

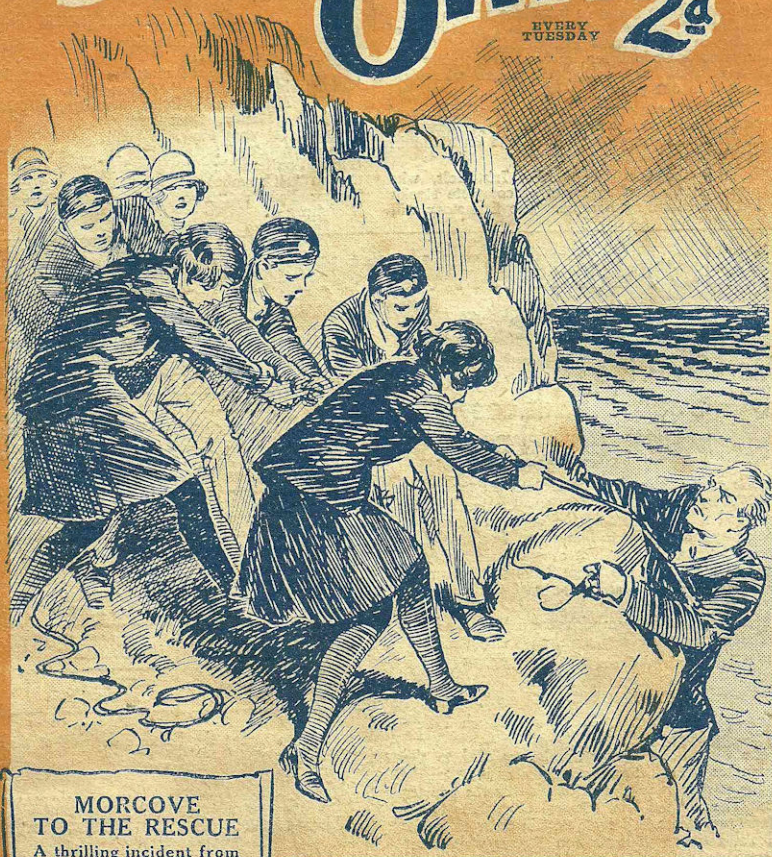
Splendid Prizes Must Be Won in
Fascinating Film Competition Within

The SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN

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Week ending
MARCH 24th, 1934.

EVERY
TUESDAY

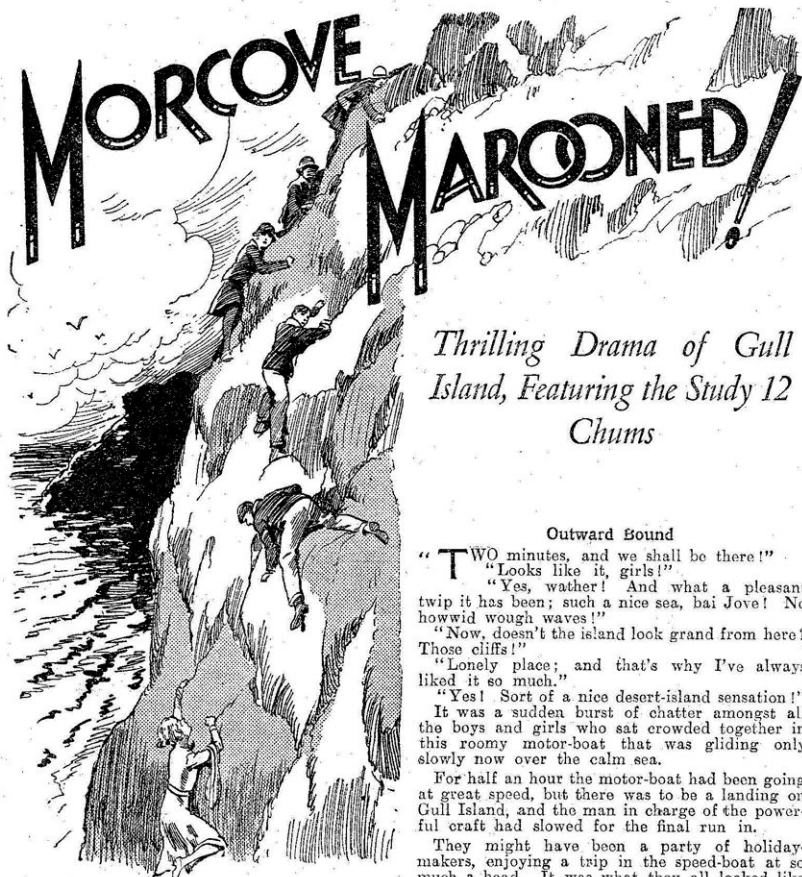
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MORCOVE TO THE RESCUE

A thrilling incident from
this week's vivid com-
plete Morcove story.

"MORCOVE MAROONED!" Thrilling Adventure Tale Inside



*Thrilling Drama of Gull
Island, Featuring the Study 12
Chums*

Outward Bound

"TWO minutes, and we shall be there!"
 "Looks like it, girls!"
 "Yes, wather! And what a pleasant twip it has been; such a nice sea, bai Jove! No howwid wough waves!"
 "Now, doesn't the island look grand from here? Those cliffs!"
 "Lonely place; and that's why I've always liked it so much."
 "Yes! Sort of a nice desert-island sensation!"
 It was a sudden burst of chatter amongst all the boys and girls who sat crowded together in this roomy motor-boat that was gliding only slowly now over the calm sea.

For half an hour the motor-boat had been going at great speed, but there was to be a landing on Gull Island, and the man in charge of the powerful craft had slowed for the final run in.

They might have been a party of holiday-makers, enjoying a trip in the speed-boat at so much a head. It was what they all looked like—this big batch of schoolboys and schoolgirls, with only one adult in charge, apart from Boatman Jake.

But there had been little thought of holiday joys to be had from the trip, when it started, barely forty minutes since.

Betty Barton and her girl chums of Morcove School, the four Grangemoor boys who were with them, and this middle-aged lady who was in their midst—they were in great suspense.

Nothing had been planned, to account for their being in the boat. At one moment, this afternoon, they had all been in wild alarm as to what could have happened to a certain young lady—Ethel Courtway, acting mistress of the Fourth Form at Morcove. And in the next moment they had all been jumping at the chance of being able to go to Gull Island, as someone had suggested that she might be there!

The boat altered its course slightly; then the engine picked up, and there was a quickened

By Marjorie Stanton

MIGHTY Atlantic breakers thunder against the rocks of lonely Gull Island; the gale shrieks and booms about the cliffs and even the restless sea-birds are driven to seek shelter. But there is little shelter for Betty Barton and her intrepid chums, marooned upon the island—with but little hope of early rescue.

running on, parallel with the island's massive cliffs.

"We're not going to land on this side," murmured Polly Linton. Her tone was serious. She had the reputation of being Morcove's madcap, but the gravity of the situation was subduing her.

The same could be said of her brother Jack, one of the four boys of the party. He had been full of fun, right enough, arriving at Morcove early this afternoon with a number of his Grange-moor chums for a hockey match against the girls. But, in the very moment that that match had been interrupted, by the sensational news that Ethel Courtway was certainly missing—in that moment Jack Linton had switched off all nonsense talk.

"I don't know the island," he exclaimed, sitting between Polly and Betty. "You girls have got the bulge on us chaps, there. You've had trips before—"

"Often," Betty nodded. "And jolly outings they have been. But this trip—oh, I shall be thankful when we land and can find out if Ethel Courtway is there!"

She added, gazing eagerly at the grassy summit of the line of cliffs:

"No sign of life up there!"

"None!"

As for the base of the cliffs, all could see that anyone would have had to be in a boat to be visible there; the tide lapped at the rocky walls, and many a fallen mass of stone, standing jaggedly half out of the water, was frilled about with foam.

"Jake knows," came the murmur from Judy Cardew, who had her brother Dave sitting next to her. "He is running us round to the outer side of the island, where there's a natural jetty."

Then the lady withdrew her anxious, searching eyes from the near-at-hand cliffs, to look at all the juniors amongst whom she sat.

"We must be thankful the weather was favourable for this trip to the island," she exclaimed fervently. "I understand a landing can hardly be made in bad weather?"

"Almost impossible," Betty answered. "And as the sea is nearly always rough, it's never much use planning far in advance for an outing on the island. The uncertainty is one reason why the place is so seldom visited."

"Bekas, you might go zere, and not be able to get back!" piped in that artless and dusky scholar, Naomer Nakara, who was generally reckoned to be Morcove's comic strip. "And zen where would you be? Still on ze island, yes, but you would starve!"

As Naomer held the Morcove championship for the best appetite, it can be imagined how any idea of possible starvation awed her.

Suddenly the boat seemed to feel the sea. She rocked as rather bigger waves presented themselves, to be slipped through under power from the propeller.

They had, in fact, lost some shelter that the south side of the island had afforded, and now there was quite a fresh breeze coming at them from the west.

But the natural jetty was only a stone's throw away on this western side of the tiny island. The boatman brought the boat round skilfully. He throttled down again, and in she ran, sweetly, to the jetty.

"Right," said Jack, rising to the occasion, boathook ready.

Dave Cardew and the two other boys also acted

smartly, first of all using extended hands to keep the boat from grinding against the water-worn rocks.

Then they managed to hold her in, close and steady, whilst Jack took a skilful leap on to the jetty.

It was a mere mass of rock, running out into deep water, and as nature had formed this landing-place, so man had left it.

Jack, securely positioned, used the hook to help keep the boat steady. Dave now jumped out, and it fell to him to offer a hand, first to the lady, Mrs. Courtway, and then to one and another of the girls.

The water just there looked very deep, and blue, and cold.

"Is Jake coming with us?"

Perhaps he heard some of them wondering aloud to that effect, when he only remained in the boat, for he announced bluffly:

"Reckon I'll do better to bide here. Don't stay, any of you, to help me tie her up. Mebbe I'll stand off from the jetty a bit, the water being a bit lumpy."

"Then which way must we go, do you think, to have the best chance of finding my husband and my niece?" asked Ethel Courtway's aunt.

Jake was filling a pipe.

"Ah, that I can't say, mum," he answered, with seeming bluntness and goodwill. "I only knows as I brought Mr. Courtway across to the island this morning, and left him here. As I take it, there's summat occupying his mind that's made him want to spend a day and night on the island."

"Strange!" Mrs. Courtway exclaimed, turning, with the others, to do the difficult scramble along the rocks and so reach a grassy slope. "But it is all so strange, my dears; I just don't know what to think! It was bad enough—the peculiar conduct of my dear husband—before ever my niece vanished, to add to the mystery."

"Anyhow, we've got here," Betty cried, by way of striking a cheerful note. "If we can't find Mr. Courtway and his niece in next to no time—well! You see, Mrs. Courtway, the island is only a tiny one."

"You can go all over it in an hour or so," Polly chimed in blithely. "Of course, there are odd corners—caves and other places—a bit difficult to get at. But unless anyone is wanting to hide, it should be quite easy to find them."

"Neither my husband nor my niece can possibly be wanting to hide," the lady said hopefully. "He is a scientist, and I can understand his putting in some time here, perhaps studying the geology of the island. But he cannot want to evade me, his wife."

The whole party was now grouped on the narrow rock jetty, against which the deep water gurgled and splashed. The boat was lying a few yards off shore.

"Come on, then, boys!" Jack's hearty voice rang out. "Let's all give a shout, just to make it known that we're here."

And they shouted—not once, but again and again.

"Mr. Court-way! Ethel! Eth-el, cooee!"

Their united voices seemed to go echoing along the cliffs, and a multitude of sea birds rose into the air, crying harshly as they flapped away. But no answering cry answered the hailing one.

"Morcove calling!" was the shout that Polly started. "Ethel Courtway, where are you? Morcove calling!"

But Morcove, it seemed, was calling, calling—in vain!

Morcove Calling

"WELL, it is a licker!"
 "Yes, goodness, if we are not to find either of them on the island, after all!"
 "Up to the high ground, boys!" Jack proposed in lively style. "Perhaps our voices haven't carried very far, after all, from down here."

They had only now come off the rugged bar of rock forming the natural jetty, to be faced with a steep slope, all rough grass and boulders. There was an eager rush to climb the rising ground; but in a few moments it had become a toilsome climb, taxing the energies of all.

Mrs. Courtway was the first to feel dead beat, and when a couple of the Morcove girls put themselves on either side of her, to give assistance, she panted gratefully:

"Kind of you, my dears! I was tired, I'm afraid, before ever we set out from Morcove. I had the journey down from London this morning, and, in any case, I have slept badly lately—worrying."

"It has been enough to worry you," said tall Pam Willoughby. She and Judy were the two girls who were giving the lady helping hands. "But surely the anxiety will end at any moment now!"

"That man Dawker, at the bungalow, seemed to feel certain that Ethel, for some reason or other, is with her uncle on the island," Judy carried on the cheering talk. "The way Dawker urged us to take the boat and come out—"

"Yes," Mrs. Courtway agreed breathlessly. "Poor Dawker! I am afraid he, too, has been worrying. And yet I have been unkind enough, just lately, to doubt that man's character. What a mistake!"

Pam gave a sudden little laugh.

"Look up there, Mrs. Courtway; some of them have already got to the top."

"Any sign?" Judy called out.

Mere gestures formed the answer—a mute: "not yet!" Those juniors who had topped the rise were much too breathless to be able to shout back.

One after another the others laboured to the summit, Mrs. Courtway reaching it last of all, still helped by Pam and Judy.

To look down to the sea created a sense of being very high up; but the spot, after all, proved to be a poor one for scanning the island itself.

"How about dividing up into parties, arranging to meet again here at the end of, say, half an hour?" Betty suggested, as soon as she had recovered her breath. "But hadn't we better first shout again, from here?"

"Make it a good 'un this time, boys," Jack urged. As usual, he was including the girls in the remark; they were always "boys" to him.

"Ethel Courtway! Ethel Courtway!" they all called again, as with one voice.

And still there was no answer. "We must remember, she might hear us when we couldn't hear any cry from her," Dave Cardew remarked.

Like the rest of the juniors, he had noticed how the failure to get any response to the hailing cry had agitated the missing girl's aunt.

"I know this," she quavered: "it is a great comfort that you boys and girls are with me. And that is a good idea of Betty's, that we separate for a search. We shall be quite a number of different parties, if we go in twos and threes."

"Meeting here again—unless something turns up in the meantime—in half an hour from now?" Pam confirmed the arrangement. "Let's be off, then."

"I say!" And Helen Craig caused a fresh standstill by her surprised cry. "Look where the boat is! Jake has taken her quite a good way from where he landed us."

"That's all right," Jack said lightly. "He talked of lying off a bit from the island. When we want him, he'll be able to run in to the jetty in two ticks."

"And I only hope we want him—soon!" murmured Madge Minden.

"Yes, wather!"

"Bekas, what ze diggings; we shan't want to hang about on ze island after we have found zem!" shrilled the dusky one. "Bekas, nothing to eat! And eet is tea-time now, don't forget—past it!"

"Can't you forget meals for once?" Polly



The boat was drawn alongside the rocky jetty, and with Dave to help them, the Morcove girls, one by one, made the difficult landing on Gull Island.

asked witheringly. "Kid, you had better come with me and Betty; then we shall know you aren't getting on anyone else's nerves!"

A few seconds sufficed for the making up of search parties. The girls wished they could have persuaded Aunt Janet to stay behind; but anxiety would not let her yield to the weariness that was upon her. So, as the next best thing, Pam and Judy accompanied her again, as she set off determinedly to help scour the hillocky ground.

Some of the searchers were to roam the interior of the island; others were to work round close to the edge of the cliffs, which everywhere rose sheer out of the sea.

"Well, Betty, what do you think of things now?" Polly asked grimly, as soon as she and the Form-captain, with Naomer, were off upon their own bit of scouting: "Mean to say, it's such a tiny island, after all, so if Ethel Courtway is here—"

"I know," Betty nodded, looking extremely serious. "Why, if Ethel and her Uncle Peter are here, I wonder they didn't see us coming out in the boat. Any rate, after the way we shrouded just now, you'd have expected them to turn up almost at once!"

"We had to be careful how we talked in front of Mrs. Courtway," Polly said softly. "She is scared stiff about the whole business, you can see. Between ourselves, Betty, I begin to think her husband must have gone off his rocker."

"Bekas, his servant at ze bungalow said he was going to stay on ze island all night, didn't he?" was Naomer's astounded outburst. "All by himself, just fancy!"

"That's nothing," Polly snorted. "He's a scientist, and he could very easily be keen on finding out something about—"

"About the Morcove monster, for instance!" Betty smiled dryly, in allusion to the mysterious object which Polly, among others, was alleged to have seen in the sea near Morcove.

Polly made a face then.

"Oh, don't talk to me about the monster, Betty! I've been forgetting all about that. Not that I've ceased to believe in it. Those of us who saw the thing, out at sea, know that it was—a monster! But even if Ethel's uncle, as a scientist, had become interested in that mystery—why did he need to come to the island? He was renting that bungalow on the mainland; he had that motor-boat ready to hand at any time."

"Why did he give out that Ethel had gone to London when it is now known that she didn't go, but simply—vanished! That's more to the point, Polly darling," the Form captain carried on their earnest talk. "Even if he is here—is Ethel with him?"

"Gosh, if we find him, and then discover that he knows nothing about Ethel!" was Polly's dismayed outburst. "And, after all, it has been only Dawker's theory that Ethel will be found here on the island. No evidence, Betty."

"Not a scrap! I was thinking about that, in the boat. And, talking of the boat," Betty sharply added, "goodness, Polly—look where it is now!"

"Gosh, what on earth—"

"Bekas, he is going right away from ze island!"

They started to run back to the high ground just above the natural jetty. Although the three of them had been working towards the centre of the island, it had remained possible for them to glance behind and still glimpse the sea over the edge of the cliffs. Betty had done this, and

had been amazed by the sight of the motor-boat, speeding over the waves at a good distance from the island.

And now, as the trio rushed back to the starting place for the intended search, they realised that others were doing the same—in similar alarm.

Once again there was a gathering together of breathless boys and girls, on the high ground overlooking the rocky jetty. Aunt Janet had also returned, in great haste.

"That man with the boat—what do you think he means by it?" she asked, in renewed agitation. "Why, now he is steering as if to run for the mainland!"

"It's what he means to do," Dave said crisply. "Yes, just look!" gasped several of the girls.

"That's faster than he brought us across!" was Tess Trelawney's uneasy comment. "And he is—he is IS returning to the Morcove shore!"

"But why?" cried others bewilderedly. "He talked of waiting for us!"

"He must have known that we hoped not to be long," said Betty. "The whole island can be scoured in no time, when there are so many of us to hunt over it."

"I don't like the look of it," Jack muttered, still watching the receding boat with frowning eyes. "He has gone, and if you ask me—he is not coming back!"

Victims of Treachery

FOR a full minute the silence of consternation reigned.

In the minds of all, thoughts existed that could be summed up in the one word—treachery!

At last Polly Linton spoke in her explosive way.

"Gosh! We've been served the same trick, most likely, that has been played upon Ethel!"

"That's about it," said one of the boys. It was Jimmy Cherrol, that lad who was a happy blend of Jack Linton's jolly nature and Dave Cardew's shrewdness. "And it means that the man Dawker is in the plot as well."

"Dawker! Ah!" exclaimed Aunt Janet, bringing her hands together with a sharp clap. "Then I was right, after all, in doubting that man's integrity the other day! He has been acting crookedly! His urging us to come across to the island this afternoon—"

"All bunk," Jack burst out disgustedly. "My hat, he's just about done us down properly—got shot of the lot of us! We're marooned, boys—marooned! It amounts to that!"

"Yes!"

"Ooo, what ze diggings!" squealed Naomer. "Bekas, what about food zen! Eef we can't get away—we shall starve, sweende!"

"Oh, boy, just fancy—marooned!" Jack could not help chuckling. "Like the jolly old days of old, with prizes bold!"

"Zat is all very well, but—"

"We'll manage," Betty voiced her famous Study 12 slogan. "It's absurd to think that we shan't soon be rescued! Meantime, if we can't stick it—well! But we shall!"

"And you can lay to that," grinned Jack, who seemed to feel that he must infuse a dash of nautical talk into the conversation. "But, joking apart, that Jake can't be much better than a pirate, to serve us this dirty trick."

"And we all thought him such a nice, bluff fellow!" grimaced Helen.

"Dave didn't," Judy quickly remarked, and although Dave frowned to her not to say any

more, she added: "In the boat, Dave whispered me that he didn't like the chap."

"You didn't, Dave?" gasped several of the girls. "Why not?"

"I couldn't say why, and that's why I only said what I did to Judy," he said uncomfortably. "His eyes weren't right, somehow—"

"Oh dear; oh dear!" Aunt Janet almost moaned, wringing her hands. "Now, what a terrible fix we are all in. This, on top of all our anxiety—which still remains—about my husband and my niece!"

"Why—why have we been shipped out of the way, like this?" clamoured Helen Craig. "That's what I want to know!"

"So that they could gain time, for some reason or other," Dave shrewdly suggested. "Smart chap, that Dawker."

"Smart?"

"He must have made up his mind in a moment, when we all turned up at the bungalow this afternoon—only thing to do, dupe us into making a trip to the island, so that we could be left there."

"Stranded!" Polly fumed. "And so, perhaps Ethel Courtway and her uncle are not on the island, after all? It was only suggested by Dawker to get us to come and look!"

"I reckon myself they are here—somewhere," Jack said stolidly. "Look at it in this light, boys! As fast as anyone has become a danger, as it were, to the plotters, they've had to be got rid of. Maybe, Mr. Courtway himself was shipped away. Ethel, we know, vanished the day before yesterday. This afternoon it was our turn."

"Oh!" Aunt Janet sighed again. "How dreadful! For now I begin to think—my dear husband, perhaps, has been the victim of foul play! With Dawker turned traitor, anything may have happened!"

Once more there was an appalled silence. Desperately the juniors wanted to say something that would dispel Aunt Janet's latest dread. But there was nothing to be said.

They were victims of ruthless villainy that seemed most certainly to have found its first victim in—Mr. Courtway.

In those few moments of renewed consternation, the receding boat was still watched by all. They saw it going under great speed in the direction of the mainland, some eight miles away.

The afternoon had not ended as brightly as it had begun, and visibility was poorer now. What with this, and the smallness of the craft, it became suddenly lost to view half-way back to the Morcove shore. But the very last sight they had of the boat, it was still heading for the shore.

So they knew, beyond all possible doubt; Jake

had deserted them—abandoned them. That he had run back to the mainland meaning to return and take them off the island, was an idea not worth considering. Why should he do such a thing, when he had definitely undertaken to lay off and wait for them?

No, there was treachery of the blackest kind, and behind that treachery of his—the villainy of Dawker at the bungalow!

"Find Mr. Courtway and Ethel," was Betty's sudden exclamation. "That's the first thing to be done!"

"Yes!"



Naomer's hopes of an early snack were dashed by Jack's gift of a far from edible bundle. "That's for you, Naomer—the sack!" he said.

"Come on, boys!"

"Come on, girls!"

And in a few moments that grassy knoll above the jetty was deserted, for the second time.

Once again the various batches had hurried away, to make their fresh start upon the desperate search. Original arrangements were adhered to, so that no part of the island could miss being patrolled.

The area—some twenty acres at most—was a trifling one; but every kind of difficulty abounded. The cliffs had their ugly, dangerous clefts and chimes; everywhere else was boulder-strewn ground, reedy grass. There were bogs that you could sink into and never be heard of again. There were all the hillocks, some showing jagged outcroppings of rock, others so smooth and round that they looked like mammoth bee-skips.

Within ten minutes, Betty, Polly and Naomer

were across the island encountering another party that had fared across by a different route—and all in vain.

"No trace?"

"None! Absolutely nothing!"

"Same with us!"

Madge, Tess and Helen—they were the three whom the other trio had fallen in with like this.

"Pretty serious, girls!"

"It is, Betty!"

"And the weather's not too good now," Tess deplored. "We ought to be able to see Morcove from this side of the island, but you can't."

"Hang!" Polly stamped. "Ugh, sickening! To know that we've been tricked—quietly tricked!"

"And of course, if Dawker and the boatman could serve us like this, it isn't to be supposed that they'll let the school know where we are!" Betty grimaced. "They'll be wondering!"

"Gosh, there'll be some excitement at the school—yes!"

"But will they ever think of Gull Island, even if they start trying to find out what's become of us? I doubt it," Tess said glumly.

"Zen, what ze diggings, how long are we to have to stay here?" cried Naomer, looking soared.

"All ze night?"

"It'll be a fluke if we get taken off before night-fall," Betty pondered aloud. "A fishing boat might come by. But we're not going to get windy for ourselves. If only we could clear up this mystery about—"

"Hark!"

Polly, as she said it, kept an upflung finger steady.

"There are two of the boys—not far from here—shouting."

"Jack and Dave!" Helen specified quickly.

"They've found something!"

"Ooo, yes, bekas— Ooo, queek, queek, zey are calling to all of us to come!"

The ground was so broken up with giant rocks, they could only see a few yards at a time as they ran. But the wild rush by all six girls was soon ended. They came out between two jagged mounds that were like twin cairns, and were right upon Jack and Dave, very close to the edge of a projecting cliff.

"What is it—what is it, you two?" clamoured some of the girls breathlessly.

And the answer came—from Jack:

"It's Ethel Courtway, trying to climb the cliffs!"

Rescue Work

"**E**THEL? Where—where?"

"There!"

The girls were left to venture close to the edge of the projecting cliff, so as to be able to peer downwards in the direction that Jack had indicated.

He and Dave could not pause to talk. It had taken them half a minute to consider what they could best do, and now they nipped a short distance away from the girls, to carry out some urgent plan of action.

"Oh!" Betty and some of her companions exclaimed together, as they looked and saw. "Ethel!" they cried aloud. "Ethel!"

She, the girl whose disappearance had thrown the whole school into such a state of alarm, was before the eyes of all those juniors, unharmed as yet, but—the danger to her now!

Terrible was the risk she had taken. Whatever

place she had started from, whether water-logged cave or a ledge of rock just above high-water mark, she had managed to clamber half-way up the rugged face of the cliffs.

The juniors could see her, as it was a projecting mass of rock upon the top of which they were grouped, whereas Ethel herself was climbing where the cliff was set back just a little.

She must have edged round whilst working her way upwards; for directly beneath her lapped the deep, cold tide.

"Ethel!"

They cried out again to her because, ceasing her desperate efforts for a moment, where her hand-hold and foothold were secure, she had been able to look half-aside at them.

"Hallo, girls!"

Her voice was weak and breathless; but she was smiling.

"Stay where you are, and we'll all lend a hand!" was Betty's frantic entreaty. "Don't move; don't come any farther yet—don't, Ethel!"

"She's got a rope!" Polly said, in greater excitement than ever. "It has been helping her; still—oh, come on, all! We and the boys, between us!"

Then, as they whipped about to go in the same direction that Jack and Dave had taken, they realised that other members of the "marooned" party were rushing up. Two lots of searchers were converging upon this spot, with all possible speed.

Betty and her companions waved and shouted.

"This way, yes! Ethel is here—she's here!"

"Ooo, queek, queek!" And Naomer's excitement kept her capering. "Bekas, pipooray—saved!"

Hearing that last word, as they rushed to rejoin Jack and Dave, the other girls exchanged looks. Saved? It was not so certain!

One false move now, on the part of Ethel; a slip—the breaking away of some bit of rock to which she was entrusting her weight—and she would plunge helplessly down to the pitiless waters below, striking the jagged rocks as she fell.

"Jack! Dave! What can we do!"

"Keep calm, for one thing, Polly—"

"Oh, but—"

"Leave it to me and Dave—"

"We're not going to!" Study 12's impetuous junior protested. "We can't!"

"It's all right, girls," Dave said quietly. "Jack and I are going down the cliff, one behind the other. We shall get her."

"You saw she had a rope?" Jack rushed on.

"I bank on that! Cheerio, for a bit."

He said it gaily, whilst he and Dave both went upon hands and knees, to crawl to the very edge of the cliff.

The chosen spot and was directly above Ethel, where she was waiting—or, at least, they all hoped she was waiting. The boys, evidently, had decided that an oblique climb-down to her offered the best prospect of success.

There, at the crumbling cliff-edge, they flattened themselves into the grass, which grew in rank tussocks. The girls saw both boys part the grass in front of their heads, so as to be able to look over.

"Keep back, can't you!" Jack growled, without looking round. He had sensed a creeping nearer by the girls. And then to Dave:

"I can go over, just here, old son."

"Go on then, and I'll follow."

DODO DOES WHAT OTHERS DAREN'T: Meet Her Next Week!

Then, before the half-agonised eyes of the girls, first Jack slid over the edge and out of sight, Dave vanishing in the same way as soon as there was room for him.

"If only this were the Morocco cliffs," Betty sighed; "so that we could have run for ropes, ladders! But here we've nothing."

"How are they getting on?" breathed Polly.

"I'm going to see!"

"Careful, dear!"

"Oh, I'm all right!"

A few seconds later she looked round, where she was spread-eagled at the edge of the cliff.

"I'm going after them. It's all right!" she insisted fiercely. "Two or three of us can follow them down and be of use, I'm sure! Jimmy and Bobby Blot are not here yet, so it's up to some of us."

"Good! Then I'm going too," Betty announced, looking relieved.

"Me, behind you, Betty," said Helen.

"Right-ho!"

The others, just as eager to volunteer, felt bound to stay back. It was impossible to believe that any good could be done by the whole lot of them clambering about on the face of the cliff.

Madge and Tess crawled to the edge, to look over and so be able to act at once, if called upon to do so. Naomer ran back to that cliff-top from which Ethel Courtney had first been seen.

By this time Aunt Janet had got to the spot, with Pam, Judy, and Paula. The only searchers who had still to turn up were Jimmy Cherrol and Bobby Blot.

As those two lads had gone searching along the cliffs on the other side of the island, it was not surprising that they had failed to hear the outcry when Ethel was first seen.

She could be seen again, now, in the same precarious position, half-way up the cliff. It was instantly noticed that she had contrived to draw up the rope into coils, using only one hand and arm for the purpose.

Jack and Dave were working, slantwise, down to her, and behind the two lads were Polly, Betty, and Helen—in that order.

An inch at a time—so it had to be for all-five intrepid juniors. Foothold was scanty. Only the fact that the cliff, just there, was not forbiddingly perpendicular, rendered the attempt possible. Even so, it was hazardous enough.

But one thing was evident to those who could only look on. The three girls were not to be denied a chance to contribute great help. Just as Dave, behind Jack, could keep a steady hold now and then on that lad, so Polly, behind Dave, could steady him.

It had become, in fact, a living chain—a human life-line, formed to draw Ethel Courtney back to safety, if only it could be done!

Not a word was uttered. However much they were all wondering where she had been, until she was first seen in the very act of struggling up the cliff, it would have been considered madness to volley questions at her, in this critical moment.

Suddenly they heard her voice a calm word to her would be rescuers.

"Stop now, and I will see if I can get the rope to you, Jack."

"Right!"

Those who watched could feel their hearts beating faster than ever. Ethel appeared to be so insecurely positioned, her feet resting on a ledge little more than two inches wide, whilst her left hand only clung on, the fingers hooking into a tiny fissure.

She required her right hand to make the catch with the rope, and the appalling fear was that when she swung the rope she would be jerked from her perch.

For a few moments there was not the slightest movement by her or any of the other climbers.

Then she slightly extended the hand that held the rope, and they saw the dangling loops start a pendulum-like motion. Her cramped position was more evident than ever; but at least she kept herself steady.

Then—up went the coiled rope, lightly tossed towards Jack. It uncoiled as it rose; but it fell short of him, in spite of his eager reaching, and poor Ethel had to start all over again.

An eternity of suspense it seemed to the watchers, whilst she was drawing up the fallen line, single-handed. At last however, she had it looped again, ready for a second throw.

"Now, Jack."

"Ready," they heard him voice back to her. His own position was every bit as hazardous as hers.

Again she tossed the line outwards and upwards, and this time—

"Got it!"

Jack seemed to catch at it with two fingers only. But he had got it, and there was an involuntary cheer.

"It's O.K., boys," he called out, reacting now to all his inborn jollity. "Now, Dave old son—that's the idea, thanks!"

Dave, reaching out, got the rope as it was passed to him. He in turn cautiously passed it back to Polly, who got it to Betty, who got it to Helen.

Another cheer! Helen, taking that end of the line with her, could now clamber back to the cliff-top.

There was no more standing to watch, after that. Those who had been forced to be mere onlookers rushed to where Helen had returned to Madge and Tess, at the very edge of the cliff.

More and more of the line came to hand there, to be held fast. Even Aunt Janet held on to it. Then Betty and Polly came scrambling back, to be followed by Dave and Jack.

Would the rope bear Ethel's weight, if by mischance it was subjected to that strain? Yes! It was a good hempen line, such as seamen use. "Bear half a dozen of us!" was Jack's jubilant cry. "So now, boys, to stand ready, holding tight!"

At this instant, Jimmy and Bobby came running up, amazed to find what was happening. They too took hold, so that the united pull, if it should become necessary, would be tremendous.

But after all those at the top of the cliff had to do little more than take in the slack, as it formed, moment by moment. Ethel never slipped!

Very likely the knowledge that she had bound her end of the rope securely about her body, and that even if she did slip she would soon be hauled up, gave her confidence. At any rate, ten minutes later she came scrambling over the edge of the cliff, two of the boys there waiting to reach helping hands to her.

Saved!

"Pouf!" she said exhaustedly; and then she smiled queerly. "Almost too much for me half-way up! I—I just had to try, anyhow," she panted on. "You see, I heard you all calling, but I knew you hadn't heard me when I answered."

"Ethel darling—oh, my dear, my dear." Aunt Janet sobbed over her rescued niece. "But where were you, then? Isn't it deep water down there?"

"I climbed round a sort of corner that hides the cavern from where you were watching."

"Cavern!"

"A deep-water cave, yes. And, auntie darling—uncle's there."

"He is! Oh, what does it all mean! But I must be patient. You, Ethel dear, need—"

"I'm quite all right, auntie, and have been, all along!"

Ethel, after sitting limply for the few moments, now got to her feet.

"And, auntie," she said, "it really is uncle, this time."

"What! My dear, how do you mean—this time?"

"I mean, that there has been an impostor at the bungalow; someone posing as Uncle Peter. That's why you were treated so strangely, and why I—vanished. I found out, you see, and then they made a prisoner of me—"

"Ethel!"

"There was no rough treatment, but I was put in the motor-boat and brought across to the island. Just dumped here, to be with Uncle Peter. Who had been," Ethel wound up calmly, "a prisoner himself for days and nights on end!"

Jimmy Takes a Chance

THE words, although so calmly spoken, seemed to crash upon the hearing of all who stood around.

Open-mouthed stood all the girls—dumb-founded! One or two of the boys voiced an amazed: "Great Scott!" As for Aunt Janet, she tottered slightly, as if the disclosure had literally staggered her.

"Not—not your real Uncle Peter at the bungalow, Ethel?" she faltered incredulously.

"No. And Dawker's in it all—the plot. Dawker seems to have been quite a leading spirit. He has had some confederate at the bungalow whose looks resembled Uncle Peter's. But I suddenly noticed a difference in the voice. You, of course, have never really had a chance, down here, to confront the impostor properly. They put you off—"

"With all sorts of vague excuses that drove me frantic, they were so bewildering!" Aunt Janet cried out, in great anger. "I had even begun to think that my dear husband must be out of his mind."

"Oh, he isn't that!" smiled Ethel. "I'm sorry to say he has a twisted ankle, caused by his trying to get up the cliffs yesterday—the only way of leaving the cave, unless you have a boat. That's why I climbed up instead of Uncle Peter, just now. Well, girls!" And the old chummy smile of the acting mistress evidenced, again, that she was

none the worse for her recent ordeal. "I hope you haven't all been dumpered here?"

"But we have!" yelled Morcove.

"Oh, have you? Oh!" said Ethel. "Then there is no boat that can be pulled round to the water-cavern, to take Uncle Peter on board?"

"Oh, heck!" burst out Jack, pushing his cap to the back of his head. "Phew! Of course, you thought we could get back with you and Mr. Courtway at once. And here we are—marooned!"

"That really is the word for it," Betty smiled at Ethel. "We were tricked into coming here, trusting Jake the boatman—and he's gone, with the boat, of course!"

"And so worst of eet is—no food!" shrielled Naomer.

"There's food in the cavern," Ethel hastily remarked. "Plenty. But it would be very unwise, to think of resorting to the cave—for shelter, say. Far better to get Uncle Peter up to us, and then the food—"

"Boys, come on!" Jack exploded gladly.

"But wait—oh, wait!" Aunt Janet nervously demurred. "Will it be safe? I long to see my husband again; but I can't allow any of you to risk—"

"Auntie darling, there's absolutely no risk, with the rope. It's a perfectly good one, as you can see. It's part of a lot of equipment down there in the water cavern. If the boys were not here, I'd be quite willing to go down again myself—"

"Or let one of us girls go!" chipped in Betty.

"Well—yes!"

"Boys," sighed Polly, "are always in the way. They have all the treats!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Nor did it lessen the laughter, to see Messrs. Jack, Dave, and Jimmy, heatedly arguing—almost coming to blows—to decide which of them should be lowered down the cliff.

The Blot boy had been shouldered out of the debate, with that playful scorn which his fatness doomed him to suffer at all times. "You'd break the rope, anyhow, Bobby!" Jack had said.

"Well, don't be all day deciding," Polly as scornfully called out to the other three boys.

But a decision was being reached, even then. Jimmy's was the most delighted look, next moment, and Pam inferred gladly:

"You're going, Jimmy!"

"Isn't it my turn?" he submitted, reddening. "I came up too late, just now, to be of any use."

Pam gave him a side-glance. "That wasn't your fault, Jimmy. Best of luck now, anyhow. I—I shall feel a bit anxious, too," Pam suddenly realised.

"Why?"

"Oh, I don't know!"

"Afraid I'll bungle the whole business, is that it?"

"Silly!"

"Hi!" Jack now vociferated, with pretended bad temper. "Remember, I'm foreman in charge, anyhow; you're under me, Jimmy. So jump to it, my lad—jump to it!"

"He will soon be two hundred feet under you, and all of us," said Pam, keeping her eyes upon Jimmy as he knotted one end of the line about his chest.

"Come on, boys; fall in, the fatigue party; take your places for the tug-o-war!" Jack cried.

Ethel could take them to the exact spot that would enable them to lower Jimmy down so that he would arrive, all a-dangle, directly in front of the cave.



Frantically Betty & Co. rushed towards the boat. If only they could be in time to leap aboard, before Jake got the boat away!

"The tide goes right inside, you understand," she said to him. "But there's a ledge of rock on one side, and you'll easily be able to swing yourself on to that."

"My brave boy!" Aunt Janet quavered at the last moment, so that Jack gave a groaning: "Poor beggar, and him so young, boo-hoo! Jimmy," he said heartily, "you're the goods! And if you come up before you've sent up the last biscuit—you can look out for trouble! I ask you to take a last look at Bobby Bloot—grown visibly thinner—and to do your best!"

Load cheers!

But Jack was done with nonsense-talk as soon as Jimmy had gone over the edge, the team that held the rope letting it out slowly.

Jack it was who lay flat at the edge of the cliff, his head projecting so that he could see right down and thus watch how Jimmy was falling.

From Jack, all those who hung on to the line got the signal, by a motion of the hand, when to lower, and when to hold hard. There was a couple of minutes of this, and then:

"Right!" came Jack's gratified shout. "He's landed on the ledge inside the cavern. "Spell-o, boys!"

"And then it came on to rain!" quoth Polly, looking up to the sky.

They all laughed. There was the mood to laugh at the least little joke now.

"Oh, it's only a spot," said Betty. "And if we can't find shelter presently, we can easily make some."

"And get a fire going," sparkled Helen.

"A jolly blaze, so that if we're still here after nightfall," Judy said, "it will be a sort of beacon light, seen at Morcove."

"So, are we downhearted?" cried Jack.

"No-o-o!"

"Carried unan! Tighten your belt, Bobby

mio! I tell you, chaps, this will go down in the annals of Grangemoor School—"

"You mean Morcove, don't you?" corrected Polly sweetly.

"I mean—Grangemoor!"

Aunt Janet looked amused. She was only glad that the juniors could be so high-spirited, now that the worst anxiety was at an end. At the same time, she was tremulously eager for this perilous business with the life-line to finish.

"I wonder how long it will be," she quavered, "before we get the signal to haul again. Ethel darling, your uncle's ankle is not paining him greatly, I hope?"

"No, auntie. He can bear to stand all right. But it whacked him for making another attempt on the cliff. Of course, even before I was dumped in the cavern, he had been wanting desperately to escape. He was terribly anxious to get back to the mainland and—"

"Here's the signal!" those who were holding the rope interrupted jubilantly. "Three tugs—means 'Ready'!"

"Splendid," said Jack.

He resumed his spread-eagle state at the edge of the cliff and peered down again.

"Gently, boys! Pull hard, now—keep her going! Whoa! And again! It's—all-right! Pull away then—pull, boys!"

For several minutes after that they had to endure the strain and keep up a timed tugging, without one moment's actual relief. The best respite they could get was by taking a half-minute rest from the hauling; even then, they still had to hang on to the taut rope.

But at last:

"Got him!" shouted Jack. "Got you, sir!" And Ethel's Uncle Peter—the real Uncle Peter!—came floundering over the cliff's edge, to lie panting in the grass.

It was a moment of triumph for Morcove.

How Long?

"IODINE, Mr. Courtway."

"Eh, what, my girl?"

"My brother Dave has given me this iodine pencil, to bring you," smiled Judy Cardew, "for your ankle. He always carries one when the team is playing an away match."

"Thank you, thank you, my dear!"

There had been time for a first exchange of joyful words between Uncle Peter and his devoted wife. Now the two of them, with Ethel Courtway, were standing aside to continue talking, whilst the juniors went on with the good work of getting up those supplies from the cavern!

But here was Judy Cardew, for the grizzle-headed scientist to regard with those keen, steel-blue eyes of his, as he added:

"What you girls and boys have managed to do for us! Words fail me—if you will tell your brother so, and the others, my dear? Thank you! Later on, I must speak of the debt of gratitude that is owing—try to repay it!"

"Oh, that's all right, Mr. Courtway," said Judy, with another of her serious smiles. "It was up to us."

"Judy," Ethel exclaimed, "if Betty can spare a moment, I wish she'd come. There's something she may be able to tell us about."

"Oh, Betty can come; I'll tell her."

"Thanks!"

Mr. Courtway was in that state of excitement, he rushed into talk again with his wife the instant Judy turned away.

"As I was saying, my dear! I never really spent more than five minutes inside that bungalow on the Morcove cliffs! I was fetched down to the boat-cave, on a false message, and the next thing was that they had me in the motor-boat. At the time they gave me no assurance that I was not to be harmed—done away with even—"

"The brutes!"

"But half-way across to the island I was told that they simply meant to keep me out of the way for a bit. They untied my wrists, and that was how I was able to carry out a certain idea that rushed upon me. They had got me, but I would see that they did not get my pocket-book. It was a case of now or never, for I felt sure they would search me when they had got me to the island. So—I managed to drop my notebook overboard, into the sea."

"And they didn't notice?"

"No!"

"Here's Betty," said Ethel, as the Form captain came running up. "I say, Betty dear, you remember a notebook that was washed up on the Morcove shore?"

"Rather!"

As Betty answered, she was aware of the scientist and his wife paying very earnest attention. "Some of us found it on the shore, and then saw that your name was written inside. So we handed it to Ethel to give to you some time."

"And I never did give it to you, uncle, as you know, of course," the youthful mistress rejoined. "Now, Betty, it so happened that I gave that notebook to a Fourth Former to take along to the school for me and put it away in my table-drawer."

"That was just before I was kidnapped, as I suppose is the word for it! I was tired of carrying the notebook about, and, as Etta Hargrove happened to go by on her bike—"

"Yes, I know!" Betty burst in rather excitedly.

"I know about a package that you gave her. And the notebook was inside? But it's not in your table drawer at the school, Ethel."

"It isn't!"

"No. Etta brought it to me in the end, to my mind. She couldn't get into your room, as the door was locked and the key gone. She thought that I, as captain, ought to mind the package. She said I would be the first to see you, on your return."

"At any rate," exclaimed Mr. Courtway, snapping a finger and thumb excitedly, "the notebook is safely put away?"

"Oh, yes, sir! I put it away in my table-drawer, in Study 12."

"Good! Good!" His relief was boundless.

"Fear of that notebook falling into the hands of—of enemies of mine, has kept me almost sleepless for night after night. I would not have minded the book being lost for ever in the sea. But it floated! It was washed ashore!"

"I'm so glad," Aunt Janet exclaimed fervently. "There is a lot that must be explained to you and your chums, Betty, by-and-by. Meantime, you would like to go back to them all, I dare say."

Betty, very humanly, would have preferred to be given the whole story then and there. But she would have scampered away, even if Aunt Janet had not given the gentle hint. Directly after the scientist had been safely hauled up by them all, the juniors had realised that he and his wife would have much to say to each other that was not for their ears.

"Something about that notebook, now, Polly!" the Form-captain chuckled, as she rejoined the team that was working the rope. "My goodness, you should have seen how Ethel's uncle looked when I told him that the book is safe in Study 12."

There was no time for more. Another hauling-in had been in progress when Betty ran back to Polly and the rest, and now a ringing cheer greeted the appearance of a half-filled sack, as it came over the cliff-edge on to the grass.

"Bekas—gorjus!" shrieked Naomer, prancing to see the sack untied and its contents emptied out. "As much as ever before—and zat makes ze third load, piporay."

"Third and last," commented Dave, kneeling to untie the sack.

He displayed a scrap of paper on which Jimmy had pencilled:

"This is the lot."

"Stand away," cried Jack, adopting a policeman-like voice. "Someone keep Bobby on the chain, or he'll be starting in to scoff the lot! Oh, boy, a tinned tongue," he exulted, having extracted it from the sack. "Don't breathe, and we'll see what else! Hurroosh!" as a tin of condensed milk was forthcoming. "Stuff to give the troops! And a packet of tea—"

"We shan't starve, any old how!" cried Naomer, dancing around. "Bekas, biscuits and tinned milk, and a tongue, and tea, and bread, and muddly-tawny soup, and sardines—"

"Hi, kid," Jack shouted, "here you are!"

But Naomer, darting to receive, as she thought, some little snack to be going on with, was merely handed a far from edible bundle.

"What ze diggings, ees zis for me?"

"That's for you, kid, yes—the sack!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Swendle," the dusky one protested. "But I, zink Jack meant eet for you, Paula. So—coming over!"

"Owp!"

There could only be a mere interlude of fun, however, for Jimmy was down there in the cavern, now waiting to be drawn up.

Once again, and for the last time, they all hoped, the rope went dangling down, and within ten minutes Jimmy was safely amongst his chums again, the recipient of a great ovation.

"And you shall sit down to a meal with us presently—oh, you shall, Jimmy boy!" said Jack. "Sit next to your Staff Commander, for a reward!"

"I expect," said Polly roguishly, "he would rather sit next to Pam!"

"Yes, well," said Pam serenely, "I hope he will! What was it like, down there, Jimmy?"

"In the cave? You ought to see!" he broke out, with all his chums for eager listeners. "It's astonishing. The sea goes a good way into the cave; but there's a floor of dry sand right at the end, only it's all so dark just there. You have to go in along a broad ledge that is only a foot or so above the water at high-tide. But what surprised me, the cave seems to have been used for a sort of workshop."

"What!"

"A tool locker, and a bench with vices—even a small lathe," Jimmy continued, his voice slightly subdued as from awe. "It's a mystery! I mean to say, who has been using the water cavern as a workshop?"

"Mr. Courtway must know," Betty said quickly. "But we mustn't bother him now. I dare say Ethel could tell us, come to that; but she's with her aunt and uncle. Look here, all, how about getting a fire going and making a brew of tea?"

"Waiter!" Jack cried. "Tea for sixteen, please!"

"Some order!" laughed Helen. "And does anyone know where the water for tea is coming from?"

"Yes; I do!" cried Judy. "I noticed a trickle of water among those rocks—a spring; it must be pure. I'll run and get some."

Jimmy had sent up a good-sized kettle with a few other utensils. Snatching it up, Judy would have been off instantly, all by herself, but Madge picked up the two tin mugs and a small jug of enamelled ware.

"We shall want more than a kettleful, Judy, so I'll come with you!"

From that moment, every one of the juniors had something useful to do. A short distance away from the cliff was as good a place as any for making a camp—and a camp there had got to be. A threatening sky and a smudgy horizon gave warning of bad weather, and how could they be sure of getting taken off before the night shut down?

Far from feeling sure of an immediate rescue, they regarded it as a fair certainty that they had got to "stick it" for the coming night at least.

So there was all this cheerful activity, with the idea of making the best of a bad job.

The island was treeless, and nothing like a fallen branch was available for firewood. Nor could there be any hunting for driftwood brought in by the tide. There was no beach; not a square yard of uncovered shingle below the cliffs, where they could have set foot.

Here and there some wind-twisted gorse bushes grew; and all the boys had pocket-knives. They set to work to cut branches, whilst some of the girls ran about, tearing out quantities of dead, reedy grass.

Ethel Courtway left her uncle and aunt still in grave talk and joined in all the activities. She had borrowed a box of matches from Uncle

Peter, and now the pile of dry grass was touched off, to start a camp fire.

They got it going at a well-judged distance from a mass of rocks that promised to provide shelter for the entire party, if a stiff wind from the south-west should start to blow. On the side that would be out of such a wind, the rocks were as sheer as a wall.

"This stuff will burn like fun," cried Jack, coming up with a great armful of the cut gorse. "Hooray, boys, look at that!" as he cast it upon the sizzling grass.

He ran off to get more, whilst Jimmy arrived with a whole lot of gorse of his cutting.

"Has your knife a tin-opener, Jimmy?" he was hailed by Pam.

"Yes; want it?"

"Please!"

For Pam, just then, was in attendance upon Ethel, by request, taking stock of the eatables and considering what to serve for the first meal.

"It's going to be a good one, even if we do have to stint later on!" the acting mistress had decided. "The tongue!"

"Better let me open it, Pam—"

"No, Jimmy. You've got something else to do."

"You might cut your hand—"

"Oh, what do you think I am!"

Whereupon Jimmy retired, crushed. He had a sort of worshipping affection for graceful Pam. Poor Jimmy, sisterless—and he would have made such a nice brother, as Pam, indeed, had once told him. She liked him greatly, but he never seemed to realise that she looked upon him as being anything else but an awkward chap, always "dropping bricks."

Then Dave arrived, with one of his loads of cut gorse. He did not cast it upon the already cheery blaze, but placed it aside in reserve.

"We've got the night to think of," he remarked to Judy, who was back with her brimming kettle. "No, Judy, it will come to grief if you dump it on the fire. Here!"

Cleverly then he hacked out a stick, leaving a prong at one end. The other end he pointed. In three minutes the kettle was hanging over the fire, safely, gipsy fashion.

"Gorjus!" was Naomer's shrilled comment. "But what I want to know is, when will tea be ready!"

"Bai Jove!" And Paula, looking glad to get a warm-up, held her hands towards the blaze after coming in from a less sheltered spot. "It's starting to blow, geals, howbly!"

"So long as it doesn't start to pour with rain," shouted Polly, now cutting slices of bread with a pocket-knife borrowed from Jack. "I hope the company won't mind doorsteps," holding up an inch-thick slice. "Best I can do!"

The sudden boiling of the kettle, so that tea could be made by stirring tea from the packet into the kettle itself, was a gratifying event. It occurred when a good many of the juniors were away, getting in more fuel, and so Naomer was told she might call them all to the gather-round.

"First useful thing you will have done," said Polly. "Sound the gong, kid!"

As Naomer's beating a tin mug with a stick caused a sound like a mere sheep-bell, Jack for one came frisking up, crying: "Ba-a-a!"

"Cook-house, boys!" was his soldierly cry, next moment.

An imitation bugle-call sounded. It blared, most realistically, over the wind-swept island.

"Come to the cookhouse door, boys; come to the cookhouse door!"

"They ought to hear that at Morcove," said Polly.

"Let's hope they will!" laughed Ethel. "It's about the only hope we have, I'm afraid, with the weather turning like this!"

No roof over their heads; only the wall of rock to shelter them—and night at hand! They might have been excused for being a bit dejected, miserable even. But there was a spirited gaiety during that first hand-round.

Morcove and Grangemore alike, far from bemoaning the hardships, gloried in them. The more they had to fend for themselves, the more thrilling would it be.

"And it isn't as if you were still anxious about the safety of that pocket-book, is it, Mr. Courtway?" after the make-shift meal had ended amidst much jocularly.

"No, young people," he said brightly, finding them all hanging upon his answer. "I have been robbed already—of what, I would rather not say, at present. Call it an invention—something in the experimental state. But those who have already done me that much harm—"

"You mean, Dawker and those he has conspired with?" interjected Ethel Courtway.

Uncle Peter nodded.

"They will gain nothing for themselves, after all, unless they also rob me of that pocket-book. It's why I threw it into the sea, and it's why I'm so thankful that, as it was not lost for ever in the sea, it is now safe at Morcove School."

"Goodness!"

Betty came out with that recollecting cry so excitably that the others, young and old alike, stared at her.

"I've just thought of it!" she spoke up quickly.

"Polly dear, what you saw last night, just after dark—"

"Gosh—"

"Ooo, and so did I!" shrielled Naomer. "Bekas, I was with you, Polly, when—"

"The man at the window!" Polly said tensely.

"A man at the class-room window, when Naomer and I looked into the room! We saw him—going to climb in, but he made off and no trace of him could afterwards be found."

"Ah!" The scientist's bushy eyebrows were close knit now. "One of the scoundrels—Dawker himself perhaps—intending to enter the school, to get hold of that pocket-book!"

"But it would have been all right, even if he had got to Ethel Courtway's study, after we'd all gone to bed," Betty made haste to remark. "The pocket-book, remember, was not there. It was where it is at this moment—in my table-drawer, in Study 12!"

"Only," Aunt Janet exclaimed, "it proves that they are desperate to get hold of the pocket-book!"

"Oh, they must be—I know, by what it contains," her husband said calmly. "A formula they must have, to be able to do any good with what they have already stolen. But I am not going to fidget and worry—why should I, when these boys and girls are all putting such a good face upon their trials. The scoundrels may break into the school to-night, but they will be wasting their time."

"Looking for the pocket-book in the wrong place—lovely!" Polly clapped.

"So it's O.K., boys," chimed in Jack blithely. "And as for meals—we're all right so far."

"And we can have another good meal, last thing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Although there should have been another hour of daylight still to count upon, there was such deep gloom now that they felt warmer; the night would close in before its proper time.

Clouds had thickened and were driving low. Away to the west—the vast Atlantic—sea and sky alike were merged blackly.

Plenty of fuel for the night, and a fresh supply of water from the spring—these were the prime necessities, to be got in before nightfall. Madge went off with Helen, this time, to fetch the water, whilst most of the others dispersed to make a fresh onslaught upon the gorse.

But Judy saw her brother standing very reflective, in that sheltered place where tea and sandwiches had been served, and she turned back to him.

"Penny, Dave!"

"I'm only thinking, Judy. I don't see why we shouldn't use some of the cut gorse—if we can get enough of it—to improve this bit of shelter. Some of the stuff, stacked as high as we can afford to carry it—"

"Only thinking that!" his admiring sister cried. "I call it a great idea. And couldn't we, whilst we're about it, Dave, manage a kind of roof—sticks across, and gorse as a sort of thatching?"

"We could, if we bring the two stacks inwards towards each other as we build," he nodded. "I was just thinking about that, too. Anyhow, it's worth trying, and all the more reason why we should cut as much gorse as possible."

"We'd be sheltered on three sides, anyhow. Besides, I'm sure we can manage that roof. Even if it does come down on us, whallop, what will it matter! We can always put it up again."

Judy laughed. She took her brother's arm, starting to go with him to where he would have more of the bushes to hack at with his pocket-knife. Then she stopped dead. So did he.

It was a sudden outcry that had startled them both, as it had startled others no doubt. Naomer! That always excitable junior was yelling loud enough for a half-dozen:

"Ooo, queek, queek, everybody—queek! A man—a man! Queek, before he is gone!"

After Him

OF all those who heard that sudden sensational cry from Naomer, Judy and Dave had perhaps the least distance to run, to get to where she was standing, pointing wildly.

But Betty and Polly had been almost as close at hand. They ended their sharp run only a moment or two after the brother and sister had reached Naomer.

She was still pointing, but there was nobody to be seen in that direction—only the hillocky ground, traversing which a man might so easily contrive to keep out of sight.

"That way?" panted Polly.

"Yes, queek!"

"You say, quick, and yet you yourself stand still! Oh!" Polly characteristically scorned the dusky one, whilst rushing on again, with Betty, Judy, and Dave.

Dave drew slightly ahead. Then they all three caught him up—at the top of a low ridge which they had all been forced to climb.

"Seen him, Dave?" they panted.

"Yes! It's Jake—"

"The boatman! But he went away and left us!"

"He's been back," gritted Dave, careering on again. "He's been—spying!"

"My goodness," gasped Betty. "And we were talking about that pocket-book, at tea!"

"That's just it!" Dave jerked out. "Look—there he goes!"

For a moment the girls saw him, in the bad light; but only for that one moment. They had just the fleeting glimpse of Jake as he had to go over another ridge, a couple of hundred yards ahead of them as they gave chase like this.

Then he plunged down on the other side of that ridge and they lost him.

"The jetty!" panted Betty. "He's making for the jetty! Oh, come on—faster!"

"If he gets away!" Polly fairly raved breathlessly. "When perhaps he has overheard us saying where the pocket-book is to be found!"

Betty glanced behind quickly as she ran with her two chums and Dave. She could see at least half a dozen others racing this way, in great alarm. Ethel was one, and her Uncle Peter was doing his best, despite his injured ankle, to keep up with younger runners.

The wind was blowing harder—striking aslant at them as they tore along. Then the ground fell away in front, sloping down to the rock jetty, and the sea was in view again, slate-coloured under the gloomy sky. Here and there a wave was white-capped.

But these foremost pursuers had eyes, now, only for Jake, as they saw him again—legging it down the slope, in those great sea-boots of his. He looked like the giant of some fable belonging to nursery days, come to life again.

"Now!" Betty panted.

The four of them had only the downhill run to do, and then they would be at the jetty, where the boat was rocking alongside. But Jake was at the foot of the slope when they were only half-way down.

Five seconds later they saw him rushing along the top of the water-worn rocks. Then he took a flying leap and landed 'midships in the boat.

But he lost his balance and was pitched off his feet. Did that mean still a chance for those pursuers who were even now rushing out along the rocks? There was a mooring rope that he must handle, and he was only now floundering on to his feet again.

If only—oh, if only they could be in time! In time to leap aboard all four of them, and grapple with him! Then the boat could be theirs—theirs, for a run to land.

It was not to be, however. By only a moment were they all too late; but tragically they were—too late!

In the very nick of time the man Jake escaped them all.

Quick-wittedly, he cast off a rope that he would otherwise have had to untie and then draw in.

He snatched up a boat-hook and thrust off. Dave and the girls—they were there at the jetty's edge, an instant later. But the boat was several yards away, with the sea, deep and cold, chopping between it and the rocks.

"You wretch!" Polly stormed. "Just you wait until—"

He laughed.

"It's for you and your friends to do the waiting, my gel!"

And, casting aside the boat-hook, he stepped down into the cockpit, started up the engine, and then settled himself to steer the powerful little boat over the roughening waters.

Storm in the Night

IT was a wild night along the Morcove coast. Girls who were lying awake after lights out in the dormitories, could hear the booming of the tide along the rugged shore.

The great schoolhouse, aloft on its lonely headland, caught the full fury of the risen wind. There were shrillings and wailings, and now and then a sudden thudding blast.

The hour was late, and yet lights still showed at some of the schoolhouse windows. Half-past eleven, and yet here was Miss Somerfield, the headmistress, throwing another lump of coal upon the fire in her private room—clear evidence that



In amazement the chums saw Jack running towards them, waving wildly towards the sea. His shouted words were carried away by the wind, and they could only wonder anxiously: What had he seen?

she had no intention of going to bed for some time to come.

She was alone, but was by no means the only person staying up to-night—waiting, waiting, hoping for news that would end all this terrible suspense.

Colleagues of hers, and not a few members of the domestic staff, were holding themselves available in case of a sudden development.

Surely something must happen soon now! At the very least, some reassuring news at last! If not, then how was there to be any going to bed to-night?

How could anxious minds give up puzzling and worrying over a mystery that concerned the strange disappearance of all those who, in the middle of the afternoon, had themselves fared away in quest of someone who had disappeared a couple of days ago!

Like the cry of lost spirits came the wailing of the wind about the night-bound schoolhouse. One great gust so shook the french windows of the

headmistress' room, that it seemed to her like someone trying to get in.

She crossed over and held the cosy hangings apart, but her peering eyes saw only the reflection of her face in the dark glass. There was a moon to-night, but it was obscured by inky clouds going over, thick and low.

Black darkness, and not a gleam of lamplight relieving that darkness, whether on land or sea.

Suddenly a tap-tap at the door caused her to start violently.

"Come in! Why, Etta," as she recognised the dressing-gowned girl who had glided in, silent as a ghost in fleecy bed-room slippers; "what are you doing down here at this hour of the night?"

"I—I hope you will excuse this, Miss Somerfield. But many of us in the dormitory can't get to sleep—"

"I am not surprised at that, Etta," the headmistress said gently. "But you must try."

"We have tried. But—it is such a noisy night out of doors, and there are more girls awake than ever now. So I said I'd come down, and ask you if—if there is any news?"

"You, Etta, have become deputy, as it were, for the Form captain? Well, you must go back and tell the others, Etta; no news yet."

"None whatever, Miss Somerfield!"

"None, Etta. But wait a minute, and I will ring through to the police station in Barncombe again. The exchange is keeping open all night, in case of urgent calls."

Turning to the extension telephone on her table, she took up the receiver; but Etta Hargrove soon realised that something was wrong. The headmistress was not getting any response.

"I am afraid there must be a breakdown, Etta! And that's a nice thing!"

"Perhaps it is the storm?"

"I'm afraid that is just what it does mean; wires down! Oh, how trying," sighed Miss Somerfield. "To be cut off at a time like this! Well, you must go up to your dormitory and tell the others; much to my sorrow—no news. I will either look up there presently, or send someone, Etta. If they would like to have a light on, they may."

"Thank you, Miss Somerfield. You see, they are girls in our Form who are missing," Etta said.

"I know; it is a terrible trial for all of you to have to bear."

"If only you could say anything, Miss Somerfield, that I could pass on; I mean, as to a theory that our chums, and Miss Courtway, and the boys as well, must be safe somewhere—"

"Etta, if I could, I would offer a comforting theory. But I am in the same position as the police—completely baffled."

"And no one has come back to the bungalow?"

"No one! As you know, the place was found deserted and locked up just before dark, when inquiries were first put on foot. The police have been keeping the bungalow watched, ever since. Nothing can have happened there, or I would have been informed. Good-night again, Etta dear, and you and the other girls—do try to sleep."

"Well, it's a—a mystery," quavered Etta Hargrove, turning to go slowly out of the bright warm room. "I could never have believed it possible; such a number of them—vanished like that! And now it seems that the manservant at the bungalow must have vanished along with them, too!"



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"Yes. A man who has been in the service of Mr. and Mrs. Courtway for years, I understand. We can only suppose that he, sharing in the original anxiety about Ethel Courtway, went off with the very party that set out to find her."

Etta, with an understanding nod, glided away as silently as she had come, and then Miss Somerfield returned to the telephone and tried again.

No. It was a breakdown, and not surprising, when wires everywhere must be swinging wildly in the wind.

What a night it had become! Hark to the waves now; that distant growling roar, forming an undertone to all the hurly-burly of the elements.

Presently the headmistress went out into the front hall, where the lights had been left on. She wanted to look at the barometer.

It had fallen an inch since nightfall. She tapped the glass, and the needle went back again, pointing still more directly to STORMY.

"Then it will become worse as the night goes on," she reflected, tragically. "As must our suspense, it seems!"

A MAN came running in the darkness, head down to the raging wind, to where another man sheltered close to a boundary hedge of the school.

"We've got to look out; I've just seen a policeman."

"Did he see you?"

"No. He's on the road, just by the gates, and the wind's terrific here. Nearly blowing him off his feet."

"It is a night, and no mistake, Dawker. We could never have used the boat, even if Jake hadn't lost it down there on the shore."

"Marvel he didn't lose his life as well."

"Say, they're going to find that wrecked boat in the morning."

"Let 'em! Maybe they will think that that accounts for everything."

The speaker, after peering over the top of the hedge, muttered angrily.

"Lights going in the schoolhouse still! But it's to-night or never, if we're to get hold of that pocket-book. Study 12, Jake said—"

"Study 12; and how we are going to find our way to it, when there are dozens of other studies, Dawker—"

"Oh, you never can see your way to do anything; although I dare say you'll know how to put in for your share of the coup!"

"If we do make the coup, I shall, for I've reckoned I've earned my share. You others could never have done without me, Dawker."

"I'm glad you think there's an 'if' in it. And a fine lot you've done, anyhow; an armchair part," sneered Dawker. "How'd you like to be one of those chaps of ours who have been chancing their lives on the sea—and under it, too? But come on now; through the hedge, after me—"

"Dawker, look out!" gasped the weakling of the gang. "Here's a 'busy'!"—meaning a policeman.

"What—where? That's no busy, man. That's only Jake, looking for us. We'll wait for him," Dawker decided. "Jake would make a dozen of you. He'll be the one to help me get inside the schoolhouse and lay hands on that pocket-book. And it's all right; I cut the telephone wires."

And, whilst waiting for this more reliable confederate to come sneaking up, in the dark and tempestuous night, Dawker added, through clenched teeth:

"The pocket-book—we've just got to get it! For without it we are—done!"

The Monster Comes Again

TARDILY, after the night of storm, daylight was creeping back, giving an awful leaden hue to land, sea and sky.

Polly Linton awoke with a start. She would have at once looked to right and left to see if any fellow victims of the great conspiracy were also stirring, now that morning had come. But instantly her eyes flew to a boyish figure—that of her own brother Jack—as he stood casting an armful of cut gorse upon the "camp" fire.

He saw that she had awakened, and nodded and smiled. Such a mute "good-morning" meant, as she promptly realised, that he did not wish to disturb those who were still asleep by speaking aloud.

Then a roving glance left her convinced; she was the only one who, asleep a few moments since, was now awake.

By the extraordinary, half-comic attitudes in which many of these others were at present lying, it was evident that there had been a dropping off into the sleep of sheer exhaustion, late in the night. So it could be taken for granted that sleep was all the heavier now for having been so long delayed.

Polly scrambled up from her wet share of that mattress of dry grass and heather which had been formed overnight in this sheltered spot. The shelter itself had been greatly improved before ever the juniors rested from their desperate labours last evening.

They had contrived to build those side walls of cut gorse, and had even succeeded in fashioning a kind of thatched roof. The result had been a really snug resting-place for the night, with a fire kept going that radiated more and more heat as its glowing heart increased.

"Gosh, stiff!" Polly whispered her brother, when she was close beside him at the fire, holding her hands to the blaze. "Pins and needles!" And she writhed an arm. "Have you had any sleep, Jack?"

"More than my share," he softly declared. "Jimmy and Dave were to wake me and Bobby at two in the morning, as you know. And, instead, Mr. Courtway ordered them to let us sleep on, saying he would keep watch."

"It hasn't rained, anyhow, Jack!"

"No. Wind was too high all night, I suppose. It's not quite so bad now."

"But bad enough! Jack dear," Polly whispered on, "we're not the only ones who are up. I see all the others, fast asleep, except Dave and Judy."

"They're away together, cutting more stuff for this fire. We must keep a good blaze going, Polly."

"Rather! It's everything to us."

"And, besides, if the weather clears a bit, they may see the smoke of our fire from Morcove by daylight, as they couldn't see the light of it by night. It's the thing to do, Polly, now; keep the jolly home fire burning!"

He reached to pick up the kettle, poured some hot tea from it into one of the tin mugs and handed it to his sister.

"Been stewing I don't know how long," he grinned. "So you'll think it pretty awful stuff, Polly."

"Oh," after the first comforting sip, "delish! Wait whilst I drink half this, Jack dear, and then I'll come with you to get in some more gorse."

But he said she had better catch him up, indicating where he was likely to be found. So when she had drunk some of the welcome tea she hurried after him.

On the way she saw Judy Cardew look round, whilst gathering branches that Dave was busy cutting. The two girls waved to each other quite gaily. Then Polly scampered across for a moment's talk.

"Well, you two! Another day! What's it going to be?"

"The weather?" Straightening up, Dave studied the sky. "Rough," he predicted. "There may be some bright gleams later on; but a bad spell like we've had can't be over all in five minutes."

"One of those deep depressions that they talk about on the wireless," Judy said, with her serious smile. "Anyhow, you don't seem to be suffering from it, Polly!"

"We've got to keep smiling—" "Oh, of course! When I think," Judy continued earnestly, "how bravely Mr. Courtway bore up all last evening—although he knew that the pocket-book would very likely be stolen, after all, during the night. It was an example to all of us."

"I know," Polly nodded; "he's the real sufferer by all this—poor Mr. Courtway! The people we're up against have already robbed him of something—an invention, as he vaguely called it. And if they have since got hold of that pocket-book, then— Yes, Dave?"

"Only want to say, we needn't despair about that pocket-book. It's true, the rotters have had the whole night. But I've been thinking; haven't there been people at the schoolhouse up all night? Can you imagine Miss Somersfield, for instance, going to bed, whilst nothing was known about us?"

"And you mean, Dave, up all night would cause lights to be kept on at the school? Oh!" And Polly clapped her hands together. "That's talking, that is! Judy darling, your brother thinks there's a chance. The pocket-book, not stolen yet—perhaps!"

Morcovians In An Island Drama

Next Tuesday you will read of the further thrilling adventures which befall Betty and Co. on Gull Island, in a complete story entitled :



By Marjorie Stanton

"There's just a chance—yes! If only we could get back to Morcove—get across, now that daylight has returned," was Judy's wistful murmur. "But what possible hope have we of doing that? Even if we had a boat—look at the sea!"

"Gosh! But now I've got an idea!" the mad-cap almost shouted, looking inspired. "Why can't we write a message that the tide will take across? Dave, wouldn't a bottle thrown into the sea find its way to the Morcove beach? We've no bottle, but we could find something that would float—"

"It's worth trying," he answered, gravely reflective. "The thing might go across, on the waves; or, again, it might hang round the island all day. Just a question of currents that we don't know anything about."

"Any rate—" Polly was resuming eagerly, when a faint "Hi!" reached all three of them, from Jack.

That had been his calling-attention cry, and now he started to run towards them, at the same time pointing wildly to the raging sea.

They whipped their eyes away from his on-rushing figure, to gaze in the direction he had indicated. But they were still wondering, seeing only the white-capped waves rolling heavily along, when he came up.

"Out there!" he bawled breathlessly, pointing afresh. "But I can't see it myself now!" His companions only just heard this, for he had dropped his voice, and the air was full of the wind's shrillings and the steady roar of waves under the cliffs.

Then he shouted again.

"Yes, I do! There it is again, boys—there, there! See it? Just come up again—"

"Oh!" Judy almost screamed. "Dave, do you see? Like a strange monster—"

"And it is—it is!" Polly yelled. "The Morcove monster—again!"

THEY watched this strange, mysterious thing so intently, not one of them was aware of someone coming towards them, walking with a slight limp.

They gazed, glimpsing the thing only now and then, as it wallowed in the heaving sea, fully a quarter of a mile from the island's cliffs.

The Morcove monster! So it had been called, when first seen off the Morcove shore by Polly and one or two others. There had been great jokes made about it, as something that existed only in the imagination of highly-fanciful juniors. But now—

"Now, what did we tell you!" Polly exclaimed to her brother, without withdrawing her gaze from the fascinating object. "You wouldn't believe, any of you who hadn't seen it. Now you are seeing it for yourself, Jack!"

"Gosh, it's simply marvellous," he gasped. "As big as a whale, and yet it can't be one. It's—I don't know what it is!"

"It's no living creature," Dave muttered. "Must be some kind of small submarine. It's only just afloat on the surface—"

"But it does look like some strange animal," Judy exclaimed. "I don't wonder Polly and the others likened it to a living monster!"

"Living monster?" spoke a voice from close behind them all. "That's no monster, boys and girls. That's the very invention of which I have been robbed!"

And they had no need to look round to know that the speaker was Ethel Courtway's Uncle Peter.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.