

Goble

IN THIS ISSUE

TWO FINE COMPLETE TALES, TWO GRAND SERIALS,
NEEDLEWORK NOTES, ETC., ETC.

The Schoolgirl's Own 2nd



**PAULA—THE
PEACEMAKER!**
An incident from this
week's long complete
tale of the girls of
Morcove School.

The first of a magnificent new series of Morcove School stories!



These People—Who Are They?

TESS TRELAWNEY, dressed for out of doors, announced her arrival outside Study 12 at Morcove School by giving a double rat-tat-tat!

"Anyone inclined to come with me?" she wished to know, advancing into the famous "den."

Tess addressed the smiling inquiry to Betty Barton and Polly Linton. At the same time, she gave an affectionate glance to Paula Creel, who was lying back in an armchair like one in a doze.

"Come where? To do what, Tess?" asked Polly, swinging her legs as she sat perched on the study table. "You look very smart for once—doesn't she, Betty?"

"Quite!" agreed the Fourth Form's captain. "Paula, when she wakes up, will be jealous. Where are you off to, then, Tess?"

"House-hunting," was the laconic remark which caused Polly to yelp:

"What? House-hunting—you? Talk like that, Tess, and I shall say that a lunatic asylum is what you need to look for! House-hunting, indeed!"

"The truth, and nothing but the truth," Tess blandly assured her listeners, stroking on a glove. "Girls, you know there is a bungalow along the cliffs that has been up for sale—"

"Or to let, furnished—yes," Betty nodded. "We know the fine place you mean."

"Well, my people have asked me to take a walk and look over it some time or other," continued Tess. "They rather favour the idea of staying for a few weeks on this part of the North Devon coast. So I thought, as it is a nice afternoon, I'd walk out there to-day."

Polly hopped down from the table-edge. Then she took up a cushion, and looked like flinging it at the dozing Paula. Only just then Paula opened her pretty eyes.

"Just as well you did!" commented Polly grimly. "You must finish your rest cure some other time, Paula, darling. At present, O-U-T is the word for all of us."

"Ah, dear!" sighed the elegant member of the Form pathetically. "I had a presentiment, geals. No west for the weawy! Bai Jove, haow extremely pwetty you look, Tess, deah!"

"Tess is going house-hunting."

"Bai Jove!"

When Morcove Was Mystified!

By MARJORIE STANTON.

With the coming of a new girl to Morcove, there comes also a baffling mystery. You will read here of Dolores Florissa and the secret she guarded.

"Tess is not like you, Paula," said that inveterate teaser, Polly. "She doesn't care about spending her life in other girls' studies, wearing out their best armchairs. Tess is going to rent a house of her own."

"Bungalow," said Betty.

"Sorry! Bungalow," corrected Polly gravely, whilst Paula stood agape, trying to sift the truth out of so much jesting. "In her own private bungalow, Paula, darling, Tess will keep three maids."

"Bai Jove!"

"And, no doubt, she will often invite us to stay there. Not you, of course, Paula! Tess is doing this to get away from people who worry her!"

"I am not awate, Polly, deah, that I wowwy anyone. It is wather the other way about, bai Jove, and eweryone wowwies me! Yes, wather! Would I be heah, geals, at this pwesent moment, if life had not become intolewable in my own study? All I want—"

"What you want is a hat, gloves, and so on. Then you'll be ready to come with us," Polly said, reaching down her own hat as she said it. "Hurry up! Hallo, Naomer, darling! Are you coming, too?"

"Ooo, yes!" gaily declared Morcove's royal scholar, as she came whisking into the study, and Paula groaned.

"Ah, dear! Howevah, geals, if you will wait one moment—"

"Which means ten minutes, we know!" chuckled Polly. "But, beware! One second over the ten minutes, Paula Creel, and thy life will not be worth living!"

"It nevah is!" sighed the long-suffering victim of so much teasing. "Now, Naomer—ow! Dwp it!"

"He, he, he! She ees still cross with me!"

"Cwoss, bai Jove! I am fwurious! Tess Twelawney, do you know what this geal twied to do just now?" Paula complained, pointing tragically at the dark-faced little imp. "She wanted to shingle my hair for me—me, Paula Cweel!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All I want," sighed Paula, "is to be left in peace. But," with one of her sudden beaming looks, "I will be weady in a jiffy, geals—yes, wather!"

And she vanished.

"Naomer," Polly started to lecture that merry youngster, as they all made a move towards the stairs, meaning to wait for Paula out of doors, "you really must give up teasing the poor girl! Only last night, in the dormitory, when Paula's bed came to bits—"

"Ooo, that was your doing!" Naomer protested virtuously.

"Oh, so it was!" Polly suddenly "reclected," with a grin. "But that only shows how good you ought to be, to set me an example. I hear Madge at the music-room piano, and I am going to fetch her out."

Away sprinted the madcap, and she did not re-join her chums without bringing along Madge Minden and three other girls. Helen Craig was one, Dolly Delane another, and Trixie Hope yet another—all waiting about with Betty & Co. presently for Paula Creel to show up.

The most delightful weather had been accorded Morcovs School for this Wednesday afternoon's "half." As the girls agreed, when at last they were stepping towards the school gateway, it was weather "just too perfect" to be devoted to anything like hockey practice.

Somehow, in the spring-time the chums always seemed to feel the beauty of the countryside and the romantic grandeur of the rugged coastline, as if they had long been away from the district. So it was this afternoon with all of them. Newcomers to Morcovs could not have felt more impressed than did Betty & Co. with all there was to see and enjoy as they fared along the cliff pathway.

Suddenly the far-from-romantic "burr" of a motor-cycle came from the highway running between Morcovs School and quaint old Barncombe Town, and the girls saw who it was speeding along at a daring rate, with head close down to the handlebars and eyes glued to the track.

"Cora Grandways!" said Helen Craig, shrugging her shoulders.

"One never sees her lending the motor-bike to her sister, Judith," was Madge Minden's comment. "Poor Judith! It is very little she gets from Cora; it is to be feared."

"Except sneers and jeers!" Polly exclaimed sadly. "I wish we had Judith with us now!"

"Yes, wather!" agreed Paula Creel, whilst others murmured to the same effect.

"Well," cried Polly, changing the conversation, "I'll race you, Naomer—race all of you! Come on!"

And off they went, all of them, with Polly leading. It was not long before they came in sight of the bungalow of which they were in search.

Whoever had built this charming bungalow towards which the chums were now trending had chosen one of the sunniest and breeziest sites that the district offered.

The low-built, commodious-looking dwelling crowned a headland as high as any along this part of the coast. Its front windows could not have been more than a hundred yards from the brink of a cliff, falling sheer to the shore, two hundred feet below.

The couple of acres of ground that went with the lonely bungalow had been fenced on either side and at the back, and at present the fence did a good deal to obscure the building from the girls' eager gaze. They could only see, for the moment, a tiled roof and the chimneys, one of which, as the chums suddenly noticed, was sending out smoke.

"Oh, and the agent's notice-board is down!"

Tess exclaimed, with a falling face. "Well, I am bothered! What a fiasco for my people! The place has already been sold, or let, to someone else!"

"Or is it only a caretaker who is inside?" Betty suggested shrewdly. "The board being down—that may be due to one of the tearing gales that we get along this coast."

"No harm in making certain, anyhow," was Tess's response. "I shall go along to the door and knock. And you'll all come, too?"

Assenting nods were given, and a couple of minutes later the Morcovians were inside the fenced enclosure, treading along a rough track that led to the main door, which was on their side of the building.

With the other girls grouped behind her, Tess reached a hand towards the bell-press. But there was no need for her to touch it.

Even as she and her chums came to a standstill at the porch, a bolt was noisily shot back, and the door opened a few inches, just enough to let a woman show her face to the schoolgirls. And what a face it was!

Not an ugly face—no. But worse than ugly, so all the startled schoolgirls felt, in its expression of cunning and hostility. Never, surely, had a sallow face held such a pair of piercing black eyes.

This woman—tall, elderly, and garbed in black—lost none of her air of suspicion when she saw that they were but a band of schoolgirls who had fetched her to the door. She was still scowling resentfully when Tess, with a bit of an effort, managed to stammer:

"Good afternoon! We—I— Pardon?"

For the woman had muttered a word or two.

Next moment, with a fierce gesture, bidding the girls to be gone, the mysterious occupant of the bungalow slammed the door in their faces.

"Well," laughed Polly, "that's politeness!"

"Bai Jove! Haw, haw, haw!" simpered Paula. "But, geals—"

"Was she a foreigner?" wondered Madge. "Some woman who doesn't understand a word of English, perhaps? There was something about her that seemed to be— Hallo, though! Look!"

"Yes, look!" exclaimed Betty and Helen at the same instant, whilst Paula joined in the general surprise by giving an amazed:

"Bai Jove!"

For, now that the Morcovians were turning away from the porch, they beheld two persons just coming in at the wicket-gate—a woman and a girl.

It might have flashed upon Betty & Co. that these newcomers were only here to see over the bungalow, with a view of taking it. At the first glance, however, the girls realised that, like the woman inside the place, these fresh arrivals had a foreign appearance.

But there was this tremendous difference. Whereas the woman just now had looked so repellent, here was a lady who was marvellously beautiful, fashionably dressed, with the air of a queen. And the same sort of dainty loveliness, as the scholars noted, distinguished the girl who was with the lady.

Who were they? Was the woman inside the bungalow in some association with them—their servant, perhaps?

Betty & Co. were feeling that it should be easy enough to find out. Little they dreamed what strange things were to come to pass, and what thrilling adventures in which they themselves

were to be involved before ever they would have the true answer to such a simple question—who these people were, and why they had come to Morcove.

"Solitude—the sea—the cave!"

TESS spoke in a subdued voice to her chums as the lady and the girl approached:

"Think I might ask them, don't you, girls?"

"Certainly!" they all agreed emphatically. "You want to know if the property is still available, Tess."

So, despite the fact that the newcomers were obviously intending to be very reserved, Tess stepped forward to meet them on the path.

"Good-afternoon! Excuse me," was Tess's polite opening, "but can you tell me if this bungalow is still up for sale or to be let furnished?"

Perhaps it was their foreign birth—for, beyond all doubt now, they were foreigners—that made the lady and her girl companion stand still in a dramatic manner, their handsome eyes aflash. The lady spoke in a challenging way:

"Why do you ask? Yes, yes, the bungalow is let to me! You have no right to be here!"

"Pardon me!" Tess said blandly. "The last that I and my schoolfellows heard about this place it was up for disposal. As my own people wish to spend a month or so in the neighbourhood of Morcove School, they asked me to make inquiries. No harm in that, surely?"

"But I have to tell you," the lady said, looking very fierce as she used such broken English, "the place is mine now—mine, do you see?"

"Oh, yes, we understand now! And, of course—"

"The bungalow and all zis land inside the fence, it is private," the foreign lady was at pains to impress upon the girls, with expressive gestures. "Also, you shall remember there is a cave just below, on the shore, where a boat is keep. All that is private, just the same."

Betty & Co. nodded. They were aware that the cliff bungalow stood above one of the numerous seashore caverns, and that the original owner of the dwelling had gone to some expense to convert the cavern below into a private boathouse.

"It is quite all right!" Tess said, putting on a bit of dignity. "I only wished to know. Why you should be so—so suspicious—"

"Suspicious? Oh, no, no, no!" the lady suddenly laughed, with a throwing back of the head that made her mirth seem very theatrical. "There is nozing like that—no! Tell me. It is perhaps that you belong to the school of Morcove?"

"We do."

"So!" was the foreign lady's excitable comment, and she turned to her handsome girl companion to speak rapidly in some foreign language.

"Spanish?" Betty wondered, under her breath, and Madge, standing close enough to hear the murmur, nodded.

"Sounds like it, Betty."

Up till now, the girl—evidently a daughter—had been staring very critically at the Morcovians. Paula she seemed to have taken special notice of, as being such a dainty, elegant young thing. Naomer, too, as a dusky-featured foreign girl, had also come in for an extra glance—one that Naomer had rather resented.

They must have been amusing remarks that the

lady addressed to her daughter about the Morcovians, for they were accompanied by smiles. After showing her teeth for one brief instant, however, the girl herself looked more contemptuous than amused. She shrugged, and looked at all the girls again in a slighting manner.

"It surprise you that I am so amuse?" the lady suddenly said to the chums, her dark and lovely eyes all a-sparkle. "Well, I shall not tell you why. I leave you to find out—yes! Now, I have not one moment more to waste—"

"And we have no desire to hinder you!" Tess hastened to say for self and friends. "The bungalow is taken. It is your place now."

"All—all of it, yes!"

"Very well; I will inform my people, and there it ends. Good-afternoon!"

Her chums would not have had Tess use any



ORDERED OFF! The lady and the girl stood still in a dramatic manner and eyed the Morcove girls. "The bungalow is let to me," the lady said. "You girls have no right to be here!"

other words or any other tone. They shared to the full her annoyance at the embarrassment that had occurred. Apart from the lady's resentful manner at the start, what right had her daughter to look them up and down in such a slighting way?

"And me a queen, too!" Naomer exploded indignantly, as soon as they had all passed out through the wicket-gate. "I could give her a—"

"How you call him? A box on the ear!"

"Bai Jove, just as well we came away when we did, then!" exclaimed Paula. "For, geals, anyone who boxed that geal's ears would get something in return—what?"

"Ah, bah, I am a queen!"

"And she is—what?" Betty said, with a short laugh.

"An extraordinarily beautiful girl," allowed Tess, the artistic genius of the Form. "I didn't like her, but I wanted to paint her."

"Perhaps you will get the chance yet," said Helen, smiling, "if they are going to stay at the bungalow."

"Too exclusive—ahem—for us!" Polly said tartly. "The idea! Even though one of us is a queen," she said, throwing a loving arm about the dusky one's shoulders.

Meantime, the foreign lady and her daughter had been admitted to the bungalow by the woman who had recently slammed the door in the chums' faces.

All the talk was now carried on in a foreign tongue, so perhaps Madge had been right in conjecturing that the woman who had come to the door knew not a word of English.

"Marcilla, we cannot stay more than five minutes now," the lady said, in her highly strung way, to this person. "The car is waiting in the road to take us on again. Is everything here all right, Marcilla? You like the place?"

Marcilla gave a lift and fall of her shoulders, and grimaced.

"Doubtless the place will serve," she said grudgingly.

"It must serve!" was the grand lady's vehement rejoinder. "It is going to serve my purpose, Marcilla, in every way. We have solitude. We have the sea—the cave—everything! Everything is as I desired! Be content, then!"

Thus rebuked, the humbler woman gave a submissive curtsy.

"Madame knows," she said in a cringing way. "Marcilla lives to be content, in madame's service."

"Out of love for me, Marcilla, or in hope of what may be reaped some day?" the handsome lady twitted her servant, with a teasing smile. "Better not ask, perhaps!"

"Win or lose, it makes no difference," fawned Marcilla, with a sort of smouldering ferocity. "I serve you to the end."

"We shall win, trust me!" the lady said, and she drew herself more erect, and gathered breath, as if to launch into a passionate speech, but suddenly repressed herself.

With a kindly nod and a smile for the woman, she turned to call towards another room:

"Dolores—Dolores!"

"I am here, mother. My word," was the English equivalent of the ejaculation the girl used, "what a place! And you are going to live here?"

The mother, advancing imperiously into this front room, where the girl was standing at the window, answered spiritedly:

"I am going to stay here, Dolores—yes. Whilst the other place is being prepared for me. Then it will be different!"

And she smiled mysteriously.

Dolores evidently understood, all so cryptic though the words and the smile had been.

"Well, let us hope it will not be for very long, mother. You say, too, that it is just the place?"

"It was wonderful luck—wonderful!" exclaimed the lady passionately. "Solitude—the sea—the cave! Dolores, think of me as sitting here at this window, looking out to sea—"

"What a sea it is!" the girl threw in derisively. "Do they call it blue, I wonder? Do they call this sunshine? Pah!"

She faced her mother.

"And I am to be in an even worse place whilst we are waiting, mother! Ah, well, one must not grumble! But I would prefer even this to what I am going to. Here, at least, one can be alone—free!"

"Dolores, remember——"

"Oh, yes, I remember!" The girl shrugged pettishly, as if she was tired of having some dazzling prospect held out before her. "But all I know is, this is England, and the English—I have no use for them!"

"I have a great use for England and the English," the mother said softly. "Despise them as much as you like, Dolores, but never deny that they are useful. Come, we must get on!"

At this, the girl gave a swing of her shoulders to right and left as she moved a step. Nothing could better have expressed the wilful mood in which she was.

"Give me a minute—just one," she said, and went from the room, to wander in and out of others.

Coming upon Marcilla in the kitchen, she smiled forlornly at the woman, shrugged, and drifted away to one of the other rooms.

This chanced to be a bed-room, and Dolores, after gazing scornfully at the furnishings, as if she was used to something far better, spent a few moments sitting on the edge of the bed. She caught sight of herself in a mirror, and looked pleased then.

"Dolores, come!"

"Oh, all right!" the girl conveyed in the language that was her native one. "But I shall miss having my own room to-night."

They went out, the mother and daughter, and fared quickly across some smooth grassland, to a point on the main road where a hired car was waiting. There was some delay in resuming the journey, the lady entering into talk with the local chauffeur. She asked him, did he think it would be possible, at any time, to take a car across the firm turf of the headland, and so up to the bungalow gateway?

His answer was that he had done that more than once for previous tenants of the place, and could have done it to-day had he been asked.

"Oh, it did not matter to-day!" the lady said. "But I am glad to know that it will be possible at any time."

Looking very gratified, she joined her daughter in the car, and they drove away. A few minutes later, just as Betty & Co. were approaching the school gateway, the blare of a motor-horn warned them to step aside. They paused to see the car come along, knowing that it could only be going to the school.

"A hired one from Barncombe," commented Betty. "Lots of luggage, girls, so I wonder—Hallo!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Well!"

"Oh, dear!"

It was one great chorus of amazement as the chums of Study 12 glimpsed the occupants of the passing car, and realised that here were the lady and her daughter again—at the gates of Morcove School!

The Last Thing Paula Wanted.

NO fewer than six cups and saucers had teaspoons jingled into them when the cloth was spread in Study 12 that afternoon.

In other words, Betty and Polly were having company to tea, with the prospect of being quite crowded out before the gossipy meal was at an end.

Sure enough, no sooner had the six sat down

than the first intrusion occurred. Dolly Delane put her head in at the door.

"Girls, any news? Have you—?"
"Have we had tea? No! Have you?" cried Polly heartily. "Then squat down, Dolly!"

"I was only going to ask, have you heard anything fresh?" said Dolly, whilst she smiled her delight at the unsought invitation. "Am I really to stay?"

"Sit down! How many more times?" Polly commanded in her very sternest voice. "Hallo, here's someone else! No, Helen, dear, we have not heard anything fresh. But Betty and I will never forgive you—"

"That's a fact, we won't, unless you squeeze in up there, between Madge and Tess," said the Form captain, pouring out tea for all. "More cups!"

"Coming!" said Polly, whisking to the study "pantry." "All right, Naomer, darling; don't move. I can still get past you. How jolly it is to— Come in!"

Grace Garfield looked into the study.

"Um, nice cosy party you look!" she commented. "Oh, I've had my tea, thanks all the same! I just looked in to—"

"Have another—you must!" insisted Polly gaily. "Move up a bit, you girls on the left! That's right!"

"What I wondered was," said Grace, directly she was settled at the table, "whether you have heard anything fresh? Everybody in the school is taking it for granted that the girl is a new scholar. But who is she?"

"Ah," said Polly profoundly, whilst she stabbed a fork into a cream bun, "that's the question!"

"Frightful swells, both of them!" said Dolly. "That was a platinum wrist-watch the girl was wearing—must have cost a fortune!"

"Ah, bah," exclaimed Naomer, "what does set matter how grand you dress? Eef I like, I can wear ever so grand dress. I can wear a crown!"

"Oh, not here, please!" said Polly hastily. "It isn't done! By the way, girls, I seem to remember taking a cream bun. Naomer, have you—"

"I not touch him—no!"

"Then where—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" some of them laughed boisterously.

"But where," Polly questioned bewilderedly— "where, oh, where has my cream bun gone? Where, oh, where can he be? As the poet says, yes! Paula—"

"Haow fwiolous you are!" chuckled Paula, now comfortably settled in the armchair. "Weally, Polly—"

"Really, Paula, I must ask you to stand up. For, do you know, I seem to remember putting my cream bun—"

"Wha-a-at!" yelled Paula, springing up. "Healp!" as she spun round and saw what she had been sitting upon. "My gwacious!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If this isn't too bad!" Polly complained. "Here I come home, dying for a good tea, and I can't even help myself to one of my own cream buns, in my own study, without this duffer going and using it for a cushion!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally," Paula groaned, "I like that!"

"Your liking to sit on cream buns doesn't excuse you!" Polly said severely. "It was my cream bun. But I forgive you!"

It was Paula's usual ill-luck to be denied the last word, for just as Polly voiced that magnani-

mous remark the door opened and Miss Redgrave stood revealed.

"Naomer, darling," said the popular assistant-mistress of the Form, after giving a smiling glance to the entire tea-party, "as soon as you have finished tea, will you come along to my room?"

"I come now!" Naomer said, jumping up. "But why, please?"

"Ah, a pleasant surprise, dear!" answered Miss Redgrave, laying an affectionate hand upon the dusky one's shoulder as they went out together.

On the way downstairs they had to stand aside for a moment, to let one of the school porters go by, carrying a big trunk. Naomer had time to see him turn aside with his burden into the Fourth Form corridor, and she felt very glum all at once.

It was fairly obvious now that that other foreign girl really had entered the school, an hour ago, as a new scholar. Still worse, as Naomer considered it, the new scholar was to be in the Fourth Form!

All this was displeasing to Naomer, because she had felt an instinctive dislike of that other foreign girl during the first encounter outside the bungalow.

What, then, were Naomer's feelings a minute later, when she found that Miss Redgrave was introducing the new girl as being one who was to have a share in Naomer's own study!

"Dolores," the mistress said to the new scholar, "I am now presenting you to a girl who, although she is treated no differently in the school on that account, is a crowned queen in her own country. She is at Morcove to be educated, like any other scholar, a girl we all love."

Dolores did not permit herself to look either impressed or charmed. Her eyes flashed into Naomer's, and Naomer's flashed back.

"Naomer," continued the mistress, "allow me to present Dolores Florissa, the daughter of Madame Florissa. I thought it would be nice if Dolores could be in your study, for you happen to know some Spanish. At present Dolores cannot speak English fluently. She has always lived in San Fernando, a South American republic."

"Then why do she not live there now?" asked Naomer.

Miss Redgrave had to smile.

"The answer is, Naomer, that San Fernando is going through disturbed times, just as your own little kingdom in North Africa had its periods of unrest in former days. For safety, Madame Florissa came to this country with Dolores."

Naomer was silent after that, although she appeared to be thinking a lot. As for Dolores Florissa, her chief concern seemed to be to look every bit as queenly as the girl queen. Florissa stood an inch taller than Naomer, and was not going to forget it!

"So I hope you will soon be great friends," Miss Redgrave finished smoothly. "Dolores might go with you now, Naomer, and you can show her the study."

Nakara's imperious little monarch stalked to the door, in front of the new scholar, with such an air that the mistress called her back.

"One moment, Naomer, dear! Why these tantrums, dear?" asked the mistress softly when Dolores had passed out. "We thought you would be delighted."

"I not love her!"

"It isn't to be expected, Naomer, so soon."

"I not like her one beet!"

"Oh, Naomer, when you get to know Dolores better, I am sure you will be great friends! She



ON THEIR DIGNITY! "What a stupid country yours must be!" said Naomer witheringly. "Fancy having a president with a daughter like you! You think yourself as good as me, eh?" "No," answered Dolores, "I zink myself much better!"

is the daughter of a very great man in her own country."

"Is he a king?" challenged Naomer. "But that ees not to do with it. I not—I not like her, and she not like me, so you see!"

"You quaint little thing!" smiled the mistress appeasingly. "Go along, and see how soon you will get to like Dolores. In any case, the head-mistress herself regards it as imperative that this new girl should share your study. Your knowing a little Spanish will be such a help!"

Looking anything but mollified, Naomer again stalked to the door, and this time she passed out. Dolores should have been waiting in the passage, but she was gone. Feeling this as a slight, the girl queen went along to the stairs, and ascended them in a very bad-tempered manner.

Having reached the Fourth Form corridor without seeing anything of the new girl, the dusky one would have rejoined her chums in Study 12, but as she went by her own door she found it ajar. Looking in, she saw Dolores already there, starting to unstrap some luggage.

It did not improve the outlook, which was distinctly stormy, when Dolores looked aside at Naomer in the most disdainful manner.

"Why you not wait for me?" Naomer demanded, entering the study. "How you know this is the right study?"

"Bekas my luggage, they are here," was Dolores Florissa's reply.

"I think you wish to be—to be swanky!" Naomer said, bringing out the bit of English slang triumphantly.

"I do not trouble myself in ze least what you zink!"

"Oh, you do not, do you?"

"No," said Dolores, "I do not."

"I am a queen!"

"Pooh! A queen of what country? A bit of desert in ze African hinterland!" scoffed Dolores, and she unslipped another strap.

By now Naomer was simply trembling with offended pride. This girl, to talk like that!

"How dare you!" she suddenly exclaimed, stamping a foot. "How dare you spik me so! You please to remember, until I give you permission as a friend—and we shall never be friends—no, never!"

"I am of ze same opinion, precise!" Dolores answered, sullenly insolent. "In my country—"

"In your country—bah!" seethed Naomer. "One would think you are queen of your country!"

"Jealous!" retorted Dolores, and she put out a tongue-tip. "Well, give me some help with this bag, bekas she is heavy."

"I shall help you out of ze room altogether, you and your bag, eef you give me your swank!" warned Naomer, looking very inimical as she stood closer. "What, do you think that I, Naomer Nakara, will allow it? In my country—"

"Your country! Listen to me!" Dolores said, holding herself very erect. "You zink too much of yourself, Queen Naomer. Queen—pooh! Why, you are not civilised! And as for your country—"

Dolores snapped her fingers close to Naomer's nose.

"That for your country, yes! In my country we do not have kings or queens. We have a president, and I—I, Dolores Florissa, am a president's daughter!"

"Eet show what a stupid country yours must be," Naomer said witheringly, "to have a president with such a daughter! You think yourself as good as me, do you?"

"No," said Dolores: "I zink myself much, much better—zat is all!"

Then, with a sort of yell, Naomer "went" for Dolores.

It was another war. The ancient kingdom of Nakara was "going for" San Florida! This particular study at Moreove School was the battlefield, and the battle royal was in full swing when Paula unluckily chanced to open the door, with the intention of entering.

She opened the door, but she did not enter. Aghast she stood, confronted with the alarming spectacle of Naomer and some other girl engaged in a fearful scrimmage.

For one horrifying moment the peace-loving Paula stood watching the astounding set-to. For that one moment her ears were assailed by the strangest medley of gasps and pantings and furious ejaculations. Then she fled.

"Healp!"

Closing the door behind her with a loud slam, she rushed back to Study 12, darted past Betty and Polly and others, and flopped into an easy-chair.

"Oh, my gwacious! Oh, dear—oh, dear!" Paula wailed, keeping her chums agape with amazement as she lopped her pretty head as if on the verge of a swoon. "Dweadful—dweadful!"

"When-all I want is a bit of peace!" lamented Paula tragically. "Oh, geals, wun! Quick—quick, wun and stop them!"

"Stop who?" Polly cried, setting down a tray of crockery. "Where? What?"

"Naomer and the new geal swapping!" groaned Paula.

And then, having got out her handkerchief, she lay back, prostrate, fanning her face and keeping her eyes closed, whilst she groaned over and over again:

"Dweadful—dweadful! It has come to that at last—and in my study, too! Naomer and the new geal swapping!"

Wanted on the 'Phone.

THERE was not much queenly dignity left in Morcove's royal scholar by the time Betty and one or two others had set the squabblers apart.

Nor was that handsome young thing, Dolores Florissa, looking less dishevelled than her recent opponent in the great set-to.

"Honours even!" was Polly's mirthful comment, as she stood amidst the jovial crowd which hung about the doorway.

"Now I see an advantage in having shingled hair!" grinned Tess. Her notebook was out. Like a newspaper artist, she was dashing down an "impression" of her Serene Highness, Naomer Nakara, with a shoulder laid bare by a rent in her frock, and her black hair like a golliwog's. "Less for your opponent to grab at!"

"We can't have this sort of thing," Betty at this moment was saying to the new girl. "Control yourself!"

And then, so as to be quite fair, she turned to Naomer:

"Naomer, this is disgraceful! How could you—"

"She began it!"

"Oh, no, Naomer; that sort of talk—"

"I say she began it, because she did begin it!" Naomer insisted passionately. She was no longer Morcove's carefully trained scholar, instructed in British notions, but was just her old, crude, passionate self. "She say she is as good as me!"

"Not so!" contradicted Dolores, curling a lip. "I say I am much, much better—zat is all!"

"All! You are full of swank!"

"And you—you are one big little idiot!"

"That will do. Now stop it, and settle down," Betty said, with a certain serious air of authority that left Dolores giving the Form captain a hostile look.

But Betty would not let this nettle her.

"I am sorry your introduction to us girls has come about in this unpleasant way," she said to the new girl. "We don't even know your name yet."

"I am Dolores Florissa, and my father," she said loftily, "is the ex-President of San Florida!"

"Ah, bah!" jeered Naomer. "He is only ex-president, you say now! Just now he was president! President—bah!"

"Naomer!" Betty said, and, somehow, it was enough.

All in a moment, tears were glistening along Naomer's lashes.

"I very sorry!" she faltered penitently. "Eet is not the way I have been taught, I know. I not say one word more."

"There, Dolores!" the Form captain exclaimed, but that girl, as she passed a smoothing hand

over her head, was not going to look anything but fiercely contemptuous.

It was a thing that witnessed to the difference between the two foreign girls. Alike they might be in their fiery, passionate natures, but, whereas Naomer could always be trusted to end in tears of regret, Dolores Florissa was subject to no such redeeming emotions.

For the time being, however, there was peace after conflict, and Polly and some of the other girls could give Paula comfort when they went back to Study 12, to find her looking out from that doorway very nervously.

"Geals—geals, is it all wight?" palpitated Paula.

"Is it safe?"

"All over until the next time!" chuckled Polly.

"But when we got to the room—"

"Don't tell me! Sway spare me the howwid details!" implored Paula. "I saw enough myself. My gwacious, how can you geals gwim? Do you realise I have got to be in that study with those two?"

"So have I, for that matter," Helen Craig remarked drily. "Cheer up, Paula, darling!"

"All I ever ask," sighed the elegant one, "is to be left in peace. I ask you, geals, haow can I stand the stwain of sitting next to—to two barwvets of gunpowder?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give it a trial," Betty counselled the apprehensive girl, a few minutes later. "Miss Redgrave has just been telling me it is particularly desired that Dolores should be with Naomer. They'll settle down after a bit, let's hope."



THE TRUANT RETURNS! Dolores recoiled before the stern gaze of her schoolfellows. "Good morning," said Betty in a tight-lipped way. "Where have you been?" demanded Polly indignantly.

"Meantime, Betty, deah—"

"Run for safety to Study 12!" Betty advised, with a smile.

"I shall, twust me!" was Paula's fervent answer. And then suddenly she chuckled. "Haw, haw, haw! Wather a joke, what? Those two geals, so touchy, so fiowy, bai Jove! Weally, it is going to be wather amusing!"

But that was Paula Creel in a moment of hard-won fortitude. All the Form knew how quickly she reacted to a state of dread. All the Form knew that Paula next day was going in momentary fear of having to escape from a study where two scholars had again started to "scrap."

All went well for a time, however. Naomer and Dolores were not friends, and were not going to pretend to be. The worst that Paula and Helen had to endure, however, whenever they were alone with the two foreign girls, was a painful state of tension.

Helen laughed about it all on the quiet. Paula, feeling the strain, was more inclined to fetch heavy sighs. "Most distwessing!" Still, so long as another flare-up was avoided, one could hope to escape a "nervous bweakdown."

What amused Helen was the idea, fondly held by the authorities, that Naomer's knowledge of Spanish was helping her and Dolores to become great friends. The two girls might have been dumb for all talk that passed between them in the study.

Hence the tension. At the same time, it became a comforting idea of Paula's that, so long as the two never spoke to each other, they were hardly likely to break out again. There was a certain safety in this silence, Paula felt.

A mistake, as she was fated to realise during "prep." on Dolores' third evening at the school.

Helen had just departed from the room, having got through her work with a facility which none of the others possessed. They had all four started late, and Paula, still dipping pen in inkpot, was sadly realising that very little time would be left for a visit to Study 12.

Suddenly, it was the elegant one's dismay to see Dolores stand up and slide a book across the table for Naomer to look at. The book was an atlas.

"Did you do that?" Dolores asked.

The first word she had addressed to Naomer since the first evening, and—oh, the tone!

Paula's heart began its palpitations. She herself looked at the open atlas—saw a map of South America, with a pen-and-ink sketch of a spidery, top-hatted president, running away from spidery populace.

"I did it, yes!" Naomer said proudly. "Because you did this!"

With the word, she flung open her atlas at the map of Africa.

On the spacious northern portion of that continent Dolores had depicted a goliwog queen, with a lot of black hair sticking out all round her crown.

Paula got up nervously.

"Er—now, Naomer, dear! Now, Dolores! Er—pway—"

"You get out!" advised Dolores insolently.

"This girl—I am not going to be insulted by a black-faced—"

"And I," flared up Naomer, slamming a chair aside—"I not allow you to insult me, you swanky daughter of an ex-president!"

"Pooh!"

"Bah!"

"Naomer—Dolores!" implored Paula. "I shall have to wun—"

"You had better!" counselled Dolores, looking ready to tear someone to pieces. "In my country—"

"Your country!" derided Naomer. "In my country—"

"Healp!" groaned Paula, for the two were quivering in front of each other now, almost chest to chest. "Dwop it! Stop! When all I ask is a bit of peace—ah, dear!"

To Paula's credit, she was resisting the desire to get out of the room before the dust began to fly again. But whether by staying she would ever have achieved the glory of preserving the peace, that cannot be said. For at this instant Fate itself intervened, in the person of a parlour-maid, with a message for Dolores.

"You are wanted, please, on the telephone."

"Me?" Dolores said excitedly.

"Yes, miss."

In a flash the new scholar was gone from the study, and Paula could sink back into her chair, breathing freely. Naomer smiled fiercely.

"No matter! Wait till she come back!"

But there was to be no chance for "scraping" that night. Dolores, as soon as she had finished with the telephone, turned to show an excited face to the maid.

"I shall have to go out at once," the new scholar said. "Get me my things from upstairs. I do not wish to—"

"Yes, miss. But, you know, you have to ask permission to go out."

"What? Ask permission? Pooh!"

"Oh, miss, but it is a rule!"

"All right," Dolores shrugged sulkily. "So long as I go, what does it matter? Say, you, do I ask Miss Redgrave?"

The parlourmaid answered that that was the usual procedure, and so Dolores sought out the youthful mistress in the latter's private room.

"Miss Redgrave, I wish to go out. It is important—very important. I have receive a telephone message that I must give my mother, at ze bungalow."

"Is that so, Dolores? Then you will have to go, of course. But you should say, 'May I have permission?'"

"What is ze difference?"

"The difference is all the difference between being high-handed and impolite, Dolores, and becomingly respectful. Still, you may go. One moment!"

Dolores stamped a foot as she halted.

"It will be dark soon, Dolores. You must have another girl for company; although it is such a little way. I think Betty Barton had better be the one to go with you. Say I said so, will you, please? Or—stay! Send her to me."

Dolores, flinging her head as she said "All right," went from the room. She met the maid with her outdoor things, and took them without a word of thanks.

"Now go to Study 12," Dolores commanded haughtily, "and say that Betty Barton is to come with me! Be quick, you!"

Betty came downstairs, in a minute or so, with a wondering expression. Dolores, hatted and coated by now, addressed her brusquely:

"Go to Miss Redgrave! She will tell you how you must come with me. Be quick! It is important!"

And the foreign girl fumed to and fro in the hall, with one eye all the time on the clock, until the Form captain was ready to be off with her.

It was a jaunt that Betty was far from relishing.

All along there had been an insolent aloofness about this new girl that was very offensive. The majority of the girls were simply not going to make any more friendly overtures, so clearly had Dolores shown her own unfriendly nature. And Betty, as captain of the Form, had perhaps been given greater cause for taking offence than any of them. So now the two hardly had a word to say to each other as they set off together. Dolores' manner said plainly, not only did she prefer to be unfriendly, she was sulking because Betty had been ordered to go with her.

It was just like Betty, however, to start making all possible allowance for the sullen girl. She was a foreigner, and foreigners were generally moody. And perhaps, thought Betty generously, the telephone message had been an upsetting one.

From this, it was a short step to feeling that one must try and win over Dolores.

"You had an urgent message?" Betty ventured, when they were half-way to the bungalow. "Your mother's place is not on the 'phone, and so—"

"No, it is not, and she will find that a—a difficulty," Dolores said.

Then she bit her lip.

"It would cost a lot to have the telephone at the bungalow," Betty chatted on. "Such a lonely place! I suppose—"

"Come on—faster!" interrupted Dolores, breaking into a trot. "But why should you come all the way?" she added a moment later, still on the run. "You can stop here."

"I must do as Miss Redgrave said. But, of course, I can wait outside your mother's house."

"You cannot come in, that is certain!" was the curt reply that seemed to Betty another bit of needless insolence.

She, Betty, was not going to say anything more after that. In silence the journey continued, with the bungalow now in sight.

But the lonely dwelling was only dimly visible, for the last of the daylight was now almost gone.

It was a cloudy evening, and the night would be a dark one. The gulls and jackdaws had sought their roosting-places, and the only sound was the surge of the waves under the beetling cliffs.

Betty looked away to the darkening sea. Upon the horizon a great steamer, outward bound, could be located by its starry lights.

Arrived at the bungalow's wicket-gate, Dolores signed to her unwanted companion to wait there. Then, a good deal out of breath after so much hurrying, she passed alone up the path to the main door.

Betty, left to wait outside the wicket, noticed that the windows were in darkness. Nor could she help being aware that Dolores neither rang for admittance, nor had the door opened to her by someone who had seen her coming. Quite distinctly on the silence of falling night, the Form captain heard a key being rattled into the latch.

She however, would not allow herself to develop an inquisitive interest in the other girl's affairs. She turned her back to the bungalow, and was only thinking how lonely and romantic the bold coastline looked in the dimming light, when suddenly she heard Dolores coming back.

Betty turned; then, with a renewed desire to be on civil terms, at least:

"Everything all right? Have you finished, Dolores?"

"No!" said that girl, as curtly as ever. "There is no one at the bungalow, and I shall have to stay all night."

Betty stared incredulously.

Miss Redgrave is Firm.

"STAY all night, Dolores? But—"

"You must go back to the school and tell them," the new girl struck in coolly. "I find my mother and her servant are away—I do not know why—so I must stay here to—wait."

"Wait for what, Dolores? I mean to say—"

"It is my business, not yours!" flashed the foreign girl. "You do as I say. If you must know, the telephone message was to let my mother know that—those goods are to be delivered to-night."

"I see. But—"

"And so I must be here to take them in. That is what you will tell them at the school, and that is sufficient."

Betty shook her head.

"Sorry, Dolores, but you don't seem to realise. It will never be allowed. No girl—"

"It will have to be allowed!" Dolores exclaimed fiercely, stamping a foot. "I am needed here in my mother's absence, and here I shall stay. You can tell them that also. I do not care!"

"Very well; I will do my best for you, of course, Dolores," Betty said good-humouredly. "But you must not expect the impossible. When Miss Redgrave hears, it is certain she will come to fetch you away."

And the prediction was fulfilled.

"Stay there at the bungalow all night, and simply to take in some goods!" was the youthful mistress's indignant cry when the Form captain had got back alone to the school, to report the situation. "What nonsense it is, Betty, dear!"

"I warned her—"

"Naturally, Betty. But the girl should not have needed warning. She might be sure that no school would allow any scholar to do such a thing. It is her mother's home, of course; all the same, it cannot be permitted. Well, I must walk across and fetch her back, that's all!"

The speaker added, as Betty was on the point of withdrawing:

"If you are not too tired, Betty, I would like you to come. It is possible that Dolores may try to make out—"

"Oh, I'll come! It is no distance!" Betty said eagerly. "And couldn't Polly join us, please?"

Miss Redgrave went to the window, and took a look at the night.

"It is a fine, dry evening," she remarked. "Yes, let Polly come—any others who would like to. Miss Somerfield, I know, would approve of this unavoidable jaunt being turned to good purpose. The walk before bed-time will do us all good."

So, five minutes later, it was a jolly party, consisting of Betty and her bosom chums, that went stepping along jauntily with Miss Redgrave.

The moonless night made it very dark going for the girls and their mistress. For this reason, they followed the main road, intending to turn off on to the bare downland when they were as close to the bungalow as the highway could take them.

Not another soul did they encounter as they trudged along. At the start there had been a good deal of jollity amongst the girls, but gradually the impressive silence of the nightbound world was telling upon even such boisterous spirits as Polly and Naomer. Laughter and talk had lapsed

altogether when, all at once, they picked up the lights of the bungalow.

"There we are, girls!" Miss Redgrave murmured serenely. "And suppose we leave the road just here, and steer straight across the grass, with the lights for a mark?"

"One moment, please, Miss Redgrave!" Betty interrupted, holding up a finger to invoke silence. "Hark! Is there a car or something at a standstill further on? If so, that may be the vehicle that was bringing the goods!"

They all listened. Betty, sure enough, had been the first to hear the tell-tale purring of a motor's engine, running softly, out of gear.

"Shall we go and see? Yes, I think we might," Miss Redgrave answered her own question, and instantly led on along the road.

There was a sharp bend to be rounded, and they had yet to get past this when they heard louder sounds from the still invisible motor. Evidently that vehicle was now on the point of starting back in the direction of Barncombe. But first it had to turn round, and this manœuvring on the narrow roadway was causing some to-do.

It also delayed the departure long enough for the Morcovians to advance round the bend and see—not a car, but a large lorry.

For a moment the big vehicle was broadside on to Miss Redgrave and the girls, who were standing by a clump of trees. Then it worked itself round into line with the road, and they saw two shadowy figures—men—under cover behind the raised tail-board.

In all this there was nothing the least bit surprising, but it did rather astonish the Morcovians to see, all at once, the slight figure of Dolores Florissa, standing on a knoll beside the road and shouting some last word to the driver, in Spanish!

What did this mean? How came it that the man in charge of the lorry had to be spoken to in Spanish?

There was no time for this puzzling incident to be pondered. Away went the lorry, rumbling off into the darkness, its tail-light showing like a red star. And now Dolores saw the Morcovians, and she came running up to them.

"What do you want?" she began at them furiously. "Oh, what a thing to do—so mean, so unfair—to spy!"

"Dolores," Miss Redgrave reproved her stiffly, "how dare you talk like that! Spying! A ridiculous word to use! Why should we want to spy upon the mere delivery of some goods at your mother's seaside bungalow? Have you locked up the place?"

"No, I—"

"Do so at once, and return with us. I am glad the goods have arrived, for it would have been impossible to allow you to remain at the bungalow all night."

"I must remain!"

"Dolores, I do not understand," Miss Redgrave said gravely. "Why should you wish to remain now? The things have arrived; they will be quite safe. Why, then, do you still talk of wanting to remain?"

"Bekas—bekas— Oh, it is my business, that is all!"

"It is my business, Dolores, to see that girls do not do just as they please. You will return with us at once!"

"I shall not! I—"

"This instant—go and lock up the place!" commanded Miss Redgrave, and never had Betty and the rest seen her so roused. "We give you five minutes. If at the end of that time you are not back, I shall have to adopt stronger measures, so be careful!"

It was the British spirit versus one of quite another kind, and the British prevailed. Dolores took less than the five minutes to go and lock up the bungalow.

All the same, before she came back there had been time for the chums to become rather curious concerning this after-dark delivery of goods at the lonely bungalow. One thing they all noticed that gave the incident a peculiar, not to say mysterious, character.

It had required a lorry and several men to carry out the transaction, and yet there was a singular absence of that litter which usually attends the unloading of goods of a bulky nature.

Polly had brought a pocket-torch with her, and it was whilst she was idly flashing the ray around that she and her chums were impressed with this feature of the affair. Here and there in the grass there were imprints left by men who had been heavy-footed under the weight of big loads. But there were no wisps of straw, no marks to show where a heavy case had been rested for a breathing space.

What, then, had the lorry brought to the bungalow? The chums could not help wondering.

As for Miss Redgrave, she let innocent curiosity lead her into asking a plain question as soon as she was on the way back to the school, with Dolores and the rest.

"Very awkward for all concerned, Dolores, those goods arriving after dark. I suppose they have come all the way from London by road, and there was some delay en route?"

"I cannot say!" the foreign girl answered brusquely.

Betty and Polly nudged elbows. That "Can't say!" from Dolores was a pure evasion. How could she know so little, when she had certainly been in talk with the driver just now?

But, there, perhaps it was only part and parcel of the girl's proud, aloof nature, this impudent, "Mind-your-own-business!" attitude. She certainly seemed to have nothing to remain agitated about as she stepped along with the other girls. Miss Redgrave, always eager to recognise when a scholar was getting over some bit of temper, did not fail to mark a more gracious mood in this girl when they had got indoors.

"There we are, then!" the youthful mistress said cheerily, as if this ended the affair. "Of course, if that lorry-load of goods had had to be waited for right on into the night, I would have got one of the school porters to see to things for you. But everything is all right now?"

"Oh, yes, thank you!"

Dolores said it quite sweetly, and neither Miss Redgrave nor the chums of Study 12 had the least suspicion of the raging anger that the girl still harboured, or of the desperate thing she was resolved to do before this night had sped!

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2:

What Did the Lorry Bring ?

"OH! Betty—sh! Quiet!"

"Why, Polly, is it—"

"No, not getting-up time yet, Betty. It is only just getting light. I say, though, where's Dolores?"

The wondering remark, voiced ever so softly by Polly Linton, as she stood at Betty Barton's bedside in the Fourth Form dormitory, caused the latter girl to lift herself up sharply and stare around.

"Dolores?"

"See her bed—empty!" Polly whispered on. "It is cold, too, so she has been gone from it some time. And, Betty—"

"Yes, dear?"

"Dolores must have dressed herself fully after getting up. All her day clothes are gone!"

For a moment there was dead silence, except for the measured breathing of all the other girls,

It would not be the first time a scholar, troubled with sleeplessness or a raging tooth, had got up to dress herself and come down to her study.

But the study that Dolores shared with Naomea and two other girls was deserted. By the chill light of the dawn, Betty and Polly took a peep into the "den," and then withdrew, to stand a moment in the dim corridor, meeting each other's eyes.

Where was Dolores, then?

Of mutual accord, the uneasy girls suddenly trailed off again, going back to the stairs. Down to the ground floor they went with all possible stealth, the rest of the school being still wrapped in slumber. Neither girl had said so, but they had the self-same thought: If Dolores had gone out of doors, she must have left a door unbolted behind her.

Nor was it a minute more before the dressing-gowned couple were checking abruptly, with



MORE MYSTERY! As the lorry worked round into line with the road, the Morcovians were astonished to see the slight figure of Dolores Florissa standing on a knoll and shouting out some instructions to the driver—in Spanish!

who were still fast asleep. Betty was pondering, wondering, frowning.

Then suddenly she threw aside her bed-clothes, and set foot to the floor.

Polly, already in a dressing-gown and slippers, nodded approvingly as her chum hurriedly donned a warm wrap and put something on her feet.

"I was half inclined not to wake you, Betty, dear; but—"

"I'm glad you did, Polly," the Form captain whispered. "Dolores— And she has been away some time, you think?"

"Must have been. We might go down and have a peep round, Betty. It is light enough."

"Yes, come on!"

And in a few moments both girls were outside the dormitory, treading noiselessly towards the stairs.

Just in case the absentee from the dormitory might be in her study, Betty and Polly went down no farther at present than the Fourth Form corridor. Along this passage they padded, earnestly hoping that there was going to be an immediate end to their anxiety.

startled eyes, just short of a side-door, the bolts of which were thrown back.

"Um!" Polly muttered glumly. "That settles it, Betty!"

"Yes, Polly. She's away from the school, and that's a nice thing! But what— Phew, I say!"

"I know what you are thinking!" Polly smiled, and nodded. "She has been all night at her mother's bungalow, after all!"

"As soon as we others were all asleep, she must have— Hark, though! Someone coming towards this door now, isn't there?"

Polly ran to it, and looked through the keyhole. Then she straightened up, and faced her chum again.

"Here she is—Dolores, just returning! And as cool as a cucumber, too!"

Betty frowned.

"We can't have this sort of thing, Polly. I shall have to warn her."

So saying, the Form captain advanced to the door and drew it wide open, to reveal Dolores Florissa standing stock still in sudden, great surprise.

For a moment she was like a figure of stone; then she slowly recoiled under the stern gaze of her two schoolfellows.

"Good-morning, Dolores!" Betty said in a tight-lipped way. "Come in!"

"Where have you been?" Polly demanded indignantly, causing Dolores to look her up and down contemptuously.

"Why should I tell you? What is it to do with you?"

Betty laughed quietly, bitterly.

"Dolores, can you seriously ask what this has to do with us? Do you really suppose that when a girl does what you have done it is nothing for her schoolfellows to be worried about?"

"If it were a mistress who had caught you, instead of the Form captain," Polly rapped out hotly, "you would be expelled right away!"

"Expelled? Pah!" shrugged the foreign girl. "How much do you zink I care if I am expelled? Get out of my way!"

"Dolores!"

"You ask me where have I been? Ver' well, I tell you. I not care!" the foreign girl turned about to say, after pushing past the chums. "I have been under my mother's roof all night. When she is told, she will say it was quite right."

"It was not right," Betty declared composedly. "As a scholar, you are under the authority of the headmistress."

"Auzority—pah!" And Dolores snapped her fingers close to Betty's nose. "I zay I had to go!"

"And why—why? Perhaps you will tell us that!" Polly challenged in her headstrong way. "The goods arrived before bed-time. They were left safe and sound at the bungalow. Why, then—"

"It is my business, not yours!" flashed Dolores. "You! Do you zink I shall let you interfere—spoil everyzink? All to be lost, perhaps, and just bekas of two girls like you—English!" she added, as a final touch of withering contempt.

She walked on again, but came back instantly. "And remember," she hissed at them, with lightning in her handsome dark eyes, "if you spy on me, you two, I will have revenge! You do not know me—what I am! Take care you do not make me show you—what I am!"

With that ferocious repetition of the boastful words, she strode off again, and this time she passed out of sight on her way round to the stairs.

Betty and Polly stood mute and motionless for a long while, as if they could still see the girl before them—strung-up, passionate, dangerous. Then at last they met each other's eyes again.

"All to be lost, perhaps! What did she mean by that, Polly?"

"I was just wondering, Betty. It is strange," mused Polly, with nothing of the madcap about her now. "Queer! I am sure I don't want to be inquisitive—"

"Nor I, Polly. But—"

"One thing I really would give something to know," spoke on the Form captain's chum softly. "I am not so sure, either, that we are not entitled to find out. For it looks very much as if Dolores felt bound to be at the bungalow, to guard the place in the others' unforeseen absence, doesn't it?"

"It does, Polly? What did the lorry bring to the bungalow, then, that Dolores could not rest content after the place had been looked up?"

"Well, what could it have been?" questioned Polly, with a quizzical smile. "Extra furniture? Groceries from London, perhaps? Hardly likely, is it? Then this is the question, Betty. This is what I want to know. What did the lorry deliver?"

"Can't imagine!" owned Betty, with a hopeless shake of the head. "But I am like you; dear—very much inclined to find out!"

"Then find out we will!" was Polly's bold rejoinder. "And so, back to bed for the present—eh, dear? Only, let's do this first!"

With the word, Polly stepped back to the house door, which had been closed directly after Dolores' entry. Quickly and silently Polly made the bolts secure, so that no one would ever know what had happened in the night.

Then, as stealthily as if they themselves were guilty-minded culprits, they made their way upstairs.

No one was astir. Dolores herself must have undressed with lightning speed. She was already in bed, with the coverings drawn up to her ears.

The two chums looked in her direction, and they did not have their mistrust, suspicion, whatever the uneasy feeling was, lessened by the sight of two dark eyes watching them fiercely from over the edge of the blankets.

A strange girl, this Dolores Florissa! And strange indeed was the mystery in which she seemed to be involved!

(END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.)

The Morcovians have stumbled across another mystery, and one that will take them all their ingenuity to solve! Why has Dolores' mother taken the bungalow on the cliffs, and what came to the bungalow that night in the lorry? Tell your friends about this magnificent new series of Morcove School stories.

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