

“From Mirth to Mystery” | “Amber the Adventurous”  
Complete Morcove Holiday Tale | New Series by Iris Holt

# The SCHOOLGIRLS' 2<sup>D</sup> OWN

No. 742, Vol. 29  
Week Ending  
April 27th, 1935.  
EVERY TUESDAY



**TO HELP THE  
'RED REVELLERS'**  
One of the many amusing incidents in this week's complete Morcove holiday tale.

Full of Fine Stories by Favourite Authors

THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN. No. 742. Vol. 29.

Week ending April 27th, 1935.

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**N**OW that Easter is over I daresay you are all thinking about the forthcoming Silver Jubilee celebrations. Most of you will be enjoying a brief holiday, and those of my London readers who are able will, no doubt, seize the opportunity to witness one or more of the special Jubilee drives, which Their Majesties are to take in the Capital.

In our next number there will appear a fascinating article, by a special contributor, reviewing the chief events of the past twenty-five years—a period as interesting as any in history. And in my next Chat I hope to tell you something of the Silver Jubilee celebrations in London.

#### A CITY OF GAIEITY

Meantime, preparations are going forward rapidly for the coming weeks of National rejoicing. London is to be a city of gaiety. Stands to accommodate thousands of sight-seers are being erected along the routes of the Royal processions; public buildings will be gay with flags and decorations; the parks—London's 'green oases in a desert of brick and mortar'—will be brilliant with flowers, and on the days of the Royal processions the streets will be a riot of colour.

In other cities and towns—and villages, too—throughout the Kingdom, there will be similar demonstrations of rejoicing and gaiety. And it is more than likely, I expect, that many readers of THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN will be taking part in local festivities.

Those of you who are Guides are certain to be very busy. No doubt, you will be called upon to take your part in local demonstrations, and I am sure you will be very proud to have this opportunity of sharing in such an important event.

#### THE GUIDE MOVEMENT

It is interesting to note that the foundation of the Girl Guide movement is one of the events of the twenty-five years of Their Majesties' reign. Although small groups of Guides had been in existence for some years, it was in 1911—a year after His Majesty ascended the throne—that the movement became established officially.

Since then the movement has grown in numbers and in prestige, and today there is hardly a town in the kingdom without its company of Guides. And it is largely due to the splendid lead given by H.R.H. the Princess Royal, as President, that the movement has made such rapid strides during the past twenty-four years.

Certain it is that in years to come you will all recall with intense interest the Silver Jubilee of 1935.

#### FIVE FINE STORIES

In addition to the special Jubilee features I have mentioned, your SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN next week will contain a host of fine stories.

There will be a brilliant long complete story of the chums of Morcove School on holiday at Brighthampton. The Study 12 Co. are thoroughly enjoying their novel holiday, and the venture to which they have so willingly lent their useful aid is providing them with all the fun and excitement they could wish.

But there is a fresh shock in store for the "Red Revellers," as you will see when you come to read next Tuesday's fine story, which will appear under the title of

#### "MORCOVE FOLLOWS THE CLUES,"

By Marjorie Stanton

Do not miss this fine tale, which is packed with dramatic adventures and sparkling holiday fun. All your favourites are to the fore—including the boys of Grangemoor School.

Our next number will contain the second of the new series by Iris Holt, and those of you who have already enjoyed this week's tale will be longing to read more about Amber Dare. Look out for another stirring yarn next week, under the title "Amber the Adventurous."

It is rather sad news to know that Muriel Holden's popular story is to end next week. But I must hasten to make it quite clear that this favourite author will not be deserting our pages, for the following week she begins a delightful and unusual new story, details of which will be announced in my Chat next week.

Further chapters of "The Caravan Wanderers," and a fine, complete tale by Margery Marriott, will complete a really splendid number, which you simply must not miss. Make quite sure of your copy by ordering it at once.

#### TO CRUISE—OR NOT TO CRUISE?

Holidays are already in the air, and, of course, Cuthbert is one of the first to take an interest in the prospect of a fortnight's freedom. He hasn't yet made up his mind as to what he wants to do, but I rather gather that he has abandoned the idea of a motor tour, and is toying with the project of a cruise.

And very nice, too! Although, somehow, I cannot imagine our Cuthbert as an immaculate passenger on a mighty liner. And I'm more than certain that some adventure would befall him, for Cuthbert is one of those people who seem to be dogged by disasters.

Quite probably Cuthbert would go ashore on a sight-seeing trip, and would then get left behind. There would be search parties scouring Morocco, or Naples, or Malta, or wherever else the boat happened to be.

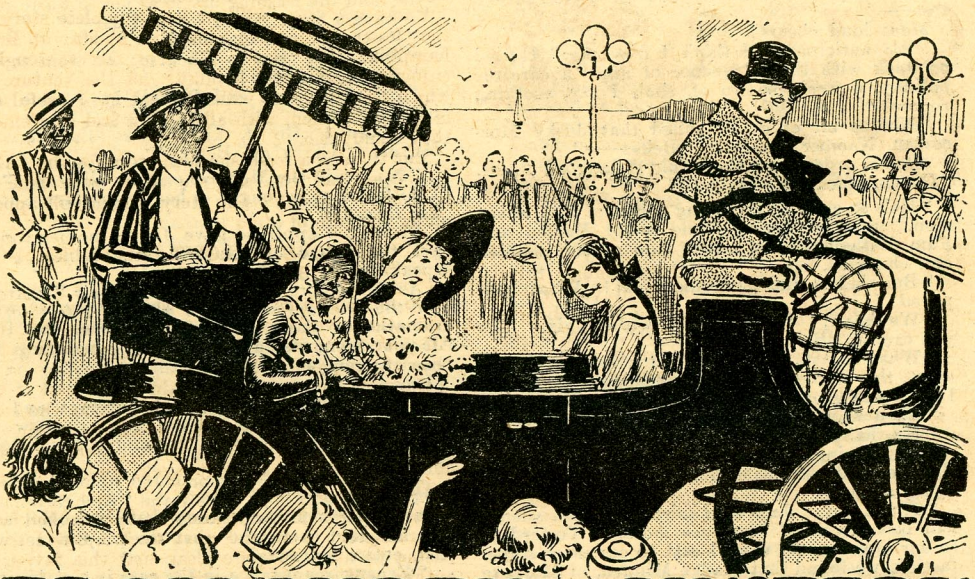
Or he would be anxious to see the engines of the ship and would get lost in the hold, or put in the refrigerator; or—worse still—he might fall overboard into some shark-infested waters.

But no doubt, next week, Cuthbert will have changed his plans and will have decided to walk to John O'Groats.

With best wishes,

YOUR EDITOR.

# Holiday Fun and Adventures With the "Red Revellers": Delightful Complete Tale of Morcove's Merry Chums



## FROM MIRTH to MYSTERY

BY MARJORIE STANTON

### CHAPTER I.

#### Morcove Will Be There !

SOUNDS of riotous merriment were coming from a certain old-fashioned house on the sea front at Brighthampton.

Early morning promenaders took their eyes from the sparkling sea to glance across at the house in a half-amused, half-wondering manner.

Was it a boarding establishment over there or a boarding-school?

And the answer was—neither!

Beach House simply happened to be a bit of property which, at present on the owners' hands, had been lent for holiday purposes to a jolly party of schoolgirls and schoolboys.

Only the day before yesterday had they taken possession, dumping their holiday kit much as soldiers on active service might have to dump theirs in an empty house to which they had been billeted.

Betty Barton and her girl chums of Morcove School were by far the larger half of the holiday party. As for the schoolboy element, its personnel was varied, even if its numbers were limited—to five lads, the best of chums, all belonging to Grangemoor School.

Madeap Polly Linton, of Morcove, could never be without her fun-loving brother Jack, during the "hols." Judy Cardew, whose widowed mother was in charge at Beach House, would have badly missed her brother Dave; but he was here—quiet, strong Dave!

And Ann—otherwise "Bunny"—Trevor, quite one of the most vivacious members of the Morcove "chummary"—she liked to have her brother Tom with her, so that accounted for his being in the party.

No claim to relationship with any of the girls had either plain Jimmy Cherrol or Master Robert Bloot, better known as "Tubby." But these two had been members of other holiday parties, and any idea of not including them this time would have meant a riot.

Full of beans, all of them, this morning! All the girlish laughter and boyish guffawing which could be heard so clearly by promenaders across the way—it had been going on for the last half-hour, whilst a hearty breakfast followed morning dips in the briny.

Ten times the greater fun were Morcove and Co. getting, because their holiday quarters were so novel. Nothing like roughing it, for a change. No better meals than those you cooked for yourselves!

But now somebody gave a calling-attention whack! of a spoon to the edge of the trestle-table. "Order! Silence, please!" seemed to be the half-serious request.

The mere fact, however, that it was Jack who had whacked the spoon meant that his standing up must be greeted with loud cheers.

"Whereas—" Jack shouted, and paused.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ladies and gentlemen——"

"Hurrah!"

"When, ladies and gentlemen, we—h'm!—forsook the paths of learning——"

"Booh! Ha, ha, ha!"

"And repaired to the seaside for a well-earned rest——"

More loud cheers!

"We anticipated, I think I may say," rattled on Jack with that eloquence of his, "a carefree holiday, a week or two of, shall I say, soothing repose!"

"Not ze bit of eet!" yelled that dusky Morcovian, Naomer Nakara. "Bekas——"

"Order, order! Sit down, kid!" laughed others. "Go on, Jack—ha, ha, ha!"

"He's so good at imitating a sort of City alderman," gurgled Bunny; and Betty Barton and Pam Willoughby, on either side of her, nodded and chuckled.

"But, ladies and gentlemen—but! What happened?"

"We know," put in Polly witheringly. "So you can cut all that!"

"What, I ask, I repeat," Jack cried, rapping upon the table, "what happened yesterday? Ladies and gentlemen, as you know——"

"Then why keep on about it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jack's fixing a very stern eye upon his saucy sister caused the peals of laughter to be slow in dying away.

"Thank you," Jack said solemnly, when silence had been accorded him—once more. "Yesterday, to our amazement; shall I say, to our utter stupefaction, we found that Madge Minden, of Morcove School, was in this town as a member of a beach concert party."

"Hear, hear! Good old Madge!" dinned the breakfast-table. "Madge!"

"Bekas, she is only doing eet to help her Aunt Ada, and eet not their fault zat ze whole zing had gone flop, only we went to ze rescue, and—— What ze diggings," Naomer yelled, deciding to make it a speech; and she mounted her chair. "Ladies and gentlemen——"

"Sit DOWN, kid!"

"Yes, bai Jove, disgwaceful!" came Paula Creel's highly indignant protest. "Intewwupting—— Ow! Ow! Gah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

For now it was Paula herself who was being interrupted, by having Naomer topple down upon her more or less by accident.

"I observe," Jack gravely remarked, "it is always the feminine element which——"

Up roar!

"Right," Jack said grimly at last, for self and chums "Do without us, then! Come on, fellows, and look up a train! And then see how that concert party, all on the rocks as it is, gets on with only the help of these girls. Help, did I say?"

"You did," said Polly sweetly. "And, don't worry, we shall manage quite well without you boys!"

"But," said Jack, sitting down with an air of having found a fresh appetite, "I'm not going until I've finished brekker. Marmalade up, please!"

"The question is," jested Polly, "had you any practical suggestion to make?"

Jack, stubbornly silent now, helped himself to marmalade.

"Then," cried Polly, rising for the moment, "I call upon our captain, girls—Betty!"

"Hurrah!" Morcove frantically cheered.

"Now, Betty, ha, ha, ha!"

"I thought we had all finished brekker," was Betty's playful allusion to Jack's starting afresh. "I thought we all wanted to get the clearing away done, and the washing-up, so as not to waste time! We have a busy day in front of us——"

"Ra-ther!" and clapping.

"Bekas, we want to rehearse; we want to——"

"Sit DOWN, kid!"

"All right, zen, and I shall have some more brekker, too!"

"Hoora! Go it, kid!" was the facetious chorus. "Carry on, Betty!"

"No," said the Morcove captain blithely. "But I do feel that we ought to hear what Mrs. Cardew has to say!"

Prolonged applause gave Judy's mother time to get the better of her own mirthfulness before speaking.

As the juniors had been aware, their "matron" for the holidays wished to address a few serious remarks to them all, and now was the time. Jack's recent rising to open the proceedings had been merely a bit of preliminary fooling on his part.

A few moments more, and Morcove and Co. were done with their levity. Mrs. Cardew was touching upon matters which could not be laughed about.

Very feelingly she commented upon the desire of the girls and boys to help the "Red Revellers" concert party to keep going. She repeated what she had said overnight—that the project met with her entire approval.

"Every circumstance in the case is a claim upon our sympathy and aid," she quietly continued. "We now know that Madge Minden gave up her intention of being with us for the holidays, because her Aunt Ada wanted somebody at short notice to take the place of a pianist who had—well, absconded is the only word for it."

"Yes—shameful, the way that fellow went off," murmured some of the listeners. "Caddish thing to do."

"And since then the two other fellows who originally belonged, have deserted," resumed Judy's mother. "So there were those who had been left to carry on as best they could—trying to give a first performance on the beach, last evening. Placed as they were, how could the show be anything else but a flop? But some of you boys and girls went to their aid, certainly turning failure into success!"

"I don't know about that," put in Betty, with a grin of recollection. "But Madge and her aunt have jumped at our offer to help; so have the three young ladies who are singers. Oh, and I'm sure we can help them, too! We girls have taken part in lots of school entertainments. And then there are the boys; there's Jack——"

He checked in the act of feeding toast and marmalade to a capacious mouth.

"Are you referring to me, Betty?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nunno," Jack shook his head. "You could never pay my fee. Come on, chaps; let's go shrimping!"

"No, you don't," Polly cried, jumping up to fly to the door and bar the way. "You've caused all this delay. Girls! I propose that the boys stay in to do the washing-up and cooking for dinner! Those in favour?"

Gaily the girls shot up right arms, with the result that Polly's yell of "carried unan!" was followed by cheering of the right Study 12 brand.

Whether Jack and his chums did turn to at the "chores" or not, certain it is that Betty and Polly were free, a minute later, to set off upon an important errand.

They were going to call for Madge Minden, where she lodged with Aunt Ada and the three young lady singers.

"I wonder how they all feel, this morning," exclaimed Betty, hurrying for the heart of the town with the madcap. "They must have gone to bed last night with spinning heads. The upsets, the hurry-scurry all yesterday!"

"I tell you, Betty, if we weren't all going to help them, I for one would be terribly worried about them," Polly responded. "They simply couldn't do any good, by themselves; yet they've taken that entertainment place on the beach—have all sorts of expenses to meet—"

"That's just it! And besides," Betty was continuing, when she and her chum both stopped dead on the pavement, their startled eyes beholding Madge Minden herself.

And such a Madge! She had come running round a corner out of a side street, as if in desperate haste to get to Beach House with some bit of bad news.

Now, at sight of Betty and Polly, she came towards them with a final breathless rush, her dark eyes enlarged by the fright that seemed to be upon her.

"Oh—so glad I've met you two," she panted. "I really don't know what you'll think of it all now, girls; but—"

"But what, then, Madge?" the Beach House pair clamoured. "A fresh upset?"

She nodded, still heaving for breath.

"Another of them," she said, in a tone that matched her scared expression—"vanished!"

## CHAPTER 2.

### One By One

FOR a long moment Betty and Polly were too astounded for speech.

They could only stand agape, their expressions speaking for them.

"Never, Madge!"

"But it is so," that girl insisted. "I was just on my way to Beach House to let you all know. Girls, there is something in all this I just can't understand!"

"I should think there must be!" gasped Polly. "Another of them—gone off, you mean, quite suddenly?"

Again Madge nodded impressively.

"This time it is Daisy Darrell who has—deserted, I suppose is the word for it. You know her, of course?"

"But of course we do," cried Betty. "Daisy Darrell—she was the contralto. A really charming girl; made quite a success last night, too, in spite of the bad start. And yet you say she has cleared out?"

"Gosh, what DOES it mean!" Polly fumed. "I mean to say! First, there was a Mr. Harrison who went off without a moment's warning. Then Maisie Duncan's brother bolted, and only yesterday Effie Norman's brother, Harry, served you all the same trick! So now, there are four—"

"And only three left of the original party," Madge gravely rejoined. "For, of course, I joined them as a kind of stop-gap. There's Aunt Ada, and there are Maisie and Effie, and that's all apart from myself."

"It isn't all," Betty dissented, with a sudden comforting smile for worried Madge. "Don't forget what we Beach Housers promised to do, last night, after we'd helped you to give that first show."

"Ah," Madge exclaimed, "and what we would have done without that help! We'd have had to ring down the curtain, return any money—if there was any to return."

Polly chuckled.

"What a lot of rot it was that we put over, really—Jack and I, and Bunny and Tom! Still, the audience seemed to like it, and, anyhow, it filled in the blanks, so to speak. Er—you are not thinking of deserting, are you, Madge?"

"Oh, Polly, don't joke!" was the half-laughed answer. "No, I'm no quitter. Aunt Ada's deep

in—she can't get out. To cancel the whole thing—"

"Cancel be blowed!" Polly exploded. "But, seriously, how about Effie and Maisie, then? Are they going to turn tail? This quitting does seem to be catching!"

"You should have been at the lodgings, only an hour ago,"

Madge earnestly exclaimed, "to hear them talking. We were at breakfast, expecting Daisy Darrell to come in and join us at any moment. She had only gone down to the sea for an early bathe—at least, so we understood. And then suddenly our landlady came up with a note."

"From Daisy Darrell?" Betty quickly inferred.

"Yes! It was just a pencilled note, in an envelope, to say that she, Daisy, would be sending for her things in a day or two—from London."

"And that was all?" stared Polly.

"Absolutely all! If you can imagine," Madge quavered on. "We had seen her go



"I'm so glad I've met you!" Madge panted, in such a distressed manner that Betty and Polly knew at once that something alarming had happened.

Was it to do with the Red Revellers?

off simply to get a before-breakfast bathe. She was fully dressed, certainly, but then, our lodgings are in the centre of the town, so she wouldn't care to slip down to the beach just anyhow."

Betty shook her head.

"She could never have intended going to bathe, really. That must have been a ruse. She must have made up her mind—overnight, most likely—and gone straight to the railway station."

"Anyway, she's gone—another of them to leave you others in the lurch," Polly burst forth disgustfully. "But why—why is it, Madge? Hang it all, they are not so new to the life, are they, that they didn't expect a bit of a struggle? Travelling companies—they always do have to live from day to day; poor takings in one town, perhaps, and then a bright time somewhere else."

"But they were not doing so badly, when first Mr. Harrison deserted," Madge declared bewilderedly. "That's the amazing thing! Aunt Ada has told me; they were getting good audiences everywhere. What's more, there was no quarrelling. They were just a happy band trying their luck together, and it was good luck they were having. So why, one by one, they should have dropped out—gone off—"

"Yet I can't help laughing," Betty mirthfully interrupted. "For that's the way they have gone off—one by one!"

Polly gave her grim smile.

"It would go to the tune of 'Ten Little Nigger Boys!' wouldn't it? 'Seven Red Revellers, full of fun and tricks; one got fed-up, and then there were Six!' Well, cheer up, Madge. This evening's show is going to stagger the town."

"Let's go down to the seashore theatre," Betty suggested. "There's a lot we can do. Some of the others will be along presently."

"Yes, let's," Madge agreed. "And I know that Aunt Ada and Effie and Maisie will be turning up as well. Nothing like rehearsing!"

"And advertising," was Polly's quick rejoinder. "That's a thing we are going to do to-day—tell the world! At any rate, we mean to make Brighthampton sit up and take notice."

"That reminds me," smiled Madge, as the three of them hurried for the sea front; "the boys went off with some of our window bills last night. If they can get them shown, it will be more than I could do yesterday. The Pier Pavilion entertainers have their bills out everywhere; but then they can pay for space with free tickets. I understand they are doing big business. They have the name!"

"There'll be a more talked-of batch of entertainers than the 'Pavilionites,' before this day is out, you see," Polly predicted. "And the name will be—the 'Red Revellers'!"

"That's it!"

Still in talk, they soon reached the so-called theatre on the beach. It was the usual type of lock-up booth, with a small stage and annexes that served as dressing-rooms.

A side door, of which Madge had the key, admitted them to what was a rather dingy interior. Windows were few and tiny, and as for the stage, it had the front curtains drawn together so as to give privacy for rehearsals and much else that would keep the lessees busy enough, in between performances.

"Gosh, one of the boys had better be appointed official stage carpenter at once," chuckled Polly, after noticing many defects due to the building's exposure to the gales of last winter. "Perhaps Tom Trevor knows how?"

"It's an electrician we most badly need,"

Madge ruefully commented. "Only half the lights would come on last night."

"Then that'll be a job for Dave," cried Betty. "He knows all about short circuits and insulations and things. Madge dear, this piano is not exactly—"

"It certainly isn't!"

"But we've one at the digs," Betty was happy to be able to remark. "I say, wouldn't it be an improvement to have that other piano along? We'll get that done during the day."

"And this back cloth," Polly said, gazing at a very washed-out bit of scenery; "it wants touching up. As soon as Tess comes along, she'll be the one. Think of the times she has painted scenery for some of our school concerts!"

"Shouldn't wonder if she knocks off a completely new back cloth," Betty was happily exclaiming, when she heard the voices of arriving chums.

Next moment, Bunny Trevor came prancing in, followed by Judy, Helen and Tess. As a sign that she, Bunny, now considered herself under contract with the Red Revellers, she promptly did a high kick in the middle of the stage.

"I can beat that," said the madcap, doing a much higher kick.

"But not this?" challenged Bunny, doing the splits. "We ought, though, to be telling you girls the news! You can't have heard that a Royalty is coming to Brighthampton to-day?"

"What!" yelled Polly and Betty, whilst Madge gaped her amazement.

"She arrives at eleven-thirty, and comes to the digs—for lunch," Bunny rattled on. "How we happen to know; Judy's mother is to entertain her Majesty—"

"Bunny, you're crazy!"

"I'm not! Isn't that right?" she appealed to Judy, Helen and Tess, who all nodded, laughing. "Mrs. Cardew is throwing a party at Beach House—"

"But—"

"And we are all invited. It is hoped, Madge, that Aunt Ada will be present, also those three girls—"

"Listen, though," Betty jerked. "There are only two girls now!"

It became Bunny's turn to stare astoundedly, along with those girls who had just turned up with her.

"Only two?"

"Yes," Madge said, and explained all over again about the sudden and amazing "desertion" of Daisy Darrell.

Madge put everything into as few words as possible, but a good deal of grave discussion inevitably followed. It was wondering talk concerning this latest sensation which was ultimately cut short by sounds from the promenaded—a medley of sounds too peculiar to be ignored.

"Is that the town crier, or what?" Betty wondered, for the jangle-jangle of a handbell was accompanying a lot of calling-out.

"Anyhow, what's everybody laughing about? Here, let's go and see!"

Polly, as she said that, was already dashing for the open air.

After her ran the others, seeing at first only a number of folk mobbed together on the asphalt walk above the sea-wall. Roars of laughter were going up.

"Come on!" cried Polly. "For I believe—"

And her chums were sharing in that same sudden belief as they dashed with the madcap over the loose shingle to some stone steps that led

up to the parade. Unless Morcove was greatly mistaken, the boys were in this!

Sure enough, Betty and her present companions reached the promenade to find that several "sandwich-men"—but they were schoolboys really—were wending slowly along the kerbside, preceded by a "spoof" town crier.

Jack!

"Oh!" said Polly, and then: "Gosh!" Her sparkling eyes expressed nothing but adoring pride in her fun-loving brother, in the rôle he had assumed.

Even without him, as a special public attraction, the other fellows would have secured plenty of attention, thereby advertising the Red Revellers in song, dance and comic sketches, twice daily!

For Tubby, Jimmy, Dave and Tom—they were sandwich-boards plastered with the Red Revellers' window bills.

Slowly, almost solemnly, they moved along at the edge of the thronged promenade, leaving Jack to do all the talking.

"Oyez, oyez, oyez!" bawled Jack, ringing a bell which Betty and the others recognised as one taken down from the kitchen wall at Beach House. "Command performance this day—at three! To the nobility and gentry of Brighthampton! To all residents, holiday-makers, excursionists, hikers and beanfeasters!"—jangle, jangle, jangle! "To-day, boys, at three! The Red Revellers in original songs, original dances, original and farcical sketches," jangle, jangle, jangle!

So he was announcing, dressed up as an old-time town crier.

How he had contrived to acquire such a rig-out on the spur of the moment would have been beyond Morcove's understanding, only they knew what a resourceful, ingenious fellow he was.

Somehow he had fashioned a cocked hat for himself. Somehow, he had achieved a beard. Somehow, the "digs" had provided him with some bits of gold braid and a brass chain.

"How lovely!" Bunny gurgled. "I thought they were up to something, when we girls came away! Ha, ha, ha!"

"He'll be run in," Polly predicted grimly. "That'll be the end of him!"

"Oyez, oyez, oyez!" Jack bawled on, pretending to read from a handbill, whilst flourishing the bell with his other hand. "Know all men by these presents! This morning, at the Central Station, platform tickets, one penny! Arrival of her Majesty Queen Naomer of Nakara, by the eleven-thirty! Afterwards at Beach House, for lunch, and then at three in the afternoon—"

Jack now worked the handbell violently.

"At Beach Theatre, Brighthampton; exhibition of native dancing by her Majesty the Queen of Nakara! Special engagement—secured at great expense!"

"My goodness," Betty gasped, during another roar of laughter from the crowd. "What IS he saying!"

"But it's all quite true," gurgled Bunny. "It's arranged!"

"Then all I can say is," Polly rejoiced, "it's the finest thing ever in the way of seaside advertising. I'll stand him an ice for this!"

On went the absurd procession, taking with it a crowd that grew every moment bigger.

The girls, keeping in the crowd, overheard some of the amused remarks.

"There's a catch in it!"

"Oh, of course, it's only a stunt to advertise

the Red Revellers. But is there really a queen coming?"

"We might go to the station when the time comes?"

"Yes!"

There were nudges amongst the Morcove girls. They had lively visions of the Central Station, and how it would look shortly after midday!

### CHAPTER 3.

#### "It Pays To Advertise"

MEANTIME, what had become of that dusky scholar whom Morcove only knew as Naomer, or the "kid"?

"I believe you could say, Bunny!"

But that member of the "chummery" was not to be drawn, nor would Judy, Helen or Tess enlighten those who were in the dark. As Polly never could endure mystification, she was soon on her way to Beach House, to find out for herself.

Dashing up the front steps, she went in by a doorway that was admitting morning sunshine and sea breezes, and she awoke the silence of an apparently deserted house by a shout:

"Naomer, where are you?"

Then Pam Willoughby came upstairs from the basement kitchen.

"Hallo, Polly, you back!"

"Thought I might find Naomer?"

"Oh, Naomer—she's gone with Mrs. Cardew; I think, to catch a train."

This serene response of Pam's must have enabled Polly to guess the rest. The madcap gave a nod of complete understanding.

"Good! What do I do, then, Pam? Stay around and help you, or get back to the theatre?"

"Bai Jove, Polly deah!" was the sudden rejoicing cry of Paula Creel, as she now appeared at the top of the kitchen stairs. "Would you like to—er—take my place as cook's mate?"

"I don't know that I would!"

"Mind you," Paula beamed, "I wegawd the job as one to be pwoof of, yes, wather! Instwutive, too! But wawm, yes, wather!"

"Want any help, Pam?" asked Polly.

"Well, as we are entertaining Royalty to lunch

"That kid," Polly said of Naomer grimly; "she gets out of all the drudgery! I can spare you an hour; then I've got to rehearse! Where are you off to, Paula?"

"Er—just to get a bwief west—"

"You don't! You come on down!" insisted the madcap, and she took Paula by force, as it were, down to the basement kitchen. "Know how to hit up jam turnovers?"

"Er—not pwecisely," Polly deah."

"I'll put you wise."

The cheerfulness with which Polly said this was not exactly reflected in Paula's looks. Indeed, a certain dolefulness, a kind of an air of martyrdom, manifested itself during subsequent instruction in the art of pastry-making.

The warmth of the kitchen, to which the beloved duffer of the "chummery" had referred, caused her to cast wistful eyes now and then towards the way out. But flee she dare not, when there was Polly with a rolling-pin ready to hand.

Polly had hinted at the start that they were more uses than one for a rolling-pin.

Suddenly, however, a diversion came about that must have been of great relief to Paula—"Yes, wather!" The boys turned up again, with a great crowd that had followed them to Beach House out of curiosity.

For a few moments the kitchen staff experienced mild panic. It looked as if a portion of the crowd might descend the area steps to see what was going on down here.

But no sooner had Jack and his chums dashed up the front steps and got indoors than the crowd began to disperse. The boys did not come down to the kitchen, so the girls went up to them.

Evidently, the recent parade of town crier and sandwich-men had created thirsts. Polly, Pam and Paula found the five heroes of that "stunt" helping themselves to lemonades in the dining-room.

"Gosh, boys," Jack said, clawing off a beard that threatened to get in the way of a foaming tumbler, "I shan't have any voice left for the show, at this rate. Got a tin of blacking downstairs, you girls?"

"Blacking?"

"Boot polish or black lead, we don't mind which, really—do we, Tubby?" Jack casually added. "So long as it's black!"

"What on earth for?"

"Oh, just to give Tubby that schoolboy complexion," Jack said. "Happy days!" And he did not stop until his glass was drained. "Ah, that's the stuff, boys! How goes the time? I say, we must jump to it."

At any rate, they were not kept waiting for their strange requisite. A large tin of stove polish was immediately brought to them by Polly.

"Thanks," said her brother. "Come on, boys!"

Although the three girls returned to the kitchen, whilst Jack went upstairs with his chums, this did not prevent the domestic staff from hearing great shouts of laughter during the next ten minutes.

Again and again the guffawing found its way down from an upper floor of the house to the basement.

"What are they up to?" Polly exploded at last, slamming aside her rolling-pin. "As if they haven't disgraced us enough!"

A little after this, the girls were surprised to hear a patter-patter as of pony feet upon the smooth motor road just outside the house.

To their increased surprise, this sound suddenly ceased, so that they were bound to suppose a halt had been called in front of Beach House.

Wondering greatly, they ran out to the area steps and mounted to the pavement level, and there at the kerb were four saddled donkeys.

"Goodness!"

"Yes bai Jove—extwaowdinawy!"

"What darlings," was Pam's only comment. She was a great lover of animals.

As all three girls realised, these were four donkeys which took children for runs along the sands. They were plump, well-groomed creatures, but this did not detract from their proper assinine appearance. When was a donkey anything but comic?

There they stood, with the proverbial patience of asses, at the kerb, twitching their long ears. A sturdy little boy, half-gipsy, had come with them, and he was all grins as if both pleasure and profit were in sight.

Polly and Pam forgot their cookery, and, with Paula, went to the pavement's edge to pet the donkeys. They also inquired of the boy why he had turned up with them, but the only answer was that they had been ordered "by the young gen'l'men."

And now, whilst the girls were still waiting, what should they see coming along the sea road but a horse and carriage of the genuine Victorian

kind. In fact, the open carriage was one of those that used to be known as a "Victoria."

Aloft on his seat was perched an aged coachman, who still wore a silver-buttoned coat to a shiny silk hat. The girls saw him drawing in to the kerb, just behind the standing donkeys, and then—

"Why, look!" cried Polly. "In the carriage—it's Bunny!"

"Good gwacious!"

"Yes, well," smiled Pam, evidently understanding the meaning of this latest surprise. "And doesn't she look sweet?"

Bunny, alighting from the open carriage, might have been a film star, she looked so ravishing. A hat had done the trick—a broad-brimmed picture hat, possibly routed out of the costume baskets belonging to the Red Revellers.

As big as a cartwheel was that hat, with just the right degree of floppiness on one side to make the face beneath look especially winsome.

"Bunny!" the madcap almost yelled, after running up to her. "But—"

"Are the boys ready?"

As if in answer to that bland inquiry, a jovial "Come on, chaps!" drew attention to Jack, as he came out of the house and ran down the front steps—with a face as black as a negro's.

After him came his four chums, and they also had stove-polished their faces and hands.

It was as if Beach House had suddenly yielded up a band of nigger minstrels, more especially as Jack had a banjo slung across his back.

Polly burst out laughing. Paula giggled. Pam smiled her serene smile.

"We're going to the station," Bunny cried, above all the guffawing of the boys as four of them mounted each a donkey. "You jump in and be with me, Polly!"

"But I must put something on," said the pastry-maker of a few minutes ago. "Oh, yes, wait for me—shan't be a sec!"

All this, of course, was not taking place without attracting a good deal of attention from passers-by.

Once again Morcove and Co. had a crowd around in a great state of amusement.

The delights of Brighthampton were not so numerous that a bit of impromptu fun of the carnival kind was not very acceptable.

Next minute Polly came rushing out of the house to jump into the open carriage and sit beside Bunny. The madcap's hasty toilette had not been done with any idea of rivalling Bunny's peach-like loveliness. Rather had Polly sought to be in keeping with her negroid brother.

In other words, Polly had now stove-polished her face, hands and arms. A scarf wound about her head and shoulders in Eastern fashion completed the effect. Morcove's madcap, in the open carriage with Bunny, was a smiling Daughter of the East.

"Carry on, chaps!" was Jack's vociferated order, causing the strange cavalcade to start.

The old coachman, baring his almost toothless gums in a wry grin, whipped up his equally aged horse. Clop, clop, clop—off went the open carriage stationwards, and patter, patter, patter, went the donkeys' hoofs.

"Hooray, boys!" roared Jack, as officer commanding the mounted bodyguard, whilst the crowd, breaking into a trot to keep up with the procession, roared with laughter.

But Polly had not forgotten that there were only four donkeys to the five boys. She might have wondered what part one of the latter was



to play, when she felt the open carriage give a lurch as if suddenly subjected to a considerable extra weight.

Then, looking over a shoulder as she sat with Bunny, she saw the fat and blackened face of Tubby Bloot rising from behind the carriage.

Up rose his head and shoulders; jerkily, more of his bulky figure became visible to her as he straightened up, having obtained a secure footing behind the ancient equipage.

His getting a ride-behind spoke well for Tubby's agility, as a youth of unwieldy proportions. He had scrambled to his perch quite successfully, in spite of his being burdened with a kind of huge, black-and-yellow umbrella.

This was one of those enormous sunshades which are used on the seashore in summer-time, and at open-air cafés, affording protection from the heat for as many as three or four people, if necessary.

Tubby did not now open the mammoth sunshade, but kept it furled under one arm.

"I say, Bunny, we shall get run in for all this!" Polly chuckled.

"Rabbits! Holiday-time—seaside—do as you like! Besides, it's a good ad."

"Oh, it's that, right enough. Just look at the people, Bunny! Ha, ha, ha! Oh, and there's Betty—there are the other girls!"

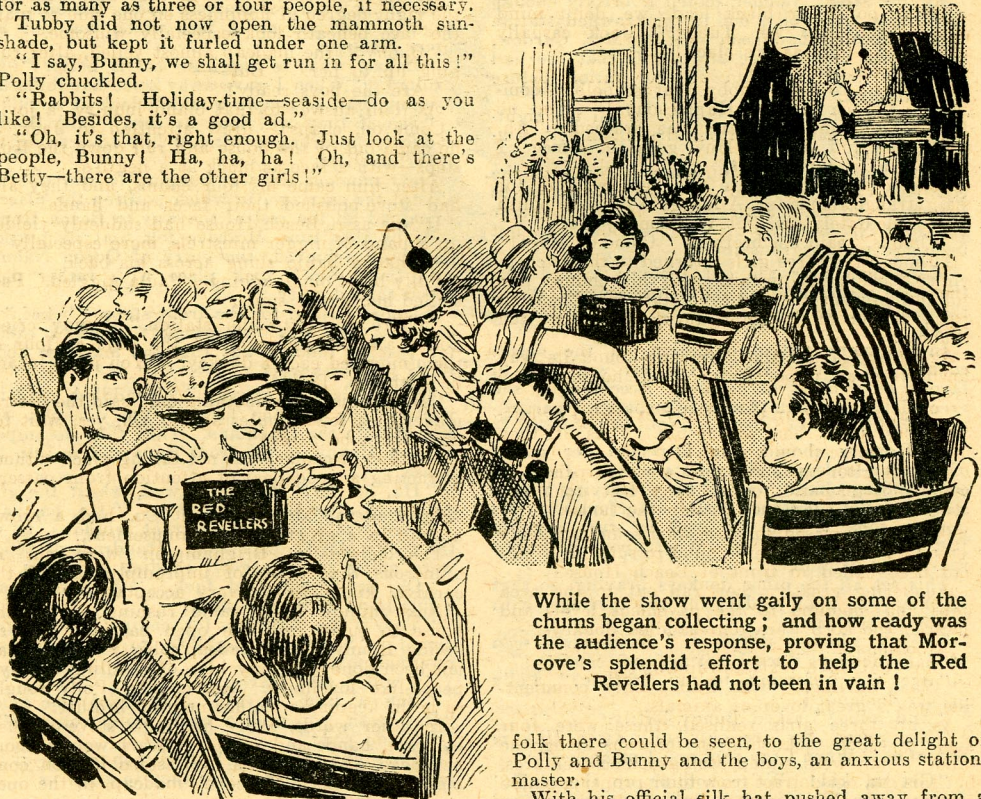
so much to do, to direct motors into side streets, they trotted by him unchallenged.

Then they themselves turned off the front, to go along one street and another, attracting more and more followers every yard of the way.

There must have been a couple of thousand hilarious sightseers flocking in attendance by the time they got to the Central Station, where hundreds more were already massed, awaiting the arrival of the eleven-thirty.

CHAPTER 4.  
Royalty Arrives

THE station clock said five-and-twenty past an enormous crowd in the yard parted to let the open carriage and the mounted bodyguard draw up. Amidst all the jostling



While the show went gaily on some of the chums began collecting; and how ready was the audience's response, proving that Morcove's splendid effort to help the Red Revellers had not been in vain!

folk there could be seen, to the great delight of Polly and Bunny and the boys, an anxious station-master.

With his official silk hat pushed away from a beetroot-coloured forehead, he was trying to grapple with a situation which defied handling.

Polly and Bunny jumped out, and way was made for them to slip through to that platform where the eleven-thirty was now being so eagerly awaited. The railway company certainly had no cause to complain, for there had been a tremendous rush for platform tickets.

All the amused attention which the two girls attracted was short-lived, for next minute the train came steaming in.

"There she is!"

This was Bunny and Polly, in unison, at sight of Morcove's royal scholar with her head out of window.

"And Madge's Aunt Ada! And Maisie and Effie!"

The open carriage, with its pattering donkeys to keep up with it, was passing close to the beach "theatre." Amongst scores of promenaders who were suddenly halted by surprise, Betty and the rest could be seen, absolutely agape.

Polly and Bunny waved gaily, and then their chums in the crowd gave way to merriment.

Only slowly did the strange cavalcade proceed along the front, so, as Polly remarked to Bunny, there was no risk of their being run in for breaking the speed limit.

One policeman was encountered; but he had

As for the general public, it started to cheer without quite knowing why—except that the train was in.

Only when a dusky schoolgirl had jumped down from a first-class compartment, to be rushed at by Polly and Bunny, did the crowd realise that this skittish imp was the much-advertised Royalty.

"Gorjus!" was Naomer's first shrill word to her escorting chums. "Bekas—ze crowds of people, hooray! Meelions! Hallo, everybody, I hope you are coming to see ze concert party on ze shore! Bekas, I am going to do my dance, you know!"

"Out of here, kid," was Polly's very disrespectful command to Morcove's girl queen. "Before we all get pinched."

"What ze diggings, I like to see zem arrest me! Zey ought to zink eet an honour to have me."

All the same, Naomer footed it briskly enough for Bunny and Polly, out to the crowded station yard. Nothing had been seen of Mrs. Cardew, and it was to transpire afterwards that she had discreetly left the train at the station before Brighthampton.

And now, to the huge delight of all the sight-seers, Tubby had opened out that mammoth sunshade of his.

Marvellous was the difference it made to the equipage, Tubby holding the sunshade so as to screen her youthful Majesty—not from the vulgar gaze, for Naomer was there to be looked at, but from the midday sunshine.

More than ever the old Victoria looked like the state carriage of an Eastern potentate, whilst the donkeys, of course, were the perfect Eastern touch.

In Naomer's native dominion, in the desert country of North Africa, the ass was still in favour as a beast of burden. Accordingly, she greeted the Brighthampton specimens with particular delight.

As Royalty should, she inspected her guard of honour—riders and mounts alike. Jack, as commanding officer, was all for preserving a very stiff, martial presence, but unfortunately his donkey took it into its head to start braying just as Naomer went by. Whereupon the crowd roared its laughter.

This set all the other donkeys braying, so that Naomer was glad to dart for the carriage, with hands to her ears.

"Bekas, what ze diggings, I have never seen so many donkeys since I left my own country!"

"Are you referring to my brother?" Polly grimly demanded.

"And mine?" asked Bunny loftily.

"No, bekas, zey are only silly asses, like ze rest of us! When I say donkeys, I mean——"

"Get in, kid! We're holding up the traffic! Home, John!" the madcap called out to the aged driver, who must have been glad to give a shake of the reins to his spiritless horse. "And mind the thirty-mile limit!"

Not that the coachman was regretting having lent himself and his outfit for this remarkable "stunt." They were liberal terms which the boys had promised him.

Again the vast crowd opened a way for the carriage and its escort. Entering into the joke of the thing, men raised their hats and waved them, cheering facetiously.

By now, it was generally known that these holiday-making boys and girls were inspired by a creditable motive—to advertise a concert party that could do with a helping hand.

Through the shopping centre of the seaside town was driven the really Royal scholar of Morcove, with one black-faced chum, and another of garden-party appearance, as "ladies in waiting," so to speak. Tubby, riding behind, managed to keep the "palanquin" steady above the heads of the three girls, whilst to right and left of the carriage rode a supposed contingent of the Nakaran "household cavalry."

But it was when they got to the more spacious roadway, on the sea front, that the fun became at its best.

Then could Jack allow his donkey to find its own way along, between the cheering multitudes. So, unslinging his banjo, he struck up.

At the same time, Messrs Jimmy, Tom and Dave produced quantities of handbills, which they proceeded to cast amongst the bystanders.

As if they were of souvenir value, the bills were eagerly snatched at—a fact which was not lost upon Naomer.

"Bekas, what ze diggings, zat is better!" she exulted. "When I gave away some handbills last evening, half ze people wouldn't look at zem!"

"See if they will look at this," said Bunny, suddenly unfurling a window bill advertising the Red Revellers.

Next moment she was hanging it over one low side of the carriage, in which position the placard remained all the rest of the way to Beach House.

As by that time Morcove felt that its purpose had been achieved, the entry of Queen Naomer into the "digs" took place with rather more speed than dignity.

Naomer dashed for the front steps, "bekas," as she said, she was "starvingk!" Polly's excuse for rushing indoors was that she must see about those jam turnovers.

The "household cavalry" off-saddled, paid the waiting boy for the hire of the donkeys, and settled with the coachman. Then they decamped, chasing Bunny up the front steps and so into the house.

"Ha, ha, ha!" they guffawed, whilst the girls gave peal after peal of laughter. "Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a running to front windows, to see the crowd slowly dispersing. Hundreds of people were going away, eagerly reading handbills.

"Oh, boy!" chuckled Jack. "We'll sure have a full house at three o'clock."

"They'll be fighting for chairs," Polly predicted. "Somebody ought to go along and sell reserved seats."

"I will," said Dave.

"Bob a time, boys!" Jack fixed the price. "But, gosh, you need a wash, Polly-wolly——"

"So do you!"

"I'm going to get one! And then, chaps—if the police do turn up, how are they to know us?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

## CHAPTER 5.

### Ring Up the Curtain

WHAT a change for Madge Minden, with a grand piano to play on the stage of the beach theatre, at three o'clock that afternoon!

What a difference—to know that every seat in front was taken, whilst hundreds of people were standing around, eager for the curtain to "rise."

Such a large and eager audience, last evening, would only have put Madge in greater dread than ever of a "flop." But this afternoon she could run through her "switch" of popular airs, by

way of overture, without feeling the slightest fear as to how the performance would go.

Morcove and the boys had come to the rescue! In fact, Morcove and Co. had as good as become the Red Revellers Concert Party.

At this very moment, Madge's chums of both schools were busily preparing themselves in the so-called dressing-rooms.

Of the original concert party, only three members were now left, including Aunt Ada. But the new recruits!—Betty and the rest of the Study 12 girls, and Jack and his chums of Grangemoor!

They would support Aunt Ada and the two young lady singers, good and well. As Madge was happy to know, a packed programme had been arranged. "Plenty of comic stuff" was the policy. Polly and Bunny could be trusted to partner Jack and Tom in plenty of back-chat. Then there was chubby Tubby, always in his element as the butt of a party.

But the greatest hit of all was likely to be a ten-minute farce, performed by some of the juniors.

As this was a piece performed by them only a little while ago at a school concert, they were confident of being word-perfect in it this afternoon. The screaming sketch was Polly's own composition, and Madge had made up all the incidental music.

As for her impish Majesty, Queen Naomer of Nakara, she would have been highly indignant if her turn in the programme had been considered a comic one. Betty and others had their own private opinion about this; but Naomer's opinion was that her examples of native dancing would give the matinee "tone."

At any rate, Aunt Ada could be relied upon to provide something really "classy." She was an elocutionist whose repertoire included excerpts from Shakespeare and Shaw.

"Ready, Madge," she got the signal, as the entire company formed up on the stage; and so she made the final switch into a brisk finale, whilst Tess, in the wings, stood ready to jerk the front curtains apart.

Again, what a joy it was to Madge to notice how perfect was even the working of the curtains to-day! A simple twitch, and she could then see the huge audience as it greeted the marshalled entertainers with a burst of clapping.

And Maisie and Effie—what a relief it must have been to them, to be so well supported by girls and boys who, having learned the opening chorus, sang away for all they were worth. How Morcove and Co. let it rip—that chorus!

Yet the humourists of the party did not forget, during the second and third verses, to start a little by-play, particularly pleasing to young children in the audience.



Betty flung wide the door, and there was Madge, soaked and agitated. "What's the matter?" gasped the chums; for they could think of no reason why Madge should come to Beach House at this time of night, through such a storm.

Madge, feeling in the mood, played tricks upon the piano keys as if she belonged to a jazz band. Oh, but how well the show had started! And in her heart she blessed the hour when all her chums had come to the rescue.

If it had not been for their timely aid, what must have been the tragic fate of the concert party? They must have abandoned the whole enterprise—gone their different ways, the poorer for liabilities incurred over the intended Brighton venture.

Rent of this little theatre on the beach; bills for printing; many other expenses—to say nothing of board and lodging for themselves. All money thrown away, and on top of such a cruel loss—the heartbreaking sense of failure!

Madge could have thoughts like these even whilst she spiritedly accompanied her fellow Revellers in various turns. Now that everything was going so smoothly, so successfully, the music was simply ABC to her.

Then there were the little rests which she came in for during "patter" stuff. Madge remained at the piano, of course, and she herself had to laugh again and again at some of the comicalities of Polly, Bunny, Jack and Tom. As for the audience—it was frequently in convulsions.

And still Madge's mind detached itself sufficiently to give her some wavering thoughts about those four "desertions."

Somehow, it did not seem good enough to regard the four runaways as mere "quitters."

About the first deserter from the party, she knew no more than what she had been told. He, Mr. Harrison, had decamped before she turned up. In fact, it was his bolting that had caused her to be suddenly enlisted, as pianiste.

But the two other fellows who had since slipped away, without a moment's warning—they had each left a sister behind.

Maisie Duncan's brother Eddie had been Deserter No. 2; and No. 3 had been Effie Norman's brother Harry.

Not exactly brothers to be proud of, either of them, if one judged them only by their going off like that! But Madge, by this time, had got to know both sisters very well, and she liked them greatly.

They were both such splendid girls, it was very hard to believe that either of them could have any fellow for a brother who was not a "white man." Maisie had thought all the world of Eddie, and Effie had held Harry in just as great esteem.

Up to the very last hour together, in either instance, brother and sister had talked of sinking or swimming together. Yet, as basely as Mr. Harrison had flitted, turn by turn, those two fellows had also—gone!

And then—only this morning—Daisy Darrell had vanished. Really, there had been something almost uncanny about her sudden disappearance. No hint in advance that she was inclined to drop out of the party; no moodiness, because the others had slipped away.

Daisy had been full of renewed enthusiasm, owing to the promised support of Morcove and Co. Yet just as suddenly as the others had deserted, so she had cleared out—the fourth case, it seemed, of misplaced confidence.

"And now, ladies and gentlemen, a little song by Miss Maisie Duncan!" Madge became aware of Jack announcing, after great applause for a turn just ended. Jack, as self-appointed "compère," was in his element.

"All you boys and girls," he addressed the kiddies; "one thing about Maisie—her chorus is aisy. So come on, now!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" and great clapping.

Madge, striking up, side-glanced Maisie, now making her bow. No fear of Maisie deserting! She was in splendid spirits, one could tell.

When the chorus came, how the kiddies took it up—and the grown-ups, too! Thump the keys as hard as she might, Madge could hardly make the piano heard. But what a success the matinee was, up till now, and there was the crowd around the enclosure of seats, getting ever bigger.

"Time we took up a collection, isn't it?" the pianiste heard Polly exclaiming, off stage, during the last chorus. "Come on, Bunny; you and I!"

"Righty-ho!"

A little after this the schoolboy "compère" made a solemn announcement from the stage. The collectors were not allowed to give change! If any member of the audience wished to put in a note instead of silver—"Ha, ha, ha!"—would he or she first take the number, as there had been complaints before about his, the "compère's," sister.

Polly, having suitably answered this insinuation from where she was working amongst the crowd, heard coins dropping more freely than ever into the shaken box.

There was a make-believe sedateness about her reception of jocular remarks which greatly delighted the audience. Both she and Bunny—and Tubby Bloot as well—did splendidly, being fol-

lowed about by the gaze of many small children. Some of these toddlers were very inquiring.

"Mummy, do they go to school?"

"Yes, dear!"

"Then why do they do this?"

"Hush, darling—"

"But will they have all that money to spend on themselves, mummy?"

"Oh, no!"

"When will the queen come on, mummy? You said there was to be a real queen, mummy! You said they would be like a pantymime!"

"Yes, dear!"

"I think that one must be going to be the fairy," was the awed allusion to Bunny. "She's ever so pretty!"

"You'll see!"

Nor was it long before the "real queen" did her turn—with, as it happened, some rather frightening effects upon the children-in-arms.

Dusky Naomer got so worked up over her examples of Nakaran dancing, now and then she looked like jumping into "the stalls."

But the grown-ups recognised the native Dervish quality of Naomer's antics, and, as Jack (off stage) twanged a banjo accompaniment to the sort of dance music which Madge had often played for her Majesty at Morcove, there was tremendous applause at the finish.

Meantime, Polly and Bunny had got back with nicely-weighted collecting boxes, which they handed to Aunt Ada. Even though Naomer was complying with the clamour for an "Encore!" there was no time for the madcap to waste in talk behind the scenes. The next item was to be the humorous sketch, in which Polly played a leading part.

Bunny, on the other hand, was out of this little play. She had not been at Morcove when it was first produced.

With the right team spirit, she helped Polly and other girls over some hurried dressing-up, then returned to where Madge's aunt had stationed herself in the wings.

"You know, Miss Fontayne," Bunny whispered jubilantly, "my chums have heaps of little sketches they can do. So they can supply something fresh for each performance."

"I can only say, my dear, it is something wonderful—the way you have all turned the tide," Aunt Ada murmured a little emotionally. "It's not for myself that I have been so anxious, although I could ill afford to drop money on the venture. But Effie and Maisie—"

"I know—great shame, if they'd been on the rocks," Bunny nodded, whilst two or three of the boys created great merriment by shifting aside the piano and shifting Madge with it. The audience saw her shunted away, as it were, along with the piano, whilst she still banged out an interlude piece.

Then the curtains closed together, although it was only a few moments more and the "ring-up" came. That was the way Morcove and Co. did things!

On went Polly and Jack, to open the play as husband and wife in wordy combat. Bunny had expected them to be quite at home in their parts, but she had never imagined they could be quite so funny.

For the first few moments she watched and listened in the wings, completely fascinated. There was a patness about the dialogue, a sense of the theatre, which made her turn, soon, to Madge's aunt, expecting an entirely delighted comment.

"Miss Fontayne, aren't they simply—priceless!" was what Bunny was going to say, when she noticed, with great surprise, that the lady was not paying the slightest attention to the acting.

There was a greatly startled look in her eyes as she kept them fixed upon a certain part of the large audience.

Bunny looked in the same direction, but could see nothing to account for such acute concern. No disturbance was starting. There seemed to be only the laughter-filled faces of people paying close attention to the play.

Suddenly, however, one member of the crowd just there did turn to leave.

He was a tall, middle-aged man, who betrayed some impatience to get away, pushing and shouldering towards the fringe of the crowd.

CHAPTER 6.

Some Mystery Here

"BUNNY, how strange!" came from Madge's aunt, when, a few moments later, the man had walked away. "I've just had such a surprise. Maisie and Effie would be surprised, too!"

"Why, what, Miss Fontayne?"

They both stood farther back in the wings, for some subdued talk.

"I think I told you girls and boys; before the concert party began to break up on account of those desertions, we gave our show at a big country house—the home of a wealthy old bachelor. He hired us to give an entertainment for the villagers. His private secretary was a Mr. Danby. Quite nice to us, was Mr. Danby, and yet—he doesn't seem to want to know us now!"

"You mean—" jerked Bunny, thinking of the man who had just left the audience in such haste.

"Yes, Bunny; he is down here in Brighthampton—was in the crowd just now. His face seemed to leap at me, and I think he noticed that I had picked him out. Yet he at once went away."

Madge's aunt was speaking in a hurt tone now.

"I do think he might have waited—come round to the back of the stage afterwards. I would have liked to inquire after his employer, the old Squire of Rabbletree. But it looks as if we are to be avoided."

"Perhaps, Miss Fontayne, Mr. Danby thought it best not to intrude during the performance. He may call at your lodgings. Easy for him to find out where you are putting up, with Maisie and Effie and Madge."

Aunt Ada nodded; but it was clear to Bunny that she still felt slighted.

A little later, Bunny saw the lady in earnest

(Concluded on the next page.)

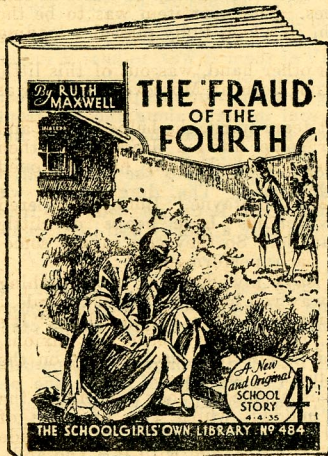
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talk with Masie and Effie, for whom the comic play was meaning a standby in one of the dressing-rooms.

Long before the matinee ended, all Bunny's youthful companions knew about Mr. Danby's fugitive appearance. Although Morcove and Co. had never met him, they could quite understand the feelings of Madge's aunt. Maisie and Effie also felt hurt, and the juniors were not surprised at this, either.

"Bekas, what ze diggings, I am disgusted!" Naomer exploded, during some discussion after the entertainment had ended. "I can't understand anybody not waiting to ze finish!"

"Plenty did wait, even if Danby didn't," Effie said, with a brightening look. "What crowds there were when we all took our call at the end. A few more audiences like that, and we shall be rolling!"

"Ah, but we won't have the girls and boys to help us, after a day or two," Maisie smiled ruefully.

Betty whisked round.

"You won't? Who says so? We've signed on for the run of the piece—at Brighthampton, anyhow!"

"Ra-ther!" cried others, gaily. "Greatest fun in the world!"

"It's all right, Maisie—and you too, Effie," Betty rattled on blithely. "We know what we are about. Madge's aunt has said, if we can stay with you until you're suitably fixed up; and we want to stay—"

"Yes, wather!"

"Bekas," yelled Naomer, suddenly returning, "have you heard about ze takings for zis afternoon? Gorjus! Zey have counted up all ze money, and it comes to—"

"Five pounds odd!" Polly hazarded.

"Not ze bit of eet! Seven pounds five shillings and tuppence ha'penny, hooray!"

"What! Oh—"

"Bai Jove, haw, haw, haw! Most gwatifying," Paula beamed. "Yes, wather!"

Bunny went away to find Tom.

"Tom dear, what make of car shall I buy?"

"Yes, I know," said he, busy with Dave and Jimmy, folding and stacking deck chairs. "But we haven't made our fortunes yet, Bunny. Wait and see how the weather behaves."

"Why, it's not on the change, is it? It isn't going to rain?"

"It is going to rain—this evening."

"Oh, botheration!" said Bunny, starting an anxiety that was soon to be troublin' all her chums as well.

Rain!

There needed to be only a sharp shower during any of the performances, and the audience would instantly scatter for shelter. That was the hazard with which a concert party had to reckon, giving its show only in the open air.

And that evening it rained—hard! All idea of giving the show had to be abandoned.

"It's coming down in torrents!" a disgruntled madcap gave the weather report, after some gloomy watching at a front window of the "digs."

Inky clouds hung low over the rough sea. No use remaining on watch at the Beach House windows for an improvement. "It's set in!"

"So I tell you what," said Betty, with a stoical look; "we'll spend our time rehearsing—"

"Making up something new—"

"That's it!" was the hearty Morcove chorus "Where are the boys!"

"But—hark!"

Startling to all of them it was, to hear a sudden violent jargle-jangle of the street-door bell.

When pouring rain had quite emptied the streets and left not a soul in sight along the sea front, it was a matter for surprise that someone had turned up like this.

Betty and Polly rushed into the bare hall of the unfurnished house. The dingy scene was hardly brightened when Betty set wide the front door, for there was only a murky half-light in the open air.

"Madge!"

They gasped the recognising cry, wondering at her having come through such a terrible deluge all the way from her aunt's lodgings, at the other end of the town.

She advanced into the thronged hall, panting for breath, whilst the waterproof which she unbuttoned simply ran the rain to the floor.

"Effie's gone!" she said.

"What!"

"Effie Norman—she's gone off now!"

"Never!"

But Madge, looking greatly agitated, nodded insistently.

"Yes, she's another—the latest, to quit! Without a moment's warning, just like all the others! Somebody rang her up on the landlady's 'phone, an hour ago, and after that Effie went out, merely saying that she should be back in an hour. But instead—"

"Yes, what, Madge—what?"

"A telephone message came, twenty minutes ago. The landlady took it. Effie had rung up from somewhere to say that we needn't expect her back."

"And that was all?" jerked Betty, staring aghast.

"That," said Madge, "was all!"

[END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.]

**M**YSTERIOUS indeed are the disappearances of the various 'Red Revellers.' What has become of them? And why have they gone off so suddenly and so strangely?

In next Tuesday's powerful long complete holiday tale Betty Barton and Co. and the boys set out to discover the reason for the disappearances. Thrilling adventures follow their investigations.

Don't miss this brilliant story, which is entitled:



**Morcove follows the Clues**

By MARJORIE STANTON

# Thrilling Mystery Series: Kathleen Carr in a Vivid Complete Tale of Exciting Happenings



## KATHLEEN'S QUESTS- IN SECRET

BY MARGERY MARRIOTT

### CHAPTER I.

#### The Clue of the Kite

"YES, Frisky, old chap, joking apart—I'm getting terribly excited."

Kathleen Carr, kneeling on the hard stones of the neglected farmyard, drew her pert little terrier into her arms.

"I can't help it—really," she went on, her blue eyes twinkling with mingled mischief and earnestness. "Of course, you can't understand what it's all about, can you? Why, you don't even know as much as I do about Lady Mary—and that's very, very little—"

"Woof, woof!" retorted Frisky, prancing up and down. By which he probably meant to apologise for his ignorance concerning Kathleen's thrilling secret.

Thoughtfully, she gazed past her four-footed friend.

Of course she was excited! How could she be anything else, under the circumstances?

To think, she reflected with gleaming eyes—to think that a mysterious woman dressed in black and calling herself Lady Mary had suddenly entered her life, and sent her on a series of amazing quests after little ivory elephants!

Astounding enough by itself, but how much more astounding—and thrilling, too—when she had been told that success on each of her peculiar missions could one day bring her happiness and freedom!

Freedom was the one thing Kathleen desired.

Living at this isolated old farmhouse with her guardians, she had everything a girl could need—beautiful clothes and a gorgeous room of her own. But never was she allowed out by herself, unless under very exceptional circumstances.

Always her uncle and aunt kept a vigilant eye upon her, as though they were afraid of something.

"Almost as though they suspected the truth," Kathleen murmured, with an instinctive glance towards the farmhouse door. "But they mustn't do that!" She clenched her hands. "There aren't many more ivory elephants for me to find. I mustn't fail now—"

She broke off.

Overhead, fluttering in a mild breeze, was a small child's kite.

Its invisible owner—probably stationed on the summit of a small hill opposite the farmhouse—appeared to be having difficulty in keeping the kite aloft, for it was swooping dangerously. As Kathleen watched, suddenly intrigued, the kite got completely out of control and fluttered to earth, not twenty yards away.

With Frisky leaping at her side, she reached the tattered object and carefully picked it up.

Yellow in colour, it was some two feet broad and about the same length, although there was a long tail of fancy-patterned paper.

She looked towards the distant hillock, but, although it was not more than a hundred yards away, there was no one in sight.

"Somebody, Frisky," she murmured, examining the object for a possible name and address, "is going to be rather miserable about this. Let's hope—" Her eyes widened all at once; her fingers suddenly plucked at one of the paper streamers, "Why," she burst out incredulously, "it's—it's for me!"

Scrawled on a scrap of blue paper was the message: "To Kathleen Carr."

Before she had opened the paper and read its

contents, Kathleen knew who had flown the kite. Lady Mary!

This was another of her ingenious ways of delivering a message. The time had arrived for Kathleen to go on another secret quest!

Eagerly, she read her elusive friend's latest instructions:

"Go to the Chinese Pagoda in the grounds of the White House. Inside, you will find a little china dog. It is hollow. An ivory elephant is inside. Don't fail me, Kathleen, but go at once. We are nearly at the end of our task. After today, only three more elephants remain to be discovered—"

Crushing the message into a ball, Kathleen looked down at Frisky with shining eyes.

"Now you know why I was so excited," she said. "I almost knew something was going to happen. Come on, now. Back to your kennel, old chap! I think you'd better stay behind in case aunt and uncle get suspicious."

She would have to deal with them as it was.

Kathleen knew the White House, a rambling old place some two miles from the farm. For the past six months it had been empty, and now rumour said that it was to be pulled down and replaced by a block of modern flats.

The Chinese Pagoda was actually a summer-house, built to resemble the structure from which it derived its nickname.

"Where's aunt?" Kathleen demanded, entering the kitchen.

Old Martha, the solitary servant who officiated at the house—and who, Kathleen suspected, served as an excellent spy for her guardians—stared up from the table, where she was peeling potatoes.

"Out!" she said ungraciously.

"Out?" Kathleen's eagerness almost betrayed the excitement that surged through her. "You mean, she and uncle have gone shopping—"

"Yes," came a grunt, and old Martha pretended to concentrate on the potatoes. Actually, she was peering at Kathleen out of the corners of her eyes.

"Oh, then at that rate I'll have to wait until she comes back," Kathleen declared, with apparent resignation, and she strolled casually out of the kitchen.

The moment the door was shut, however, she flew out of the house, across the farmyard, and into the lane that ran parallel with the farm.

Two miles away she would find another ivory elephant!

Exactly why it was so vital to her future happiness to obtain several of those quaint little ornaments, Kathleen did not know. But Lady Mary had given her word that the recovery of all the little tokens which were hidden in different places COULD, if nothing else went wrong, bring Kathleen the freedom and happiness she so desired.

"Good thing aunt and uncle are out," she reflected, as she hurried along. "They can't say then that I disobeyed them."

But did Kathleen really mind whether they did or not?

She was growing accustomed to their punishments now. Besides, the thought of being free of them one of these days made it so much easier to endure their harshness.

Coming within sight of the White House, Kathleen received a mild shock. It was a shock of disappointment that something she had come to know well was about to vanish for ever.

A long, deep trench had been dug in the road

outside the White House, and a series of huge pipes told Kathleen that the work of destruction had already commenced. Soon the imposing house would be gone; in its place would arise a block of monotonously samey flats.

Entering the main gates, Kathleen began to walk up the drive.

Part of the White House was already in ruins. Broken stonework, piles of bricks, beams and doors lay in a heap on the ground, and workmen with picks and shovels, perched most precariously on different points of the building, were hacking away more debris.

"Morning, miss. Anything I can do for you?"

A man in a dusty blue suit and a bowler hat—a foreman, Kathleen decided—had approached and was regarding her.

"Oh—yes!" Kathleen jerked herself away from a contemplation of the work of progress. She was here on business—vital business, affecting her whole future. "I—I rather wanted to look over the grounds," she explained, for the presence of these workmen rather handicapped her chances of searching in secret.

"Then I'm afraid you can't!" the man said. "We're working on plans that require secrecy. A man at the gates should have stopped you getting as far as this. I'll have to find out where he's miking. Sorry, miss, but you'll have to leave—"

Kathleen started.

Leave, before she had even seen the Chinese Pagoda! But that was impossible! She couldn't do anything of the sort until the little ivory elephant was safely in her possession.

"Oh, please," she begged. "I shouldn't be long."

"Sorry, miss."

The man took her arm, gently but very resolutely, and led her back to the gates.

"But I shouldn't discover anything about your work—"

"Good-afternoon," said the foreman, raising his hat with exaggerated politeness. "You get the bus for Holmwood at the top of the road. Now where's that man—"

Grimly, Kathleen stared after his retreating form as he stamped about in search of the vanished sentry.

Turned out of the grounds! Refused admission! Obviously she couldn't expect to get in now.

But stay—she was reckoning only on obtaining permission. What was there to stop her getting into the grounds without any of the workmen knowing?

Her eyes shining with a determined gleam, Kathleen strolled away, and turned the first corner she came to. Then she swiftly pushed open a small side gate into the grounds of the White House, and began to creep towards the Chinese Pagoda, which was less than fifty yards away.

Kathleen was thrilling with tense excitement and eagerness as she neared the Pagoda.

Inside it she would find one of the four remaining ivory elephants which meant—

She breathed rather than said the word:

"Freedom."

How her pulses raced as she approached the door, noticing with added delight that it was slightly ajar.

She mounted the three steps to it and pushed it open wide. Beyond, the gloom was cut by two huge shafts of sunlight, in which hung myriads of specks of dust.

waiting until her eyes had become accustomed to the semi-darkness before commencing to search

Carefully, Kathleen stepped inside the Pagoda,



for the little china dog in which the precious elephant was secreted.

She found it almost at once, lying in one corner.

It was no larger than a medium-sized doll, a quaint little fellow in rich blue, with a snub nose which made it resemble a Pekingese and bulldog combined.

Kathleen shook it. Something rattled within. The ivory elephant, of course! Eagerly, with fingers that shook, Kathleen turned over the little dog. In its neck was a cavity, stopped up with a cork.

Her eyes shining with a sense of triumph, Kathleen prepared to remove the cork and let the precious ivory elephant drop into her hands.

But before she could do so, something utterly bewildering took place.

There was a scamper of feet, someone brushed heavily into Kathleen's side, the china dog was snatched from her grasp, and then, even as she whirled round towards the door, it slammed with a jarring crash!

## CHAPTER 2.

### The Room of the Thousand Rarities

SO completely unexpected had been the whirlwind attack that Kathleen did not spring forward and drag open the door until several seconds later.

Then she halted again with a cry, before racing in pursuit of her adversary.

A Chinese girl, clad in picturesque, flowing Oriental clothes, and clutching the blue china dog under one arm, was pattering away towards the side gate through which Kathleen had gained admittance to the grounds.

"A Chinese girl!" Kathleen thought in growing astonishment.

At the same time, she was filled with horror at the loss of the little ivory elephant. Whether the fugitive was more concerned with the china dog than with what it contained Kathleen did not pause to consider. It scarcely mattered, anyway. Her one concern must be the safety of the ivory elephant. Without that, all her hopes and plans for a happy future might be irretrievably ruined!

Desperately, Kathleen raced through the gate after the Chinese girl.

She was just in time to witness another extraordinary happening.

The fugitive had been caught. A tall, heavily-built woman had seized her by the arm in the centre of the road and was marching her into the grounds of an adjoining house.

"My goodness!" Kathleen gasped, as the woman snatched the china dog out of her prisoner's grasp. "It—it's changed hands again—"

Darting to the gateway of this other house, Kathleen saw her recent attacker marched indoors. The door closed. All was silent.

Grimly, Kathleen set her lips.

At all costs she was going to recover the precious little ivory elephant.

Using trees and bushes to cover her from view of the house, Kathleen approached it, until, risking a dash across a short lawn, she reached the building.

What should she do? That was the immediate problem.

"I'll jolly well knock and demand an explanation," she decided, and strode towards the front door.

She never reached it.

A sound from above caused her to look up. She drew back, a whistle of surprise leaving her

pursed lips. Waving to her from a window about thirty feet up was the very same Chinese girl who had tricked her at the Pagoda.

Glancing around to make sure she was not being watched, Kathleen peered up at the Eastern maid again.

"What's the idea of all this?"

"O most illustrious stranger, Soo-Ling is humble with shame. But Soo-Ling in dire difficulty. Soo-Ling a prisoner."

"You mean?"—Kathleen started—"you're locked in?"

"Very much locked in. I fear, O worthy stranger."

Kathleen indicated the thick ivy which grew over the wall.

"Can't you climb down?"

Soo-Ling shook her head.

"Such dangers are only to be undertaken by courageous and illustrious strangers such as yourself," she cooed. "They have taken my precious dog—the relic of my ancestors. I must get free—please to lend your noble services—"

"Taken the dog?" Kathleen ejaculated.

Horried, she stared up at the prisoner.

"Oh, goodness!" she gasped, as the other nodded. "You mean, that woman's taken it away from you and locked you in there?"

Fiercely, she clenched her hands.

This was getting complicated. It meant that she must transfer her attentions from the Chinese girl to the woman who had captured her.

And yet—

Thoughtfully, Kathleen continued to stare upward at the waving Oriental.

Soo-Ling might be very useful. It would be as well to have a companion, in any case. She'd join the frightened girl by means of the ivy, and perhaps she could effect their escape by the same means.

"Don't make a noise," she called. "I'm coming up."

A few moments later Kathleen was climbing towards the window.

The ivy, thick and strong, supplied plenty of foot-and hand-holds, but as Kathleen scrambled over the window-sill the last patch of foliage broke away and fell to the ground. Escape that way was now out of the question!

Dropping to the floor, Kathleen stood up and surveyed her companion.

She was a rather winsome girl of about her own age, though much smaller. Soo-Ling had narrow, almond eyes, of course; her skin was a pleasant yellow and her raven black hair was smooth. She was clad in a gorgeous purple-and-scarlet robe, with huge, voluminous sleeves; tight silk trousers of yellow, with black rings at the end; and the tiniest of shoes.

"Well—here I am!" Kathleen introduced herself brightly. "Kathleen's the name, Soo-Ling. And now—why exactly did you steal that china dog from me?"

Soo-Ling clutched her arm pleadingly.

"I am prostrate with apology," she said, bowing low. "But listen! The dog belonged to my father. It has been handed down by my worthy ancestors for generation after generation. A year ago, an unworthy infidel steal it. Yesterday, we learn that it was hidden in the pagoda. I, the humble last of my line, go to recover what belongs to me. And what do I see? Your own illustrious self holding the pride of my ancestors."

"Oh," said Kathleen, with an understanding nod. "Well, I wanted it because—"

Soo-Ling's eyes were filled with wonder when

Kathleen had explained her own reasons for wanting the china dog.

"And now," Kathleen abruptly switched off, "what about getting out of here? The china dog's in this house, of course?"

Kathleen was crossing to the door when a warning from Soo-Ling that it was securely locked brought her to a halt, half-way there. Then, changing her mind, Kathleen examined the lock.

"Good!" she said, looking up. "Is there a knife here, Soo-Ling, or anything I could use as a screwdriver? You see, if I could get out—"

She broke off incredulously, her eyes widening as the little Chinese girl waved a hand above her head and seemed to pluck from the air the very tool Kathleen had mentioned!

"My hat!" she burst out, as Soo-Ling handed her the screwdriver. "However did you manage that?"

Soo-Ling, folding her arms across her chest, bowed low.

"Humble self perform the most magical and deceiving illusions," she explained. "Humble self carry such things as you now have in your hand for her performances. I confess," with a sad shake of the head, "I confess I should not have considered its usefulness under present deplorable circumstances—"

"You just see," Kathleen told her, and set to work to remove the four screws which kept the lock in position.

Without a pause, so determined was she to get on the trail of the china dog and its contents, she worked at the obstinate lock. One screw came away, another screw came away, a third and finally—Kathleen was trembling with excitement now—the fourth!

Very carefully, Kathleen removed the lock, placed it on the floor, out of reach, and opened the door.

"Sh!" she cautioned, holding up a warning finger. "No one about. Come on. We'll look in all the rooms we can see."

Search every inch of the house, if necessary. The ivory elephant had got to be found! So, too, if Soo-Ling's quest was to succeed, must the quaint blue china dog.

Down the corridor they tip-toed, Soo-Ling looking rather comical in her flowing robe and tiny shoes; Kathleen very grim and pale-faced, as she went ahead, peering this way and that, now and again pausing to listen.

Suddenly, she seized her companion's arm and whispered tensely:

"Hark! Someone coming."

"O most worthy protector—" Soo-Ling began in alarm.

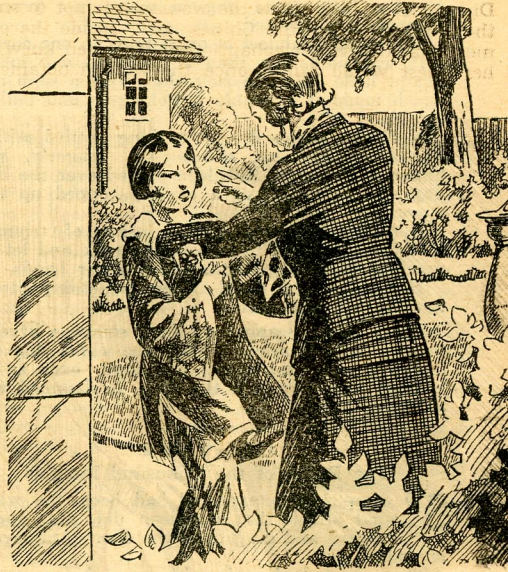
The sound of voices and footsteps, coming up stairs, plainly reached the two girls.

Kathleen, looking about her, dragged Soo-Ling towards a half-open door.

"In here—quick!" she snapped, pushing the door wide.

A moment later the door had clicked to upon them and they were standing with their backs to it, regarding in gathering amazement, a scene that might have been taken from China itself.

The room in which they were hiding was decorated in Oriental fashion, with huge dragons and Chinese and Japanese signs adorning the walls. Stacked on shelves, tables and benches was an array of miscellaneous articles such as ancient pottery, shields, swords, spears, clumsy muskets and pistols. Several Buddha-like figures stood against one wall.



"The Room of a Thousand Rarities," whispered Soo-Ling in apparent awe.

"You've heard of it?" Kathleen ejaculated in surprise.

"Yes, worthy friend." Soo-Ling nodded. "The people of this house of deception and cheating are collectors of my nation's treasures. These are some of them."

Kathleen pressed her ear to the door.

"Listen," she urged tensely. "I think they're going past."

The sound of muffled voices grew fainter, and seemed on the point of dying altogether when they broke out again.

"She's escaped—the lock's been taken off!" came the shrill cry of a woman.

Kathleen glanced at Soo-Ling. The Chinese girl was trembling with alarm. Putting an arm about her, Kathleen forced a smile.

"It's all right—they're rushing downstairs," she said, though she knew that this momentary respite from discovery had not assisted her to find the ivory elephant. "Let's see if your little china dog is here!"

Together, they walked around the curios. Several minutes went by, and they were approaching a bookcase filled with Oriental volumes when Kathleen stopped, pointing to a shelf.

"Look!" she cried in mingled triumph and dismay.

Success of a sort had crowned their efforts, but not the success which Kathleen would have preferred. The shelf contained a row of at least thirty little blue dogs, all exactly alike!

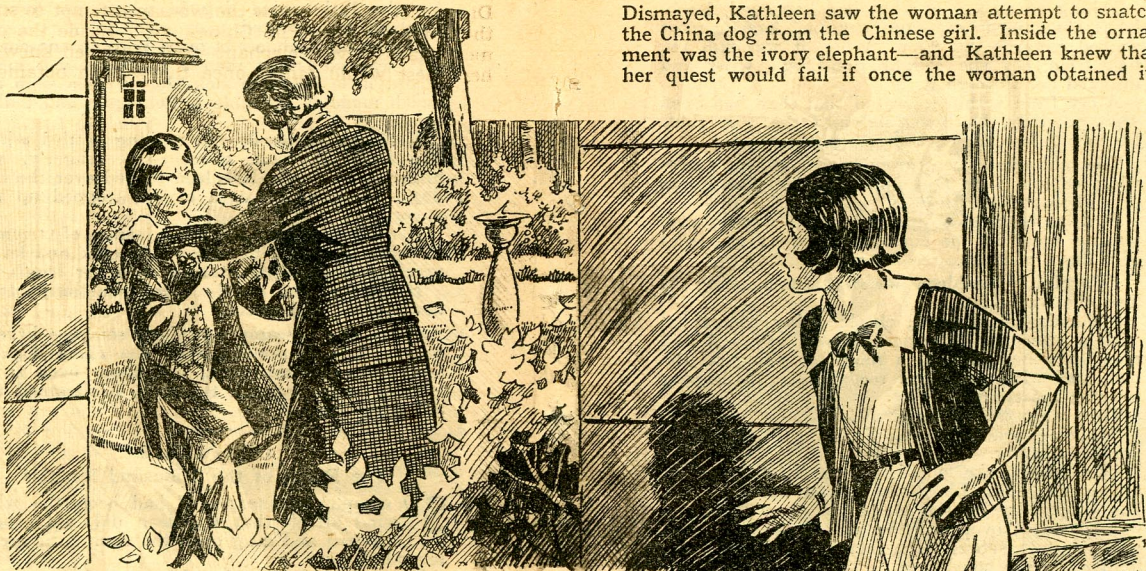
"And there," said Soo-Ling quietly, pointing to another shelf, similarly laden.

They looked at each other in blank dismay. At the same moment a voice from the corridor outside sent a chill dread to Kathleen's heart.

"Search all the rooms, Maud! She must still be upstairs!"

Soo-Ling's captors were on the prowl. In a matter of seconds they might enter this room and

Dismayed, Kathleen saw the woman attempt to snatch the China dog from the Chinese girl. Inside the ornament was the ivory elephant—and Kathleen knew that her quest would fail if once the woman obtained it.



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find both Kathleen and the Chinese girl here. There was no possible time for Kathleen and her companion to examine each china dog until they discovered the right one!

### CHAPTER 3.

#### "Magic" Smoke

**G**RIM-FACED, Kathleen suddenly realised that their first consideration must be to conceal themselves. Swiftly, she urged Soo-Ling behind a bookcase, then looked at her.

"Pretty awkward," she muttered. "Even if the dog we want is among that lot, however can we find it in a few seconds? Listen—you hear them coming? They'll be here any moment. Even if we could slip out without being caught, we'd never have time to get what we want."

A very faint smile mantled the Chinese girl's features. Flashing a hand before her face, she produced a small box.

Flash! Went the same hand again, and a box of matches accompanied the first box.

"You watch illusion," she whispered, darting out to the first shelf of china dogs. "When I light this powder the precious relic of my ancestors will change its colour. The others will not. They are fakes"—with scorn.

Kathleen watched in growing suspense and interest as Soo-Ling opened the box, revealing a whitish powder. Then she struck a match and held it to the box.

A sheet of yellow flame leaped upwards. Almost instantly it vanished, and in its place great volumes of smoke came billowing out of the tiny box.

Slowly the acrid fumes began to clear. Kath-

leen, coughing lightly into her hand and listening at the same time to sounds of pursuit from outside, gazed along the row of ornaments, backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards.

Suddenly she started. A thrill shot through her veins. One of the china dogs had changed from blue to yellow!

"My—my goodness!" she gasped, regarding it in fascination. "It—it worked."

Why, the thing seemed to savour of magic! She forgot for the moment that a coating of some special preparation would offer an obvious solution, and stared at her companion in speechless awe.

Soo-Ling, chuckling with glee, snatched up the yellow dog. It rattled!

"That's the one!" Kathleen ejaculated. "The ivory elephant is inside. But—quick! Before they get to this room. Let's bolt for it."

Together, they raced to the door, only for Kathleen to reel back, white-faced. It would not budge. She saw now that it automatically locked outside when closed!

And all the time, from the corridor, those sounds of searching grew more ominous every moment—louder and nearer!

It seemed that she had succeeded in rescuing the little ivory elephant at the expense of her own liberty, and both were invaluable to her plans. One would be useless without the other.

"O most worthy friend," came a trembling whisper from Soo-Ling. "What can be done? We shall become slaves again."

Kathleen set her lips.

The sounds from outside were getting alarmingly near.

"We shan't!" she snapped. "You see that bookcase—next to those wax figures? Slip behind it—"

Desperately, she pushed Soo-Ling towards the bookcase as footsteps halted outside the door and the handle rattled.

"Quick—before we're seen—"

Scarcely daring to breathe, their scalps tingling with suspense, Kathleen and Soo-Ling crouched against the wall behind the bookcase, listening to the door being opened. They caught a slanting view of the burly woman who had made Soo-Ling a prisoner. Her face, dark and furious, suddenly twisted into an expression of astonishment and suspicion.

"Maud!" she shouted, striding across the room.

"There's smoke in here."

Kathleen craned around the bookcase and witnessed the breathless arrival of a smaller woman, who suddenly brought wild alarm to her companion by pointing a trembling hand at the vacant spot where the little china dog had been.

"Gone!" came a hoarse cry.

Frantically, the women began picking up the little china dogs and examining them.

Kathleen looked at Soo-Ling. Her eyes conveyed the unspoken question:

"How on earth are we going to slip past them out of the room?"

Soo-Ling, looking very miserable, clung to the precious yellow dog and shook her head with mournful slowness.

Seething with anxiety and helplessness, Kathleen looked around her limited range of vision. There was no possibility of creeping past the two women without being seen, especially as Soo-Ling's attire was so strikingly attractive. And yet the door stood open—beckoning them.

"Phew!" Kathleen whistled incredulously. Her eyes shining, she bent closer to Soo-Ling. "I've an idea. You see those two statues—the

Budda-like things, with those gorgeous robes over them? Well—if only we could put them on we might be able to reach the door without being seen.”

Holding her breath, Kathleen reached out and silently seized the nearest robe. It was like a glorified scarlet dressing-gown, adorned with golden dragons and star-like ornamentations. As she tugged it off the huge image over which it was draped, Soo-Ling reached behind her and caught hold of the second robe.

It was the work of only a few seconds to slip the robes over their heads and then, while the women's frantic searchings drowned every other sound, the two girls began to creep out from their hiding-place.

The success of Kathleen's plan depended entirely upon whether the women realised what had taken the place of the images beneath the robes. Kathleen hoped with all her heart that the two desperate plotters would be too busy to notice anything wrong.

And it was then that Kathleen tripped over her flowing robe!

Heart thudding, Kathleen reeled forward, swiftly recovered her balance and posed, as well

Taking advantage of what had happened, Kathleen abandoned extreme caution, and almost walked towards the door. When it was still ten feet from her she caught Soo-Ling's wrist and dragged her through it.

A cry from within indicated that they had been seen. Swiftly, Kathleen slammed the door shut. Its patent fastener clicked into position.

The tables had been turned, and Soo-Ling's erstwhile captors were now imprisoned in The Room of a Thousand Rarities!

Swiftly, both girls dragged off the robes and, leaving them in the corridor, crept to the head of a flight of stairs.

“Careful,” Kathleen warned, commencing to lead the way down.

Suddenly she stopped, checking her companion with a sweeping movement of one arm. A tall man had emerged from a room branching off the hall, and, with a shout of recognition, was leaping towards the stairs.

They were trapped after all!

“Quick—back upstairs, Soo-Ling!” Kathleen panted, turning.

Then she broke off, her face lighting up in amazement. Soo-Ling had placed another little box of powder on the stairs and was holding a lighted match over it. She waited until the man was about ten steps from them, then dabbed the light on to the powder.

Woooomp!

Again, a vivid tongue of yellow flame shot ceilingwards, to be replaced by an impenetrable barrier of acrid smoke. The now invisible man coughed and stumbled, to flounder against the banisters.

Kathleen, her eyes shining with sudden triumph, seized Soo-Ling's hand and dragged her through the smoke, past the helpless man on the stairs, who was still groping blindly, chokingly when they dashed out of the house, the precious little china dog in their possession!

## • A Special SILVER JUBILEE

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## SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN

as she could, in an exact imitation of the images.

The women had turned—they were looking straight at her—then they glanced at each other, shrugged and bent over the china dogs again.

Kathleen gave a great sigh of relief. She must be careful not to trip over her robe again. Her task was going to be difficult enough without adding to it. Although the women were again bent to their frenzied task on the far side of the room, they would be almost within arm's-length when Kathleen and Soo-Ling reached the open door.

Once the girls had reached that position they might risk a dash for liberty and be able to lock the women in the room!

Step at a time, holding her robe off the ground, Kathleen led the way on again. Another movement from one of the women and she halted, heart seeming to stand still.

“I say, Clara,” the woman exclaimed, clutching her companion's arm, “look at those robed images! I could have sworn they weren't there this morning.”

Horror flooded Kathleen. She felt herself swaying. Utter disaster—the complete ruin of her hopes—was looming over her.

The eyes of both women were fixed upon her and Soo-Ling as both girls lowered their faces. She felt as though they could pierce the robes and detect what they concealed. If either she or her Chinese companion moved now—

“Oh, I expect John moved them,” came the reply, and Kathleen's pulses leaped with relief as the women turned back to their occupation.

WHEN Kathleen parted from Soo-Ling at the top of the road, her own treasure, the ivory elephant, was firmly clasped in her hand.

“Thanks ever so much, Soo-Ling,” she said gratefully. “Without your powder we'd never have got away.”

“Without honourable and ingenious lady's cleverness, my humble powder would have been of no avail,” came the gracious reply. “A hundred thousand thanks from this worthless self and estimable ancestors.”

Bowing low, Soo-Ling backed away for several yards before turning and slowly pattering away with light, mincing steps.

Kathleen, watching her for some seconds, broke into a radiant smile.

Then she, too, turned and sped away—thrilling with the knowledge that another ivory elephant had been retrieved from its hiding-place; another step had been taken towards the ultimate happiness of Lady Mary and herself.

“And,” Kathleen murmured, with shining eyes, “another step taken towards my discovering who Lady Mary really is.”

[END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.]

KATHLEEN CARR'S quest for another of the mysterious ivory elephants leads her into fresh adventures, as you will see when you read next Tuesday's exciting complete story by Margery Marriott. Make sure of your SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN by ordering it at once.

COMPLETE THIS WEEK: The First of a Novel Series of Boy-and-Girl Adventure Tales



## CHAPTER 1.

## The Legend

"HAVE you boys got some dark secret that you think I'm too young to know?" suddenly demanded Amber Dare.

The three lads referred to gave a start so that their teacups jerked in the saucers and most of the contents sprinkled the tablecloth.

Then they stared at the pretty auburn-haired girl who had launched this sudden query.

"What are you getting at, kid?" demanded Amber's brother Dick.

"Ough! Ough! Ough!" coughed lanky Jim Partridge. "W-what—"

"Secret?" mumbled the immaculate Tony Malone. "Really, Amber, we don't know what you mean."

"That," said Amber cheerfully, "is a fib, and you all know it."

The three boys glanced at one another, and their expressions denoted that they *did*.

"There are some things that girls are better out of," remarked Amber's brother at length.

Amber's eyebrows went up. Here they were at the point upon which she had longed to tackle them ever since this holiday had started.

Amber held the opinion that what a boy could do in the adventure line, so could a girl. Her brother and his chums, on the other hand, had politely intimated that they thought otherwise. For the past week they had given Amber to understand that she was just the "kid sister"—quite a nice ornament to have about the house, useful if a tune was wanted on the piano, or to pour out tea and act the hostess. But that was all.

## BY IRIS HOLT

Amber was determined to have it out this tea-time.

"I know you're keeping something from me," she said. "D'you think I didn't notice how keen you all were last night that I should accept Aunt Mary's invite to spend the week-end with her. You want me out of the way. And why? Dick's just told me, although I knew it all along. It's because I'm a girl. Now what's all this you're keeping from me? I insist upon being told."

"Umphs!" grunted her brother Dick.

Amber experienced a little thrill of satisfaction. Obviously she had impressed them. They were glancing at each other with some embarrassment as if to say "You tell her."

"Well," said Dick at length, "it's like this, Amber, there happens to be a spot of danger knocking around here—"

"Gorgeous!" breathed Amber. "I love excitement!"

"It may be exciting, or it may not," said Dick guardedly.

"Is the danger actually in the house?" pressed Amber, with sparkling eyes.

Her brother nodded. But Amber noted that he was gazing at her with a newly awakened interest as if he had just got to know her. And this was so. During the last five years brother and sister had only met for brief intervals in the hols. before each was waited off to different relatives.

The present holiday, however, was being spent entirely in their ancestral home, The Gables, and

Amber and Dick were thus given the opportunity to "discover" each other.

"Yes," said Dick impressively, "the danger is possibly actually in this house. You know that picture in the red room of Sir Simon Dare—"

"Sir Simon Dare!" echoed Amber, with a slight intake of breath that passed unnoticed. "Of course I know it."

"Well," continued Dick, "although Sir Simon pegged out three hundred years ago, the danger has something to do with *him*."

"Everything to do with him!" chimed in Jim Partridge.

"There!" interjected Tony Malone. "She's already turning a bit pale!"

"I'm not," protested Amber. "Don't be silly. Go on, Dick."

"Sir Simon," proceeded Dick, "died exactly three hundred years ago to-morrow. I came across all the facts last week in an old book. From all accounts Sir Simon was a bit of a bad egg. He collared the estate and played old Harry until the rightful heir barged in and put the kybosh on him. But before Sir Simon pegged out he laid a curse on the house. He prophesied that every fifty years—on the anniversary of his death—disaster in some form or other would descend on the Gables."

"And has it?" asked Amber, trying hard not to appear impressed by all this.

"It jolly well *has*!" nodded Dick. "In 1685 there was a tremendous storm, the west wing was struck by lightning, and two of the servants were killed. Fifty years later, to the very day, fire broke out and did much damage. Fifty years after that one of the Dares walked in his sleep, fell down the big staircase and broke his neck. To come to more recent times, in 1885, the last anniversary, the floor in the east wing collapsed and there were many casualties. To-morrow—"

"To-morrow!" chimed in his chums in their deepest tones, and peering at Amber to see how these sinister details were affecting her. "To-morrow—"

"To-morrow," concluded Dick, "is the day due for the next disaster. So, Amber, that's why we think you'll be better out of the way."

For a second Amber had the feeling deep down that her brother was right. Then she stoutly got a grip on herself.

"I don't see why, at all," she shrugged. "And what about you three? I take it you're going to remain here?"

"Of course," replied Dick. "We're stopping, we—er—men."

Amber hid a smile.

"And Mrs. Gubbins and the maids?" she asked.

"Luckily," said Dick, "they've arranged to go to the fair at Clodham. They'll be away all to-morrow. We're banking on whatever is going to happen will take place while they're absent."

"Therefore, Amber," chimed in Jim Partridge, "the Gables to-morrow will be no place for the likes of you. So in the language of the classics—'op it.'"

"And don't run away with the idea that all these things that happened in the past were flukes," added Tony Malone. "I bet old Sir Simon is still a force to be reckoned with. Take my tip and think it over."

"I *am* thinking," said Amber.

And what she was particularly thinking about at the moment was the very queer dream she had had last night. A short but eerie species of nightmare, and now doubly eerie after what she had just heard.

She had dreamed she had crossed the old red

room upstairs, when suddenly the saturnine portrait of Sir Simon Dare had started to laugh. Then he had stepped out of the massive gilt frame—

"Shall I tell them?" wondered Amber.

Related with proper effect—not in the tinpot way Dick had recounted the legend—it might make them reconsider their intention of remaining at The Gables to-morrow. If they left the place, she too, would leave it. It was a tempting thing to try and persuade them—

Yes— But wasn't it the sort of faint-hearted thing these fellows thought girls always did? Of course they would never know why she had related her dream.

"But I should know!" gritted Amber.

"I'm staying," she said aloud. "And if you ask me, you've all got wind up about nothing. Here I am, and here I remain."

"Look here, Amber," burst out Dick, "I—"

Then he gave a helpless sort of gesture and turned to the others.

"Can't very well chuck her out," he shrugged.

"She'll have to have her own way. All right, Amber, you chump, you can stop. But don't say we didn't warn you."

"Thanks," smiled Amber, "I won't."

WELL, that was that, she had asserted herself. Good! thought Amber. But she had yet to prove to the boys what she could do in the event of the legend coming true to-morrow. That would be a far harder task.

She was pondering on this point after tea when the faint buzz of Jim Partridge's mo'-bike reached her ears.

She looked towards the garage. There was Jim in the act of mounting and by his side stood Dick. Both were in earnest conversation.

"More secrets?" wondered Amber.

Then Jim set the machine in motion and came dashing up to where she stood in the drive.

"Wondered if you'd like to have a buzz round in the side car for half an hour," he said.

"Thanks, Jim," returned Amber. "I should love it."

"Good, get in."

For the moment Amber was rather flattered by this little attention; but they had barely gone a mile when suddenly Amber grew suspicious. She noted that Jim had hardly spoken a word—also that he was going along at a rare lick.

"I believe it's a plot to get me away from the Gables," she breathed. "Yes, that's it. We're going in the direction of Aunt Mary's house, too—"

All right—"

Amber took out her handkerchief and deliberately let it fall.

"Jim! Jim!" she called out. "Stop, I've dropped my hankie."

With a grunt Jim slowed up, and Amber blithely jumped out.

"Thanks," she said. "I think, if you don't mind, I'll go back now. You go on. I can easily walk."

"What d'you mean?" mumbled Jim Partridge, very red in the face.

"Now, now, Jim," admonished Amber. "You know perfectly well what I mean. Oh, I'm not blaming you. I can guess it was Dick who put you up to carting me off."

"Phew!" whistled the disgruntled Jim Partridge.

"Am I right?" smiled Amber.

"Yes—that was the idea. Look here, old thing, it really isn't safe for you to be at the Gables— Wait, let me tell you—"

But Amber simply laughed as she strode away, and half an hour later was back in the grounds of the Gables looking forward gleefully to reporting her return to Dick.

As she passed through the shrubbery she suddenly had a feeling that she was being followed. She stopped and peered into the gathering gloom. No one to be seen. But she was certain someone was there. Dick or Tony—trying to frighten her?

"I'll dash on to the house and see if they are there," she decided.

Taking to her heels Amber pelted along to the Gables. The front door was open, and in the hall stood her brother and Tony.

"You!" ejaculated Dick.

"Yes—little me," smiled Amber. "Jim soon had enough of me and sent me back."

"Oh, did he," grunted Dick. "Did he!"

"And by the way," went on Amber, "I believe there's someone lurking in the grounds. I don't know who it is—I couldn't see—but—"

"There you are!" exploded Dick. "You're getting wind up already! Seeing and hearing things that aren't there. Just as we expected you would. Want us to go out and search, I suppose?"

"Just as you like," shrugged Amber.

"Then I jolly well don't like," retorted her brother, with a wink at his chum.

FOR the rest of the evening there was an air of constraint. Tomorrow was uppermost in all their minds, though no one mentioned it. But each of them, in the long intervals of silence, pondered on the various disasters that might happen.

Amber thought of her soldier father in India. Ah, if he were only home! He was the man for an affair of this kind.

Old Roy, the sheep dog, who had been placidly dozing at Amber's feet, suddenly awoke with a start and growled.

"Shuruppp!" grumbled Dick, deep in a game of draughts and enjoying the rare experience of beating Tony Malone.

But the dog bounded to its feet and with a crescendo of barks dashed to the door and pawed at it.

"Gosh!" cried Dick. "What's up with Roy? Open that door, Jim!"

Jim Partridge hastened to obey, but he fumbled the handle, and it was Amber who finally got it open.

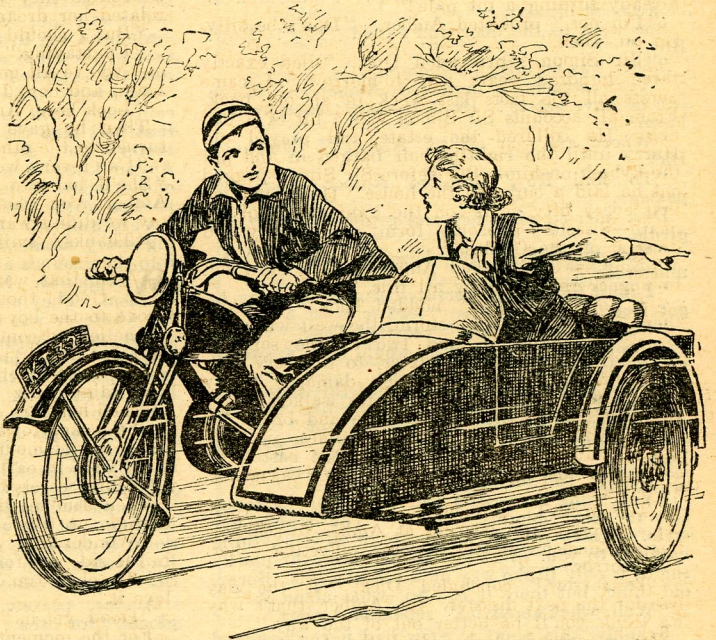
The dog dashed into the passage. Amber saw him dart to the front door, all the while growling like mad.

"It you ask me," said Amber a trifle breathlessly, "Roy thought there was someone in the passage, just as I thought there was someone in the grounds this evening."

Dick's answer was to stride to the front door and throw it open. At once the dog bounded out and scuttled away, barking furiously.

"P'raps Amber was right—there may have been someone in the grounds," muttered Tony Malone.

Dick obstinately refused to agree, and when Roy returned a few minutes later, Dick professed to be entirely satisfied.



"Stop, Jim! I've dropped my hankie!" Amber called, though she did not add that she had dropped it on purpose! She knew quite well that she was only being taken for a ride because the boys wanted her out of the way!

"A false alarm," he said. "Thought it was."

But something in his voice told Amber that he wasn't entirely convinced on the point.

## CHAPTER 2.

### The Thing Happens

CURIOSLY enough Amber slept soundly that night, with no sudden awakenings, or unpleasant dreams.

"Which, considering everything," thought Amber, when she awoke, "is rather remarkable."

But as she dressed, apprehensive thoughts crept in. Was there anything in that legend? If so, what would to-day bring forth? Fire, flood—what?

Nerves! She would have to fight them! It would be the waiting for something to happen that would be the worst. She remembered what her father had told her of war time. The waiting for the attack to commence—the bombardment to



start—that was what sapped the spirit. Once things started, one hadn't time to think of nerves.

In the hall she met Mrs. Gubbins, the house-keeper, dressed for going out. The good lady held Amber in conversation while she told her various household details. Then, accompanied by the two maids, departed to catch the bus to Clodham.

Amber watched their figures dwindle in the distance, trying to persuade herself that she didn't want to go with them. After this, she entered the breakfast-room to exchange gloomy "good-mornings" with the boys.

"Where's Roy?" asked Amber suddenly. "Anyone seen him this morning? Unlike him to be away at breakfast."

She went to the door and called "Roy! Roy! Roy!"

There was no doggy response.

"Very strange," muttered Amber. "Where can he have got to? Hope he hasn't come to any harm."

"Where are you off to, Amber?" demanded Dick.

"To find Roy," replied Amber from the passage.

Dick hurried after her and grabbed her by the girdle.

"You mustn't go anywhere by yourself," he muttered.

"I must find Roy," persisted Amber, striving to get free.

"You won't find him," retorted Dick. "If he had been anywhere about he would have answered when you called."

Amber had to admit the force of this argument.

"Dick," she muttered, "I don't like the dog disappearing like this. I'm worried stiff."

"I've got worse worries than that," grunted Dick.

"Dick! Tell me—"

"You being here—Jim and Tony feel the same. Got to speak plainly, Amber. You cramp our style. We've all got wind up in case anything happens to you. You see—a girl, however plucky she is, is only in the way on a job like this. Sorry, old thing, but there it is. So—what about it?"

"Well, what about it?" repeated Amber.

Frankly, this point of view had never occurred to her. Why should it?—being fully convinced in her own mind that she was quite capable of taking care of herself. But how was she to convince Dick that a girl wasn't necessarily in the way; what arguments was she to advance to combat this fixed idea?

"I'll make the chaps understand," her brother went on. "They won't think it's through funk—"

"And if I refuse to clear out—"

"Then we all clear," said Dick firmly. "The whole thing's off if you persist in stopping with us. It's our adventure—not yours—and it's up to you whether it's spoilt or not."

Amber's hat and coat were hanging on a peg close by. She took them down and donned them. Her feelings were too choked for words. Without a glance at Dick she moved to the front door.

Her brother said nothing either—just stood by with his hands thrust in his pockets, frowning into space. It was one of those silences that are more bitter than the fiercest quarrels.

FOR some ten minutes Amber strode along the road, rehearsing all the arguments for her point of view. Then suddenly she pulled up and turned.

Sheltered amongst the trees was the old, ivy

covered mansion she had just left. Her vivid imagination conjured up all sorts of things that at this very minute might be happening inside. Sudden and devastating catastrophe—

But uppermost in her mind was the thought that Dick and the others deemed her incapable of sharing danger. She was a girl, and according to them, only in the way! Which was obviously absurd!

"I'll show them they're wrong," Amber muttered fiercely, "I'll go back; get in the back way so that they won't see me, and then—and then—"

There was a winding lane on the left, and down this she hurried, sheltered from view by the high hedge on either side. The morning was very misty—almost a fog in parts. The lane came out at the rear of the Dare estate, with a small gate leading into the extensive orchards.

Arriving there, Amber made her way cautiously until she reached the ruined West Wing that had seen the first of Sir Simon's prophecies materialise. By climbing the fallen masonry Amber knew it was possible to get within reach of a window of one of the rooms of the inhabited portion of the Gables.

Very gingerly she accomplished the climb, fearing every moment that the boys would come out into the grounds and spot her. But nothing of the sort happened. Neither did she hear any sound of them. They must still be in the house waiting for whatever was to happen—

But had it happened? Amber wondered with a shudder! She had been absent nearly half an hour—plenty of time for all manner of things to have taken place.

She forced open the window, and clambered over the ledge. She dropped inside and tip-toed across the floor. The room was stacked from floor to ceiling with old boxes and packing cases. The rubbish of years was stored here.

She pushed back the door opening on to a long landing. At the end was a winding stair leading down to the wide corridor where was situated the Red Room, with the massively framed painting of Sir Simon on its walls—the scene of her dream!

Amber peered apprehensively through the gloom, for the mist outside was increasing, giving the interior of the Gables the aspect of twilight.

But her fears shrank to a secondary consideration before her determination to show the boys that a girl could play a daring part as well as they. She was ready to face any danger to prove that, even to the extent of entering the Red Room and facing the grim painting of her ancestor.

"For if there is any truth in the legend," she thought, "surely the first sign should occur there."

She reached the top of the staircase and peered down. Then she stiffened in the attitude of listening.

Surely the faint murmur of voices! She waited with the stillness of a statue. Yes, someone was coming up from the main hall.

A faint shaft of light cut into the blackness. An electric torch! Could it be Dick and the others? A moment later she saw that it was they. Her inclination was to dart back to the lumber-room and hide. But there was no need for that. The three had halted in front of the door of the Red Room, and Dick turned the handle.

"They've had the same idea as I had," Amber told herself. "They also expect things will start in there. What do I do now?"

For a couple of minutes she debated the point, all the while listening with bated breath.

Not a sound anywhere—just the dreadful silence.

Wait! What was that shape below that had suddenly detached itself from the heavy shadows? Her glance saw it creeping stealthily towards the Red Room. Fascinated she watched it linger by the door—listening, its whole attitude sinister, threatening— Was it—could it be—Sir Simon

“Pull yourself together—don't funk!” gritted Amber in her mind. “That's not a spectre—there's no such things. It's an enemy about to attack the boys. It's up to me to do something. I *must* do something. They must be warned.”

There was but one thing to do, and heedless of the consequences to herself, Amber did it.

She let forth a piercing cry that awoke the echoes.

For just one second she waited for the result. She saw the figure start from its crouching attitude, glance up, and then with the swiftness of a panther make for the stairs that led to where she was standing.

But Amber was no longer standing there. Having accomplished her purpose she was off like the wind, back to the lumber-room.

She heard the faint patter of footsteps behind her; heard also the movements of Dick and the others; into the lumber-room she darted, and dived behind the nearest pile of packing cases.

Hardly had she taken cover than she heard the door creak. The unknown pursuer had entered the room.

SECONDS went by. Amber crouched in the darkness, holding her breath—wishing she could see and yet dreading what she might see. She sensed that the unknown was still present although not a sound betrayed that it was there.

From below came the muffled voices of Dick, Jim and Tony. Amber could imagine their mystification—they must have thought her cry had no earthly origin. They were probably nerving themselves to come up here and investigate.

Despite the tension, Amber's brain worked with crystal clearness. The intruder, only a few paces away from her, was evidently waiting in the room ready to pounce should the boys approach. He had chosen the lumber room as an ambush for them rather than with any intention of seeking who it was that had uttered that cry.

“They're coming up!” breathed Amber.

Taking a desperate chance she moved an inch and peered round the corner of the stacked-up packing cases. Her eyes by this time were accustomed to the darkness, and she was able to make out the figure of the intruder waiting by the door.

It was a man—she could see that—but what sort of a man it was impossible to discover. The shadows were deceptive, yet he did not look very big. Big or little, however, a surprise attack would give the boys no chance against him.

Amber parted her lips to utter another cry of warning, but the cry died away in her throat as her fingers suddenly came into contact with a piece of old sacking lying on top of the boxes.

Here was a means of dealing with the situation, if she dare employ it, that was far better than raising an alarm. The intruder, occupied in waiting for his victims, offered an easy target for a counter-ambush.

She had but to seize the sacking, creep up behind it with lightning swiftness and envelope him in it. Then, before he could get free the boys would be here, and the capture would be completed.

(Concluded on the next page.)



Is  
Your  
Reply  
Here?

“Admirers of the Denver Sisters” (Cheshire).—I am afraid your views are at variance with those of the majority of my readers, but, nevertheless, I was pleased to hear your comments. The fact that the Morcove stories have been popular for more than fourteen years proves that the characters must be interesting to the majority of readers. I think you will agree that there is a most thrilling “plot” in the present series. Best wishes.

“Pam's Admirers” (Bournemouth).—I was pleased to hear that you like all the present stories. Yes, Dick Cherrol is a cousin of Jimmy; he appeared in a series of holiday stories. No doubt there will be a series featuring Pam in the near future.

“Paddy” (Kingsbridge).—Thank you for your nice letter. It is just possible that we may have a series featuring the characters you mention, though I mustn't make any promises. Many thanks for introducing our paper to your chums. That was splendid of you!

“A Lover of Pam” (near Spalding).—I was very pleased to hear from you and to know that you liked the gifts so much. And all the stories, too! The Morcove character you mention may reappear in a future series. All good wishes.

Moyra Tarrant (N. Faverley, Yorks).—Another letter full of praise for all our stories! I was delighted to hear from you, dear reader, and to have your comments on our features. Watch my Chat for details of new stories coming soon.

“Pam's Fan” (Luton, Beds).—Thank you for such a nice long letter. The answer to your question regarding Morcove is No. Dodo Wren may appear in a future series, but meantime I'm sure you will enjoy Iris Holt's new series about Amber. All good wishes.

“Ticky” (Coatbridge).—Tuesday seems to be a very popular day; all my readers look forward to it. I'm so glad you like the present stories. I hope you will write to me again soon.

Pauline Finkelstein (Snaresbrook, E.18).—Thank you for such a nice letter. Yes, I thought your note paper was very pretty. I expect I shall have some news of Peter, my dog, to relate in a forthcoming Chat Very best wishes.

“Brown-eyed Peggy” (Kinellar, Aberdeenshire).—I always welcome “first” letters, dear reader, and I was delighted to know that you are so pleased with all the present features. Do write again soon, please.

“A Morcove Admirer” (Shotley).—You will be glad to know that “Josie—Pride of the Stables” is shortly to be reprinted in the “Library.” It is quite likely that the Study 12 chums will one of these days spend a holiday at Swanlake. Best wishes.

Violet Cavendish (Brixton Hill).—Thanks so much for your welcome letter. Yes, I expect we shall have a series in which the Morcove seniors play a big part. Meantime, aren't you enjoying the present holiday stories? And how do you like Bunny Trevor? All good wishes.

“Trixie Hope Fan” (Manchester).—I was very pleased to hear from you, but I'm afraid I cannot promise the return of the character you mention. She left Morcove some time ago. I will bear in mind your request for the other stories. Write again, won't you?

Edith Dando (Dudley, Worcs.).—Many thanks for your appreciative letter. I was very pleased to know that you like all our stories.

“Betty's Admirer” (Blair, nr. Aberdeen).—Madge Minden is probably Jack's best chum among the Morcove Co.—though they are all such good friends together that there are really no “favourites.” Best wishes.

Margery Potter (nr. Newton Abbot).—Thank you for your nice little letter. Kit Carroll and Tony will be appearing again in the future.

"I'll make the attempt," breathed Amber.

Silently rising to her feet, she gripped the sacking, and holding it wide in her arms, stole forward.

"Mind how you go, Jim," she heard her brother's voice in the passage. "Careful, the floor's a bit rotten in parts."

Amber, with the sacking poised aloft, saw the intruder crouch lower to spring. She was about a yard from him—just the right distance for her purpose—

With a yell, half of defiance, half of fear, Amber brought the sacking down on his head and shoulders, and gripping the ends, held on like grim death.

"Dick—Tony—Jim!" she shrieked. "Quick! I've got him—it's me—Amber—"

DICK flashed his electric torch on the prone figure—for Jim Partridge was sitting on the intruders' chest, and Tony had charge of the legs.

"An Indian!" gasped Amber.

The man's dark eyes flashed defiance.

"Yes," he said in excellent English. "An Indian! The young sahibs have the good fortune of their father. They have the luck, as you Eng-

the stairs, paused for a second at the bottom, and then darted into the Red Room, Dick, Jim, Tony, and Amber hot on his heels.

Then they pulled up as they saw him halt by the far wall and bring out a long knife.

"It is my turn now, my young Sahibs," he muttered.

Exactly above where he stood hung the massive frame containing the painting of Sir Simon Dare, and even as the Indian flourished the knife there was a report like a pistol shot.

"Oh!" cried Amber, clapping her hands to her eyes.

But not before she had seen the huge frame descend and fell the Indian to the ground.

IT was some three hours later that Dick returned from the Cottage Hospital.

"They seem to think the chap will live," he reported. "I've seen the police and they have the matter in hand. And now, Amber," he drew a deep breath, "having a little leisure, I may as well hear what you've got to say for yourself."

Amber eyed her brother for a second.

"Shan't say a word if you're going to be cross," she replied.

"Cross!" he echoed. "Well, I'll try not to be. But it isn't very nice for an elder brother having to eat humble pie and take everything back, is it, you chaps?"

"Apt to make a bloke ratty," agreed Jim Partridge.

"Especially to a young sister," added Tony Malone with a polite inclination of his head to Amber. "And more especially when three blokes would have been absolutely in the cart if it hadn't been for her. My hat, Dick Dare, you'll want to fall down at her feet and grovel when you hear what she did. Jim and I have already grovelled. She was wonderful! Now Amber my chee-ild, tell little Dicky all about everything, just as you told us."

Which Amber did.

"Amber, old thing," said Dick with frank admiration. "I give you full marks. You seem to have thought of everything. I suppose you didn't by any chance do anything to that chain of Sir Simon's picture. No?" He regarded them all thoughtfully for a moment. "That was a very queer happening. Of course it was just a chance happening. Nothing in it—and yet—fifty years to the very day! Makes one wonder if there is anything in that legend. What's your opinion, Amber?"

"You want a *girl's* opinion!" laughed Amber.

"Here—no rubbing things in," protested Dick.

"Well, then," said Amber, "I like to think that old Sir Simon considers his curse has gone far enough, and his action to-day is a sort of make up for all the damage he's done in the past."

"Maybe you're right," nodded Dick.

"I have a horrible feeling," murmured Tony Malone, "that Amber generally is right. School-girls! There is something to be said for them after all!"

[END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.]

DON'T you admire Amber for her daring, and for refusing to be left out of the boys' adventures? This splendid new character features again next Tuesday in another vivid complete story by Iris Holt; order your SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN now, and make certain of enjoying the second story in this absorbing and unusual new series.

## ● Coming Shortly

Thrilling new story by  
Muriel Holden entitled:

### "Silver Mist' of the Circus"

lish call it; not knowing that the all-powerful gods for some strange reason are on their side."

"What are you doing here?" demanded Dick.

The man's lips curled into a bitter smile.

"In the far-off hills where I come from," he muttered, "there once stood a happy village which is now a blackened ruin. My people would not bow the knee to your race, and we withstood your attacks for years until your airships descended upon us. We were conquered, and the man who led our conquerors was Flight Commander Dare—your father. Many moons ago that happened, and I swore that as he and his men treated my home so would I treat his home. I worked my way on a ship to England. I found out where your father lived—I got into this house last night, and had it not been for the dog—"

"What has happened to the dog?" burst out Amber.

The man gave a cruel smile.

"He met the fate that I hoped to deal out to you," he snarled.

"You've killed him!" cried Amber. "Oh, how wicked—"

"You brute!" breathed Dick. "So you're one of the Hilyk tribe who for years and years robbed and murdered. I'm glad my father gave it you in the neck—Hi! Look out—"

With a sudden heave the man tumbled his captors to the ground, and gaining his feet with a savage whoop of defiance, he gained the passage and streaked off towards the staircase.

"After him!" yelled Dick.

Pell mell, they dashed in pursuit.

But the man was fleet of foot. He leaped down



By  
MURIEL  
HOLDEN

### Peggy Faces the Crisis of Her Life

#### Claire's Triumph

**D**ISMAYED, and for the moment almost too bewildered to think coherently, Peggy Lorne stood staring at the objects which had fallen from the basket she had been about to take to old Mrs. Merton.

The silver forks and spoons, the silver serviette rings, and the string of lustrous pearls—they lay there on the hall floor reflecting the beams of the midday sun that came through the large windows on either side of the front door.

The pearls seemed to be winking mockingly up at her. In her ears rang Claire Blackburn's accusing words:

"She's Stella Randall's sister. Now she's attempted to steal these things because she's afraid I'd found out her guilty secret and she and Stella wanted money to enable them to go away quickly before the police could be informed!"

Only a few seconds ago Claire had given vent to that dramatic outburst, and yet, to Peggy, it seemed as if hours must have passed.

It was Mrs. Anstey who broke the dreadful silence.

"Whatever are you saying, Claire? Surely you—you can't mean all this?"

The note of horror and bewilderment in her employer's voice made Peggy feel dreadful. She had done nothing of which she should be in the least ashamed, and yet Claire's way of putting it had made it all sound so appalling that Peggy knew a feeling of guilt.

"Yes, aunt, I meant it—every word!" Claire insisted, and oh, how cruelly she smiled, how triumphantly she spoke! "Look at her!" She indicated Peggy. "She can't deny any of it!"

And then something seemed to snap inside Peggy's brain. The colour flooded back to her cheeks. Only with a great effort did she resist

an urge to rush at Claire and drive the false smile from her face.

Desperately she turned to Mrs. Anstey.

"I don't deny that I'm Stella Randall's sister," she panted, "but I do deny knowing anything about these things." She flung out a hand towards the spoons and forks and the string of pearls.

Mrs. Anstey's eyes widened.

"You—you're Stella's sister?" she echoed incredulously. "But I thought your name was Lorne! We all did!"

Peggy's flush deepened, but she met her employer's gaze frankly.

"It is!" she declared. "It's Peggy Lorne Randall. I came here to try and prove Stella's innocence—the job appealed to me. You see, I—I've always loved dancing—I hoped one day to make a name for myself. Stella came and told me what had happened and about this job. It seemed"—her voice faltered—"well, as if Fate had sent it along so that I could help Stella as well as myself."

Peggy paused. The front door had opened to admit Sheila Anstey. Now Sheila stood staring in blank astonishment at the queer scene presented to her eyes.

"Hallo! What's happened?" she demanded, looking at the articles strewn on the hall floor, then from one to another of the little group. "Been an earthquake or something?"

Claire's dark eyes flashed.

"Something rather like that," she said. "Peggy's been caught out at last—that's what it all means. She isn't Peggy Lorne at all, but Peggy Randall, and now she's even tried to steal!"

"Peggy!" In a moment Sheila was at Peggy's side, her arm through her friend's. "You tell me. Is this some silly joke on Claire's part?"

Fury, at Sheila's words, showed on Claire's handsome face. Peggy shook her head slowly.

"Anything but a joke, Sheila," she answered huskily. "The first part of what Claire says is right enough, but it's not true that I tried to steal." She sighed. "Well, I suppose you won't want any more to do with me now, any of you—"

But Sheila gave a dissenting gesture.

"Here, not so fast, Peggy!" she interrupted. "If you say you didn't try to steal, I believe you. But what's all this about you being Stella Randall's sister?"

Peggy shrugged.

"That's true enough," she admitted wearily. "I came here, hoping to clear her. She was never guilty of anything—though I don't expect you'll be able to credit it—"

Sheila whirled her round.

"You mean, you've been trying all this time to find out the truth of things—I mean where your sister was concerned?" And as Peggy nodded: "Then I think you've been jolly plucky, Pegs!"

Sheila ran to her mother's side.

"Mumsie, there's something very odd about all this!" she rushed on. "I think you should give Pegs the benefit of the doubt—"

Mrs. Anstey's arm went round her daughter's shoulder.

"I—I hardly know what to say, Sheila my dear," she interposed. "I've always liked Peggy, but she's admitted being the sister of—of a girl whom the police are after. And those things in the basket—how did they come there?"

"Pegs says she doesn't know!" Sheila insisted. Claire laughed sarcastically.

"Naturally she would!" she ejaculated. "You didn't expect her to admit trying to smuggle them out of the house, did you? She wouldn't have admitted being Stella Randall's sister if I hadn't practically forced her to!"

Sheila glared at her.

"You shut up, Claire!" she flung at her with unusual vigour. "You've never liked Pegs, and it's no use pretending you have. But I do like her, and I don't want her to be sent away from here."

Her forthright declaration caused Peggy to experience a queer feeling in the throat.

"I don't know what to say," repeated Mrs. Anstey then. "I must have a talk to your father, Sheila darling, before I can decide anything."

She went over to Peggy and looked searchingly into her flushed face.

"For the moment matters must be left as they are," she went on. "At least, I can say this: As far as your sister is concerned, neither my husband nor I desire to take any further proceedings!"

"Oh!" Peggy exclaimed, while tears of joy started to her eyes. "Thank you, Mrs. Anstey. Thank you! I—I don't care what you do to me now—"

Claire, her face flushed and angry-looking, stepped forward. She did not like the way things were going at all. In her opinion both Mrs. Anstey and Sheila were being ridiculously soft.

"That doesn't mean that aunt thinks your sister's innocent, or anything like that," she could not resist saying. "Thieving evidently runs in your family!"

Mrs. Anstey flashed a look of disapproval at her.

"Thank you, Claire, but please allow me to manage this for myself," she said coldly. "I think Peggy had better regard herself as suspended from all duties until she hears further from me. Her meals will be sent to her room."

Feeling that this was the end of all her hopes and ambitions, Peggy turned away. Instantly Sheila was at her side.

"I'm terribly sorry about all this, Pegs," Sheila murmured sympathetically. "I can see now what a dreadful time you must have had while you've been here. I shall speak to daddy myself and try to make him understand—you know I'll do my best for you, don't you?"

Peggy nodded.

"It's sweet of you, Sheila," she said gratefully, forcing back the tears that came unbidden to her eyes. "I feel terrible about the whole thing." She sighed. "Now I think I'd better go and see Stella. At least she'll be glad to know that she needn't fear the police any longer!"

Claire Blackburn heard those last murmured words, and her dark eyes narrowed. She waited until the hall was empty then she darted to the telephone.

A few moments later she was talking to Mr. Spelthorne. Briefly, she told him all that had happened.

"And, of course, Mr. Spelthorne," she concluded, after a quick glance over her shoulder to make sure no one was within earshot, "Mrs. Anstey thinks you would be most useful to keep your new assistant on a moment longer."

From the other end came Mr. Spelthorne's flustered tones. If Mrs. Anstey said that, then, of course, he wouldn't dream of going against her wishes.

Claire was laughing quietly to herself as she turned away from the phone.

"So you were going to prove your sister's innocence, were you, Miss Peggy Randall!" she murmured to herself. "I rather think you'll both find that you're not wanted in Oldborough—before very long!"

### Peggy Remembers

IT was during the lunch-hour that Peggy reached the nurses' hostel.

Stella was in the grounds, sitting at the base of a tree in the shade, and Peggy saw at a glance that she had been weeping. The elder girl rose unsteadily at her sister's approach.

"I—I know why you've come, Peggy," Stella greeted her wanly. "Someone phoned Mr. Spelthorne and told him—everything. He says he's very sorry, but he can't possibly keep me on."

Despairingly she looked away, and Peggy knew a fresh pang of unhappiness at sight of her sister's misery.

One blow on top of another—none the less dimming because it was perhaps inevitable.

"You'd better get your things," Peggy advised dully. "At least you can go back home now. Mrs. Anstey told me that she had no intention of taking any further action against you—"

Stella sighed.

"Which means that I'm still looked on as a thief," she said dully; "and it seems you are, too. To think—after all you've tried to do for me." She took Peggy's hand. "You—you couldn't find out anything definite about Claire, then?"

Peggy shook her head.

"I found out that there's a lot of money owing to various tradespeople," she told Stella, "and Claire's had the money right enough—"

She broke off with a little cry.

"What is it, Peggy?" Stella asked wonderingly.

Peggy's eyes shone with excitement.

"I've just remembered something—a diary of Claire's! I thought it wasn't any use saying

anything about the unpaid bills. Not that I had a chance to. But if only I could get hold of that diary! There's proof of Claire's duplicity—proof that she's been doing things in secret that she'd never want Mrs. Anstey to know about."

Quickly she went on to tell Stella how she had come across the diary lying on the floor of the library at Chester Lodge, and what she had seen in it.

Stella gripped her hands together. "Why, it's the very thing!" she ejaculated.

"Where is it now?"  
 "I put it in a drawer of a desk in the library," Peggy told her. "I expect it's still there. I'll go back as soon as I've seen you home and try to get a chance to look for it."

They went into the hostel then and up in the dainty little room which had been allotted to Stella, Peggy helped her sister pack her few belongings. They were soon ready, and then began the sad journey home.

Peggy could not help smiling bitterly as she thought of it as "home." What sort of a home would it be now?

Bare, empty and cheerless it was when they entered, with that curious, stuffy smell houses get when they have been shut up for a long while.

"At any rate," Peggy said, with a forced attempt to be cheerful, "we shall be able to get the place cleaned and aired for aunt Hetty's return. We—we shan't have much else to do."

They lighted a fire in the living-room, and then, leaving Stella to put things ship-shape, Peggy set out for Chester Lodge.

For the present she was suspended from all activities. There would be no dancing academy for her that afternoon. Perhaps no more dancing ever with Sheila, that splendid partner with whom Peggy had hoped to score such triumphs.

How Claire must be chuckling to herself!

It had been a battle of wits all along, and at the moment the honours were all with the arch-schemer.

Peggy clenched her hands; her lips set in a grim line.

If only she could get possession of that diary, she would not hesitate. She would go straight to Mrs. Anstey and show her the revealing book and tell her all she had learned about Claire's conduct of the finances entrusted to her.

Those two things together would be enough to convince anyone of Claire's duplicity.

Peggy hurried up the drive and into the lodge, determined to find out exactly where Claire was and what she was doing. The big house was very quiet as she passed through the hall, and at the end of the passage leading to the domestic quar-

ters, Peggy caught sight of Mrs. Rowton, the stout cook.

She at least was friendly disposed, as Peggy could see at a glance, and Peggy determined to enlist her aid.

"Do you happen to know where Miss Claire is, Mrs. Rowton?" Peggy asked her.

The cook pointed upstairs. "I rather think she's busy in the library," she answered, and Peggy's eyes narrowed.

"I'll pop up and see," she decided. "If she is will you do me a great favour, Mrs. Rowton?"

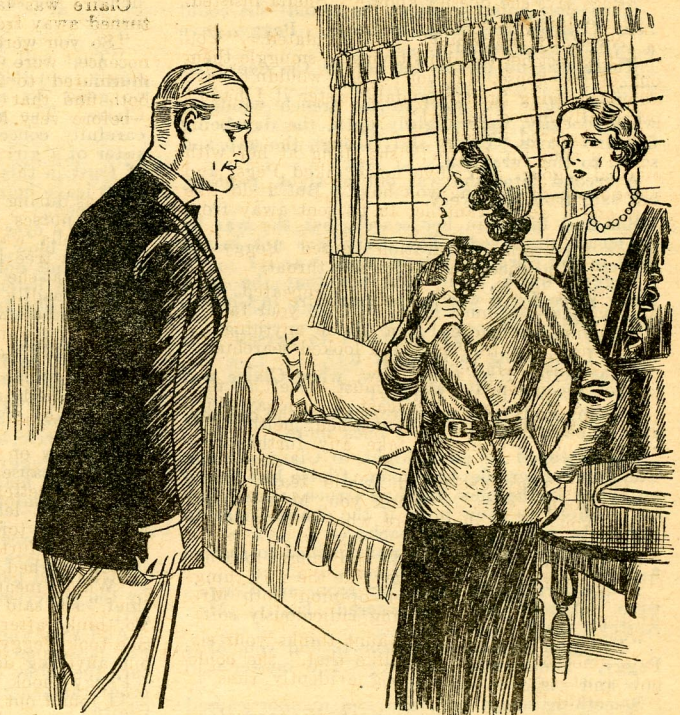
"Why, certainly," agreed the cook. She coughed. "I—I've sort of heard what's happened, miss, and I want to say as I'm very sorry about things. Anything I can do to help you—"

Peggy smiled her gratitude. "If Claire's in the library," she said, "I'll beckon to you from the landing. Then I want you to go up and tell Claire there's a 'phone call for her. Of course, by the time she gets down here, the supposed person will have rung off—"

The cook nodded. "Leave it to me, miss. It's as good as done."

Peggy wasted no more time. Quietly she mounted the stairs. She did not go to the library door, but to a door at the end of the corridor admitting to the balcony which ran right along that side of the house.

A few moments later she was moving cautiously along the balcony in the direction of the library



"You were caught trying to leave the house with several articles that did not belong to you," Mr. Anstey said, and Peggy's heart leapt. Claire was responsible for this, Peggy knew—but how could she prove it?

windows. From a point about twenty feet distant she was able to see into the library.

Claire was there, seated at the desk she used for her duties as secretary to Mrs. Anstey.

Quickly Peggy retraced her steps to the landing where she signalled the cook waiting in the hall below. Then, moving along to an alcove, she drew back into the shadows and waited.

In a few moments the stout form of the cook came panting up the stairs and made for the library door, to disappear inside.

Then she emerged again, followed by Claire Blackburn, who was obviously quite unaware of the trick being played on her.

Down the stairs she hurried, and immediately Peggy darted from her place of concealment and into the library.

Her heart was thudding with almost painful intensity. So much depended on whether she could find that diary again or not. She could see no other way of bowling out Claire and so retrieving a situation which had grown utterly desperate.

Swift steps took her to the desk and eagerly she tore open the top right-hand drawer. It was in there she had placed the diary, as she well remembered.

The diary was not visible, but it flashed into Peggy's mind that it might have been covered with papers. She turned them over feverishly.

An icy chill swept over her.

The diary was not there. Drawer after drawer she looked in—but all to no avail.

Then—her pulses leapt at the sound—she could hear Claire's returning footsteps. Peggy gave a swift glance round.

There was no escape for her by the door, but

Like a deer she sped to the french windows, which, luckily, were slightly open, the day being fine and warm. Peggy slid through the gap and so on to the verandah.

A second later she was out of sight, panting, but safe from discovery.

She had failed in her search, but she was by no means dismayed. The diary was not in the desk in the library. Where, then, was it?

Peggy's quick brain told her that the most likely place for it was in the escritoire in Claire's own room!

"And that," Peggy muttered to herself, "is where I am going to look for it!"

What better time to go now, when Claire was busily occupied in the library?

Wasting no time, Peggy crept along the balcony, and so back into the house once more.

She intended to go straight to Claire's room. The time for scruples had gone. Claire had shown no mercy in the blow she had struck, and Peggy could afford to show none if the chance came to her to be able to strike back.

As it happened, her plan was destined to receive a check.

In the corridor in which her room and Claire's were situated she encountered Emily, Mrs. Anstey's maid.

"I've just been to your room to find you, Miss Peggy," Emily said soberly. "The master's in now and wishes to see you."

Something about her tone and manner caused Peggy to experience a queer sinking feeling inside. It was with a premonition of further disaster that she followed Emily to the lounge.

What had happened? Had Claire devised some fresh scheme for which she, Peggy, was to get the blame?

### Now or Never

MR. AND MRS. ANSTEY were both in the room as Peggy entered, and Peggy noticed how grave the former was. He waved her to a chair, but remained standing himself near the windows.

"Mrs. Anstey has told me all that has occurred, Peggy," he said, and his tone was very serious. "I may say at once that I was amazed and profoundly shocked. I understand that you came here hoping to prove that your sister, Stella, had never attempted to steal?"

Peggy, every nerve taut as a bowstring, nodded.

"Yes, Mr. Anstey. She was innocent and—"

He held up his hand.

"I am afraid that everything pointed to the fact that she was guilty," he said coldly. "I do not blame you altogether for what you did, but the fact remains that you came here in circumstances that were, to say the least, peculiar, and you were caught trying to leave the house with several articles that did not belong to you! You denied all knowledge of them, I hear?"

Peggy trembled.

I had not the slightest idea they were in the basket," she said hotly. "They were put in—"

Mr. Anstey shrugged.

"Indeed! And who would have done such a thing?" he demanded keenly.

Peggy leapt to her feet. Resentment she could no longer keep in check filled her.

"There's only one person who would—in this house," she said hotly, "and that's Claire Blackburn."

Mr. Anstey gestured imperiously for silence.

"That will do, Miss—Randall!" he spoke cuttingly, and Peggy winced. "You can do yourself no good by making wild accusations against Claire. The real case against you is that you carelessly concealed the fact that you were the sister of a girl who was dismissed from a position of trust in this very house. I am sorry, but you must leave here at once. It will be better for all concerned!"

Peggy's eyes widened in dismay.

So the blow had fallen! Stella's fate was to be hers. And nothing she could say about Claire would be listened to, much less believed!

Slowly she turned to go, feeling numbed and helpless?

Mr. Anstey followed her to the door and beckoned to Emily, the maid, who was waiting in the hall outside.

"Emily, help Miss Randall to pack, please," he ordered. "She is leaving here at once. Johnson will drive her to wherever she wishes to go!"

Slowly Peggy mounted the stairs to her room. Emily, the maid, tried to talk to her, to speak words of comfort and sympathy while they packed together.

Peggy scarcely heard her, so great was her sense of failure and hopelessness.

Stella and herself—both turned out, both beaten by the cleverness and cunning of an unscrupulous girl.

And somewhere in Claire's room was a book—the possession of which would enable Peggy to turn the tables completely, in conjunction with the other amazing facts she had collected about Claire!

Suddenly, into Peggy's mind flashed a memory. It was as if history were repeating itself in some strange, uncanny way. Peggy was recalling that tense moment when Claire had discovered Stella's hairbrush in her room, and only Sheila's intervention had prevented Peggy from being exposed

It came to Peggy that she must get that diary of Claire's. Somehow she must get back into this house when Claire thought she was miles away.

And how better could she achieve that purpose than by deliberately leaving something of her own here and returning for it!

If she came back when the family were at dinner and went round to the servants' entrance, she was sure good-hearted Mrs. Rowton would help her.

Yes—she would do it! She must! It was her one and only chance of putting things right for Stella and herself.

Her wrist-watch—the very thing. Emily was bending over the case. Peggy slipped the wrist-watch from her wrist and thrust it beneath the pillow of the bed.

Then she straightened up, and, without so much as the flicker of an eyelid to betray her rising excitement, she helped Emily to complete the packing and fastening of the suitcase.

She was on the point of leaving, the suitcase clasped in her hand, when the door opened and Sheila entered.

"Peggy! It's—it's terrible!" Sheila's voice was choked with sobs. "I did all I could, but daddy wouldn't give way. He thinks he's doing it for the best. You—you mustn't think too unkindly of him, Pegs."

Peggy felt warm lips pressed suddenly to her cheek, and her arms went round Sheila in a fond embrace.

"I don't think unkindly of anyone in this house—except one person who shall be nameless, Sheila," she assured her friend. "Good-bye. And—and if I don't see you before you go to London to join Mr. Sergieoff's ballet company—good luck, dear!"

Sheila shook her head mournfully.

"I don't feel I want to go now, Pegs," she whispered. "It wouldn't be the same without you. We've worked and planned it all together, you see." She thrust something into Peggy's hand. "Take this, dear, as—a little souvenir, will you?"

Peggy looked down. She gasped at sight of the lovely thing Sheila had given her. It was a bracelet cunningly wrought in gold and platinum, a piece of jewellery of exquisite modern design that must have cost pounds.

"Thank you, Sheila," she said simply. "I shouldn't ever forget you and your kindness, even if I hadn't got this to remember you by—you may be sure of that!"

A few minutes later, Peggy was in the handsome saloon car, being driven by Johnson, the chauffeur, to her aunt's modest home in a suburb of Oldborough.

Once she reached her aunt's flat, Peggy wasted no time in acquainting her sister with what had happened.

"I—I guessed that was what would happen, Pegs," Stella murmured distressfully. "And now you've lost the greatest chance you'll ever have—and I feel it's all my fault."

Firmly Peggy shook her head.

"No, dear, it isn't your fault, and you're not to talk like that," she insisted. "And, anyway, although things look so hopeless, we're not beaten yet."

After that Peggy refused to discuss their position any further. She felt it was better to keep her mind occupied, and busied herself about the house.

There was plenty to be done in this place that

had been shut up for so long, and the time sped by.

Finally, at half-past six or thereabouts, Peggy quietly left the flat, and by bus and on foot made her way in the direction of Chester Lodge.

Dusk was falling as she neared the gates, and then very cautiously she made her way to the rear of the big house and so to a spot whence she could see into the spacious kitchen.

Mrs. Rowton was there, and Peggy, nerving herself for the task which awaited her, tapped at the window.

She saw Mrs. Rowton look up then hurry to the door.

"It's you, my dear, is it?" the stout cook exclaimed in surprise. "I was told you'd gone!"

Peggy nodded.

"Yes, I had, Mrs. Rowton, but I left something in my room—a wristwatch." She caught at the cook's arm. "Be a sport and let me go and get it. You see, it's like this, Mrs. Rowton, there's something I must look for while they're all at dinner. If you doubt me, you can come with me—"

The cook shook her head.

"Rubbish, my dear! You come in, then, and good luck to you."

Peggy waited for no second invitation. With a muttered word of thanks, she entered the house. "You go up by this back staircase," the cook whispered. "You'll be safe as houses. They're all in the dining-room."

Two at a time Peggy sped up the flight of stairs. Her heart was thudding, and her temples throbbled madly. It was now or never.

On tiptoe, noiseless as a spectre, she hurried along the corridor to the door of Claire Blackburn's room. A second later she was inside and the light was switched on.

Her feverish gaze roved the room. There was the escritoire, and she darted to it. Grasping the lid, she strove to open it.

A baffled exclamation left her lips. The lid was locked.

Like lightning her brain worked in these tense moments. In all probability, she reasoned, the key would be in one of the small drawers of the dressing-table.

Quick steps took her to the spot, and she opened the two small drawers. Yes, there was a bunch of keys—

And, at that very moment, Peggy heard a sound that sent her whirling round, heart in mouth.

Footsteps coming along the landing; perhaps coming here!

She literally leapt across the intervening space and snapped out the electric light. Then, like a flash, she was at the big wardrobe only a few feet away.

A wrench and the door was open, and Peggy flung herself inside, to pull the door shut after her while she sought refuge behind the many frocks and other garments hanging there.

And in the chill silence that followed, broken only by the hammering of her own heart, Peggy heard the door handle click. Someone was entering the room!

**I**S Peggy's daring plan to be foiled at the last moment? Will she be found in the house from which she has so recently been banished in disgrace? Your admiration for Peggy will make you long to read next Tuesday's chapters of this fine serial, in order to see how she fares.



JUST STARTED: A Brilliant Story of Adventure and Mystery, Featuring  
a Charming New Character



Jessie Rebels

“O N. Bruce, old chap! Find the one who took all our money!”

Her eyes strained ahead into the darkness, her right hand gripping the end of a leather lead, Claudette Oliver whispered the words in low, tense tones.

The magnificent St. Bernard, pulling at the lead, gave a vibrant bay and pressed on into the night, his muzzle lowered to the grass, following a trail that was but a matter of minutes old.

Claudette's heart was thumping with apprehension; she was filled with horror. Not ten minutes ago all the money she possessed in the world had been stolen from the caravan home she shared with Jessie, her younger sister, and Nannie, their old nurse, not to mention Joey, the parrot.

The situation that had arisen as a result would be a disastrous one, unless the money were recovered.

“Bruce, if you don't get that money back again it'll mean good-bye to all chances of earning the fortune Uncle Jonathan has promised us. We mustn't fail!”

Again that deep bay in reply, followed by an increased pace.

The girls' caravan home, parked in a wayside meadow, had been the scene of great activity during the past half hour. They had all settled down for the night when Bruce had given the alarm that someone was lurking outside.

Claudette had gone to investigate, only to find that Chum, their pony, was missing. Jess had gone to telephone the police whilst Claudette, with Bruce, had successfully gone in search of Chum.

They had returned, to find the van on fire, and their money missing. Fortunately, inside the van Claudette discovered an old cap, obviously

# The Caravan Wanderers

By Louise Carlton

left behind by the thieves, and now Bruce, who was a born tracker, was following up the trail.

Claudette shuddered to think what would happen if she failed to recover their lost money.

Nannie had told her the intruders had been gypsies and once they got away Claudette would have no proof of their guilt. Nannie would never be able to identify the thieves.

Left destitute by her father, her hopes that his brother would help them were shattered. Uncle Jonathan had given them five pounds, and Claudette had struck a bargain with him that she would make that five into a far greater figure and carry on for three months, keeping herself and the others.

The one stipulation Uncle Jonathan had made was that they were not to accept any kind of outside help—they must be entirely self-supporting.

Suddenly Bruce gave a jerk at the lead and, with a low growl, darted away across the field.

The direction lay away from the roadway now, and soon they came to another gate, which gave into a narrow lane.

Here the St. Bernard didn't halt for a second, but carried on, travelling now at a speed that compelled Claudette to run.

“They've not got far away,” she thought exultantly, and not feeling in the least afraid. “Keep it up, Bruce—Hallo!”

Bruce had suddenly stopped dead. The hair along his back was bristling, his head thrown back. For once he was showing his teeth—a rare occurrence for Bruce.

Claudette's keen eyes were probing the darkness in front of her, but she could see nothing.

"What do you want?"

The voice, hoarse, menacing, sounded from a few feet away—and it was then that Claudette had to exercise control over Bruce, for he crouched with a snarl, ready to spring.

"I want the one who set fire to my van and stole my money!"

Claudette spoke without the slightest tremor in her voice.

When she had fought the fire in the caravan she had slipped her torch in her pocket. Now she withdrew it quickly and snapped it on.

A pair of glittering eyes blinked in the glare, which picked out a swarthy, lowering face, and a lank-haired, hatless head.

A feeling of fear shot through Claudette; was this a trap for her? How many gipsies were beyond there in the dark, out of her torch's light?

Why hadn't she waited for the police to come? After all, Bruce wouldn't be a match for half a dozen men. Had she acted too impetuously?

The man who glared at her in the light of her torch wore no hat, and this pointed to the fact that the cap she had found in the caravan belonged to him.

"Someone stole my money from my caravan," she returned firmly. "Please give it me back."

A coarse laugh came in answer.

"I haven't got your money," he said. "Go away or it'll be the worse for you."

Bruce growled ominously. At the same moment Claudette heard a movement from the hedge, and her fear that she had run into a crowd of gipsies returned in full force. She had to exercise all her self-control to stay there and face it out.

If only Jess would arrive with the police! But she couldn't expect that. She would carry on—and carry on bravely.

Even as she made the resolution Bruce took matters into his own hands. He suddenly flew at the gipsy in the roadway before him and bore him to the ground.

Claudette knew that Bruce would not actually hurt the man unless he thought she was in danger of being attacked. And this did not seem to be the case, after all.

"Hold him down, Bruce," she ordered. "That's right."

The great St. Bernard stood with one paw on the gipsy's chest, his fangs gleaming in the torch-light. Sure that the man was safe, Claudette turned her torch on to the hedge—and then she breathed a sigh of relief. Only a gipsy woman stood there, cowering back.

"Quick, give me my money," she urged.

"I give you the money and then you will still give me to the police—eh?" snarled the man.

"No! You return my money and I'll promise to let you go. And, if you also undertake never to try those sort of tricks again, I'll agree to forget what you're like. I mean that. Refuse and I'll keep you there until we get the police."

"Give her the money, Jake," said the woman harshly.

She hesitated.

Claudette made up her mind to bluff. At any moment the tribe of gipsies might arrive.

"Guard him, Bruce—don't let him move or let her go near him."

She walked away.

"Here, where are you going?" he cried hoarsely.

"To bring the police!" returned Claudette, determinedly. "I don't suppose they have many jobs about here."

"I'll give you the money," he snarled. "Take this dog away."

"When you have given me the money," repeated Claudette steadily. "Thank you"—as with a muttered word the gipsy handed her a bundle of notes.

Claudette felt wonderfully relieved at her success.

"Come along, Bruce," she cried. "Home, old chap. And"—to the gipsy—"if you don't want to be roughly handled, don't follow us in the hope of getting this back again. Bruce doesn't like you—and he's hungry!" she added meaningly.

Claudette walked away, followed reluctantly by the sagacious St. Bernard, who cast repeated glances back at the scowling gipsies.

But the gipsy and his wife didn't attempt to follow—they knew better.

In a few minutes Claudette and her pet were back at the van.

"Oh, Claudette," gasped Nannie, who had re-entered the caravan and had lighted several candles. "Whatever's going to become of us? What shall we do?"

"Do?" repeated Claudette, implanting a kiss on the wrinkled cheek. "Why, my dear, late though is the witching hour, we're going to clear up the van and then—well, sleep."

"Sleep!" The old lady held up her hands in silent supplication. "Hark at the girl! Sleep—when we've been robbed!"

Nan always exaggerated, and Claudette was used to it.

"Robbed, my dear!" she laughed. "Not yet. Look!"

And she displayed the returned money, just as Jess, her young sister, came bounding into the van.

"What's happened?" Jess cried, looking at the untidy, smoke-blackened van.

"Oh, we just felt cold so we had a little fire, dear. The police?" asked Claudette lightly.

"I couldn't get through—the line must be out of order," Jess gasped. "What do you mean about a fire?"

Claudette, who felt rather relieved now that Jess had not been able to communicate with the police, explained what had happened.

Jess whistled.

"My hat!" she laughed. "We're on the high way to adventures all right."

It was past two o'clock when finally they were able to settle down to sleep, and the sun was high when Claudette opened her eyes again.

She roused Jess and set her to work preparing breakfast, whilst she herself made some tea.

By ten o'clock they were all on the road to the town, where part of their money was spent in buying raffia, material to make baskets and leather strips and sheets for the making of bags.

Claudette was keen, and hopefully she drove to a field she knew of, where they could park whilst making their first batch of goods.

The same afternoon she was surprised by a sudden change in Jess' manner.

Claudette glanced at her curiously.

"Of course we must," she replied. "Haven't we got to keep ourselves for three months?"

"It's going to be sickening, isn't it?" pouted Jess. "I'm fed up already."

"You mustn't get fed up, dear," Claudette told her, with just a trace of reproach.

"I'd make much more money giving ventriloquist shows!" said Jess, who rather fancied herself as a ventriloquist.

"You're not good enough yet," Claudette said gently. "Keep smiling, dear."

But during the next few days, whilst Claudette and Nannie worked hard, Jess slacked more and more.

"It's all very well for you to laugh and joke," she said suddenly, when Claudette had made some flippant remark, with the idea of keeping them all lively. "I'm fed up. Nothing but raffia, raffia, raffia, all day long. I'm not going to do any more to-day. I'm going to the pictures!"

She flung down the raffia mat upon which she had been engaged and picked up her hat. Her freckled face was flushed and rebellious, and her red hair was like a flaming mop.

"Jess, don't talk like that, please," Claudette begged, jumping up and catching at Jess' arm. And none of them noticed the sound of a motor cycle pulling up outside. "Play the game!"

"I shan't!" shouted Jess, running to the door. "Blow Uncle Jonathan—blow his rotten fortune—blow everything. And especially blow the raffia!"

And she turned and ran down the steps, nearly colliding with a thin-faced young woman who had just dismounted from a motor-bike.

The newcomer was Sadie Clarke, a distant cousin, who had been bidden by Uncle Jonathan to keep an eye on the Caravan Wanderers.

Sadie's thin lips parted in a sneering smile as she looked from Jess to Claudette.

"Hallo! Happy little family party, eh? Ha, ha, ha! Sounds as if something had gone wrong already! I think I'd better go back and tell Uncle Jonathan that the venture's a failure, don't you, Claudette?"

### The Biter Bit

"MY dear," smiled Claudette serenely. "Why not? Go and tell Uncle Jonathan we're a failure—if you want to look foolish yourself, later on."

The laugh died from Sadie's thin lips.

"Do you really imagine you're going to make a success of this?" she demanded, in a superior manner.

"I don't imagine, Sadie. I know!" was Claudette's reply.

"But Jess's fed up already!"—with a sarcastic laugh.

"I'm not!"

Jess, her face red as a beetroot, spoke up defiantly.

"I see! You're accustomed to talking through your hat, eh?" jeered Sadie, under a show of pleasantry.

"That's more than you could do—talk through your hat," apparently said Joey, who was perched in his cage on the rear platform, sunning himself.

Sadie glared at the parrot, never dreaming that Jess had been responsible.

Jess was feeling ashamed of herself now, and was "playing the game."

"Listen to me!" snapped Sadie, for a moment giving way to anger. "Uncle sent me along to see how you are getting on. He wants me to keep an eye on you in case you need helping—"

"And lose the fortune? Not likely," Claudette interrupted.

Sadie smiled strangely.

"Right-ho!" she nodded. "Selling your raffia stuff yet?"

"Not yet—only just making it. But we've got quite a lot ready for sale. Look!"

Claudette displayed a number of raffia mats and bags, and some leathern shopping bags.

"Quite clever of you all, I'm sure," Sadie said. "There's a shop at the other end of the town where they sell this sort of thing. They'd buy some from you. Why don't you go there?"

"Thanks, I will," nodded Claudette.

Sadie, who seemed to have recovered her good

humour now, supplied her with the address and then prepared to go.

"I'll look you up every now and again, just to see you're all right," she said.

She started up the engine and turned the bike out on to the road.

Jess went back to the steps and mounted to the platform.

There were tears in her eyes as she kissed Claudette.

"I—I'm sorry, dear," she exclaimed impulsively. "It—it was hateful of me to talk about—about things like I did. Forgive me."

A lump was in Claudette's throat.

She hadn't shown her feelings when Jess had rebelled, but had her young sister really gone to the pictures and thrown up the work, she would have been almost heartbroken.

For, of all things necessary, the most important was for them to pull together if they were to succeed in this difficult venture of theirs.

"That's all right, Jess," she said, in a voice that trembled a little. "Let's finish the jobs we're on, and then pop into the town and find that shop Sadie spoke about!"

An hour later they arrived at a large shop outside which was a stall full of raffia, basket and leather goods. But in the window, instead of goods, were four girls, busily engaged in making them.

At the door was a large, red-faced man who glared at Claudette and Jess.

"Hallo!" he jerked.

"Hallo!" smiled Claudette.

"Well, what do you want?" he asked.

"I came to see if you would care to buy some of our raffia and leather articles," Claudette returned.

His eyes goggled.

"What?" he shouted. "Me buy stuff from you? I like that!"

"I'd like it, too," Claudette told him, her eyes wandering to the girls in the window and her brain slowly realising the position.

"You impudent creature! So you're the rivals I've heard about? And you dare to come here and pull my leg about me buying from you Clear out!"

He pointed along the road as he spoke.

"Hallo! Selling your raffia stuff?"

Claudette swung round as the man disappeared into the shop, ignoring the grinning girls in the window. It was to see Sadie there at the kerb, seated on her motor-cycle.

Claudette saw an amused expression in her eyes.

"Or aren't you?" Sadie added.

"Did you know he was an actual maker and wouldn't be likely to buy from a rival?" asked Claudette pointedly.

"Oh, does he make his own? Oh, yes, I can see the girls at work. Dear, dear—that's really too bad. But it's funny, isn't it?"

Sadie was enjoying herself. She loved to laugh at the expense of others—it was great fun!

"Well, cheer up," she said. "Never make a fuss about trifles. We all have our setbacks."

Claudette forced a cheerful smile, but inwardly she was feeling far from easy in her mind. It was a terrible disappointment to her to find that this shop was actually the place where such goods were made.

She felt that it was high time they started to pay their way. She had spent nearly all their cash on stock-in-trade.

"Hallo, what's the matter?" she asked as Sadie

kicked at the starter of her cycle and nothing happened.

"Oh, the carburettor needs flooding," was the reply.

Claudette's smile deepened.

"I say, what's all that in the road?" she asked innocently, pointing to a large wet patch under the cycle.

Sadie looked down and then went white.

"Oh, my petrol tap was on and all my petrol's gone," she gasped. "Oh, dear!"

It had evidently been leaking for some time, for there was a trail of petrol along the road.

"Isn't that annoying!" Sadie stamped in her temper. "There isn't a garage for a long way. Whatever shall I do?"

"Oh, well, never mind—cheer up," Claudette advised her, repeating Sadie's words of a few seconds ago. "Never make a fuss about trifles. We all have our setbacks!"

Sadie only just managed to stifle an angry retort: Instead she forced a smile.

"I was only joking; you know that," she returned. "I say, be sports—help me to push the bike to the nearest garage."

Claudette was convinced that Sadie had played a joke on them by sending them to the shop, knowing that the proprietor would refuse; but it wasn't in her to bear malice.

"Come on, Jess," she said cheerily. "Let's give her a hand."

Half an hour later they parted company with Sadie, and walked back.

"I vote we try to sell some of the stuff at houses. Let's knock at this one and see," said Jess suddenly.

Claudette nodded eagerly.

They knocked at the door of a fairly large house and a kindly-looking woman answered.

"Dear me," she exclaimed, when Claudette told her they had made them all themselves. "What clever girls! Yes, I will buy that raffia mat and this little leather bag. How much are they?"

Claudette's heart sang for joy.

This was going to be easy! They would soon sell out, buy some more stock-in-trade, and carry on, swelling their income and increasing their scope.

With the money jingling in her pocket as they left the house, Claudette executed an impromptu dance on the pavement.

A dance that was cut short by a "Just a moment, miss!" in a deep, masculine voice.

She turned sharply to find a uniformed policeman standing there, looking at them sternly.

"Let me see your pedlar's licence, will you, please?" he asked in a very official tone.

Claudette's heart leapt.

What an idiot she had been!

It came back into her mind now that any



"I should like to see your pedlar's licence," the constable requested. Horror gripped Claudette. She had no licence, and so she would not be allowed to sell the articles upon which she and her sister depended for a livelihood.

person selling goods from door to door was compelled by law to have a licence.

And she did not possess one!

"Oh, I'm so sorry," she said humbly. "I'd forgotten all about having to possess a licence, officer. Give me another chance, will you? I'll take out licences at once."

"Even if I wished to give you another chance," he returned, nodding down the road, "I couldn't, because here comes the superintendent. I'm afraid you're for it this time, my girl."

He took out his notebook—and then something happened that threw an entirely different complexion on the situation.

Came a shouting and a rattle of hoofs.

Around the corner, some distance up the road, a runaway horse careered, drawing a swaying van behind him.

Young and spirited, he possessed a high turn of speed, and was level with the two girls and the policeman in a matter of seconds.

At the end of the road was the main highway, busy with all kinds of motor traffic.

That a terrible accident would occur when the runaway careered out into the main road was certain.

Claudette's mind was made up in a flash.

Dropping her load of raffia and leather goods, she sprang at the horse with precision and excellent judgment.

Claudette caught the reins and gave them a jerk.

Then she was hanging on, her legs dangling as she strove to rein in the runaway. Grimly, she clung to the reins, heedless of her own peril as horse and cart plunged on.

At last the runaway felt the sting of the bit in the tender corners of his mouth, and in a flash he was under control.

"Steady, old boy," Claudette called, easing him to a standstill. "That's the style. Whoa!"

She helped him up by the kerb, not five feet from the main road, where he stood, trembling and shivering.

A crowd commenced to form and the eyes of all were on her.

"Oh, Claudette, what a splendid thing you did," Jess gasped. "I—I thought you would be killed—he looked so terribly fierce!"

Claudette laughed.

The police pushed their way through the excited crowd, whilst the owner of the van could be seen running towards them down the road, looking mightily relieved.

The superintendent turned admiringly to Claudette.

"What's your name, young lady?" he asked.

"Does that matter, sir?" she asked, the corners of her lips twitching.

"It matters a lot," was the reply. "You've just performed a very gallant act. The owner of this horse ought to be very grateful to you."

"Oh, it was nothing—I mean, what I did. I'm used to horses and their ways," Claudette replied. "I'm not worrying about that. I'm worrying about—"

"Ahem!"

The policeman coughed suddenly and Claudette looked at him sharply.

Plainly the constable was warning her to say nothing, implying that he would remain silent.

"Well, you're worrying about what?" the superintendent asked.

"Well, things in general," Claudette said lamely. "You see, trade isn't very good."

"I shouldn't think it would be, in this town," he replied. "Where do you come from?"

"Oh, a long way away," Claudette replied, mentioning the place they had stayed in for so long before her father died.

"And is that your living? Selling those?"

"Yes, and making them, too."

"Well, when I tell you that this is a basket, raffia and leather goods town—that it's full of manufacturers, you'll understand there's not much chance for you. Er—pass along, please. Constable, clear the crowd away."

When this had been accomplished, the superintendent added:

"You're a plucky girl and deserve helping. Won't you tell me your name?"

"Oh, just Claudette," she smiled. "It doesn't really matter, does it?"

"Only this: At Summertown, twenty-eight miles away, there's a three-day fair on, and it's being supervised by a relative of mine."

"Yes, yes!" gasped Claudette.

"Well, if you can get there by noon to-morrow and claim your place—a stall it'll be—I'll undertake to telephone through and arrange it for you."

"Oh, how kind you are!" cried Claudette gratefully.

Misfortune had turned into wonderful opportunity!

The future looked bright for them, after all. Then her heart sank. Back into her memory came her uncle's stipulation—that they should succeed entirely through their own efforts.

How could she accept this offer of the kindly superintendent?

If she did her action would automatically disqualify her from inheriting the fortune that meant so much to them all.

She must refuse!

In crestfallen tones she explained the position to the official, whose lips took on a grim expression.

"Pretty tough proposition, isn't it?" he asked.

"Tough or not, sir, we've got to tackle it—and we're going to do so. Thanks ever so much for your offer," she added wistfully.

She and Jess turned away, taking their mats and leather goods with them.

"And that's that!" laughed Claudette.

Who would have believed that, despite her merry laugh, Claudette's heart was well-nigh breaking? Not for the world would Claudette allow Jess to realise how desperate she really felt.

"Come along," she said, taking Jess' arm. "Let's get to the fair as soon as we can. We can travel a good part of the journey to-night, and complete the rest in the morning. Heigh-ho, here's for the open road!"

Alas! They had not travelled more than six miles when a car, driven by a woman, rounded a bend in front of them on its wrong side.

Claudette, who was driving Chum, pulled hard on his off rein. At the same time the woman driving the car pulled over to her own side at a dangerous angle.

Unfortunately the lane was very narrow, and to her utter dismay, Claudette felt the caravan give a sudden sickening lurch as the wheels on one side sank deep into the ditch beside the road.

"My goodness!" Claudette panted. "We're ditched!"

The car, with which they had so nearly collided, sped on and the caravanners were left alone to contemplate the disaster that had befallen their home on wheels.

Crestfallen and filled with dismay, Claudette dismounted, to see at a glance that it was impossible for Chum to pull the van out, for nothing but a team of horses or a traction engine could possibly have succeeded.

This meant that they would not get to the fair in time to register their claim for a stall. Their efforts had been in vain.

Stay!

Claudette's keen eyes suddenly saw smoke rising above some trees a short distance down the road—which was a quiet thoroughfare.

"A traction-engine!" she shouted, darting forward. "Oh, Jess—if only we can get them to come and haul us out, we're saved!"

**C**LAUDETTE is not to be easily baffled; resolute and resourceful, she is determined to make a success of the daring venture on which she has staked her all. Make sure of reading next Tuesday's fine chapters of this enthralling new story.