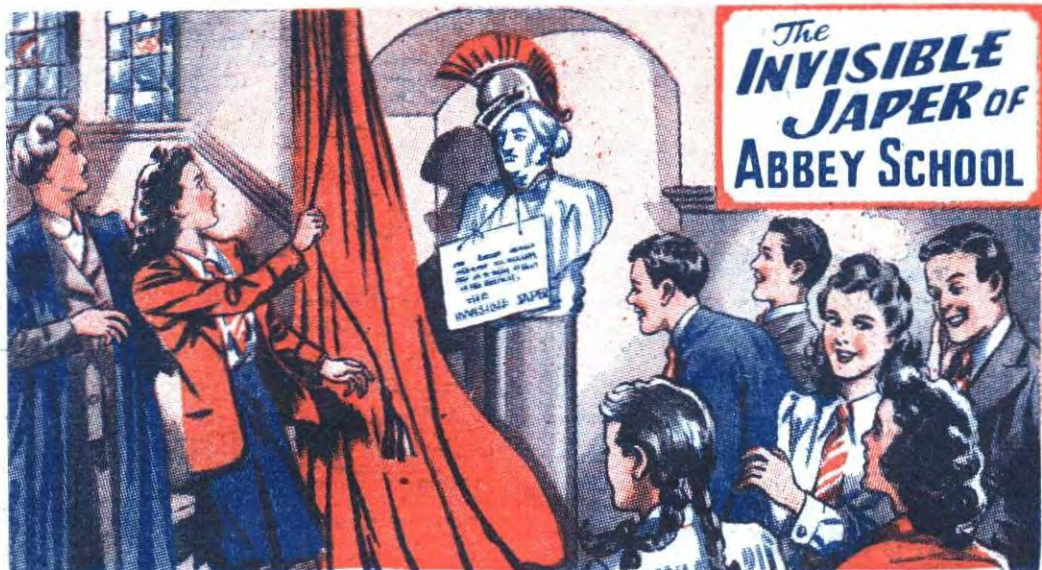


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GIRLS' CRYSTAL^{3D}

AND "THE SCHOOLGIRL"

Week
Ending
March 23rd,
1946.



Who Was The Elusive Practical Joker And What Was The Reason For His Sensational Exploits? That Is What Janice Sets Out To Discover In This Grand Story—By JENNIFER DAY

THE THREAT TO THEIR BALLET

"JOLLY good show, girls!" exclaimed Janice Merton. "That final dance movement has come on wonderfully—it was miles better than at the last rehearsal. If we go on like this, the ballet is going to be a wizard success!"

Janice's dark eyes shone with excitement as she surveyed the group of breathless girls on the platform of the school Hall.

"How about the costumes, Janice?" Coralie Grant demanded eagerly. "Have they arrived yet?"

"They'll be here to-morrow," Janice promised. "Then we can start dress rehearsals, which will be still more fun."

These were busy and thrilling days for Janice, captain of the Fourth at Abbey Co-ed School. She had devised and produced a little ballet, "The Merry Magician," in which the girl dancers of the Fourth could show their skill; and the Head had been so interested that she had arranged for the ballet to form part of a concert to be given in the town theatre in aid of the local hospital.

What a triumph for the Form it would be, if the show was a public success! The girls, under Janice's inspiring leadership, were straining every nerve to make their performance as perfect as could be.

A voice broke in on their excited chatter. "I'll tell the world you girls can trip the light fantastic too!" it drawled.

They turned to see a fair-haired boy strolling towards the platform, a quizzical gleam in his blue eyes.

"You really think it has improved, Colin?" asked Janice eagerly.

Colin Brooks was her cousin. They had been brought up together under the guardianship of

dear old Uncle Rex, and had always been the closest of chums.

"It's going to be a smashing success," chuckled the boy. "Don't be surprised if it doesn't lift the roof right off the town theatre!"

"And how about that special effect you promised us for the last scene, Colin?" asked plump Babs Harcourt.

Colin flourished the brown paper parcel he was carrying.

"I have it here, my children," he chuckled. "Trust your Uncle Colin."

He unwrapped the parcel and produced a large bottle containing a greyish powder.

"Golly! This isn't one of your practical jokes, is it, Colin?" exclaimed Gina Fairfax, backing hastily away. "Everyone knows you're the biggest spoofer in the school."

Colin looked pained.

"Me? Joking?" he echoed, with a wink to Janice. "Didn't you know I'd made a vow never to joke again, Gina? Now, watch this!"

He poured a tiny pile of powder into a saucer, placed it on the platform and put a match to it. At once a weird red glow sprang up, shining vividly on the girls' faces.

"See the idea?" smiled Colin. "This stuff is perfectly harmless—no danger of fire. But it will make just the kind of eerie red glow you need for the last dance in the magician's cave. What do you think of it, Janice?"

"It's a grand idea!" Janice agreed enthusiastically, and threw him a warm look of gratitude. "You've been jolly helpful all the way through, Colin—and we're grateful, aren't we, girls?"

There was a chorus of agreement. Colin had certainly been a tower of strength in every way, helping with the scenery and the stage management and the lighting, and in a score of other ways.

"And now, if we don't want to be late for class, we'd better get cracking," suggested Coralie.

But there came another interruption. It was Roy Withers, a tall, dark boy, who had not been at the Abbey School very long, but had already become a popular figure, who strode into the hall.

"Heard the news, you people?" he called. "The Invisible Japer has been at work again!"

"What? You don't say so!" they gasped.

For a moment the ballet was forgotten as they crowded round Roy, eager to learn the details. For some days past mysterious practical jokes had been occurring in the school. Always they took the same puzzling form. A valuable object would disappear from the school museum, and hours later it would be found in some peculiar position in the school with a note attached, signed by "The Invisible Japer."

Who was the Invisible Japer? How did he get into the museum, which was always kept locked, except at stated hours when there was a curator in attendance? All the boys and girls in Abbey School were asking themselves those questions, and no one could find an answer.

"Apparently the mystery joker took an old pewter jug and hid it in the Head's roll-top desk with the usual little note," went on Roy. "She has just discovered it there and she's none too pleased, I can tell you. She's asking for you, Janice, as you're assistant curator of the museum."

Janice gave a little grimace and hurried off in answer to the headmistress' summons, leaving the rest of them chuckling over the mystery joker's latest prank.

An odd uneasiness had come over Janice, and she could not quite share the amusement of her chums.

The mistress who acted as museum curator was away ill just now, and all her work had fallen on Janice's shoulders. She was responsible for the safety of the museum, and if the Invisible Japer damaged one of the exhibits she would feel herself partly to blame.

Miss Shepherd, when Janice arrived at the Head's study, certainly looked annoyed as she stood there holding a large pewter jug.

"Another of these ridiculous pranks, Janice," she exclaimed. "Are you perfectly sure you have been keeping the museum door locked?"

"Quite sure, Miss Shepherd," Janice declared. "I've been specially careful just lately."

"And the windows are secured?" the Head asked.

"Always," nodded Janice. "And anyway, Miss Shepherd, as the museum is three stories up, it would be difficult for anyone to get in by a window."

The Head frowned. "I can't understand it," she murmured. "But when I do, I shall deal with the offender in no gentle fashion," she added more firmly. "Kindly take this object back to its proper place, Janice."

Janice went upstairs to the museum, that premonition of coming trouble growing stronger, though she scarcely knew why.

At the museum door she found Gina Fairfax waiting. Gina was noted for her inquisitive habits, and she was fairly agog with curiosity.

"I'll come in with you, Janice," she offered. "Perhaps we shall find a clue as to who the Invisible Japer really is. I've got my suspicions, though I'm not telling."

Everything seemed in order in the museum. The window catches were secured on the inside, the door had been locked. Yet some time within the last twenty-four hours the Invisible Japer had effected an entry!

Janice had just replaced the jug when there came an excited squeal from Gina. She turned

to see that girl straightening up and holding in her hand a white object.

"A handkerchief—a boy's handkerchief! It was under this case of old coins!" she exclaimed. "And there's someone's initials in the corner—C. B.," she read out.

Janice gave a momentary start.

"It's a clue!" Gina cried, her thin face flushed with excitement. "There's only one boy in the school with those initials and that's your cousin, Colin Brooks. He's the mystery japer, Janice!"

"What utter rubbish!" Janice retorted quickly. "If it's Colin's handkerchief, he probably dropped it when coming to the museum in the ordinary way. Plenty of people come here to look at the exhibits when the museum's open."

"I've never known Colin take the slightest interest in it," Gina objected. "And we all know he's the biggest practical joker in the school."

Janice met Gina's sharp, inquisitive eyes.

"I tell you, Colin has nothing to do with these jokes, Gina!" she said firmly.

Gina shrugged her shoulders. "That's what you think," she said. "Anyway, I'm going to give him this handkerchief and watch the look on his face."

And she hurried off, leaving Janice feeling angry and worried.

She was convinced that Colin was not the culprit. Fond though he was of practical jokes, he would never make trouble in this way, she was sure. And yet—

Again she picked up the pewter jug that had been spirited away so strangely from the museum, and as she did so she noticed an odd thing. There was a faint but unmistakable smell clinging to the jug—the smell of some kind of chemical, it seemed.

"Strange!" mused Janice. "But it doesn't help much in solving the mystery, I'm afraid."

For the rest of the day the mystery buzzed in Janice's brain, and she spent many hours into the night puzzling over it before she dropped off to sleep.

She got up early, thinking that a stroll in the grounds before breakfast would freshen her up.

She had no sooner entered the cloisters near the quad than a startled call met her ears.

"Janice! For goodness' sake come quickly!"

It was Coralie Grant, that graceful light-footed girl who took the principal part in Janice's ballet. She grabbed Janice's arm and pulled her out into the quad.

"Look!" she gasped, pointing upwards.

Janice looked, then gave a cry of astonishment.

There was a weather-vane on the school hall roof, and on top of it an object was perched at a perilous angle. She recognised it at once as it swayed gently in the breeze. It was an old Egyptian vase, one of the rarest objects in the museum.

"The Invisible Japer again!" Coralie breathed at her side. "And—suppose the vase falls and gets smashed, Janice!"

That possibility had already occurred to Janice. It had, in fact, spurred her to action.

Workmen had been repairing the school hall roof, and one of their ladders was still propped against it, reaching the eaves at a point not far from the weather-vane. Her heart thudding, Janice ran to the ladder and began to clamber up, scarcely hearing Coralie's gasp of warning.

If only she could safely retrieve the vase before the Head or one of the mistresses saw it! That was the desperate aim in Janice's mind, for she guessed there would be most serious trouble if Miss Shepherd got to know of this latest outrageous prank.

Forcing herself not to look down from that giddy height, she reached the top of the ladder and crawled cautiously on to the sloping roof, edging her way upwards.

"Janice! Take care!"

Coralie's appeal reached her as her chum climbed the ladder below, ready to help if needed. And now Janice, lying at full length, was able to reach out and grasp the vase.

In spite of her perilous position, she noted two things as she carefully lifted the vase from its perch.

There was a scrap of paper pasted on the vase, with a message scrawled on it: "Thought I would give the jolly old vase a rise in the world.—The Invisible Japer."

And then, as she lifted the vase down, she noticed that odd chemical smell which had also clung to the pewter jug.

But she had no time or inclination to ponder these problems just now. Gingerly she began the descent—and then for one breath-taking moment she felt herself beginning to slide over the steeply-pitched slates of the roof.

A cry was wrung from her. She pictured herself reaching the edge and hurtling below. Yet still, with one hand, she frantically clung to the precious vase.

She knew a throb of relief as a hand grasped her ankle, steadying her. Coralie had reached the ladder-top now, just in time to come to the rescue. And as she lay there, panting, Janice heard running footsteps and a buzz of excited voices in the quad below, and her heart sank.

"Thanks, Coralie, I'm O.K. now!" she panted shakily. "Can you grab the vase? Then I'll get on the ladder and follow you down."

So, rather pale-faced and shaky, the two girls descended. And below they found a crowd of boys and girls, with Miss Shepherd and several other masters and mistresses. And on the Head's brow was a look of thunder!

"You are safe, Janice?" she queried. "Thank goodness for that!"

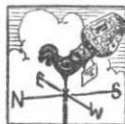
She turned to face the little crowd in the quad.

"This is another of the outrageous pranks of the person known as the Invisible Japer," she said. "Obviously that person is a member of the school. And, as you have seen, Janice nearly met with a serious accident as a result of the joker's folly."

Miss Shepherd paused, her face grim. "Who the culprit is I cannot tell," she went on. "But I wish to say this. If another prank of this nature occurs, then the whole school—without exception—will be gated until the culprit is found."

So saying, the Head turned on her heel and walked off towards her study, leaving them staring at one another in dismay.

WATCHERS IN THE NIGHT



"THE whole school gated!" Babs Harcourt exclaimed. "But if that happens it will be the end of the Fourth Form ballet! We shan't be allowed to go into the town to perform it!"

The same thought had occurred to all the Fourth Formers, and a buzz of indignant chatter broke out.

"Just a minute, everybody, please!" Roy Withers took command of the situation. "It's time we all took a hand against this Invisible Japer, whoever he is. It's getting past a joke now."

He turned and studied the roof, as if trying to probe the mystery. Then, to everyone's surprise, he clambered up the ladder, reached out and grasped something at the edge of the roof, then climbed down and held it out for them all to see.

It was a scrap of blue cloth. "I spotted it hanging on a nail at the edge there," Roy told them. "Looks like a scrap torn from someone's blazer. Maybe it's a clue!"

It was at this moment that Colin Brooks, in his casual way, strolled into the quad. He was wearing a blazer and flannels, and he gazed in mild surprise at the excited throng.

"Can't think why you people want to get up so early," he drawled. "Frightfully bad habit, you know. Bad for the brain, and all that."

All eyes were turned on Janice's fair-haired cousin, and a startling fact about him dawned on them as they gazed. It was Gina Fairfax who put it into words.

"You've torn your blazer, Colin!" she shrieked.

Janice's heart gave a jump. But Colin seemed quite unmoved as he grinned cheerily at Gina.

"Well, well! So I have," he mused. "What an observant child you are, Gina! Nothing escapes that eagle eye of yours."

"I suppose you haven't been clambering about the roof, old man?" Roy inquired.

"Clambering about the roof?" echoed Colin. "My dear chap, don't you know I'm dead scared of heights? Even when I look out of bed on a cold morning I come over giddy. Well, I'll have to be staggering along, folks. Cheerio!"

And unconcernedly he strolled off, humming a tune.

"Doesn't that prove it?" cried Gina. "First I find his handkerchief in the museum, and now the torn blazer! It proves that Colin—"

"It doesn't prove anything!" Once more Janice flashed out in defence of her boy cousin. "Anyone can drop a handkerchief or tear a blazer. And I'm telling you all that, even though he's fond of practical jokes, Colin doesn't play tricks like this. I'm sure of it!"

But with a sinking heart she observed the looks of doubt which were still on their faces.

"I'm inclined to agree that it isn't quite proved yet," Roy nodded judiciously. "And there goes the breakfast bell. I vote we have a meeting in the Form-room after class, and decide what to do."

So there the matter rested, though Janice knew a strange anxiety during morning lessons. And as soon as lessons were over she was dismayed to see Colin slip out of the class-room, leaving the meeting to start without him.

"That shows he's afraid to face us!" Gina was quick to point out. "It's just another piece of evidence added to the other proofs!"

"Just a moment, please!"

It was Janice who had spoken, springing to her feet. She wanted, at all costs, to keep Gina's spiteful tongue quiet, and prevent Roy throwing out any of those horrid suspicious hints about Colin.

"I suggest we're wasting our time trying to throw blame on anyone," she began. "For we haven't enough proof, one way or the other. None of us want to be gated, do we? So what we've got to do is to think of some plan for preventing the Invisible Japer from striking again."

"Hear, hear!" Coralie backed her up.

"Yes, but about Colin—" Gina broke out.

"Never mind Colin!" flashed Janice. "What I propose is this. It's probably at night-time that the Invisible Japer works his stunts. So I suggest we take it in turns to keep watch in the museum at night. What do you think, Roy?" she demanded.

For a moment Roy Withers hesitated, a frown on his good-looking face. Then he nodded.

"Seems a good idea," he agreed. "Girls watch one night, I suggest, and boys the next. We might flip a coin to see who has first watch."

They tossed up. Janice called heads, and it came down heads—which meant that the girl Fourth Formers would undertake to watch the museum that night.

"Ugh! It will be like spending a night in a haunted house," Babs shivered. "I shall quake like a jelly the whole time!"

The meeting broke up amidst excited

chatter, and Janice heaved a sigh of relief. At least she had kept Colin's name out of it, as far as she could. And perhaps her plan might succeed in tracing the real Invisible Japer, which would put an end to all the suspicions of Colin.

Also, if the Head kept her threat and gated the whole school, it would mean the end of the Fourth Form ballet. And the success of that ballet, for which she had worked so hard, was Janice's dearest wish.

The day wore on. After prep that evening, Janice called the girl Fourth Formers together to decide how the watch was to be kept.

It was arranged that Janice, Coralie and Gina should watch till one o'clock in the morning. Then they would be relieved by three more girls, and so on through the night.

Soon after lights-out the three watchers stole along the corridors to the museum, high up in the south wing of the school buildings. Janice unlocked the door and they tiptoed inside, locking the door behind them.

"We can't put the light on," Gina whispered. "But I've got my big torch, and if anything suspicious happens I'll flash it."

Janice went round to make sure the window-catches were secure, and then there was nothing for it but to sit down and wait.

It was a windy night. Dark clouds scudded across the sky, blotting out the moon from time to time, so that the museum was plunged into inky blackness.

In tense silence they waited. A distant church clock struck midnight.

Suddenly a mass of cloud blotted out the moon, throwing the museum again into pitch blackness. Janice's heart accelerated, she scarcely knew why. And then a faint sound caught her ears—a sharp click that brought her to her feet, every nerve alert.

And then a stealthy footstep in the darkness!

"Gina! Quick—the torch!" she breathed. There came a muffled gasp from Gina.

"On, someone's grabbed me!" she wailed. "I—I've lost the torch. Oh, Janice—help!"

There was the sound of a scuffle, the metallic clang of the torch falling on the floor. Janice sprang forward in the pitch blackness, bumping into Coralie as she did so.

There was a wild scramble, until at last Janice's groping fingers found the electric light switch and snapped it on, flooding the museum with light and revealing Gina sprawled on the floor, hair awry, the torch lying beside her. Coralie was there, too, pale-faced and panting. But—nobody else!

Yet someone had been there in the darkness. Some mysterious presence had entered the museum, grappled with Gina and vanished, even though windows were still secured and the door locked.

Anxiously Janice's gaze roved round the museum. As assistant curator, she knew every object there, would see at a glance if anything was missing. And as her glance rested on a shelf at one side, she uttered a whisper of dismay.

"The old Roman helmet!" she panted. "It's gone! And I'm sure it was there when we first came in."

"But—but it's incredible!" Coralie exclaimed. "How did the Invisible Japer get in? And where has he gone?"

Excitedly Gina was scrambling to her feet. They saw, now, that she was grasping something between finger and thumb.

"It was a boy—I'm sure of that, though I couldn't see him in the darkness," she burst out. "He grabbed me and knocked the torch out of my hand. But I grabbed him, too, and snatched his tie-pin."

She held out the glittering little object triumphantly.

"Recognise it, either of you?" she asked.

Janice took the pin, and as she examined it her heart knew a pang of dismay.

It was the gold pin she had given Colin for his last birthday! She stood staring at it almost stupidly, unable to speak.

"I don't remember seeing any of the boys wearing it," Coralie said.

"What about you, Janice?" Gina's sharp voice broke in, as she eyed Janice curiously. "Do you know whose it is?"

Janice forced herself to speak.

"I—I can't be quite sure," she said faintly. "I'll inquire about it in the morning, but now—now we'd better make a thorough search, to see if we can find how the intruder got in."

But she spoke without her usual spirit. That last discovery had dealt her a stunning blow.

She had defended Colin so gallantly, had been so sure this was not the kind of practical joke he would have enjoyed or carried through. And now it seemed certain that it was Colin who, in some inexplicable way, had entered the museum in the darkness and taken the Roman helmet.

And would he continue the mad jest? Would he place the helmet in some conspicuous position next day, so that Miss Shepherd would see it and carry out her threat of gating the whole school?

Janice's brain whirled dazedly, a sick feeling at her heart.

They made a thorough search, but found no hint as to how the Invisible Japer could have made his entry. And yet he had done so—he had outwitted them!

They could only report what had happened, in awed tones, to the three girls who came to relieve them at one o'clock. Not that it was much use continuing the watch now, for the Invisible Japer had never taken more than one object from the museum at a time.

Janice's head sank on her pillow at last, but sleep was far away.

She must see Colin first thing in the morning, she decided, as she tossed restlessly. She must get the truth from him.

Before breakfast she was hurrying towards Colin's study, taking with her the tie-pin whose discovery had so shaken her.

She found him perched carelessly on his study table, swinging his legs and humming a tune.

"Colin! Is this yours?" she challenged, holding out the tie-pin, her hand trembling a little.

Watching him closely, she saw the tiny frown that flickered across his face, only to be replaced by his usual cheery grin.

"Of course it's mine," he said. "It was a present from the grandest little girl cousin any fellow ever had. But where—"

"It was worn last night by someone who broke into the museum," Janice interrupted him. "And there's another exhibit missing—an old Roman helmet."

He raised an eyebrow quizzically.

"Was it you, Colin?" she asked bluntly.

"Me? But I can't make myself invisible, old girl!" he chuckled. "Only wish I could at times—"

"Colin! Don't joke!" she cried impatiently. "If you took that helmet, please put it back. The joke has gone too far."

"You're telling me!" he replied. "But I haven't got the helmet, Janice. It's my guess it has been placed, by now, in some position where it will cause a proper sensation when it's found. Mind you, I'm only guessing, but—"

"And you still haven't denied that you're the Invisible Japer," Janice cried in sudden bitterness. "You're willing to risk getting the whole school gated, and ruining our ballet, and— Oh!"

Janice's feeling overcame her suddenly, and as the breakfast bell clanged out she turned on her heel and hurried hopelessly away.

(Please turn to page 477.)

It Looked As If Larry Woodstock Meant To Stop Julie From Investigating The Mystery Of The Golden Palm



THE BOY WHO BOSSED The Castaways

WHY DID LARRY WANT HER LOCKET?

JULIE WALLACE and her chums, Elsie and Roly Maynard and Dick Mardie, and a party of other passengers from the s.s. Daffodil, found themselves marooned on the Island of the Golden Palm—upon which Julie's father had been castaway for two years.

On the island was a strange pillar in the form of a gigantic palm-tree. Upon it were hieroglyphics which resembled those on a locket which Julie's father had given her.

Also on the island was a lawless boy named Larry Woodstock, who had escaped from the Daffodil and whom Julie & Co. believed had been responsible for their being marooned. He seemed to be familiar with the island, and offered to help the castaways on the condition that they recognised him as boss, and eventually they agreed to accept his leadership.

Neil Gilson, the professor's secretary, and Ada Henshaw, his assistant, however, refused to accept his orders.

Larry told Julie he had a mission on the island, and when she asked if she could help, Larry nodded.

"Give me the locket you're wearing round your neck!" he said.

FOR just an instant Julie stared at Larry Woodstock, her face suddenly white. There flashed into her mind his first extraordinary interest in the locket her father had given her, and instinctively her hand went up to the thin gold chain about her neck. Again she felt afraid as she glimpsed the steel-like gleam in his eyes. He saw her fear and laughed shortly.

"O.K.," he said. "Your answer's no, eh? You needn't worry, I'm not going to steal your locket."

"But—but, Larry, why do you want it?"

"Will you give it to me?"

"I can't. You—you know I can't—"

"O.K.," he said again, more gruffly this time. "Then let's get going!"

"But, Larry, why do you want it? How—how can it be of any use to you—"

"I've an idea—that's all," he answered her.

By HAZEL ARMITAGE

"Don't keep on, Julie, because I'm not answering questions. I thought, when I saw it— But never mind. Can you manage that shovel?" And obviously having completed the conversation, he strode on his way, his pick under one arm and fingering the telescope now swinging at his belt.

Julie followed a few paces in the rear. She felt half afraid—but more than ever intrigued by this strange boy. Again she had that distinct feeling that her own fortunes in some inexplicable way were bound up with those of Larry Woodstock: that this little locket with its map of the Indian Ocean on one side and the drawing of Golden Palm Island on the other, formed a link between them, the significance of which she could not even pretend to guess.

For the locket had been given to her by her father, a man whom Larry Woodstock could not possibly have known. And yet—yet—this was the odd part—Larry Woodstock had obviously had a previous acquaintance with this island; and her father had spent two mysterious years of his life here.

Catching up with him again, she tried to mention the puzzle. His mouth shut.

"My dear Julie, I like you," he said, "but you don't trust me. Perhaps, I don't blame you. Anyway, I'm not answering questions or giving information until—well, until other things happen."

"Such as what?"

He gazed at her.

"Until I'm sure you trust me."

"But, Larry, how do you know I don't trust you now?"

"Your actions. The way you look at me." He shook his head. "Why should you trust me—when you know what a bad egg I am? If you really trusted me you wouldn't hesitate to hand over the locket—but that's the last thing you'd do, isn't it? When you do hand over that locket—of your own free will—then I'll believe you trust me. Not before."

She bit her lip. She felt snubbed. He was

so sure and masterful. He had such an unanswerable way of arguing that she felt powerless to pursue the topic.

But she was more sure than ever that Larry Woodstock's interest in her locket was deep and vital.

Was there some secret in that locket? she asked herself. Was it because of that secret that Larry had deliberately plotted to get back to the island? But what secret?

"The Golden Palm," she found herself breathing as though that answer had forced itself into her mind.

The Golden Palm—that strange, grotesque, ancient stone monument which she, Dick, and Roly had discovered to be such a surprise when they had first examined it.

It was the thing most emphasised in the picture in the locket. It seemed to dominate the whole scene as though her father had desired to draw attention to it. Julie found herself suddenly resolving that at the very first opportunity she would revisit the Golden Palm; but, of course, she'd say nothing of that intention to Larry. Nor to anyone, except Dick and Roly and Elsie.

And so, following Larry, she tramped on, until presently they reached the woodland belt near the cave on the beach, where Larry abruptly paused.

"Now," he said, "we'll find some sweet potatoes. Know sweet potatoes when you see them, Julie?"

She had to confess that she did not. She blinked when suddenly Larry stuck a spade in the ground, dug up a scoop of earth, shook it, then threw it to the ground to reveal several small, light-coloured objects which looked at first like small apples. While she picked one up, and rubbed it in the moist grass to clean it, Larry dug up another root—and then another.

"O.K.," he said, "Enough there for dinner. Wait a minute, I'll make you a basket to carry them."

"A basket!" she cried.

He took his knife from his pocket—a heavy knife, which contained several gadgets as well as two blades. From a tall bamboo near by he cut a pliable branch, stripped it of leaves, and, bending it into an oval shape, dragged a piece of string from his pocket and bound the loose ends together. Then he nodded.

"Collect a few of those big plantain leaves over there, will you? We'll soon have this little job finished."

He was as good as his word. Watching his nimble, skilful fingers, Julie again felt her admiration soaring. With lighter bamboo strips bent into half circles, he swiftly made a skeleton base. Then, fastening the light strips to the oval frame he had already made, he took the heavy plantain leaves from her, arranged them over the basketwork skeleton, and there, indeed, was one of the most serviceable baskets Julie had ever seen.

"Pretty rough, but it'll do," he decided, frowning displeasedly at his handiwork. "Later on I'll show you how to make proper baskets. There! You take it!"

Julie did take it—with delight. Proudly she filled it with the sweet potatoes and carried it back at Larry's side into camp.

There was Aunt Martha hovering over the fire and Mrs. Fry throwing on bits of brushwood from time to time. Over at the cliff Dick, Roly, and Hitchcock were doing superhuman work in hurling away the heavy stones. Already the camp seemed more homely, more comfortable.

And then Julie saw Ada Henshaw and Gilson again. They stood a little withdrawn under the protecting shadows of a clump of broad-leaved pandanus, and they were all staring questioningly at Larry as he threw down the tools he had been carrying. He saw them but took no notice.

"I'll leave you to superintend the dinner, Julie," he said. "The others can have these

tools. I——" Then he stopped as the professor called his name. "Yes?" he asked sharply.

"Woodstock, come here. We want you!"

"Supposing," Woodstock replied coolly, "you come here instead?"

The professor glared.

"Dash it, young man, a bit of respect——" "There's no disrespect, sir," Larry replied in level tones. "I'm only reminding you that I'm here to give orders—not to take them."

There was a stir among the group, a hasty muttering. Then, to Julie's relief, they sauntered over, the professor leading, and Gilson and Ada following reluctantly behind.

"Well," Larry demanded curtly. "You weren't so good at finding a breakfast as you thought you'd be, Gilson——"

"How do you know?" Gilson glared.

"I just do," Larry shrugged. "And now I guess you want to join us?"

"Woodstock, that—that's it," the professor gulped in hasty anticipation of his secretary's outburst. "If you're willing to let bygones be bygones, Mr. Gilson says——"

"I'm not interested in what Mr. Gilson says," Larry replied curtly. "I'm interested only in what he does. He knows the rules. So does Miss Henshaw. He's welcome to join us if he pulls his weight. If not—well, he can find his own food. And don't forget," he added significantly, "that I'm the one who gives the orders——"

"I take my orders from the professor," Gilson said with frosty dignity. "I—I came back only because I felt it my duty to look after the professor."

"That's O.K. with me. Make what excuse you like," Larry responded drily. "But remember the rules. Help me over to the cave with those tools——"

For a moment Gilson looked mutinous. Julie saw his eyes flame, and saw him stiffen. A look passed between him and the professor and Gilson bit his lip. Then, with a resigned sigh, he bent down.

"And you," Larry said to Ada, "help Julie. This way, Gilson."

Without a glance behind him he walked off, Gilson, loaded with tools, trailing in his rear. But only Julie saw that glance of dark hate in the secretary's face. And she knew then that if Gilson had come back, it was in no knuckling-under spirit to Larry. He hated the boy who was his self-proclaimed boss on the Island of the Golden Palm.

BY LARRY'S ORDER



IN spite of Julie's fears, things went smoothly on Golden Palm Island. With the men all working together, the cave was cleared, made safe and snug and comfortable again, and a delicious dinner was hungrily eaten and thoroughly enjoyed. This time, however, Gilson made

no demur when Larry, laying his tools and his telescope at his side, seated himself at the head of the table. He said nothing, either, when after the meal, Larry gave orders for the afternoon.

"We've earned a rest, and we'll have it," he said. "For the next hour or so the heat will be too intense to think of work. I'll leave you to spend that time as you like." He rose to his feet, glanced at his belongings, and then nodded as though deciding to leave them there. "I'll be back for tea," he announced abruptly, and departed.

"Well, thank goodness he's gone for a bit," Gilson said. "But where on earth is he off to?"

Nobody knew. Nobody cared. They were all beginning to realise now that Larry, even if he did give the orders, was a law to himself. And yet, looking round, Julie could not help but reflect that out of those orders had come orderliness and peace.

The cave was set to rights, which meant they

had living quarters for the night. Everyone was well fed and contented—which would have been far from the case had they had to fend for themselves without Larry's assistance.

And if he had insisted on bossing, he was at least fair and reasonable in his demands.

With the meal cleared away, most of the castaways sought shelter from the terrific heat and dozed, and Julie, joining Dick, Roly, and Elsie in the shadow of the pandanus, also relaxed. Roly, in a few minutes, was fast asleep. Dick, quietly making new arrows for his bamboo bow, was absorbed, and Elsie was busy attending to her nails with the sharpened end of a thin twig.

Julie, sitting up as she gazed through the shrub at the gently heaving sea, found her mind occupied with a million thoughts. Found herself, hardly without realising it, toying with that golden chain about her neck.

Then, somehow, the locket was in her hand. She found herself snapping it open and staring again at the little sketch which her father had made of Golden Palm Island.

There was no doubt about it, she realised, with a quick thrill, that he had made the golden palm itself predominant out of all proportion. It seemed to jump at her, to urge her suddenly to rise up and find out what its secret really was.

"Dick," she said suddenly. Dick paused in the delicate operation of fixing a small leaf flight to one of his arrows and looked questioning at her.

"I'm going to have another look at the Golden Palm," Julie announced.

"In this heat?" Dick asked. "Why not?" Julie looked at him. Then, realising she had her locket still in her hand, she closed it. "I—I've got to—somehow," she said. "I've a feeling that—that there's something more there—"

She realised that explanation was halting, lame, even stupid. She wondered if she should tell Dick about what Larry had said? And then, noticing that Elsie was also taking an interest in the conversation, she shut her lips. No, she decided. Something was seeming to tell her that the hour of revelation was not yet.

Dick, putting his bow and arrow aside, immediately arose.

"I'll come," he said.

"Me, too," Elsie volunteered at once. "You can't go to that place on your own, Julie."

"Oh, but I can. I don't want to disturb you," Julie protested.

They awakened Roly in their arguing. He, too, when he learned what was afoot, insisted on coming, and so when Julie at last slipped off, they followed her. For, secretly, they, too, wanted to revisit the ancient Golden Palm. They had been fascinated by that first glimpse of the age-old monument in stone.

"But what's the rush?" Dick asked as they crept away.

"Oh, nothing," Julie said. "I—I hate sitting down doing nothing, even in this heat."

That was true, but she was wondering if she had been wise long before they had covered half the distance to the Golden Palm. Overhead the island was canopied by a sky of cloudless blue.

The sun, like a gigantic ball in the sky, was shedding a brassy heat over all.

Now and again some bird squawked or cawed in the wood, and around their ears was the buzz of a million insects. Now and again they jumped or flinched as one of them received a bite.

But they went on, with Julie leading, seldom speaking. The heat seemed to be using up all their energies. It was blistering in the open spaces, almost unnaturally cool, when they reached the shelter of the tall trees, and gratefully refreshing when they splashed through the clear crystal water of the stream which ran round the base of the mound.

Climbing the mound the heat was grilling, and a million mosquitoes and other winged

denizens of the jungle made the air alive with the beating of their unseen wings.

Once they heard a rustle ahead of them and saw for an instant the yellow, beady eyes of a snake as it rolled its way into the ferns. In a patch of sandy scrub they saw a red scorpion beating menacingly with its pinching foreclaws as they passed.

"Gosh," Roly gasped at last, "I'm a grease spot! Nearly there, aren't we?" "Just a minute or two," Julie answered, and pointed upwards. "Look—"

They were on the steepest bit of the climb now, and beneath their feet the limestone sand seemed red hot. But above was the rocky cliff on which they knew was perched the ancient monument, and eagerly Julie pushed on.

Then at last they stood on the sandy plateau which formed the monument's base. Turning until her two chums joined her, Julie looked towards the object of their visit, and then—then she stood transfixed.

They all stood transfixed.

For the scene had changed. There was the great monolith with its horizontal stone laid across it. But there was no clear space around as there had been before, for now the monument, which from a distance resembled a glittering palm tree, was edged about with a thick hedge of thorn, cactus, and twining brambly branches which had obviously been erected as a protection. As they stared, too surprised to comment, Julie saw something else.

"Look," she whispered, and suddenly felt the blood race to her face, felt a gust of anger sweep over her.

For projecting above the fence, was a notice. An improvised notice painted in tar on a piece of ship's sailcloth, and supported in position by a bamboo branch. And that notice said:

"KEEP OUT. IT IS FORBIDDEN TO ENTER THIS ENCLOSURE."

And it was signed:

"By order.—LARRY WOODSTOCK."

THE MYSTERY DEEPENS



"WELL, of all the cheek!" gasped Dick.

"Of all the swanking nerve!" Roly snorted.

"What on earth does the fellow think he is?" Elsie protested.

She looked indignantly at Julie. Julie was not looking at her. She was still staring at the offending notice, and there was a bright flush of anger in her tanned cheeks. She knew that Larry Woodstock was arrogant, insolent, and contemptuous, but this autocratic notice was going too far—even for him.

Why, anyway, should Larry have put this spot out of bounds to everyone except himself? Why so impudently scorn the interest of others who might want to make a closer inspection? Why want to keep it to himself?

There could only be one answer to that. The answer immediately flashed into Julie's mind. Here lay the unknown secret which was somehow concealed in the locket she wore, and this was Larry's idea of preventing her from discovering what it was.

The idea, though it brought with it a sense of shock, fanned her anger. She felt no compulsion now in letting her two chums into her secret.

"But why on earth has he done it?" Dick spluttered.

Julie at once flung round. "He's done it," she said, "to prevent me from getting too close to the monument. He's done it because he knows there's something there that might interest me—though I'm bothered if I know what it is myself." And then, as they stared, she jerked the locket from her

neck and snapped it open. "Something to do with this!" she said.

And while they stared at the two little pictures she disclosed, she told them everything she knew about Larry and the locket, from that first moment when he had tried to snatch it out of her possession on board the s.y. Daffodil.

"Gosh!" Dick whistled. "So he has got some secret game on—as Gilson says. And this is the place where the secret is, eh?" he added grimly, eyeing the towering stones. "O.K. We'll show the rotter if his footling notice can keep us out—or his prickly cactus hedge. Come on, Roly!"

"You bet!" Roly snorted. He had got his breath back now. Determinedly he and Dick advanced to the attack. The protecting hedge, high and thick and skilfully linked by twisting strands of liana, certainly looked formidable enough. Tall, prickly cactus, thorns, broad-leaved nettles, and a species of prickly bramble were woven together almost impenetrably. But that wasn't going to deter Roly and Dick.

It was Roly who lifted a foot and, placing it against the stem of an uprooted grass tree, pressed forward heavily. The tree, soft and pliable, bent back a little, and Roly pressed harder. It gave a little more.

"It'll go," he puffed. "It is going. It—gosh, though, it's slippery!" he added, and the next moment gave a yell as his sole shot off the round tree and the hedge jumped back like elastic, smiting him full in the chest.

"Roly!" Julie gasped. She expected Roly to stagger back. Dick, in fact, was already moving to catch him. But he didn't. The hedge, hitting Roly, stayed with him, seemed to embrace him. To Julie's utter astonishment, the hedge dragged Roly back with it as though some invisible arms were gripping him. For a moment they all felt inclined to rub their eyes at the phenomenon.

"Oh, gosh! Oh, I'm hurt—I woe, rescue, somebody!" Roly hooted, and frantically struggled.

Dick plunged to the rescue. A thorny twig swept across his shoulder, bringing from him a yell of anguish. To Julie's amazement, that twig immediately attached itself to Dick and would not be shaken off!

"What the dickens!" Dick cried. "What—oh, help, I'm fixed!" Roly, you ass, stop struggling—"

"Wait a minute!" Julie cried. She dashed forward. So did Elsie. She caught Dick's hand and vigorously pulled while Elsie caught at Roly. Suddenly Julie was aware of a pungent smell of gum and resin, and a sweet spiciness which reminded her of lavender oil.

Then she saw what she had not seen before. Some of those branches were glistening as with rain; some were shining as though with wax. She realised then what had happened.

Larry had not merely constructed a formidable hedge, but as an extra precaution had treated that hedge with cloying gums and resin so as to trap securely anyone who tried to force a way through it. The harder she and Elsie pulled, the more firmly fixed did Dick and Roly become. They were literally glued into the hedge now—and suffering a thousand stabs from nettles with every movement they made.

"Oh, dear," Julie panted in dismay, and at last stopped. "What are we going to do?"

"For goodness' sake do something," Roly moaned. "I'm punctured in about a million places. Gosh, I feel like a sieve. Trust that rotter to think up some miserable dodge like this!"

"And trust you," broke in a scornful voice, "to disobey orders!"

Julie wheeled, a sharp little gasp on her lips. She had not heard the approach of Larry Woodstock in his bare feet, but there he was, his face rather grimly amused as he took in the scene.

Just for a second the fury ebbed out of her.

Just for a moment she felt that old sense of respect for him. The next she was facing up to him.

"You did this!" she blazed. "If you mean I put up the fence, of course I did," he said. "But I didn't land Roly and Mardie in that mess. Still—and dragging out his axe he strode forward; with a few shrewd, well-placed blows he cut the prisoners free—I hope," Larry said severely, "that next time you get an order—whether it's a spoken or a written one—you'll obey it."

Roly glowered. "But, dash it, you don't own this island! What right have you to fence off that monument?"

"I'm boss," Larry eyed him. "I've a particular reason for keeping busybodies away from the Golden Palm. You wouldn't have hesitated to put a fence round anything you didn't want other people to trespass on, would you?"

They eyed him in silence for a moment. "But—but why should you wish to keep others out?" Elsie blurted.

"That is my business," Larry replied. "Is it?" Suddenly Julie was furious again. "Are you sure of that, Larry Woodstock? Or is it my business as well?" She stared him straight in the eyes as she found his gaze upon her. "Is it entirely your business—or is it mine as well?" she repeated.

He frowned. "I'm afraid I don't get you, Julie." "No?" Julie's eyes flashed. "Then let me make myself clear," she said. "You erected that fence—not to keep Dick and Roly out—but to keep me out. And you wanted to keep me out because there's some secret here connected with this locket."

She did not miss the start he gave. Did not miss the momentary confusion in his face. Her heart jumped to see that she had struck right home.

"That's what you think, eh?" Julie retorted. "That is what I'm certain of," Julie retorted. "O.K." He shrugged. "Then there's nothing more to be said, is there?" Again the old bitter smile was on his face. "Have it your way. I put the fence here because there's some secret that belongs to you, and I'm trying to keep you from it. Let's leave it at that!"

"It's the truth, isn't it?" Julie challenged. "You say so!" he told her.

"What is the secret, then?" He paused a long moment before replying, and when he spoke there was something in his face and in his voice which momentarily robbed Julie of her anger.

"I'm not going to tell you," he said deliberately. "If there is a secret—and I'm not saying there is—the best thing that can be done about it is to leave it alone. Secrets on this island aren't very safe, Julie, if they happen to be shared, and maybe you'll remember that before long. Now, come on," he said briskly.

And he walked away, leaving Julie staring and frowning—wondering. What did he mean by that?

For she knew now that whatever secret bound her and Larry Woodstock was known to him, and him alone. She knew by what he said that he was going to keep that secret. He was never going to share that secret with her or anyone else.

Suddenly she found her anger rising in hot mutiny against the self-ordained boss of the island.

"But I won't be beaten! He shan't get away with it," she resolved fiercely. "And he shan't keep me away from the Golden Palm. Boss, or no boss, hedge or no hedge, I'll find that secret for myself!"

The secret of the Golden Palm monument must indeed be of great importance for Larry to go to such lengths to safeguard it. You will find many excitements in next Friday's chapters of this splendid serial.

The Boy Actor Didn't Realise That Nat Piggot & Co. Were Pulling His Leg. He Really Believed The K House Boys And Girls Were His Enthusiastic Admirers!

The MERRYMAKERS at College



By DAPHNE GRAYSON

ANDY THE-ACTOR

"NO tennis for you on Saturday, Don—that old wrist's put you clean out of the match," Sally Warner said, with a little sigh. "The question is—"

"How are we going to beat the Grasshoppers without you?" finished Johnny Briggs. "They're the strongest club in the town, and you were our chief hope, Don!" pouted Fay Manners.

"What about Andy?" asked Don Weston. "Andy Ruggles."

"Why, of course! Andy Ruggles is the man!" Sally brightened at once. "I know he tries his hand at everything else under the sun and flops at most of them—but I'll give old Andy full marks for his tennis. Why didn't we think of him before! I'll go and see him right now!"

She skipped out of the Merry-makers' clubhouse and sped across the campus to Andy's chalet. A lad of a thousand surprises was Andy Ruggles. He dabbled in everything, throwing himself heart and soul into one craze after another. His failures were legion, and his one and only success was tennis.

Sally was running up the steps of his chalet, when with a shock she paused.

"Vengeance!" she heard a voice roar within. "Vengeance shall be mine, and though I strike you down to your bended knees, strike I shall, without pity, without mercy—"

"Andy!" gasped Sally, and burst open the door.

Then her eyes popped, for Andy Ruggles was all alone in the chalet, his dark, curly hair covered by a flowing white wig, his gesticulating hand holding only a harmless script of paper.

"Gosh, I thought you were planning something villainous, Andy!" laughed Sally. "What's the latest?"

"Acting!" said Andy, his eyes shining as he threw off his wig. "Haven't you heard, Sally? I'm going in for film acting. Taking it up as a career. My talent's been noticed—"

"Wh-what?" gasped Sally.

"And I've just had the encouragement I needed. Everyone's got their talents, Sally, and acting happens to be mine. Listen!" And he grabbed up his wig again, thrusting the

script eagerly into her hand. "You know something about acting yourself. Watch this! Here's me in the tragic role!"

Tragic it was to watch him! Andy leaped about the room like an enraged bull. If he'd been putting on a burlesque show he couldn't have overdone it more.

"This is only a slight impression, Sally," he said, pausing for breath. "I shall put more punch into it on Saturday—"

"Say, I want you for Saturday, Andy," gasped Sally. "Don's crooked his wrist. Can't play in the tennis match. I want you to take his place!"

"I've no time for tennis, Sally, and Saturday's off, anyway!" cried Andy. "Didn't you hear? Fiske's uncle is coming here on Saturday! The great film producer! He's coming here to see me act—"

"Good!" cut in Sally. "But you're playing tennis for us in Don's place, Andy, understand?"

"I would if I possibly could, Sally, but—"

"We're banking on you to save the match for us—you're our star player now, Andy!" And Sally added solemnly: "A good player never misses his call, eh?"

"But you don't understand, Sally," began Andy waving his arms again.

"Practice to-day, three o'clock sharp, and it's very important!" stressed Sally. "We've got to try you out with each of the other chaps, Andy, to find the right partner for you!"

"Yes, but—" Andy's wig flopped over his mouth, muffling his protestations.

"Three sharp, Andy—don't forget!" And Sally escaped before Andy could say anything else.

Don & Co. met her outside the chalet, and chuckled heartily at the picture of Andy Ruggles as an actor.

"The tennis will cure the acting craze," said Don confidently.

"Mustn't encourage it," put in Johnny.

"Funny thing, but he says he's been getting encouragement—" began Sally, then paused oddly as they stepped into the cafeteria.

Sidney Fiske and his cronies of K House were bunched at a table by the window, all chortling excitedly over a newspaper Nat Piggot was showing them.

"Andy Ruggles'll lap this up like a cat laps

milk," Piggot was burbling. "By the time he's finished acting the goat on Saturday it'll be the biggest smack in the eye for J House that—Ahem!"

He broke off with a cough as he saw Sally & Co., and with lightning glee he hid the newspaper away in his pocket.

"What's all this about Andy Ruggles and J House, Piggy?" asked Sally.

"Oh, nothing—just talking generally about funny people," grinned Piggot.

Sally said nothing as Doc and Johnny and Fay joined her at the counter—but she took note of the newspaper which Piggot had stuffed into his pocket.

"Only J House could have produced an actor like Ruggles," he was saying, amid laughter. "You should have seen him when I told him that about your Hollywood uncle, Sid! We'll see some fun on Saturday!"

The K House crowd left then. Immediately Sally asked Mrs. Barwell for the local newspaper.

It was the latest number of the "Roxburgh Mirror" that the obliging manageress of the cafeteria handed over. A paragraph in heavy black type stared out at them from the front page, and the chums were wide-eyed as they read:

"COLLEGE BOY ACTOR."

"We hear that Andy Ruggles, of Roxburgh College, has shown such striking talent as an actor that Jabez J. Fiske, the famous film producer, is coming from Hollywood especially to see him on Saturday. The City Hall has been hired for the occasion, so that Ruggles may display his ability to full advantage, and it is confidently believed that the young actor will be signed up for a sensational film contract—"

"That Piggot!" groaned Sally. "He's paid for this spoof to be printed! Oh, it's too bad!"

"Andy'll believe it, too!" gasped Don. "He would till he found himself at the City Hall—then he'd just turn to a jelly!" added Sally. "And on Saturday, too!"

Quite apart from wanting Andy that day to save the tennis match for them, they all felt it was up to them to save him from this jape! But it would need tactful handling, as Sally quickly realised.

"Everybody in the town will be there—everybody except Fiske's uncle!" Johnny was fuming. "I'm going to tell Andy! I'll open the fathead's eyes—"

"You won't Johnny! Please leave this to me!" implored Sally. "We know what Andy's like when he gets anything on the brain! He's crazy on this acting at the moment, and we've got to handle him tactfully—not get his back up!"

With that she wandered across to Andy's chalet for a chat with him. But she was just, too late.

"Tis a far, far better thing I do than I have ever done!" boomed a voice from Andy's open doorway. And with a wig in one hand, and his arms waving theatrically, Andy departed before Sally could reach him—disappearing along the path to K House quarters!

A little uneasy, Sally turned back to the Merry-makers' clubhouse and got busy drawing up the plans for Saturday's match, not forgetting to write off to the Grasshoppers, notifying them that Don Weston would be replaced by Andy Ruggles.

It all took time, and it was considerably after three when Sally hurried down to the tennis courts, to join the team at practice. To her dismay, she found everyone hanging about impatiently, and play had not even begun.

"What's holding you up?" she cried.

"We're waiting for Andy Ruggles!" came an exasperated chorus.

"We thought you'd bring him along with you, Sally," cried Johnny. "Where is he?"

Sally's apprehension grew. Until this moment it had not really occurred to her that

Andy was taking his acting more seriously than the tennis.

GOOD INTENTIONS



"DO get cracking, everybody! I'll find Andy!" gasped Sally.

She turned and dashed away, but Johnny and Don came dashing after her. They, too, had their qualms.

"Didn't you see Andy, Sally?"

"I didn't get a chance to speak to him!" jerked out Sally.

"The last time I saw him he was going into K House—"

"Let's look there, then!"

Breathlessly they made tracks towards K House. An unusual quiet seemed to hang over this rival territory to-day. But out of the stillness she heard a pulsating voice echoing somewhere—and it seemed to emanate from K House community-room.

Finger on lips, she led the way on tiptoe to the half-open door.

It was an incredible sight that met their gaze.

K House were sitting in audience before the platform, row after row of them, Nat Piggot and his cronies in front, and all their faces as solemn as owls. On the platform, a flowing white robe draped over his shoulders, Andy Ruggles was leaping and prancing in a feverish display of dramatic acting.

"A horse, a horse!" he was roaring. "My kingdom for a horse! Let fools defy me, let knaves try to thwart me, yet will I ride roughshod over yonder moor, trampling down and cr-r-rushing all who—"

"Hey! Who's that?" came a sudden yell from Nat Piggot.

He had spotted Sally & Co., and was quick to use the situation to his own advantage. "They've come to guy you, Andy!" he shouted. "It's a shame!"

Andy, from the platform, was glaring with indignation.

"There's nothing puts an actor off more than an interruption like that!" he said. "I'm surprised at you, Sally. You've made me forget my lines, and—"

"Did you forget you've got a date with us, Andy—on the tennis courts?" began Sally. But then Johnny barged in like a bull in a china shop.

"We've been waiting half an hour for you. Can't you see that these K House folks are only guying you? They've got you here to see you make a clown of yourself. They know jolly well you can't act for monkey nuts!"

"L-look here, Briggs—" blazed Andy.

"Throw them out of here!" yelled Piggot.

Sally & Co. were swept out like chaff before the wind, and, with a click, the door was locked behind them—leaving their crack tennis player in the hands of their rivals.

"Oh, Johnny—" And Sally looked at him hopelessly.

"Well," gasped Johnny. "I only said what was true, didn't I? Anyhow, you can smooth him over."

That was Sally's only hope, and that evening she went along to Andy's chalet and put her head round the door.

"What do you want? I'm busy!" she was greeted stiffly.

It was only with an effort that Sally kept her face straight. Andy was sitting before a mirror with a brand new box of make-up, and as he turned coldly towards her he was wearing a false moustache which wobbled comically.

"I came to see you about the tennis, Andy, but I'll give you a hand with this make-up while we're talking, shall I?" Sally said, sitting down beside him.

"I'm not interested in tennis—after this afternoon—" began Andy.

"Let's try these other eyebrows on, Andy—those don't match the moustache," went on Sally, reaching for the wig box.

"—And I don't want any help, thank you!" he ended, though his reproachful eyes were watching her with livelier interest.

Off came his false brows, and deftly Sally replaced them with another pair. She fixed his moustache straight, and skilfully she dabbed away some of his overdone greasepaint. A grateful look began to kindle in Andy's eyes.

"I don't suppose you really meant to spoil my show this afternoon," he muttered. "Not you, anyway. You're quite a good actress yourself."

"I don't take it as seriously as you, Andy," she said.

"Oh, you will, Sally!" And he was glowing again with his customary enthusiasm. "I tell myself I can tackle any part. Drama, comedy, tragedy—"

"And tennis," Sally put in eagerly. "You don't realise it, Andy, but you can play a marvellous game of tennis when you put your heart into it."

"Jolly nice of you to say so, Sally!" he enthused. "It's just the same with acting—"

"And on Saturday, Andy, you're going to excel yourself!"

"Rather! You'll have to come along and see me, Sally, at the City Hall—"

"You'll put up the show of your life, won't you, Andy, and you'll lick the Grasshoppers clean off the courts!"

"Courts?" He blinked at her. "Oh, I see. You're talking about the tennis, but—"

"Sure! Saturday's the day!" And she smiled back at him. "We're banking on you, Andy. You won't let us down, will you?"

"But I was talking about the show I'm giving, Sally, on Saturday evening—"

"After the match, you mean? That's at three!" Sally hurried on. "We've only got one more day for practice, Andy, so you'll be sure to turn out to-morrow afternoon, won't you? The team was terribly disappointed because you didn't turn out to-day. They blame me for it—"

Andy was the soul of good nature, and he couldn't rush to Sally's rescue fast enough.

"Blame you, do they?" he cried indignantly. "I'll come down to practice to-morrow, and I'll have something to say about that."

His righteous indignation was so intense that he came to practice next afternoon, and he put up the best game J House had ever seen him play.

The tennis team crowded round him after the game, wringing his hand, and slapping him on the back in their enthusiasm.

"Good old Andy! We've got the right man for to-morrow's match!" cried Rene Chalmers, echoed enthusiastically by all. But that enthusiasm was a little dimmed when it was rumoured that Andy had a date with K House that evening.

"Look, boys!" Sally said to Don and Johnny. "I'll go and see Piggy, asking him to cut this joke out. And if he won't, I'll leave you two to persuade him—"

"In our own way!" smiled Johnny.

They knew there was something in the wind as soon as they marched into K House quarters. Where was Piggot?

It was Johnny who was the first to spot him, hovering in the doorway of the K House kitchen, a basket in his hands, and with him was Sidney Fiske, peeping out to see if the coast was clear.

The chums drew back swiftly behind cover. Fiske evidently hadn't seen them. He gave a signal. Then out stepped Piggot and went hurrying after him with the basket.

Sally & Co. stiffened. That basket was full of over-ripe tomatoes!

At a safe distance they followed Piggot as far as the small lecture hall. They saw him dart into the hall with his basket, then hurriedly close the door behind him. But there was a notice pinned on the outside of that door:

RESERVED, 7 to 8 p.m.,

for

PRIVATE DRAMATIC DISPLAY

By A. RUGGLES.

Sally & Co. could hardly contain their excitement as they crept away.

"So that's the idea!" said Johnny, as soon as they were outside. "K House knew they couldn't get away with it to-morrow, so they've fixed it for to-night—to get poor old Andy up on that platform, and then pelt him with tomatoes!"

"At seven o'clock!" breathed Don.

"Just as well to know!" said Sally grimly.

"Boys, I think we can promise a nice little surprise to Piggy & Co!"

She was thinking fast. Something must be done, not only to spoil Nat Piggot's little plan, but also to open Andy's eyes to what had been in store for him.

Dusk came and the college clock boomed seven.

Sally & Co. stole back to the small lecture hall. It was packed now with Piggot's followers and the door locked. The chums had expected that. Don and Johnny had already hidden a ladder in the bushes under the window. They fished it out now, reared it up against the wall, and noiselessly all three climbed to the top of it.

The drawn curtains concealed them from within. But the window was open, and it stood just above the platform. They could hear Andy's voice rising and throbbing. They could hear K House solemnly applauding him. It was obviously their intention to play up to Andy to the limit before letting him know what they really thought of him and his acting.

"But they shan't!" Sally vowed to herself. "Now, boys!" she added aloud, as they all clambered on to the window-sill.

Don flung the window wide. Johnny flung the curtains apart.

"Midnight, and all is still!" Andy's voice was booming. "But, hist! What do I hear—"

With three violent bumps Sally & Co. descended upon the platform. From the curtains above them came a squelching shower of tomatoes. They sat up dazedly, and the first thing they knew was that Andy was deluged from wig to feet in ripe red tomato juice.

"Ow! Ouch! Sally, how could you? And you two! I'll—!" Andy was incoherent with fury. "That's the second time you've spoiled my act! You just wait—"

The chums gazed to the window, and the next thing they knew was that a booby trap had been fixed for them behind those curtains—by Piggot!

"Shame! Shame!" he was yelling, while his housemates were all smothering their laughter. "Don't you stand for it, Andy!"

"They're jealous of you, Andy!" shouted Sidney Fiske. "They're trying to put you off your stroke for to-morrow night! Trying to do you out of my uncle's film contract!"

"We'll bounce 'em out of here, Andy!" And Piggot & Co. made a rush for the chums.

Sally staggered out of their reach. She heard herself desperately appealing to Andy, trying to explain.

"You've got to listen to me, Andy! It's all a—!" But Sidney Fiske grabbed her off the platform before she could finish.

"Don't you talk to me, Sally Warner!" stormed Andy, his face white with wrath under the cascading tomato juice. "I don't want to speak to you again. You're as bad as Briggs and Weston. You don't get me playing in your match to-morrow. I'm done with you and your tennis, too! Finished!"

That was the last word Sally & Co. heard as they were shot out of the hall—but they knew he meant it!

ANDY'S BIG MOMENT



IT was shortly before three next afternoon, and a strange scene was taking place within the locked doors of the Merry-makers' clubhouse.

The anxious tennis team were clustered round Sally & Co., all gazing on in a state of tension.

"Seems to me, Sally, you've gone as crazy as Andy—" began Rene Chalmers nervously.

"I don't think so!" breathed Sally. "Andy's our only hope of winning the match, and we've got to get him to play somehow. You girls buzz off now and meet the Grasshoppers when they come!"

"And you chaps buzz off to the boiler-house and hide!" Johnny said in excitement. "You know what you've got to do!"

"Make a good job of it!" added Don.

The team cast awed and dubious looks upon him as they trooped out. Sally locked the door again immediately they were gone. Eagerly she seized a fresh stick of greasepaint from Johnny and resumed her own mysterious task.

Don was sitting in a chair before the mirror, a large towel swathed round his neck. A film magazine lay open on the table, displaying a photo of the famous Hollywood producer, Mr. Jabez J. Fiske. While Sally worked deftly with greasepaint and eyebrow pencil, Don's features were gradually assuming a curious likeness to Mr. Fiske.

"It's a bit of luck he wears those dark specs," chortled Sally. "You'll find a pair just like them. Fay, in the big prop basket!"

While Fay fished out the blue spectacles, Johnny triumphantly produced a large panama hat—the twin double of that worn by Mr. Fiske. It would amply cover any faults in the curly black wig which Sally was now arranging in the style of the photo.

"I'm not saying his own nephew wouldn't know you, Don," murmured Johnny, moving with relish to the door, "but you won't have to worry about Nephew Sidney—or Piggot, either!"

Johnny hadn't dabbled in ventriloquism for nothing. When he rang up Sidney Fiske on the college telephone his voice sounded exactly like the curt, impatient voice of Mr. Grittal.

"Hallo, is that Fiske? What time is your uncle expected here?"

"Not till seven, sir!" came Fiske's voice inquiringly.

"H'm! Well, a reporter, or someone, is hanging about the grounds, asking to see you and Piggot, for some reason," snapped Johnny in Grittal-like tones. "I don't know why he should loiter outside the boiler-house—"

"We'll see him at once, sir! Thank you, sir!" came Fiske's voice hastily.

Evidently both he and Piggot were alarmed. Perhaps they thought that the reporter's visit had something to do with their spoof announcement in the local "Mirror." They wasted not a moment in rushing to the boiler-house—which was an out-of-the-way shed at the back of the caretakers' quarters.

"Where is he?" muttered Fiske, as they approached the door.

"I don't see any reporter here—" began Piggot suspiciously, craning his head inside. "O-ouch!"

He went sprawling into the darkness, propelled by unseen hands. Fiske went sprawling on top of him. They had only time to recognise the laughs of their J House rivals. Then the door slammed and they heard the click of the key, locking them inescapably in the boiler-house.

Ten minutes later a portly figure in panama hat and smoked spectacles emerged from the Merry-makers' clubhouse.

"Good luck, Don!" Sally breathed in his ear. "Allow me to escort you, Mr. Fiske!" said Johnny, in a perfect imitation of Mr. Grittal's voice.

"Remember, Johnny, you've got to be heard

and not seen!" warned Don—and with portly gait he made for Andy Ruggles' chalet.

ANDY was pacing up and down before the mirror, rehearsing his lines for to-night's great "audition," when voices outside his chalet suddenly held him spellbound.

"Ruggles is not expecting you so early," Mr. Fiske, and he may be a little nervous—

"I would prefer to take him by surprise, thank you, Mr. Grittal. A gifted actor should not be nervous!"

Then a single tread sounded on the chalet steps. Nervous? Never had Andy been less nervous or more elated in his whole life. He made a bound for the door as it opened.

"Mr. Fiske!" he cried.

"Ah, you know me, my lad?" asked his visitor.

Know him? Andy knew that portly figure at once by his photos, even if he had not already heard his name mentioned by Mr. Grittal.

"Everyone knows you, Mr. Fiske—but I want you to know me," grinned Andy, his delight overcoming all modesty. "I'm Andy Ruggles. I'm the chap you've heard about, and I don't mind telling you I'm the actor you're looking for. No need for me to blow my own trumpet. Look, I've got some parts here I was just running through—"

"Now wait a moment, young man!" And the visitor stood with his back to the window, as if the light perhaps hurt his eyes in spite of the dark specs. "Hollywood's cram full of people who can act—but a modern film actor has to have many other accomplishments. Particularly sports. Are you any good at sports?"

"Sure!" said Andy, waving that aside. "But when it comes to acting—"

"Can you ride—box—swim—"

"Gee, yes—I take a cut at everything, Mr. Fiske!" cried Andy, with complete truth. "Perhaps that's what gives me my inspiration for—"

"What about games? Do you play football? Baseball? Tennis?" And his visitor repeated that question sharply: "Tennis? A man's only half an actor on the screen to-day, you know, if he doesn't play a good game of tennis!"

"As a matter of fact, that's my best game, Mr. Fiske—when I've got time for it!" laughed Andy. "They were begging me to turn out for a tennis match to-day, but—"

"And you stuck in here instead, browsing over these scripts?" And Andy jumped at the disbelief he heard in his visitor's voice.

"Only because I had to get my speaking parts pat for to-night—" he began breathlessly.

"But all actors can speak a part, but they can't all play tennis!" And the panama hat shook deprecatingly. "You've lost a good chance, Ruggles!"

Not if Andy knew it! He saw his chances doubled and his film triumph certain—if only he could win back the opportunity he had flung away! With one lightning hand he grabbed up his racket—with the other he grabbed his distinguished visitor.

"You come down to the courts, Mr. Fiske!" he cried. "It's not too late! I'll show you!"

The match had already begun, but Andy was undaunted. Like an actor making a superlative stage entrance, he burst on to the crowded courts with his illustrious companion. He swept him into the seat of honour in the visitors' stand. His gaze flashed to the pavilion, and in feverish excitement he saw Sally standing aloof on the terrace.

Only then did Andy's heart falter. But he didn't hesitate.

"Sally!" He pelted breathlessly up the steps to her. His eyes were imploring. "Sally, you know I think the world of you—you know I didn't mean a word I said, and only you can help me now. Let me play in the match—please!"

He didn't see the sunbeams dancing in Sally's eyes.

"Eat, Andy, you said you wouldn't have anything to do with it—," she began in tones of hurt reproach.

"I know—I'm sorry. Please let me play, Sally!" he rushed on. "This means my chance! My big chance in films! Mr. Fiske is going to watch me!"

"All right, Andy—you shall play," said Sally forgivingly.

"Gee, thanks, Sally, I'll never forget this!" whooped Andy, and made a dive into the pavilion.

He was out again in three minutes, spruce in tennis shorts—just in time to take his place in the decisive game against the Grasshoppers' crack players.

Sally held up her thumbs to the disguised Don, then hurried jubilantly to join him in the visitors' stand.

"Good old Don, I knew you'd manage Andy!" she laughed, giving him a gleeful pat on his panama hat. "That's the next best thing to having you playing for us! We'll save him from Piggy's jape to-night, whatever happens, and—"

"Sally, look!" came a gasp from Don.

Sally looked, and her heart gave a plunge.

Approaching the visitors' stand came a portly figure in large panama hat and smoked spectacles. His hand grimly clutched a folded newspaper—his white suit bore the unmistakable Hollywood cut.

Sally grabbed Don's arm in dumbstruck dismay, and the pair just melted away. They had recognised the real Mr. Jabez J. Fiske!

"BRAVO, Andy!"

"What a winner!"

"ANDY RUGGLES!"

Deafening cheers roared out from J House, but a lump seemed to choke in Sally's throat. She had seen Andy Ruggles play the game of his life. Five gruelling sets, and he had won the last point! He had won the match for Roxburgh—fired and inspired by an ambition that could never be fulfilled!

Sally turned to Don beside her. His disguise lay hidden in his pavilion locker. But the real Mr. Fiske sat like a grim panama-hatted spectre in the seat that Don had so hastily vacated.

"You cut off now, Don, and let Piggot and Fiske out of the boiler-house!" Sally bade him unsteadily. "I'll meet poor old Andy. I—I feel just awful about this!"

Then her heart turned over. Andy was running gleefully from the court—he was making a bee-line for Mr. Fiske! He hadn't spotted the difference in that panama-hatted figure! His partner Johnny knew no better and was running with him.

Sally flew to warn him—but Andy was too quick for her.

"How do you stand for tennis, Mr. Fiske?" he cried, vaulting over the rail. "It's nothing to my acting, of course, but—but—" And then Andy's voice gasped away as he beheld a total stranger. "Say, y-you're not Mr. Fiske!" he stuttered.

"Yes, Andy!" And Sally pulled up beside him as the grim-looking producer rose to his feet. "This is the real Mr. Fiske! The other was just a—harmless pretence—"

"A heartless jape—a fraud!" cut in Mr. Fiske in booming wrath. "I know all about it! Did someone impersonate me, my lad, pretending he was offering you a film contract?"

"Y-yes, sir!" faltered Andy, and his face had gone white—but not whiter than Sally's.

"And you believed it, laddie?"

"Yes, sir!" And even in his bitter disappointment Andy's confidence shone through bravely. "My heart's set on film acting, Mr. Fiske, and I know I can do it! I know—"

"You can play a rattling good game of tennis, laddie, and it's not all film actors who can do that!" put in Mr. Fiske kindly. "I'm real fond of tennis. I've enjoyed this match. That's why

I came here early when I heard about it. It gave me an idea while I was watching you."

"An idea for a college film, Mr. Fiske?" Sally suggested breathlessly. "With Andy playing in it?"

"Something like that!" And Mr. Fiske looked at her, and Sally could see that he was trying to be kind to Andy. "Yes, that's a capital idea, young lady! Make up for the lad's disappointment. Make a good film, too!"

"And you'll book me in it, Mr. Fiske?" cried Andy, radiant with enthusiasm.

"Sure, I'll give you a tennis-playing part!" agreed Mr. Fiske.

"And a speaking part, sir?" pleaded Andy excitedly.

Mr. Fiske met Sally's eyes and coughed.

"Well, we'll see how you figure in the tennis part first—," he began non-committally, and then broke off with a sudden grim change in his face.

Two youths came running somewhat uncertainly to meet him. One was his nephew, Sidney Fiske. And behind him was Nat Piggot. Both bore smudges from the boiler-house on their rather anxious-looking faces.

"Oh, hello, uncle. I didn't expect you so early—" Sidney Fiske began confusedly—and that was as far as he got.

"I know you didn't, you young scamp!" boomed Mr. Fiske, and he waved the folded newspaper in Sidney's face. "I went into your chalet, and this is what I found! A spoof item in this paper, making out that I was coming here to make a film star of this lad, Andy Ruggles! Thought you'd have a good grin at his expense, did you? I'll bet it was Piggot's idea! Well, this young lady's given me a better idea, so that Andy's going to get the laugh instead—," and he patted Sally's shoulder approvingly—"and now I'll tell you two what I think of you and your funny jape!"

Sally moved away arm-in-arm with the elated Andy. She had gained him a part in a film, even if it was only a tennis part. He could afford to forget the jape played on him by Piggot and Sidney Fiske.

He stood Sally & Co. treat in the cafeteria to celebrate his great triumph—and to this day he doesn't dream that it was Don who had posed as the first Mr. Fiske.

(End of this week's story.)

In next Friday's **GIRLS' CRYSTAL** you will find another high-spirited complete story featuring those cheery chums, Sally Warner & Co.

HER FEUD WITH THE BOY DETECTIVE

By
RENEE FRAZER

Avril liked the boy detective, but in order to protect her secret, she was compelled to engage in a desperate battle of wits with him.

Don't miss this grand story. It will appear complete in next Friday's

GIRLS' CRYSTAL

The CASE of THE Frightened Girl



JUNE'S THRILLING RIDE

JUNE GAYNOR, niece and partner of Noel Raymond, the famous young detective, went to Glen Hall, as the guest of Mr. Henley, to solve the mystery of a spectral figure known as the Green Rajah, who was out to find the Lost Secret of the Purple Mountains. The clue to this was a crystal goblet hidden by the former owner of Glen Hall, Colonel Raikes.

June discovered the Green Rajah to be Roger Standish, one of the guests at Glen Hall, but she was unable to prove it. Everyone else believed the trickster was Jack Linton, a boy who had disappeared from Glen Hall and was hiding in a cave.

He told June that he was out to prove the innocence of his friend, Ronnie Baring, who had once been secretary to the colonel, and who was now a fugitive from the police.

Roger Standish arranged a trap for Jack, but, thanks to June, he escaped. The two made their way to the top of a mountain, pursued by Roger Standish and his men, intending to make their escape by means of an aerial railway running from an iron tower across the valley. But, to their dismay, when they reached the tower, they found the ladder padlocked up.

"**Q**UICK, Jack, or it'll be too late!"

Desperately June shouted to the boy who was striving to batter open the padlock which secured the ladder to the foot of the tower.

"Shan't be a tick! I think it's giving!" panted Jack, and again he hammered with the heavy stone.

Unable to do anything, June stood there, her agitated gaze on Roger Standish and those other climbing men, now very near the summit of the mountain.

In another few moments they would gain the peak, and then—

June gave a frantic gasp.

To be captured now would be unbearable. Even more unbearable was the possibility of the Green Rajah's triumph. And he would triumph if she and Jack were caught, for with them out of the way he would be able to con-

By PETER LANGLEY

tinue at his leisure his quest for the Lost Secret of the Purple Mountains.

"Done it!" Suddenly there came an exultant cry from Jack, and, scrambling breathlessly to his feet, he beckoned to the girl detective. "Give me a hand, will you, June?" he asked.

Eagerly June ran to his side, and between them they managed to rear up the long ladder and plant it firmly against the side of the high tower from which ran the cables of the aerial railway.

"Up you go!" Jack panted. "I'll hold the ladder steady, and—"

But a savage shout drowned his words. Roger Standish, almost at the top of the precipitous slope, had seen them and guessed their daring purpose.

"No, you don't!" he bellowed. "You don't escape this time!"

Clinging to the rock ledge with one hand, he threw his shot-gun up on to the flat summit, then made to clamber after it.

Jack swung round in dismay. One glance about him told him the dismal truth. He and June could never hope to make their getaway now. Long before they could get aboard the tub which swung from the cable Roger Standish would be on them.

His face grim and white, the boy turned, and his fingers closed around June's arm.

"Do you think you've got the nerve to make the trip on your own?" he asked.

June regarded him with wide, startled eyes. "On my own?" she gulped. "Why, what do you mean? I'm not going to leave you here."

"I'm afraid you must. Someone's got to hold Standish back."

"But—"

"It's no use arguing, June. It's hopeless for the two of us to try to get away. Here!" Stuffing his hand into his pocket, he pulled out a crumpled scrap of paper. "Take the clue. Eva will translate it for you. You'll find her with Granny Benton—at Waterfall Cottage at High Tor. Tell her—"

He finished with a cry of alarm as he saw that Roger Standish had now gained the summit and was reaching for his shot-gun.

"Quick, June—quick!" he urged.

In distress, June stood there, but already Jack had turned, was rushing to where Roger Standish was picking up his gun.

"Stay where you are!" the man roared. "Don't either of you dare move!"

Menacingly the shot-gun swung up, but like a flash Jack was on him, bowling him over and flinging himself on top of him. The gun, wrenched from Standish's grasp, went clattering down the mountainside, then the pair of them were struggling fiercely, rolling over and over.

Torn with indecision, June still lingered until other climbing figures loomed into view, and there came a frantic shout from Jack.

"Go, June—go! I'm relying on you!" he gasped.

The urgency, the command, in his voice decided June. Grabbing the ladder, she went scurrying up it—up and up, until at last she was level with the iron platform at the top of the tower. There she turned, then gave a loud gasp. For the other pursuers had now caught up with their leader and, crashing past Jack, had reached the foot of the ladder. Next moment heavy feet clattered on the rungs.

June, her heart thudding, breathlessly climbed into the swinging tub. At the front was fastened a lever. She guessed that it was a brake which held the tub firm, but as yet she made no attempt to operate it. Her gaze was still centred on that plucky figure down below, now struggling against half a dozen adversaries. Though his courage had won a respite for her, it seemed that the odds would be too much for him.

And then abruptly June jerked her eyes away from the scene of the fight. A man's head and shoulders had appeared above the edge of the platform; a furious hand lunged out towards her.

"Out of there! It's no use trying to escape!"

But June heard no more. Mechanically her fingers had closed around the lever; mechanically she had given it a pull.

Sw-ooo-sh!

The result took her breath away. The tub, as if shot from a cannon, went hurtling out into space. The wheel which suspended it from the thick cable screamed wildly, and, swinging and rocking, the tub plunged away from the mountain-top, speeding out across the valley.

Faster and faster! June had to hold on like grim death. Every moment she half expected to be flung out. She caught one blurred glimpse of the floor of the valley a thousand feet below and hurriedly turned away her head.

On she was whirled, jolted and shaken, and then, before her she saw the high cliff on the other side of the valley. It seemed to be rushing towards her with the speed of an express train. Instantly a new terror seized her.

What would happen when the cable-end was reached?

"The tub'll be battered to bits!" she gasped. "At this speed—"

She gave a startled gulp and clung more desperately than ever to the juddering sides of the tub, for suddenly there had come a clattering crash and the whole tub had seemed to leap up into space. With a juddering thud the wheel settled back again on the wire, then amazingly almost magically, the dizzy speed slackened.

Looking up, June saw the reason why. Fitted at intervals along the cable were iron devices which acted as brakes, and here the wire ran, not steeply downwards, but on the level. Her fears had been unnecessary. Slowly but surely the tub was grinding to a standstill. At last it jerked to a halt, and before her she saw another iron tower, similar to the one she had recently left.

Feeling dazed and exhausted, she climbed shakily out on to the platform and looked anxiously for a ladder. To her relief she saw that an iron one ran down the whole length of the landing tower.

"Thank goodness!" she exclaimed, and a little nervously began the long, difficult descent, to give another gasp of relief when at last her feet touched the solid ground. "Done it!" she cried. "Phew! I wouldn't like to do that trip again."

She gazed back across to the other mountain. What had become of Jack? Had he managed to escape, despite the odds, or—

She strained her eyes desperately, but it was impossible to see at that distance. She gave a little gulp as she realised that the boy who had risked so much for her must have been captured. Then, as her fingers closed involuntarily over the scrap of paper Jack had given her, her lips set fiercely.

"But the Green Rajah hasn't won yet," she told herself. "If only I can get in touch with the Barings—if only I can find the crystal goblet—I may still be able to bowl him out and put things right."

Walking down the path from the deserted quarry she set off along the mountain road, determined to lose no time in seeking out the cottage in which Jack's friends had found refuge.

THE FUGITIVE PAIR



"GOLLY, I must have walked miles! Surely there must be a village somewhere?"

Her thin shoes torn by the rough, flinty road, June came to a halt and flopped down on a fallen rock.

It seemed hours since she had experienced that nightmare journey on the aerial railway, and still only grey mountains hemmed her in.

Gloomily she looked around, but there was not a recognisable landmark in sight.

"High Tor's somewhere on the other side of the lake," she murmured, "but where's the lake? Somewhere on—"

She broke off and jumped eagerly to her feet as she heard the barking of a dog. It came from away to the left, and there, on the open fell, shepherding sheep, was a big brown-and-white collie, and trudging behind him was a fellsman.

With a gasp of delight, June hailed the farmer, then went hurrying to meet him. He regarded her breathless, rather dishevelled figure in surprise.

"Anything the matter, missy?" he asked. "You've strayed a bit far from home, haven't ye?"

Ruefully June nodded.

"I have," she confessed. "In fact, I'm lost. Can you tell me the best way to get to High Tor, please?"

"High Tor?" He opened his eyes in astonishment. "Ee, but that's nearly seven miles away, missy—away over yon mountain. Straight on down the road. But it's a tidy walk."

June thanked him and got to her feet, resolved to reach her destination before dark, if possible.

That narrow, muddy road seemed never-ending. Time and again she had to stop to pick stones out of her shoes, and every muscle in her body seemed to ache.

The sun sank lower and lower, and involuntarily she shivered as the black shadows of the mountains crept across the lonely road, as if to engulf her.

Despite her tiredness, she forced herself to walk more briskly. The sky grew darker. A cold wind sprang up, whistling about her. But the mountain which the kindly fellsman had pointed out was very near now. The road began to rise steeply. Panting, June trudged up the hill, round a shoulder of the mountain, then gave a gasp of relief.

In the distance she caught a gleam of water. The lake! And there, huddled at the foot of the dark hill, was a cluster of houses.

"That must be High Tor!" she exclaimed.

Eagerly she strode on, suddenly to become aware of the clattering fall of water. From a mountain pool a hundred feet above her head spouted a waterfall. It streamed and splashed into a narrow creek which ran back from the lake, and there beside it, standing alone, was a tumble-down grey cottage, with a landing-stage almost at its side door.

Instantly June remembered what Jack had told her.

"Waterfall Cottage!" she cried excitedly. "This must be where Granny Benton lives!"

The place was in darkness, and there came no response to her first knock on the front door. She knocked again, then anxiously waited. Still silence, and then—

Footsteps!

At last someone was coming!

She heard a bolt being withdrawn. Then the door opened just a few inches and she saw a pair of sharp, suspicious eyes peering at her through the crack.

"What d'ye want?" asked a woman's voice, and June dimly discerned an elderly figure with grey hair, holding a shawl about her shoulders.

"Are you Granny Benton?" she asked eagerly.

Slowly the woman inclined her head.

"Yes—that is what they call me," she admitted, her old but remarkably keen eyes never leaving the girl detective's face. "What is it ye want with me?"

"I've come to see the Barings," June explained.

"The Barings?" Instantly that frail figure stiffened. "Then ye've come to the wrong house. There's no one o' that name livin' here."

And Granny Benton made to shut the door. Frantically June pushed a foot over the step.

"Oh, but please!" she gasped. "Jack Linton sent me!"

Pleadingly she regarded the figure in the doorway, and again she became conscious of a piercing scrutiny from those sharp brown eyes.

"So it's Master Jack who sent ye," Granny Benton said slowly.

"Yes—he and I are friends!" gasped June.

For a moment longer the woman regarded her doubtfully, then, seemingly satisfied by what she saw, she slowly let the door swing right open.

"Tis a risk I'm takin'," she muttered, "but if ye're a friend o' Master Jack's, no harm'll be done. Ye can come in. Your friends are upstairs—in the back room."

"Oh, thank you!"

With a gasp of relief, June entered the cottage and went bounding up the oilcloth-covered stairs. At the top was a door, and through the slit between it and the floor a yellow gleam of light stole. She opened the door, and instantly there came a startled gasp from the two occupants seated by the fire.

One was a tall, white-faced boy, ill-looking and yet with frank, likeable features. The other was a dark-haired girl, and at sight of her June gave a cry of pleasure.

"Eva!" she ejaculated.

The girl stared at her with eyes dilated with fear.

"J-June Gaynor," she whispered, and involuntarily she threw a quivering arm around her brother, as if to protect him. "The—the girl detective!"

June nodded and smiled reassuringly at the frightened girl.

"Yes, it's me," she said softly. "But there's no need to be alarmed. I've come as a friend—to help you both."

"To—to help us?"

An eager light flashed into Eva's dark eyes, but she continued to look doubtful.

"Yes; Jack and I have cleared up all the misunderstandings, and now he and I are partners—working together to bowl out the Green Rajah!"

"Gee, that's fine—simply whizzo!"

There came a delighted shout from Ronald Baring, echoed by his sister.

"We'll never be able to thank you," she cried. "But come and sit down," she urged, seeing how dishevelled and tired June looked. "You look as if you've had a tough time."

Gratefully June accepted the vacant chair by the fire, and wearily she nodded.

"I have had, rather," she confessed. "You see—"

At that moment there came a knock on the door, and Granny Benton entered, carrying a well-laden tray. She smiled across at the girl detective.

With sparkling eyes June surveyed the tea, the boiled eggs, the home-made bread-and-butter, and the cakes which the old woman set out before her.

"Oh, thank you!" she exclaimed. "That's a real banquet—and I'm going to enjoy every bit of it!"

She drew her chair up to the table, and when Granny Benton had departed she told the Barings all about the exciting happenings of the past few days. Ronald listened in increasing admiration, but Eva's dark eyes filled with concern.

"What a shame that you should have been humiliated like this!" she breathed. "And I feel it is all our fault!"

June patted the distressed girl's hand.

"Don't let's worry about that," she said. "It's all over now. What we've got to concentrate on is finding the crystal goblet. Do you think you can translate Colonel Raikes' last message?"

As she spoke she pulled from her pocket the crumpled piece of paper Jack had given her and passed it across the table. Eagerly Eva bent over it, while her brother peered over her shoulder.

For a few moments there was silence, then Eva looked up and smiled excitedly across at June.

"This is Sanskrit—Indian writing!" she exclaimed. "Yes, I can read it. You get on with your supper, June. By the time you've finished it I'll have mastered the secret."

THE TRANSLATION OF THE CLUE



"WELL, how goes it?"

Draining her third cup of tea, June pushed back the tray and anxiously regarded the girl on the other side of the table.

Eva frowned at the crumpled clue, wrote another few words with her pencil, then ran a satisfied hand over her dark hair.

"There, it's done!" she cried. "And, Ronnie" excitedly she regarded her brother—"you were right. Colonel Raikes did suspect the truth before he died."

"About me, you mean?" asked the boy, with a gasp.

His sister nodded, her face shining with joy.

"Yes, about you and the Green Rajah! But read what he wrote for yourself."

She pushed across the translation, and excitedly Ronald bent over it. June, almost as excited, craned over the paper also. At long last the secret which had baffled her for so long was to be revealed.

"To-night I have had another heart attack and feel that I may not see the morning. That is why I am writing this last message in Sanskrit and why I intend to hide it. It would be disastrous if the wrong person read it and destroyed it."

"Only this morning did I discover the truth about the Green Rajah, and I only pray that it is not too late to make amends. You will find the evidence, together with my last will and testament, hidden inside the crystal goblet."

(Please turn to the back page.)



The Invisible Japer OF ABBEY SCHOOL

(Continued
from
page 464.)

Miss Shepherd spoke in a voice that fairly trembled with rage.

"This—this is unpardonable," she said. "I warned you all, not long ago, what would be the consequence if this foolish trickster played another outrageous prank. The whole school will be gated from now on, until the culprit is found and punished. That will be all. You may go."

There was an awed hush. Never had such a punishment descended on the whole of Abbey School before.

And Janice, watching Colin, saw his face look for a moment strangely pale and troubled.

They had to go straight into class, so there was no chance of discussion just then. But as soon as lessons were over the storm broke.

"Janice! Our ballet!" Coralie burst out. "I'd invited my people to attend, and now it will all have to be cancelled. We shan't be allowed to go into the town."

"Unless the Invisible Japer is shown up first!" cried Gina.

She turned to Janice, her sharp eyes spiteful. "That tie-pin I grabbed from the joker last night, Janice!" she exclaimed. "It was Colin's, wasn't it? You can't deny it!"

"And Colin, I see, has sneaked off on his own somewhere," Roy put in smoothly. "Strange how he always disappears when we're discussing the Invisible Japer!"

Janice could only stare at them blankly, pale-faced.

All eyes were fixed on Roy Withers now, as he produced several slips of paper from his pocket. He held them aloft, for all to see.

"Here is my suggestion for finally tracking down the culprit," he went on. "We've all got to co-operate, for we shall all suffer until he is found. Now, I've collected all the slips of paper on which the Invisible Japer has written his messages." He paused for a moment, then went on: "All these papers have been torn from the same writing-pad. It's a special kind of pale blue paper, with a water-mark on it. I suggest we search through the studies to try to find the owner of this particular writing-paper."

There was a chorus of approval. Janice, as Form captain, found herself included in the search party with Gina and Roy and Keith Barkley. And, to prove he was scrupulously fair, Roy insisted on starting with his own study.

They worked their way along the corridor, from study to study, without finding a sign of that vital writing-pad. Last of all came Colin's study, at the end of the passage.

Colin's cheery voice bade them come in, and they found him seated on the window-ledge, hands in his pockets, grinning at them.

"You don't mind if we root around a bit, old man?" Roy inquired. "We've all agreed at a Form meeting to have our studies searched."

For a moment the fair boy hesitated, eyeing Roy steadily.

"Go ahead," he said calmly at last. "I dare say you know what you will find."

"I don't know what I shall find," Roy retorted sharply. "But I know what I'm looking for."

Keith and Roy went through the drawers of his little writing-desk. And suddenly from Roy came a sharp exclamation as he held up an object he had just taken from the bottom drawer.

It was a writing-pad of pale blue paper, with

But one more shock awaited her. On her way to the dining-hall she passed Phyl Cornford, head of the school, talking to one of the other prefects. And a scrap of their conversation reached her ears.

"Heard the latest?" Phyl was saying. "The Head told one of the mistresses that if that Invisible Japer starts his tricks again, and gets found out, he'll be expelled, and—"

Janice heard no more, but there was a new chill at her heart now.

Expulsion!

If that was the penalty awaiting the Invisible Japer, surely Colin could not be stupid enough to go on with this reckless prank?

She had a swift vision of how Uncle Rex would feel if Colin was expelled, and the thought of it took away her appetite for breakfast.

THE BLOW FALLS



ALREADY the whole school was buzzing with the news that the Invisible Japer had struck again, and as she tried to eat her porridge Janice heard Colin's name mentioned more than once.

She was dreading the moment when either Coralie or Gina would ask her if she had identified that tie-pin yet. She wouldn't be able to fib to them. Yet what could she say? How could she, now, make even a pretence of defending Colin?

However, for some time after breakfast there would be no chance of awkward questions, she remembered in relief. There was to be a special little ceremony in the school hall, and everyone would have to attend.

The school had been presented with a marble bust of a former headmistress, and after breakfast Phyl Cornford was to unveil it in the big hall.

Janice gazed without interest at the curtains which veiled the statue as she stood in her place. Phyl Cornford took her place on the platform.

"And now," she said, "I have much pleasure in unveiling this marble bust of Miss Tanforth."

With a smile Phyl pulled the silken cord that caused the curtains to draw apart.

And as she did so the whole school gasped in horror.

Perched on the head of the dignified statue was the ancient Roman helmet that had been taken from the museum last night. It was placed at a rakish angle, and looked so comical that, in spite of themselves, one or two giggles broke out from watching girls.

And from the helmet dangled a scrap of paper with a message scribbled on it:

"Just a little idea for brightening up a statue!—THE INVISIBLE JAPER."

For a moment there was tense silence. Then

several sheets already torn off in an irregular way. Roy ripped off another sheet, holding it up to the light.

"The same water-mark as on the Invisible Japer's messages," he said shortly. "And—look at this!"

He fitted one of the joker's messages to the irregular torn edge of a sheet that had already been torn off. There was a brief, tense silence as they saw that it fitted exactly.

"Colin!" The cry was wrung from Janice. "Surely you can explain! Surely you can defend yourself—"

"He can't!" Gina shrieked. "What's the use of it? This proves beyond doubt that Colin Brooks is the Invisible Japer and has got the whole school into trouble and ruined the Fourth Form ballet, and—"

She stopped abruptly as the door opened. Mr. Hayward, Colin's Form-master, stood there. He had obviously heard every word of Gina's accusation.

A stern expression on his face, he gazed at the tense little group of boys and girls in the study.

"I must demand an explanation of this," he said. "Withers! What does it all mean?"

Roy faced the master reluctantly. "I'm sorry to have to say, sir," he replied. "I'm not a sneak, I hope, but—well, the whole school is suffering, and I think it's up to me to tell you what we've found."

In that same reluctant tone he recited all the evidence that had piled up so conclusively against Colin.

"And you, Brooks!" Mr. Hayward's tone was harsh as he turned to Colin. "Have you anything to say to this?"

"Nothing at all, at present, sir," Colin replied quietly.

"Then you had better come with me to the headmistress' study," the master told him.

Colin, unperturbed, went, leaving behind him an awed silence. And then Roy turned to Janice.

"I'm frightfully sorry, Janice," he began. "I know how you must feel about this, but I—"

"Oh, please! Please don't say anything more," Janice breathed. "I—I just can't stand it!"

And because she didn't want them to see the tears that were glistening in her eyes, she fairly ran out of the study. But she could not shut her ears to the grim news that was very soon echoing through the school.

Miss Shepherd had taken Colin's guilt as proved, for apparently he could say nothing to defend himself.

For the time being he was locked up in the detention-room, and to-morrow the Head meant to write to Uncle Rex, asking him to take Colin away from the school.

The worst had happened. That reckless series of practical jokes had ended in—expulsion.

To Janice it seemed as if all the happiness of her school life had suddenly crumbled away.

THE SECRET OF THE MILL



HOW she struggled through the rest of that day Janice scarcely knew.

Now that the culprit was found, the school was no longer gated, of course. Rehearsals for the Fourth Form ballet could proceed as before; but although the ballet had been so dear to Janice's heart, she could take little interest in it now.

And then, just before supper, there occurred a little incident which switched her thoughts away in another direction.

Not feeling in the mood for the noisy chatter of the Common-room, she wandered by herself in the corridors near the school lab.

Wrapped in her own thoughts, she failed to notice the sound of hurrying footsteps around the corner, until suddenly there was a gasp and the tinkle of smashed glass.

"Gosh! I'm sorry, Janice!" Roy Withers' voice broke on her ears.

It was Roy, who had collided with her as he hurried round the corner, carrying a small bottle of chemical which he had evidently just obtained from the lab.

And now the bottle was smashed, and the liquid formed a little pool on the stone flags.

"My fault, I'm afraid," Janice murmured. "And now the bottle is broken. I ought to have looked where I was going."

"Don't worry! I'll soon get some more of that stuff," Roy informed her. "It's for a little experiment we've got to do, as prep for the science class to-morrow."

And then Janice noticed something that set her brain awash.

That faint, but unmistakable smell! Already she had noticed that every relic which the Invisible Japer had taken from the museum had that curious scent clinging to it.

Now this chemical, which Roy had been carrying, had the same elusive scent. She was sure of it!

Did it mean anything? Did it, in some way, connect Roy Withers with those mysterious happenings in the school museum?

Janice's heart beat faster as she moved away, after helping Roy clear up the broken glass.

Up till now she had felt crushed by the weight of evidence against Colin. Much as she longed to believe him innocent, she had not been able to do so. Now a flood of startling new ideas streamed through her mind.

She remembered that it was always Roy, aided by Gina, who had found those proofs against Colin.

It was Roy who had found the scrap of torn blazer on the roof, Roy who had started searching the studies for the writing-pad, Roy who had recited all the evidence against Colin to Mr. Hayward.

Suppose there was some secret purpose behind all this! Suppose Roy, for some reason, had wanted to throw the blame on Colin, had deliberately manufactured those "proofs"!

But why? And what part did that chemical with the elusive scent play in the mystery of the school museum?

There was a gleam in Janice's dark eyes now. Perhaps, after all, she still had a chance to fight for Colin, to prove his innocence!

First she made a discreet inquiry as to what science prep the boys had to do for to-morrow's chemistry lesson. She found that no prep had been set at all.

Again her pulses raced. So Roy had fished to her when he told her he needed that chemical for his school work! That proved, surely, that he had something to hide.

She made another discovery before bed-time. Without letting anyone know, she paid another visit to the museum and checked its contents. She drew a startled breath on discovering that a small brass platter of antique design was missing.

That in itself didn't prove Colin's innocence, of course. He might have taken the platter before being shut in the detention-room. All the same, it gave fresh food for Janice's suspicions against Roy.

"But what can I do about it?" she asked herself for the hundredth time. "I've only got vague suspicions to work on. How can I make sure?"

There was such a short time left, if she was to save Uncle Rex from the dreadful shock of hearing that Colin was to be expelled.

Too excited even to undress, she stood by

her cubicle window, watching the moon swing up behind the old mill on the hilltop.

Suddenly a movement below caught her sharp eyes. A window was opening at the end of the south wing.

"Roy Withers' study!" she breathed. "And someone is climbing out. It looks like Roy himself."

Yes, she was sure it was Roy, creeping stealthily across the school gardens, carrying a parcel of some kind.

Here, at last, was a chance for action, and not for a moment did Janice hesitate. She paused only long enough to throw on a woolly coat, then sped to the near-by fire-escape and ran lightly down it. A few moments later she, too, was flitting through the shadows of the garden, her heart pounding.

She reached the gate in time to see Roy disappearing up the lane beyond, and silently she trailed him. Under the shadow of the old mill he hurried, then took a path that led towards a lonely house on the other side of the hill.

She remembered that Roy's home was only two miles from the school. He was probably going home now; that lonely house must be where his father lived. Janice reached the garden gate just as he disappeared inside the front door.

Light gleamed behind the chinks of a shuttered window, and, quivering with excitement, Janice crept towards it. A murmur of voices reached her ears. Putting her face close to the shutter, she tried to peer through one of the chinks.

Only a small section of the room was visible beyond. Dimly she could glimpse two figures bending over an object of some kind.

"At last we've found it, son!" a harsh voice reached her ears. "Look! You can see the writing beginning to appear. Just a little more of the liquid, and then—"

Surely that must be Roy's father speaking. And the other figure she could see in there was Roy himself. And they were bending over—what? Could it be the antique brass platter from the museum?

If only she could see and hear more plainly! It was some moments before she could distinguish any other words.

"It's hidden in the mill, father!" That was Roy's voice. "This diagram on the platter makes it quite clear where the hiding-place is. Shall we go and get it now? Remember how vitally important it is to us!"

"Better wait a few days, son," his father said. "It won't run away, and we can pick it up at any time in the mill. Wait till young Brooks is cleared right out of the school. It will be safer to wait till he's expelled."

"As he will be to-morrow!" She heard Roy's sneering laugh. "We certainly worked it very cleverly—"

The pair of them in that lighted room moved farther from the window, and try as she would, Janice could hear no more.

Her brain was in a whirl now. What had they discovered on that brass platter? What was hidden in the mill? Why had they plotted against Colin?

She waited in the shadows until the door opened and Roy came out again and went hurrying back in the direction of school. There was nothing for it but to follow him at a safe distance, cudgelling her brains as to what her next move should be.

Something of vital importance was hidden in the old mill. And they meant to leave it there till the sensation of Colin's expulsion from the school had died down.

If only—
Her thoughts broke off as a figure darted out from the hedge into the moonlight, and a gasp of surprise left her lips.

"Colin!" she whispered.

"What? You here, Janice!" He gave her

his cheery grin. "I climbed down from the detention-room when I saw Roy skeddaddling out of the school garden. But then one of the masters came along and I had to go into hiding and couldn't follow Roy. And now, I guess, I'm too late!"

Breathlessly she told him what she had discovered.

"Janice! You brick!" Excitedly he grasped her arm. "You've almost solved the mystery I've been puzzling over for weeks. I thought if I let them get me nearly expelled it might put them off their guard, and they might give themselves away. But now—"

"Now we've got to prove the whole thing to Miss Shepherd," Janice exclaimed, and her dark eyes were shining. "And I believe we can do it to-morrow, Colin. I've just thought of a plan. Listen!"

NEXT day dawned dark and stormy, and the weather seemed to reflect the mood of the Fourth as they gathered silently in the class-room.

"I just hate to think of poor old Colin getting expelled," Babs Harcourt sighed at last, "even if he did play those jokes. He was always such a good sort."

Coralie nodded.

"I feel awful about it, too," she replied. "And I can't think what has become of Janice. Haven't see a sign of her since breakfast."

"Perhaps they're letting her say good-bye to Colin," suggested Babs.

Outside the clouds grew darker. Only Roy Withers and his chum Gina seemed to be in good spirits, joking and laughing as usual.

And then suddenly Babs, glancing through the window, gave a cry of amazement.

"Look!" she gasped. "Look at the old mill! What's happening out there?"

The class-room windows gave a clear view of the hilltop where the mill was silhouetted against the dark sky. Cries of alarm broke from all of them as they saw a red glow shine out vividly from the windows of the old wooden structure. Brighter and brighter grew the glow.

"The mill's on fire!" Coralie cried.

The effect of that cry on Roy Withers seemed extraordinary. His face paled; he gave a choking cry, then turned and rushed wildly from the room.

"Hallo! What's wrong with him? Where has he gone?" cried Babs.

"To give the alarm, I suppose," Coralie replied. "Or to try to put the fire out, though he can't do much on his own, surely."

Roy, however, was already rushing from the school buildings in the direction of the old mill, from which that crimson glow showed more vividly than ever against the dark sky.

Behind him he heard shouts of alarm from the school, but he paid no heed to them. His face was twisted with dismay and panic.

"The mill will burn like tinder!" he panted. "If I don't get there in time all our scheming will go for nothing, and we shall have lost everything!"

Almost beside himself, he rushed through the mill doorway into the heart of that red glow. He drew from his pocket a small brass platter of antique design, studying certain words and marks which could be seen on the polished surface.

Breathlessly he climbed a ladder into an upper compartment where the red glow seemed brighter still. He rushed into one corner, tearing down some of the ancient, crumbling woodwork and thrusting his hand into a cavity behind it, bringing out a bundle of folded papers.

"It's here!" he gasped in relief. "I've got the formula that will make our fortunes. I've solved the secret of the school museum. I've—"

He broke off in utter dismay as a hand gripped his shoulder and spun him round,

while another hand snatched the papers and the antique platter from him.

His face drained of colour, Roy found himself confronted by Mr. Hayward, his Form-master, while close behind stood Miss Shepherd and Janice.

Stupidly he stared at them, and then gazed around at the mill, where the red glow was fading.

"But—but the fire!" he muttered. "I thought the mill was on fire!"

"That was what you were intended to think," Miss Shepherd said sternly. "Thanks to Janice, you have given yourself away. Withers, and I have been saved from doing Colin Brooks a most grave injustice. And I have no doubt now that we shall quickly get to the whole truth of this matter."

And so they did. In his surprise and stupefaction, in fact, Roy confessed his guilt, and little by little the whole story was pieced together.

Some years ago the curator of the school museum had been an eccentric old scientist. Just before he died he had invented a way of making wireless valves at a cheap rate.

The old gentleman was haunted by a fear that his formulae might be stolen, and so he had hidden them in the old mill near the school. On an antique platter in the school museum he had described, in invisible ink, the whereabouts of the precious papers.

This had come to the ears of Roy Withers and his father, and Roy had been sent to the school with the express purpose of finding and stealing the hidden documents.

All they knew was that the secret was written on a certain object in the museum, though they did not know which particular one it was.

So Roy had started "borrowing" the museum exhibits one by one, making his way into the museum through a sliding panel leading from a secret passage he had discovered. He would smuggle the objects away to his father, who would treat them with a chemical which Roy obtained from the science lab., to see if there was any invisible writing on them.

As the objects might be missed before they could be returned to the museum again, Roy had decided to cover his tracks by pretending that the whole thing was a series of practical jokes. And with the help of his accomplice, Gina Fairfax, he had succeeded in throwing the blame on Colin, who had begun to suspect that something suspicious was afoot.

That final scene in the mill was Janice's clever idea.

She had remembered the powder Colin had obtained to produce a weird red glow in the last scene of the ballet. By using this powder she had given the illusion that the old mill was on fire, guessing that Roy would at once make an effort to save the papers, and in this way could be caught in the act.

And now the whole truth was known. Roy and Gina were seen no more at the Abbey School, while Miss Shepherd made a public apology to Colin for having wrongly threatened him with expulsion.

"And it's due to you, Janice, old girl!" Colin told her, in warm gratitude. "I'll never forget how you came to my rescue when everyone doubted me!"

Janice's eyes danced with happiness, for once again she could enjoy the old, carefree comradeship with Colin. And both of them could throw themselves wholeheartedly into the task of making the Fourth Form ballet the biggest success of the season.

Which is just what it turned out to be when it was performed at the town theatre a few days later!

THE END.

THE CASE OF THE FRIGHTENED GIRL

(Continued from page 476.)

"To find the goblet, go to my museum on Temple Isle. There seek out the Great Bell of Bhul. Its clear voice shall reveal the secret, and there—"

Abruptly the message came to an end, as if Colonel Rakes had been too ill to continue.

"The Great Bell of Bhul!" repeated June, her heart thumping with wonder. "I remember seeing a big brass bell hanging amongst the curios, but how can it reveal the secret?"

Eva shook her head. She was gazing at her brother with eyes which had suddenly filled with tears.

"I—I can hardly believe it," she whispered. "It seems too good to be true. To think that at last we'll be able to prove your innocence, Ronnie! At last—"

"It's certainly the best bit of news we've had for many a day," he agreed. "But"—his voice grew grim—"no wonder that scoundrel, the Green Rajah, was so mighty keen to lay his hands on the crystal goblet. It wasn't only the Lost Secret of the Purple Mountains he was after, but also the evidence which might send him to prison."

"Yes, and even more than that, if what I think is right," June said slowly. "He is out to destroy Colonel Rakes' will."

"You mean—"

"Yes, I have a suspicion that unless that new will is discovered Roger Standish will inherit the colonel's property," June declared. "But this reference to making amends can only mean one thing—before he died the colonel made a new will making Ronnie his heir."

The girl detective's sensational announcement robbed the Barings of their breath.

"There's no time to lose," June declared.

"The Green Rajah will have translated the original message long ago, and you can bet your boots that he won't waste any time in looking for the goblet."

As she spoke she pushed back her chair and rose to her feet. Eva and her brother regarded her in startled surprise.

"You're not going to look for the goblet tonight!" they gasped.

"I certainly am," she declared.

"But you've done enough for us!" protested Eva. "Besides, you're tired."

"Here, let me go!" cried Ronnie, struggling to his feet. "My leg's not so bad now."

But Eva shook her head.

"No, Ronnie; you'd never manage the journey. You must stay here," she said. "I'll go. There's a boat tied up to the landing-stage outside, and—"

But June intervened.

"No, I'll go. I was engaged to solve this case and I'm going to follow it up to the end," she said firmly. "You stay and look after your brother, Eva. And you needn't—"

She broke off, and they all stiffened. From below had come the thud of the door-knocker.

"G-goodness, who can that be?" whispered Eva, her timid face paling in alarm.

There came another thunderous tattoo, then a man's voice rang out:

"Open up! Open in the name of the law!"

In mute horror June and the Barings surveyed each other, then, as another imperious order rang out, the girl detective licked lips which had suddenly gone dry.

"The—the police!" she breathed.

Have the police come for Ronnie Baring—or who? Be sure to read next Friday's exciting chapters of this serial in the GIRLS' CRYSTAL.