

"Oh, it's no use you trying to pull the wool over our eyes. This time you're for it." With another toss of her head, Stephanie whirled round on the others. "Jess Grant said she was going to meet Miss Dalton, didn't she?" she asked.

"That's right!" There came a series of nods. "But what's that got to do with the Mimosa Cafe?" asked Cecily Savage.

Stephanie grinned.

"Everything. For that's where she's been all afternoon—lapping up tea and cakes and listening to the wireless! That yarn of hers about being kidnapped is all bunkum. I tell you, I saw her in the cafe myself, and with her was a tall, middle-aged woman. I don't know who she was, but I expect she was this mysterious Miss Dalton we hear so much about."

Triumphantly Stephanie gazed around; in shocked silence the rest of the Form stood there. Then Jess strode forward, her face white and furious.

"It's not true!" she cried. "I never saw Miss Dalton. I saw no one but that rascally chauffeur. I was never in any cafe!"

Stephanie glared.

"Are you suggesting I'm telling lies?" she demanded.

"No, of course she isn't!" It was Olive who spoke. "You made a mistake, that's all," she said. "It was some other girl you saw."

"What; do you think I don't know Jess when I see her?"

"But I was never in any cafe! Oh, it's not fair! You've no right to say such things, Stephanie! Just because you dislike me, there's no reason to blacken my name like this!"

Hotly Jess defended herself. So sincere did she seem that, despite themselves, many of the girls were impressed. Then Letty gave an excited cry.

"Why, it's as clear as water!" she exclaimed. "Of course it wasn't Jess Stephanie saw! It was her double!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"Yes, her double. The girl who's in league with Jess' unknown double; the girl Olive and I saw the other night!"

There came another startled gasp, but Letty persisted with her theory. Olive, of course, backed her up. To their relief, their arguments seemed to win over most of the girls. But Stephanie continued to jeer.

"Trust you two to make up some yarn to try to clear her!" she snorted. "Well, you don't fool me! I know she's a disgrace to St. Kit's, and I don't mean to have anything to do with her!"

"Nor me!" quickly added Iris Watts.

"And I'm with you!" chipped in Cecily Savage. She glowered at Olive. "I may as well tell you straight, Olive French, that it's no use you picking me to play hockey again! While that girl plays"—contemptuously she looked across at Jess—"I refuse to turn out, and that's flat!"

And, picking up her sports bag, she stamped out of the wash-room. With her went Stephanie, Iris Watts, and one

or two of the other girls. Those who remained stood as if petrified. As for Olive, she was white with dismay.

A split in the Fourth! What a fine beginning to her career as Form captain—the career to which, only a few days before, she had been so eagerly, so proudly looking forward!

Jess, though grim and angry, gave a cry of concern as she saw her chum's distress.

"It's a shame!" she cried. "Whatever the girls think of me, they've no right to treat Olive like this! They ought at least to be loyal to their captain!"

"Hear, hear!"

There came a murmur of approval. It was at least consoling to the chums to know that the bulk of the Form was on their side.

Olive smothered a sigh.

"Well, it's no use standing here," she said. "Come on! Let's go to our study."

As Jess and Letty followed her along the corridor Olive's face was marred by a deep frown. Once they were in the privacy of their own room she swung round on her chum.

"All this mystery's got to end!" she declared. "There'll be no peace for Jess, for me, for anyone until we've unmasked that wretched unknown enemy!"

"You're right!" agreed Jess.

"But how are we going to do that?" asked Letty.

Olive shook her head, and, flopping down into the nearest chair, she thought hard. For some minutes there was silence in the study. Suddenly Olive jumped to her feet, her eyes gleaming.

"Got it!" she cried.

Eagerly the other two regarded her. "You mean you know how to get on the track of that anonymous letter-writer?" asked Letty.

Olive nodded.

"Yes—at least, I know how to find out who Jess' double is, and that's just as vital. The key to the mystery lies in the Mimosa Cafe."

"Of course!" exclaimed Jess, her eyes lighting up. "They'll be able to prove that it was my double Stephanie saw! Why, they may even know all about her—where she lives and everything!"

Excited, they stood there, then Letty made a grab for her hat.

"Come on! Let's go!" she urged.

But Olive pointed to the clock on the mantelshelf.

"Fraid it's impossible to-night," she said. "Look at the time! We'd never get back in time for roll-call."

"But we must follow up this clue while it's hot!" protested the fat girl.

"To-morrow's Sunday, and the cafe will be closed; and by Monday the folks there may have forgotten all about Jess' double. We must go to-night, Olive. We can't afford to let this chance slip by!"

"That's true," Olive nodded. Suddenly a reckless gleam crept into her eyes. "There's only one thing for it. We must sneak down into the village the moment the register's been called."

"You mean, break bounds?"

"Yes. The Mimosa keeps open late. They always have a dance on Saturday nights, and if we go on our bikes we should be back here soon after bedtime."

"But suppose our absence was discovered?" asked Jess. "No; it's too risky, and it's not fair that you two should get into trouble. Let me go on my own."

"Rubbish!" snorted Letty. "You don't know where the cafe is. It would take you ages to find it. No; I vote we all go." She looked around eagerly. "Is it agreed?" she asked.

Silently Olive and Jess nodded, and so it was settled.

## AT THE MIMOSA CAFE

**A**FTER roll-call the Fourth Form at St. Kit's had supper, then they were allowed an hour's free time before going to bed.

Under Miss Bramleigh's new regime there was little supervision, the girls going to bed on their own, and the lights being turned out by means of a master switch downstairs.

So Olive & Co. had little fear of being caught. Even if they did not get back to school until after lights out, they could easily steal upstairs unobserved.

Jess was the only one who had any qualms. But it was not for herself she worried. It was Olive's future she was apprehensive about. As Form captain, Olive's offence would be regarded as serious if it were discovered.

However, realising that her chums were determined to accompany her, Jess kept her fears to herself, and the moment Miss Charters had called the roll, they hurried upstairs and donned their hats and raincoats.

In the dormitory they waited until the supper bell rang; then, knowing that the coast would be clear, they slipped downstairs and went hurrying across the quad to the cycle-shed. It was locked, but, as Form captain, Olive had a key. As she opened the door she turned to Jess.

"You'd better borrow Molly's bike," she said.

Molly Barker was one of her staunchest supporters, so Olive knew she would not mind the liberty.

Jess nodded, and, wheeling out their machines, they nervously approached the lodge gates. They were closed, and, to their dismay, locked.

"Oh crumbs! That's torn it!" exclaimed Olive. "We'll have to try to slip through the side gate."

But that meant passing right by the lodge, and Bilkins, the porter, had ears like a lynx. To make matters worse, the side gate squeaked horribly.

On tiptoe, they glided their cycles along the winding gravel path. And then suddenly they heard the sound of a car approaching, quickly followed by the toot of a horn.

Someone was at the main gates, waiting to be admitted. Olive peered over the bushes, then she gave a startled gasp.

"It's Brammy herself—quick, hide!"

With frantic haste, they dragged their bikes amongst the shrubbery and themselves crouched down. And only just in time, for the lodge door opened and the lanky figure of the porter loomed into view.

Olive & Co. held their breath as he strode towards them, a bunch of keys jangling in one hand. But he had no suspicion of anything wrong, but went hurrying along down the main drive.

A moment later the Fourth Formers heard a clang as the main gates were opened, then they heard the headmistress talking to the porter. Olive nodded to the others.

"Follow me!" she whispered. "Now's our chance, but for goodness' sake don't make a sound!"

Hardly daring to breathe, they picked up their machines and stole towards the little side gate. Only a single line of shrubs separated them from the Head's car. Would Miss Bramleigh see them? Would the porter's sharp ears hear the squeak as the side gate was opened?

The suspense was agonising, but luck was with them. Just as Olive gingerly

reached out a hand to open the gate there came the roar of an engine. Miss Bramleigh was driving on. The sudden noise drowned any sound the gate made, and gulping their relief, Olive & Co. gained the road, jumped into the saddles, and rode off.

The night was pitch black, but there was quite a strong breeze blowing, so the girls knew there was no chance of becoming fog-bound. That was the one thing they feared when riding through the marshes.

Fenleigh was quickly reached, and, leaving their cycles parked in the ancient market place, they set out for the Mimosa Cafe. Originally it had been quite a small place, but recently a luxurious ball-room had been added on at the back.

Eagerly they pushed open the door and entered.

The cafe itself was empty, but from the adjoining ball-room came the sound of laughter and the lively strains of a dance band. As they seated themselves at one of the tables, each of which was set in an alcove formed by quaint Japanese screens, a waitress, dressed in Oriental style, approached on slipped feet.

"What can I get you?" she asked. Then she stopped, staring at Jess, seemingly puzzled by the ordinary clothes she was wearing. "Why, miss, aren't you attending the dance?" she asked.

Jess gaped, utterly at a loss.

"Dance?" she echoed.

The waitress nodded.

"This afternoon you seemed so keen on it. I hope nothing's happened to make you change your mind. It's going to be a very jolly affair."

Jess and Letty still looked bewildered, but Olive, quicker-witted than them, instantly realised the truth. The waitress had mistaken Jess for that girl's mystery double!

Swiftly the Form captain decided how to turn this mistake to their advantage. Smiling up at the waitress, she shook her head.

"Oh, no, she hasn't changed her mind," she said. "She'll join in the fun later on. But first we want to have a quiet chat together. You see, we can't stay long."

The waitress nodded sympathetically.

"That's a pity, miss. I'm sure you'd enjoy it. It's a gala night to-night, you know."

She took their order for toasted buns and coffee, and when she had departed Jess and Letty looked across the table in bewilderment.

"What's the giddy idea—pulling her leg like that?" demanded the fat girl. Olive grinned.

"Don't you see, you chump, she mistook Jess for her own double," she explained.

"Ph-ce-w!"

Letty gave an excited whistle, but Jess still looked puzzled.

"But why did you let her go on thinking I'm the other girl?" she asked. "Surely it would have been best to have told her of her mistake?"

But Olive shook her head.

"I thought of that, then a better idea occurred to me. Don't you realise that this mystery girl is expected at the dance to-night? All we have to do is sit tight until she shows up."

The other two girls eyed her in admiration. Thanks to the Form captain's quick wits, soon they would find themselves face to face with Jess' double.

At that moment there came the rattle of crockery; the friendly waitress



## FROM ONE GIRL TO ANOTHER

### Cheery Chatter and Helpful Hints by Penelope

I've finished the winter sports gloves—which look sweet and cuddly, just like a baby's—and now I'm on the last finger of the navy gloves.

That leaves only the lemon ones to make. But I shall have to hurry, for my own will be wearing out, and I shall have to knit myself a new pair very soon, I'm thinking!

Unless we have a heat-wave before then!

#### CRISP BISCUITS

Are you all very fond of biscuits in your home? I know I adore them—especially ginger biscuits. And the crisper they are, the more delicious. But very often the last few biscuits do become a bit soft, even when they are kept in tins, don't they?

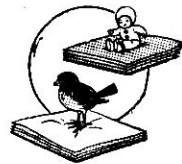
So next time you hear mother wondering why this should happen, tell her not to worry, for you have a solution.

If she pops two lumps of sugar in the tin with the biscuits they will keep their freshness and crispness right to the end.

It's so simple, yet it does work!

#### VERY CHEERY

How do you like the little pen-wipers in the picture? Aren't they



just the very thing to take to school, to cheer up your desk until the sunny days are here again?

To make them, you should cut a piece of cardboard about 3 inches square. Then cut some pieces of material the same size.

Place them on top of the cardboard, and sew right through them and the cardboard.

Now see if you have any of those little robins or snow-babies over from the Christmas decorations, and stitch one of them to the top layer of material.

They'll look so cheery.

Good-bye until next week!

Your own,

PENELOPE

**H**ALLO, EVERYBODY!—This is your Penelope here, feeling as merry and bright as ever—but rather busy.

You see, I have a glove-knitting craze on.

Do you have crazes, too? I'm quite sure you do. One time it's skipping in every spare moment, and another time it might even be darning your stockings. (Though, on second thoughts, perhaps that isn't a very likely one—even if mother should wish it were!)

I sometimes get a mending attack, when I gather together all my stockings and undies, and start sewing on buttons and ribbons, and repairing ladders with great gusto. But—I'm afraid it doesn't last very long.

This knitting craze is slightly different.

It all started with the very cold weather, when I lost two precious pairs of gloves in one week.

And as I simply couldn't spare the cash to buy myself a "posh" new pair, I knitted some instead.

#### GAY GLOVES

I made one pair in vivid green, and was so pleased with them, I decided to make another in magenta red.

The green I have been wearing with my brown coat, and the red ones with my navy. Jolly warm they are, too.

Then some of my friends started to admire these gloves. (I think it was the gay colours that took their fancy.) So impetuously I promised to knit three friends a pair each.

One pair is in very thick wool, without any fingers, for a chum who's off to the winter sports in Switzerland, the lucky thing!

The other pair is in navy 3-ply wool, and the third is lemon yellow, very fine, in 2-ply.

was returning, carrying a tray. As she set out the cups and plates, she smiled apologetically across at Jess.

"There's been a telephone call for you, miss," she said. "Sorry, but I clean forgot all about it until just this minute."

"A telephone call!" gasped Jess, her heart giving a leap. "Who—who from?"

The waitress shook her head.

"She didn't give her name, miss, but I recognised her voice. It was that friend of yours. You know, the one at St. Kit's School!"

Olive & Co. exchanged excited

glances. This was news indeed! For who else could be the person who had telephoned but Jess' unknown enemy?

Tingling from head to foot, Jess leaned forward.

"What did she say?" she asked eagerly. "Did she leave a message?"

To her dismay, the waitress again shook her head.

"No, miss. But she said she'd ring again—round about half-past eight. The call will come through in here, so if you hear the bell, would you mind answering it yourself? I'm awfully busy in the ball-room, you know."

"Oh, that's all right! I'll see to it!"

Jess said quickly; and when the waitress had gone, she gazed triumphantly across at her chums. "Well, of all the luck!" she exclaimed. "Why, if only I can trick my unknown enemy into thinking I'm my double—golly, there's no telling what I mayn't learn!"

"Only hope your giddy double doesn't turn up and spoil things, that's all!" grunted Letty, as she helped herself to the buttered buns. "It's only just eight now."

Olive smiled, despite the tension, as she watched her stout chum getting through all the tuck. Letty didn't mean to allow these startling developments of the mystery to interfere with her appetite.

But Jess' anxious, pale face showed how worried she was. She had not forgotten that they had deliberately broken bounds. She and Letty would be punished if they were caught. But for Olive— Jess went cold as she thought what might happen to the Form captain, who was supposed to set an example to the rest of the Form. Even though Olive was breaking the rules only for the sake of her chum, Miss Bramleigh would hardly be likely to accept that as an excuse.

"Oh, Olive," Jess whispered. "We mustn't be seen by anyone from St. Kit's, whatever happens. I can't allow you to get into trouble for my sake."

"Tosh!" laughed Olive. "We'll soon be clearing up all this mystery, and then there'll be no more trouble for us to get into. Just wait until that phone bell rings, then we'll find out who is behind everything."

On tenterhooks they watched and waited. Every time the door bell tinkled they turned in alarm, fearful lest it should be the mystery girl arriving on the scene.

But there came no sign of Jess' double, and gradually the big hand of the clock on the wall crept round to half-past eight. Then, suddenly—

Tr-iii-ling!  
The phone bell!  
Excitedly Olive grabbed Jess by the arm.

"There it is!" she exclaimed. "Now it's up to you! Best of luck!"

Her face flushed, her eyes sparkling, Jess jumped to her feet and crossed to the telephone cabinet at the back of the cafe. Olive and Letty were just as excited as she was, and they caught in their breath as she disappeared into the cabinet and picked up the receiver.

"Oh crumbs! But will she be able to do it?" Letty gasped, mopping at her plump, hot cheeks. "And if she does—what'll she learn? What—"

She broke off, for Olive had suddenly given her an agitated nudge. Looking round, she saw that the Form captain had stiffened and was gazing in horror across to the doorway.

A slim figure stood on the pavement, paying off a taxi-man, the figure of a girl who wore an expensive camel-hair coat over her dance frock.

Through the glass window of the door the chums could see her clearly, and instantly they recognised her.

It was Jess' double, and only too obviously she was about to enter the cafe. Even more alarming, on her way to the ball-room she would have to pass right by the phone cabinet. And that meant that she could not fail to see the real Jess!

Further exciting chapters of this grand school-and-mystery serial follow in next Friday's GIRLS' CRYSTAL. Order your copy early, so as to make sure you don't miss this bumper number.

## THE GIRL WHO HAUNTED GREY GABLES

(Continued from page 396.)

A curious expression crossed his freckled face.

"I say—you've cut yourself!"  
"Just a scratch," said Norma hastily, her heart missing a beat. "It's nothing."

"Looks more than a scratch to me," said Gerald, indicating the stain that had crept through the bandage. "You must be careful, you know. Can't have you getting blood-poisoning before the concert!"

Norma laughed a trifle unsteadily as she commenced to mount the steps.

"It's a funny thing," said Gerald, "but I met another girl last night who'd hurt herself rather badly. I'll tell you about it some time. It's a queer business altogether."

Norma glanced at him swiftly, her face suddenly pale.

"What—what do you mean?" she asked darily.

Gerald shrugged.

"You'll never guess. You know our family spook—the phantom that's been causing so much trouble round here. Well, I've discovered that it's a girl! And, what's more, she's got some grudge against our family."

"Grudge?" whispered Norma.

Gerald nodded, his eyes darkening.  
"She told a strange story—I hardly know what to make of it. She gave me the slip before I could question her—but I've got a bit of a clue I mean to follow up. It's a cap—a seaman's cap—and there was a message hidden in the lining—I say, Norma, look out!"

For, with a violent start, Norma released her hold on the steps, and would have fallen if Gerald had not grabbed her arm.

Something fell from her pocket, slipping to the ground: it was the handkerchief Gerald had lent her the previous day, but for the moment neither noticed it.

There came an unexpected interruption.

A footman burst into the hall, his face ghastly white.

"Master Gerald!" he exclaimed. "Thank goodness you're here. Mrs. Merrivale is out—and something dreadful has happened. That phantom figure has been round here, and it's broken into Mrs. Merrivale's room and stolen her jewel-box!"

A stifled, incredulous cry escaped Norma's lips; Gerald spun round, his eyes flashing.

"What's that? The Phantom, you say? Are you sure?"

The footman nodded distractedly.

"One of the maids saw it—creeping down the stairs—about five minutes ago. She was too scared to give the alarm. I wish you'd come, Master Gerald!"

"You bet I'll come!" snapped Gerald. "Wait here, Norma—" He broke off, stooping to pick up something that lay on the stage.

It was a man's handkerchief, slightly stained and crumpled.

A startled expression flashed into Gerald's eyes as he glanced at Norma.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed. "This is my handkerchief—the handkerchief I lent to the Phantom!"

Will Gerald guess that Norma is the Phantom? And will she be blamed for the mysterious theft of Mrs. Merrivale's jewels? See next Friday's exciting chapters.

## THE GOLDEN FINGER- PRINT

(Continued from page 400.)

Gold with horror, the two girls watched as the gilded hand closed on Eva's drawing.

Then came a strange and bizarre interruption.

From its high pedestal that overshadowed the alcove leaped the sheeted figure of the goddess, Bast.

"Got you, you scoundrel!" rapped a voice.

Noel Raymond flung off the sheet that enveloped him, and seized the gilded hand of the supposed mummy.

There was a desperate struggle, and a dishevelled figure was dragged from a dark cavity at the rear of the mummy case.

It was Mr. Lucas, the assistant curator!

"I thought as much!" snapped Noel.

"Sanders!"

Into the room raced the temporary "watchman"—a police officer in disguise. A pair of handcuffs snapped on the struggling scoundrel's wrists.

"Take him away!" said Noel grimly.

"He's the fellow you've been looking for—the man responsible for the thefts at the Lanhurst Museum. He's been trying on his old dodge here—substituting worthless fakes for valuable curios. I think you will find there's a secret door in the back of the mummy case. That's how the rascal came and went."

Julie found her voice, her face pale and bewildered.

"Then—then, Lucille—"

"Lucille was helping her father to prove his innocence," replied Noel gravely. "She is here now—to explain."

Lucille stepped into the room, a trace of tears in her dark eyes.

"Julie—" she faltered.

Julie darted towards her, grabbing the other girl's hands in hers.

"Lucille, will you—can you ever forgive me?" she choked.

"I think," said Noel, with a smile, "that that question is answered. Fetch your other chums along, Julie, and you can all complete your drawings together. There is nothing more to fear from the terror of the museum."

A FEW days later Noel heard the result of the competition. Professor Stanley's first prize of a hundred pounds had gone to Lucille, for the drawing showing the greatest appreciation of Egyptian art. Eva came second, and Julie third.

It was Julie who wrote—her letter bubbling over with enthusiasm.

"Lucille deserves it," she declared.

"And we're all happy now—thanks to you, Mr. Raymond!"

Noel smiled as he slipped the letter into the file that contained mementoes of his most intriguing cases.

He had missed the train he had been going to catch back to town, but it had been well worth it. For an innocent man's name had been cleared, and, indeed, Professor Stanley had insisted on Carter accepting the post as assistant curator at the museum.

"Thanks to that scoundrel leaving a gilt finger-print on the drawing," thought Noel. "Another criminal who made just one fatal slip!"

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

MYSTERY AT THE SNOWBOUND HOUSE—that is the title of next Friday's thrilling detective story. Don't miss it!

G.C.W. 15

Printed in England and published every Friday by the Proprietors, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Advertisement Offices: The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Registered for transmission by Canadian Magazine Post. Subscription Rates: Inland and Abroad, 11s. per annum; 5s. 6d. for six months. Sole Agents for Australia and New Zealand: Messrs. Gordon & Gotch, Ltd., and for South Africa: Central News Agency, Ltd. All rights reserved and reproduction without permission strictly forbidden.—February 4th, 1939. LG