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EVERY  
FRIDAY.

# GIRLS' CRYSTAL <sup>3<sup>d</sup></sup>

AND "THE SCHOOLGIRL"

Week  
Ending  
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1946.



## Their Helper IN THE SCARLET CLOAK

An Enthralling Story Of School Life And Mystery—By ENID BOYTEN

### A STRANGE MESSAGE

"JUST look at this, you two!" cried Kitty Benton, her dark eyes sparkling. "It came by this morning's post. My sister has been as good as her word, you see, and has sent us a design for our boat. What do you think of it?"

Kitty's two chums, Madge Rossiter and Nina Wallace, bent over the gaily painted design which Kitty held out to them. It showed a decorated boat with a graceful canopy at the stern, golden shields along the sides, and a royal standard fluttering at the bows.

"I say! It's super!" Madge exclaimed. "Smashing!" agreed Nina, tossing her fair curls excitedly. "It looks like one of those royal barges they used to have in Tudor times."

"That's just what it's meant to be," nodded Kitty. "My sister's idea was that we should represent Queen Elizabeth and two of her court ladies going up-river in a royal procession. If only we can carry out the idea properly, we ought to stand a chance of winning the prize. But, golly, we'll have to work!"

The three chums nodded enthusiastically, for they had all set their hearts on winning the silver cup for the best decorated boat at Ridingford Town Regatta.

Kitty had asked her elder sister, who was an artist, to send them a design for their boat; and now that it had arrived, they would be able to go ahead with the work of decoration.

"Thank goodness to-morrow is a half-holiday," declared Kitty. "That means we can go into Ridingford and buy the stuff we shall need, and—"

She broke off suddenly. Her pretty face crinkled into a smile as she caught sight of a scrap of paper on Madge's desk.

Plump Madge Rossiter was something of an artist, too, in her way. At least, she had a clever knack of drawing comical sketches of people. On her desk lay a caricature of a young lady with carefully permed hair, a pointed nose, and a very stern look in her eye.

"It's Delia Stanley to the life!" grinned Kitty. "You're a wizard at those sketches, Madge!"

"She's got that cold look in her eye, like she has when she's handing out impôts all round," Nina giggled. "Put it away, Madge. I can hardly bear the sight of it!"

They were interrupted by a rush of footsteps. Into the class-room hurried the other members of the Fourth, to get ready for the morning's lessons.

"Look out, everybody! Delia's on her way!" warned Mae Morris. "And she looks as if she is properly on the war-path this morning. Be ready for squalls and storms—with a few thunderbolts thrown in!"

These were certainly stirring days for the Fourth Form at St. Celia's—and not very happy ones in some ways.

Their regular Form-mistress, popular Miss Hume, was ill, much to their regret. And Miss Thwaites, the Head, had appointed her young secretary, Delia Stanley, to take the Form-mistress' place while she was away.

Last term Delia had been a prefect in the Sixth. Then she had passed a secretarial exam which had won her the post of Miss Thwaites' secretary. And now that she found herself in charge of the Fourth, she was proving a positive tyrant.

The whole Form suffered, but Kitty, Madge and Nina always seemed to come in for the worst of Delia's bad temper, somehow.

As Mae had warned, Delia seemed in a specially bad mood to-day. Even before she reached the mistress's desk, she turned and glared at Kitty.

"Kitty Benton! The top of your desk is in a disgracefully untidy state," she snapped acidly. "Sometimes I think you should be in the kindergarten instead of the Fourth. You will take an order mark for untidiness."

Kitty heaved a sigh. Her desk was quite as tidy as usual, but it was no good arguing with Delia.

"Still, we must try not to get too many punishments between now and Saturday," Kitty said to herself. "We shall need every minute of our spare time to decorate the boat."

The monitress was going round collecting the essays they had done as last night's prep, and piling them on the mistress's desk. The whole form sat in apprehension, wondering on whose head Delia's wrath would fall next.

For the moment Delia had turned her back on them and was writing on the blackboard. And suddenly Kitty heard a whisper of dismay from Madge, who was sitting next to her.

The plump girl was rather easily flustered, and she was certainly flustered now. Her face was the colour of a beetroot and her eyes were full of dismay.

"What's wrong?" breathed Kitty.

"Th-that caricature of Delia!" Madge whispered wildly. "It's vanished! It must have stuck to the bottom of my essay when I handed it in just now. I know it had a spot of gum on it. Oh, Kitty—it must be amongst that pile of papers on Delia's desk."

Kitty drew a breath of dismay. If Delia found that sketch, then indeed they could look out for trouble!

Other mistresses might have enjoyed the fun of a harmless caricature of themselves. But not so Delia. She would, as Kitty knew, be furious if she found Madge's sketch amongst the essays.

"Something had to be done quickly. But what?"

Already Delia had turned from the blackboard and was eyeing the pile of papers. Madge was too flustered to make any kind of move, and Nina, on the other side of her, seemed for the moment thunderstruck with dismay. It was up to Kitty, but—

"I will now go through these essays," Delia was saying in her most sarcastic tone. "I can only hope they will be better than your last ones, which were too childish for words."

Kitty's heart pounded. It was now or never, and on the impulse of the moment she jumped to her feet, pointing to the floor near Delia's desk.

"Oh, Miss Stanley, what was that?" she gasped. "I'm almost sure I saw something move down there. Was it a mouse?"

But even as Delia looked down at the floor, she spotted the piece of drawing paper jutting out from the neat pile of essays. Kitty's attempt to save Madge had failed, she realised, even as the secretary pounced on the drawing. The anger blazed out on Delia's thin face as she recognised the caricature of herself, then glared at Kitty.

"So you have nothing better to do than to insult your Form-mistress in this manner!" she said icily at last. "And you add to the insult by trying to scare me over a mouse!"

"Please, Miss Stanley, it was nothing to do with Kitty," Madge spoke up loyally. "I did the sketch, and I'm entirely to blame, though I only meant it as a joke."

Delia's icy glance passed from Kitty to Madge, and then on to Nina. As usual, she was singling out the three chums.

"And you, Nina—did you know of this wretched joke?" she demanded.

"I saw the sketch, Miss Stanley," Nina confessed. "But I thought it was just a—"

"That will do, Nina," Delia rasped. "It is quite clear to me that you three were planning to make me look ridiculous in front of the whole Form. You will find that such jokes do not pay. And if the truth were known, I dare say your desks are full of similar insulting drawings."

So saying, Delia Stanley strode to Kitty's desk and flung up the lid. As she did so, her gaze fell on the design for the regatta contest.

It seemed to Kitty that an odd look came into Delia's face as she saw the boat with its crimson canopy and golden shields. Her eyes narrowed and her lips tightened. Next moment she had picked up the design and tucked it under her arm.

"I shall confiscate this," she said acidly. "You know as well as I do, Kitty, that only school books are allowed in your desk."

"But, Miss Stanley, that's our design for the regatta competition," Kitty burst out. "We can't do without it. We—"

"You should have thought of that before you broke the rule," Delia replied icily, and Kitty fancied she saw an odd gleam of triumph in the secretary's eyes. "And for trying to make your Form-mistress look ridiculous, you three will do five hundred lines each, and work out twenty arithmetic problems, and bring them to me first thing Thursday morning."

The whole Form gasped. Never had such a punishment been given for what was, after all, only a harmless joke.

A flame of rebellion shone in Kitty's eyes. It was all so unjust that for the moment she felt like openly defying the tyrannical secretary.

"But it would only be playing Delia's game," she reflected, checking herself. "It would give her an excuse to punish us still more."

So Kitty sat down, restraining her feelings as best she could. But gradually she was realising what this latest act of tyranny meant.

The only possible way they could get the lines and problems done in time would be to give up to-morrow's half-holiday. And they had been relying on the half-holiday to purchase the materials they would need for the contest, and to begin the actual work of decorating the boat.

And the loss of the design was just as serious a blow. It meant they just couldn't carry on without it.

When lessons at last ended and Delia Stanley went off, a buzz of indignation rose up from the class.

"Whew! She has certainly got a down on you three," cried Mae Morris. "Fancy punishing you like that! It's simply not fair."

The words were echoed by other sympathisers, but one by one they drifted away, till the three friends were left alone in the class-room.

"Gosh! I'm most awfully sorry," Madge burst out, her plump face the picture of dismay. "It was my fault for drawing that silly sketch."

"Not a bit of it, Madge!" replied Kitty. "You can't help it if Delia is such a bully. Oh, if only we could think of a way to—"

She paused in surprise as three loud knocks resounded suddenly through the class-room.

"What was that?" Nina asked, startled. "It didn't come from the door, surely."

They listened, straining their ears. Then, once again, came the three mysterious knocks.

And suddenly Kitty realised where they came from. The school had once been an abbey, and it was full of low-arched doorways and winding little stairs. Apart from the door leading into the corridor, there was one of these low doorways in the class-room, behind the mistress's desk.

It was from this doorway, which was always kept bolted, that the knocking came.

Kitty, her wondering chums at her heels, flew to unbolt the door. She flung it open, gazing at the vestibule and winding stairway

beyond. Then she caught her breath, for it seemed to her that she glimpsed a dim figure vanishing up the stairway.

She saw something else, too. On the bottom step was propped a square of white paper, and swiftly Kitty picked it up. In an excited whisper she read the message written on it:

"To Kitty and her Chums.—Cheer up! You may still win that silver cup. I am your friend, and will help you to outwit Delia Stanley. Meet me in the crypt at seven this evening.—THE GIRL IN THE SCARLET CLOAK."

"Goodness!" Kitty breathed excitedly. "Who wrote this? What does it mean?"

Then, in a flash, she was bounding up the stairs. But at the top she came to a small landing with no outlet at all, except a narrow window.

The mysterious figure who had left that message seemed to have vanished through the solid stone!

### THE SECRET PACT



"HAVE you heard the latest example of Delia's bossiness?" asked Ena Parker, as the three chums arrived in the dining-hall for tea later on. "She has pinned a notice on the board saying that the crypt is out of bounds, as the stonework isn't safe. Did you ever hear of such a preposterous thing!"

Kitty and her friends exchanged a quick glance. This meant that their visit to the crypt that evening would be more dangerous than they had imagined.

"But we'll go, all the same," murmured Kitty. "It may be a joke, of course—but I can't help feeling that the Girl in the Scarlet Cloak, whoever she is, may be a secret ally, who will help us."

They made their way separately to the cloisters just before seven that evening, meeting at the narrow door that led down the worn stone steps to the crypt.

"Everything's O.K., I think," whispered Kitty. "I had to dodge that little sneak, Muriel, but we don't seem to have been spotted. Follow me!"

With fast-beating hearts they tiptoed down the stairs. At the bottom another door barred their way, and as they pushed it open a gleam of yellow light shone through.

In utter wonderment the three Fourth Formers paused on the threshold.

On a small table in the middle of the crypt two candles burned in tall, strangely shaped candlesticks. Behind them stood a girlish figure draped in a scarlet cloak, a black mask covering the upper part of her face.

Her lips curved in a smile of welcome at sight of them. She raised one scarlet-clothed arm, beckoning.

Breathlessly Kitty and her chums tiptoed forward.

"We got your message," Kitty burst out. "But—but who are you?"

The masked girl shook her head.

"My name I cannot reveal—yet," she replied in a low voice. "But I can tell you this. I am your friend, and Delia Stanley's enemy."

She paused. The candles flickered weirdly under the vaulted roof of the ancient crypt.

"I will tell you something else," the girl in the scarlet cloak went on, in that same low, vibrant tone. "It is vital that you should win that contest in the regatta—more vital than you can know. I intend to help you. You need the design that Delia took from you, and I will see that you get it back. As for these punishments—"

"You know about those, too?" Kitty broke in eagerly. "You see, it means we shall have to stay in to-morrow afternoon instead of—"

"Forget it!" their mystery friend interrupted her. "The lines and the problems will be done for you. Hurry forward with your plans for the regatta. And there is something else."

Her eyes gleamed at them from behind the disguising mask.

"I will help you, and in return you must help me," the unknown girl went on softly. "In Delia's office there is a cupboard, with solid oak doors, used as a bookcase. It is always kept locked, except when Delia is working there. I need something—most urgently—from that bookcase, but to obtain it I need the key, and, try as I will, I cannot discover where Delia hides it."

With slim fingers she extinguished one of the candles, so that the shadows in the crypt grew darker.

"Our time together grows short," she breathed. "Will you make a pact with me, girls? I will help you, as I have promised—and in return will you find that key and place it under the big stone at the entrance to the crypt?"

Kitty drew a deep breath. "Yes, we'll do it—if we can!" she murmured, and her chums nodded eager agreement.

Somehow they could not doubt the girl in the scarlet cloak. All three of them felt the note of sincerity in her voice. All three of them instinctively trusted her.

And then Nina, standing a little behind the other two, gave the alarm.

"Listen! I hear voices!" she whispered. They could all hear voices and hurrying footsteps in the cloisters above.

"I'm sure I saw three girls going down into the crypt, Miss Stanley," came a high-pitched voice.

"It's Muriel!" Kitty whispered. "She's put Delia on our track!"

"That means we're trapped! Madge gasped in dismay. "They are on the stairs already."

A low laugh came from the girl in the scarlet cloak. She picked up the candlesticks and moved to a shadowy corner of the crypt.

"Follow me!" she whispered. "Quickly!"

They flew to her side. She pressed part of the stonework, and at once a section of the wall swung back like a narrow door. Breathlessly they stepped through, and the stone wall closed behind them, a second or two before Delia and Muriel rushed into the crypt.

"There are secrets in St. Cella's that even Delia knows nothing about," murmured their unknown friend. "But you mustn't linger here, girls. As soon as Delia finds you are not in the crypt she will hurry to the classroom to see if you've taken your places for evening prep. This way!"

She led them up a short stairway, then opened a hidden door leading into the shrubbery near the cloisters.

"We shall meet again," she breathed. "Till then—farewell!"

Next moment the three chums found themselves in the shrubbery, where the shadows of evening were closing down.

"Gosh! Was it a dream?" panted Madge, gazing around her. "Or did we really see a girl in a scarlet cloak?"

"No, it wasn't a dream," grinned Kitty. "But we shall get a bad nightmare if Delia catches us late for prep. Come on, let's scam!"

Prep was held in an upstairs classroom, and with a breathless rush the three girls managed to reach their places a minute before Delia Stanley arrived.

Kitty noted the disappointed look that flashed in Delia's eyes as she saw that they were at their desks.

"She was hoping to catch us," Kitty thought. "But thanks to our secret friend, she's failed this time."

A score of puzzling questions flooded Kitty's brain.

Who was the girl in the scarlet cloak? Why

had she impressed on the Fourth Formers the vital importance of their winning that regatta contest? What was it she needed from the bookcase in the secretary's office? And, above all, why was she Delia's enemy?

For the present there was no answer to these baffling queries. Kitty bent over her books, trying to concentrate on her work.

All was silent in the class-room as the Fourth Formers pored over their prep. At her desk on the platform Delia sat reading, now and again lifting her gimlet eyes, ready to pounce on anyone who had stopped working.

Kitty's desk was by one of the tall windows. As evening was closing in, the curtains had been drawn, but there was a slight gap between them here.

Through that gap Kitty could see the quaa, and the high wall separating it from the Head's garden beyond.

Suddenly she saw something that made her pulses race excitedly.

In the gloom a shadowy figure had appeared on top of the wall. It was a figure in a long cloak that fluttered in the breeze. Daringly it made its way along that narrow parapet towards the line of windows in the wall at the end.

"The girl in the scarlet cloak!" Kitty thought, hardly able to check a cry of surprise. "She's making her way towards the window of Delia's office at the end, there."

Already, in fact, their mystery friend had reached the window; had opened it, and vanished over the sill. Then Kitty saw the light switched on in the office.

"She's searching for something, perhaps for our regatta design," Kitty told herself. "She is keeping her part of the pact already."

In her excitement Kitty had grasped the curtain, slightly drawing it to one side. She was startled to hear a rasping voice almost in her ear.

"Will you kindly stop star-gazing out of that window, Kitty, and get on with your prep? Pull those curtains together at once."

It was Delia. The lynx-eyed secretary had silently stepped forward and was standing beside Kitty's desk. And before the startled Fourth Former could close the gap in the curtains, Delia had grasped them herself.

As she did so, a cry of surprise broke from her. Kitty, with a sinking heart, realised that she had seen that lighted window beyond the quad.

"A light in my room!" There was a note of alarm in the secretary's voice. "I'm quite sure I switched out the light. And locked the door, too!"

Her face suddenly white, she turned away from Kitty's desk and fairly ran out of the room.

"She's going to her office," Kitty thought in dismay. "Oh, supposing she catches the girl in the scarlet cloak!"

Somehow that disaster must be averted. Somehow their unknown friend must be warned.

In a twinkling Kitty had torn a scrap of paper from her exercise book and scribbled three words: "Beware! Delia coming!" With one movement of her nimble fingers she wrapped the message round a small paper-weight she kept on her desk.

Next moment she had dived between the long curtains, pulling them behind her so that no one in the room could see what she was doing, and in the same instant she softly raised the lower window sash.

Could she toss her warning message through the open window of the secretary's office across the quad?

Kitty was not one of the most athletic girls in the Middle School for nothing. She had a good eye and a steady hand. Her heart throbbing excitedly, she took aim.

The little missile whizzed through the gloom. Kitty drew a swift sigh of relief as it

bounced on the sill of the lighted window and vanished into the office.

Next instant she saw that the light had been switched off.

"She's seen the message," Kitty told herself. "Yes, and she's coming out—she's making her escape before Delia can get there."

Kitty gave a gasp of overwhelming relief as she watched their unknown helper racing along the narrow parapet, quickly vanishing in the shadows beyond!

Only then did Kitty emerge from the curtains and resume her place, and almost as soon as she had done so Delia Stanley returned to the class-room. It was quite clear that she was in one of her cold rages.

"There has been an intruder in my office," she rasped out, and her gaze fixed on Kitty.

"I am quite sure I should have caught her, if she hadn't been warned in time. Luckily I picked up the message that warned her to get away—and it is written on a piece of Fourth Form exercise book paper."

Kitty's heart sank as Delia held up a scrap of crumpled paper. The girl in the scarlet cloak had read the message, but must have dropped it in making her swift getaway. And now—

Without warning, Delia suddenly pounced forward. She snatched up the exercise book which lay on Kitty's desk and flipped the pages. In a moment she had spotted the torn page, and found that the warning message fitted it.

"So it was you, Kitty." Her voice was shrill with anger. "You warned that—that sneaking intruder. Who was she? I demand to know!"

Never had the Head's young secretary looked so furious. Trembling inwardly, Kitty faced her boldly.

"I haven't the slightest idea who she was. Miss Stanley," she replied, quite truthfully.

Delia bit her lip. For a moment it looked as if she would grab Kitty's shoulders and try to shake the truth out of her. Then she checked herself.

"I warn you, Kitty, you are playing a dangerous game!" she burst out. "I have reason to believe that some ne'er-do-well is lurking in the school, and that you are in league with her—or him. I shall not rest till I have probed this matter to the bottom!"

With another baleful look at Kitty, she stalked to her desk, and in hushed silence the Form went on with their prep till the bell rang for supper.

The girl in the scarlet cloak made no more of her mysterious appearances that night. But at bed-time, as Kitty lay back on her pillow, a faint rustling sound came to her ears.

Kitty slipped her hand under the pillow and her fingers touched a folded paper. A whisper of delight broke from her as she opened it out.

It was the precious design that Delia had confiscated! Their secret friend, it seemed, had found a way to keep her word!

## BANNED FROM THE REGATTA



"It's taking a big risk," Nina said, a trifle doubtfully. "Are you sure it's worth it, Kitty? There will be a most frightful row if those impots aren't done by to-morrow morning."

"But they're going to be done!" cried Kitty. "The girl in the scarlet cloak promised she'd do them for us. Our job is to carry on with our preparations for the regatta contest, so let's forget everything else but our chance of winning the cup!"

As usual, Kitty's enthusiasm won the day. Nina and Madge were only too ready to fall

(Continued on page 337.)



## The CASE OF THE Frightened Girl

By PETER LANGLEY

### THE LETTER SHE FOUND

**J**UNE GAYNOR, niece and partner of Noel Raymond, the famous young detective, went to Glen Hall to investigate the mystery of a spectral figure known as the Green Rajah, who was supposed to haunt Temple Isle.

June discovered that Colonel Raikes, who had once owned Glen Hall and Temple Isle, had hidden a crystal goblet which was the key to the lost secret of the Purple Mountains. She also found out that the Green Rajah was after the goblet.

June believed that the Green Rajah was the trickster who, disguised as Roger Standish, a friend of her host, had called at Noel Raymond's London flat and pretended to invoke her help. With the impostor had been a frightened girl, and June thought that if she could only discover where this girl lived she would be able to track down the Green Rajah.

Also staying at Glen Hall was a likeable but mysterious boy named Jack Linton, who did not seem to want June to get on the track of the frightened girl, but despite his efforts June discovered that her name was Eva Baring, and that she was living in near-by Black Glen.

June set out for Black Glen, but in crossing a frozen river ran into danger, and was rescued by Jack. When he had gone she found a letter he had dropped, and to her surprise it was addressed to Eva Baring!

**J**UNE'S fingers quivered as she smoothed out the letter which Jack Linton had dropped. She had a feeling that its contents, for good or ill, would settle her doubts one way or the other.

Were her suspicions about that strange, likeable boy correct, or had she been doing him an injustice?

With all her heart June hoped that the latter alternative would prove to be true. She was eager to accept Jack's protestations that he was "not as bad as he was painted"; eager to believe that he hated the Green Rajah as much as she did; was fervently anxious to accept his offer of friendship.

But—  
She gave a sigh as she remembered all the incriminating bits of evidence which had accumulated against him. The very fact that

he had written to Eva Baring, the girl she believed to be the Green Rajah's sister, seemed to be additional proof of his cunning.

"Oh, how can I possibly believe him?" June asked herself, and anxiously, almost fearfully, she read what Jack had written.

The letter was not very long, and as she scanned the first few lines her heart gave a wild leap.

"Dear Eva,—I am doing my best, but I have a feeling that sooner or later June Gaynor is going to get on your track. In a way, I shan't be sorry if she does. Now that I know her better, I think it was a mistake not to take her into our confidence from the first. If she knew the truth, I'm positive she would not blame us, but would realise that we had every right to act as we did.

"I hope you will agree to my telling her; for I hate the idea of her thinking that I was playing the part of the Green Rajah who threatened her on Temple Isle last night. Besides, it seems foolish not to join forces. After all, we're all out to achieve the same result—to put an end to the Green Rajah's villainous career.—Yours, Jack."

As she came to the end of the letter, June drew in an excited breath, and her eyes sparkled with delight. It was wonderful to know that all her worrying suspicions had been ill-founded; wonderful to secure confirmation of the instinct which had told her that a boy so chivalrous and courageous as Jack could not possibly be a treacherous thief.

For there could be no mistaking the meaning of that note. It showed conclusively that Jack was not the Green Rajah; showed, too, that neither he nor Eva was that villain's confederate.

Her doubts gone on that score, at least, she returned the letter to the envelope, pocketed it, then set off for Glen Hall, a happy smile on her face. For suddenly a new thought had occurred to her. If Jack was as anxious as she was to bring the Green Rajah to book, then there was no reason why they should not co-operate and join forces.

The exciting possibility set her pulses tingling, and eager to see Jack and have a talk with him, she hurried down the icy, mountain road.

It was nearly tea-time when the house beside the lake came into view, and as she went striding through the grounds she gave a smile of satisfaction, for standing in the sun-porch was a solitary figure.

"Jack!" she cried, and broke into a run. "Half a minute, Jack, please! I've got something for you."

He turned away from the French windows through which he had been about to enter the house, and regarded her with a quizzical grin as she came running forward, rosy-cheeked and sparkling-eyed.

"I hope it's something pleasant," he said.

She smiled back, and dived her hand into her coat pocket.

"I think it is," she said, and held up the letter he had dropped. He gave a start at sight of it, and swiftly June explained how it had come into her possession. "I'm afraid I opened it and read it," she confessed. "You see, I just had to. As a detective I've got to investigate every clue, and I'm glad I did read it. Oh, Jack, I can't tell you how pleased I am to have had all my horrid suspicions disproved."

He looked at her quickly.

"You mean, about me being the Green Rajah?" he said.

She nodded, and gave a relieved sigh.

"I hated the idea all the time," she confessed. "So now you will confide in me, won't you?"

"I'd like to," he said sincerely. "I'm your friend, June, and I want to help you to clear up all this mystery."

"Then won't you do what you suggest in your letter—confide in me?" asked June. "I'd like to be friends, too, but first I must know exactly what it is you and Eva have been keeping from me."

He nodded.

"Of course. That's only natural, but I'll have to talk it over with Eva first. You see, it's not really my secret. Tell you what," he added as he noted June's anxious look, "I'll slip over to where she's living first thing in the morning and get her permission. Then, when all this beastly misunderstanding between us has been cleared up, we'll join forces."

"You mean, become partners in the hunt for the Green Rajah?" she asked, regarding him with sparkling eyes.

He grinned, and took her hand in his.

"Yes—partners," he said softly. "That'll be—"

He broke off, and they both turned as a voice halted them from the french windows:

"So there you are! Come along—It's long past tea-time. And we're all anxious to get the meal over so that we can put on our charades."

And there, in the doorway, stood Mildred Henley.

"Okay, we're just coming!" called Jack, and led the way indoors.

Happily June followed him, completely forgetting all her worries, and so enabling her, after tea, to throw herself heart and soul into the organisation of the charades.

Mr. Henley and several of the older guests joined in the fun, and the charades were a great success. Afterwards the radio was tuned in to a dance band, and still wearing their romantic, colourful costumes they had donned for the charades, everyone took to the dance floor.

Jack and Mildred had promised to put on a cabaret turn, and round about ten o'clock they retired to their own rooms to change for their act. They had been gone about ten minutes, and June was waltzing with Ted Brandish, when suddenly she stiffened and pulled her partner to a halt.

"What's that?" she asked.

Ted cocked his ear, then grinned. "Only the wireless," he said. "That set wants seeing to. It does nothing but crackle."

"No—I didn't mean that!" June exclaimed, her whole body tense. "I thought I heard—yes, there it is again!"

Now there could be no mistaking the sound which rose above the dance music and the light-hearted chatter.

It was a girl's terrified scream!

"It sounds like Mildred!" gasped June, and tugged agitatedly at Ted Brandish's sleeve. "Oh, goodness, what can have happened to her? Come on, let's investigate!"

Together they rushed for the door. Mr. Henley and all the others raced after them. Out into the hall and up the stairs June led the way. Those strangely muffled cries seemed to be coming from the far end of the landing, and June gave another gasp as she heard a series of frantic kicks come from a big cupboard which stood in a dark alcove.

"By the sound of it, she's locked in there!" she cried.

Racing across to the cupboard, she turned the key which was in the outside of the lock. As the door swung open, a slim, hysterical figure almost collapsed upon her, and Mr. Henley gave a horrified cry as he saw his daughter's pale, scared face.

"My dear!" he gasped, putting his arm around her and trying to comfort her. "There, there, now. No need to worry. You're safe enough now. But what happened? Who locked you in that cupboard?"

Mildred gave a convulsive shudder.

"The—The Green Rajah!" she announced, in a whisper.

"The Green Rajah!" came in a startled chorus from all around.

"Yes—I'd just changed and was going to Jack's room to see if he was ready, when that awful, glowing figure sprang on me. He clapped one hand over my mouth and brandished a dagger at me. He threatened all kinds of things unless I handed him over the key of your study, dad."

"The key of the study!" It was June's turn to gasp. "But that's where some of Colonel Raikes' curios are kept, isn't it?" she cried.

Mr. Henley nodded, but all his interest was concentrated on the still quivering girl in his arms.

"The villain!" he ejaculated. "He shall pay for this! But what happened next, my dear?"

"I—I gave him the key," confessed Mildred breathlessly. "I—I had to, dad," she rushed on, in a weak, apologetic voice. "He—"

"Yes, of course you had to, my dear," Mr. Henley hastened to soothe the trembling, white-faced Mildred.

"And what did he do then?" he asked, while the others crowded round, listening.

"He—he locked me in the cupboard—"

But June did not stay to hear any more. The Green Rajah's latest dastardly act could only mean one thing. He had broken into Glen Hall in order to search for the Crystal Goblet, which was the vital clue to the Lost Secret of the Purple Mountains.

Was it possible that the missing goblet was hidden in Mr. Henley's study?

"It must be," June told herself, and excitedly she beckoned to Ted Brandish, Billie Murdoch and all the others. "Come on! We may catch the scoundrel red-handed!" she cried.

Led by June, the young guests rushed down stairs, and the girl detective's heart leapt, as she saw that the study door was ajar and that there was a light on in the room.

Banging the door full open, she darted into the room, only to pull up dead at the sight of the turbaned, Eastern-clad figure that stood before a smashed showcase, a heavy chisel grasped in one hand. That strange-looking figure was not dressed in green, and he had no black beard. June gave a gasp as she recognised him.

"J-Jack!" she gulped. "J-Jack Linton!"

## THE CLUE OF THE PARCHMENT



BUT strangely enough, Jack Linton did not seem in the least perturbed.

Tossing the chisel up into the air and catching it again, he surveyed them with an amused grin, executing a mock bow.

"Behold, the Indian magician!" he said, then abruptly

became serious. "I had just finished dressing for my cabaret turn with Mildred," he explained, "when I heard sounds below which suggested someone was breaking in. I poked my head out of the jolly old window and was just in time to see the Green Rajah climbing through there!" He waved airily to the study window, which June now realised was wide open. "So, of course, I scooted down here as fast as I could, but I was too late." He made a rueful grimace. "His Highness had taken alarm and done a bunk."

June's face cleared as if by magic, and an embarrassed flush dyed her cheeks. She was angry with herself for doubting Jack even momentarily. To cover her confusion, she crossed to the smashed open showcase. It was empty, but on the floor, amid a pile of shattered glass, lay a broken, richly ornamented Indian vase.

Before she could bend to examine it, Mr. Henley and Mildred entered the room, and behind them came Mr. Standish, who, busy in his room writing letters, had been unaware of what was afoot, until his host had burst in and informed him.

He took one look around the study, then beckoned impatiently to the boys.

"Where is the scoundrel?" he barked. "Why don't you go in search of him? Come on. He can't have got far away!"

And with surprising agility, he climbed through the open window and dropped down to the white, frosty ground below. In an instant, Ted, Billie and all the other boys followed. Even the girls joined in the hunt, and in a moment only June, Mr. Henley and Mildred were left behind. The girl detective looked keenly across at the elderly solicitor.

"Has anything been stolen?" she asked.

Mr. Henley led his daughter across to a chair, gave her a comforting pat on the shoulder, then looked round anxiously. Finally, he gave a grim nod.

"There were five vases in that showcase," he declared, "and now there's only that broken one left."

June frowned. Why should the Green Rajah have stolen mere vases? Surely they could have no connection with the secret he was out to discover?

"I expect he was after all five," she commented, "but in his hurry to get away he must have dropped one of them."

She crossed to the window and examined it. Plainly it bore chisel marks. Obviously the fastening had been forced. She looked through at the ground, which was covered thickly with frost, but any hope of picking up the Green Rajah's footprints had gone. Mr. Standish and the other guests, in their haste to begin their search, had trampled on any clues there might have been there.

So June turned her attention to the study itself. It had a polished wood floor, and here and there she caught a glimpse of impressions left by sandalled feet.

"Why, that's funny!" she exclaimed, as, magnifying-glass in hand, she bent over them.

"What's funny?" asked Mildred, who, though she had recovered from her nerve-racking shock, still looked pale.

"Those footprints." June pointed to the sandal marks. "They were undoubtedly left by the Green Rajah, and yet they are quite dry."

"Well, what of it?" Mildred looked completely bewildered, and her father, crossing over to where June stood, also shook his head.

"What is surprising about them, my dear?" he asked.

June frowned.

"There's a heavy white frost outside," she declared. "Anyone walking over the ground would be bound to get his shoes covered with it, and I should have thought that he would be certain to make wet footprints in here. But these are perfectly dry," she insisted again. "There's not a trace of frost, or melted frost, anywhere."

"You mean—"

Inquiringly his eyes met hers. "That this looks like an inside job. The Green Rajah didn't break in from outside, but got in through the door."

Mr. Henley regarded her in horror. "An inside job!" he gasped. "You mean, that the thief was a member of my household! That this villainous Green Rajah actually lives in Glen Hall! No, no, my dear, I can't believe that. There must be some mistake. Besides, there's the window. Clearly that's been forced."

"That might have been done just to put us off the track," June pointed out, still staring in perplexity at the disturbing footprints.

"But Jack says he saw the Green Rajah climbing through the window!" objected Mildred.

June bit her lip. Jack's evidence seemed to destroy the startling theory her keen mind had been beginning to build up. She examined the marks again, shook her head in puzzlement, then moved across to where the broken vase lay. Idly she stooped and picked it up, her mind grappling with the new problem presented her by the re-appearance of the Green Rajah.

She turned the broken vase over in her hand, then abruptly stiffened, a look of excitement on her face.

"I'm not sure—but—yes, the bottom of this vase unscrews." And eagerly June tipped the vase upside down, and began to unscrew the base.

"Why, there's something hidden in here!" she exclaimed and, thrilling, she poked her fingers into the narrow, bottom end of the broken vase. "Yes—a piece of parchment! Suppose this is what the Green Rajah was after!" she cried, as she pulled out the crumpled, yellow piece of thick paper. "Suppose he stole the vases because he suspected that one of them held a clue to the missing Crystal Goblet! And suppose, in his hurry, he dropped the one important vase, and—"

Breaking off, she smoothed out the piece of parchment, and eagerly Mr. Henley and his daughter craned over her shoulder, anxious to survey this unexpected find. On the parchment was drawn an outline of what looked like an Indian temple, and inside was sketched a gracefully designed goblet, while underneath were several lines of what appeared to be some weird kind of shorthand.

June's eyes sparkled as she surveyed the drawing.

"This is a clue to the Crystal Goblet!" she ejaculated. "Oh, what a bit of luck, the Green Rajah dropping it! D'you see that?" She pointed to the outside design. "That's the temple on Temple Isle! Then the goblet must be hidden somewhere there! Oh, if only we could decode these hieroglyphics," she added, frowning down at the signs, "then we'd soon clear up all this mystery."

As excited as his daughter, Mr. Henley and Mildred peered at the parchment, and Mr. Henley gave a sudden cry as he detected three tiny initials down at the bottom, right-hand corner.

"A. J. R.!" he cried. "Yes, those are Colonel Raikes' initials, sure enough. It was he who drew that queer plan. By Jove, I believe you have hit upon it, June! Well done, my dear!" He patted her admiringly on the shoulder. "To-morrow," he declared, "we must organise a thorough search of the island."

## JACK BREAKS HIS PROMISE



YOU don't mind if I keep this clue, do you? I'd rather like to study it.

Inquiringly, June regarded the solicitor, as she made her request. He shook his head and smiled.

"Of course not, my dear, but take very great care of it. It would be disastrous if—"

He broke off and all three turned, as from outside they heard voices. Crossing to the window, June saw Mr. Roger Standish and the rest of the search-party tramping down the path. As he saw her, Mr. Standish glared and shook his head.

"The scoundrel's got clean away," he barked. "We couldn't find a trace of him."

That seemed to end the excitement for the evening, and one by one the guests drifted off to bed.

For over an hour June sat by the window of her room, puzzling over the dry footprints which suggested that the robbery had been an "inside job" and examining the parchment clue. She failed, however, to make anything of the queer hieroglyphics, and next morning, immediately after an early breakfast, she repaired to the library in order to study them again.

"They will tell me where the goblet's hidden—I'm sure they will," she murmured, frowning down at the paper. "If only—" she broke off as the door opened, and she smiled as she saw who it was who had entered the room. "Jack!" she exclaimed. "I thought I was the only early bird. There was practically no one but myself at breakfast."

"Oh, I've been up hours," he replied. "Now I am off to visit Eva. You can't imagine how keen I am to see her so that I can tell you everything!" he exclaimed, regarding her with bright, eager eyes. "It'll be simply whizzo to be your partner! We can—"

He stopped, then took a step forward, regarding curiously the crumpled piece of parchment on her knee. "I say, what's that?" he asked.

"A clue," said June.

"Not the one Mr. Henley was talking about!" exclaimed Jack. "The one which is the key to the hiding-place of the Crystal Goblet?" June nodded and he held out an eager hand.

"Let me look at it," he urged. "I might be able to help you solve it."

June passed over the piece of parchment and closely he regarded it, then suddenly he gave a cry.

"Why, this—this is Sanskrit!"

"Sanskrit?" echoed June.

"Yes—Indian writing. Old Raikes lived in India, you know, for donkey's years, so Sanskrit would be as easy as pie to him."

"And so it would be to Mr. Standish, too, I expect," cried June, delighted by Jack's news.

"He's lived in India, also, you know. Golly, I must get him to take a look at it."

Jack grinned.

"No need to do that," he said. "Let me have it for an hour or so. I'll soon get it translated for you."

"But who by?" asked June, in surprise.

"By Eva," was the unexpected reply. "What she doesn't know about India is nobody's business. May I take it with me?" he asked.

June hesitated. It wasn't that she didn't trust Jack. After what she had discovered, that was silly. All the same, she did not like the idea of the vital clue going out of her possession.

But it was horrid of her to be so cautious, she told herself, as she saw the hurt look in his eyes, and impulsively she thrust the parchment back into his hand.

"All right—take it," she said. "But you won't be away long, will you?" she asked. "You see, Mr. Henley will hold me responsible if anything should happen to that clue."

He laughed and took her hand in his own.

"I'll guard it more closely than I would the Crown Jewels," he promised. "And I'll be back in just over an hour. Tell you what"—pausing, he looked at his wrist-watch—"what d'you say to meeting me on Temple Isle at ten o'clock?"

"On Temple Isle?" she asked, in surprise.

He nodded.

"Yes, as there's a drawing of the temple on the parchment, it looks as if that jolly old goblet might be hidden there. So, when I've told you all about Eva and myself—when we've officially become partners, then we can hunt for it together. How's that?"

June's eyes sparkled. The idea appealed to her enormously.

"Splendid!" she cried.

He grinned and gave her hand a boisterous shake.

"O.K., then that's a date. Expect me in the museum at ten sharp," he cried. "And when I come I'll have heaps to tell you. Not only news which will clear up all the misunderstanding between us, but the translation of this jolly old document. Till then, fair damsel—cheerio!"

And fairly bubbling over with high spirits, he leapt out of the room. As the door closed behind him, June jumped up and felt like leaping herself. Never had she felt so happy. Everything was turning out better than she had dared hope.

Not only had she cheated the Green Rajah of the vital clue, but within an hour she would have in her possession the translation which would enable her to track down the missing Crystal Goblet. Even more thrilling, in a way, was the knowledge that when Jack returned he would be able to confide fully in her—would be able to clear up all the disturbing incidents which had formed a barrier to their friendship.

For half an hour June sat there, going over in her mind all that had happened ever since that eventful day when the frightened girl she now knew to be Eva Baring had called at Uncle Noel's flat. Then, as the clock struck half-past nine, she jumped up and made her way to the landing-stage.

Clambering into one of the boats which lay moored there, she cast free the painter and was soon rowing vigorously across the lake. On reaching Temple Isle, she beached the boat, then, knowing she had plenty of time, set out to explore the island thoroughly.

She shivered involuntarily as she came to the edge of the cliff where she had nearly met her death; and then felt a glow in her heart as she remembered the brave way in which Jack had saved her. Since then he had rescued her from another peril. She certainly had cause to be grateful to him, and she smiled happily as she realised that soon they would be real friends and partners.

Partners! The word brought a sparkle to her eyes. With Jack to help her, it should not take long to bring this strange case to a successful conclusion.

The chiming of the church clock on the mainland made her cut off her thoughts and sent her hurrying back towards the temple-like museum. It was ten o'clock—time for her appointment with Jack.

Eagerly she cast a look over the lake, but, to her disappointment, there was no sign of any boat.

"Never mind," she told herself. "He won't be long. I expect it's taken him longer than he expected to get back from Eva's."

As she waited for him to arrive, she found herself speculating as to Jack's relationship with the frightened girl. Was he actually her brother; was he really the Ronald Baring of whom Mr. Standish had spoken?

Despite herself, June felt a pang of dismay strike her heart.

If that was so, then Jack was a fugitive from justice—liable to arrest at any moment.

Oh, that couldn't be true! She would never

(Continued on page 332.)





# The Skating Girl's MYSTERY MASCOT

## MR. MAYNE'S DECISION

SHEILA MAYNE lived with her family at the little Canadian town of Juniper Bend.

The "Bluebirds," the skating club to which Sheila belonged, were anxious to do well in the forthcoming ice carnival and impress Lee Farrell, a film producer, who would be present.

Sheila possessed a mysterious totem which she believed might be a clue to a store of hidden gold, but Corinne Lefevre, her skating rival, and Karl Olsen, Corinne's uncle, were also out to discover the secret. Sheila had a helper, however, Red Eagle, a mysterious young Red Indian outlaw.

Two bailiff's men came to stay in the clubhouse until Sheila's father was able to pay a debt he owed.

Sheila raised some money by posing for posters to advertise the ice ballet, but when she returned home with the money she discovered she was too late. Her father had already arranged to sell the house, and the clubhouse, to Norman Wayne, a cousin they had never seen!

"YOU'RE going to sell off everything to Norman Wayne? Oh, daddy, and I thought I had arrived in time to stop all that!"

Sheila stared up anxiously at her father, unable to keep the dismay out of her face. John Mayne looked down at her fondly.

"It's the best thing I could do," he insisted. "For all of you. But the deal's not clinched yet. They're going to let me know in a few days, then I will travel to meet our mysterious cousin's agents. In any case, it won't interfere with you competing at the carnival. We'll be here till that's over."

Sheila nodded.

"Yes, daddy," she agreed. "That's right. In any case, aided by the money I've made by posing, we can pay that debt you owe and send the broker's men away from the clubhouse."

"They'll go first thing in the morning," her father declared. "And, by the way, I had a telephone inquiry from Juniper about a boarder. A Mr. Cooper. He's a newspaperman who's going to report the carnival, and he's willing to pay well for digs. He said he'd come to-morrow sometime."

"That's good," agreed Sheila, thinking of household finance. "Juniper's getting pretty well booked up. I knew we'd get someone. But—"

She hesitated, and he looked at her.

"But what?" he demanded.

"Oh, nothing!" said Sheila quickly. "I'm tired. I want to get to bed."

It had been on the tip of her tongue to tell her father about Red Eagle and about the tale he had told her of the secret treasure that might be hidden in Chinook.

If the ground were sold before she and Red Eagle could lay hands on the treasure, then Norman Wayne would become the owner of it as well.

She wished desperately that Red Eagle was near so that she could talk things over with him. Then she remembered the strange way he had looked at her when he had said that whatever happened now Chinook would stay in her father's keeping.

Red Eagle would be sure to come again soon.

The first thing Sheila did in the morning after breakfast was to phone up Larry Green to tell him the good news that the clubhouse would be free again.

"Great!" he called through the phone in reply. "That was swell of you, Sheila, making all those dollars yourself. We'll be all out to-night. The old Bluebirds will make things hum yet at the carnival. And, I say, a queer thing's happened. Dad got back that stolen picture yesterday. It was sent anonymously and was unharmed."

"You mean Red Eagle's ancestor's portrait?" cried Sheila.

Larry answered in the affirmative, and added that they had notified the police and given instructions for the search for the thief to be stopped.

Sheila sighed in relief. This meant that as far as the Greens were concerned there was no menace now to her mysterious friend. Later she went down with her father to pay off the broker's men.

The unwelcome guests in the shack grinned as the money was handed over. Sheila's fees, added to what the Bluebirds had subscribed, and along with a few more dollars from her father, cancelled the debt.

When the broker's men had gone Sheila spent a couple of hours tidying up. When she returned to the lodge she found a man chatting with her father.

"Sheila, our new boarder, Mr. Cooper!" said John Mayne.

The visitor turned round, and Sheila gave a gasp of astonished recognition. Smiling at her was the man with the beard and dark glasses she had met at the skating rink.

Suspicion filled her. What if this man was just a spy of Karl Olsen's, sent to take his place?

"We've met before, Miss Mayne, haven't we?" said Mr. Cooper. "I saw you at the ice rink last night. I think this will be an ideal spot for a rest before the arduous week I shall have reporting on the ice carnival. I hope I shan't put you to too much trouble."

Sheila forced herself to be nice in spite of her fears, and she had to admit that Mr. Cooper seemed to be a quiet, pleasant fellow.

When she had seen their new boarder settled in Sheila went to the nursing home to see Toddes. Juniper Bend was already getting ready for the carnival. Poles and bunting had been hung up. Christmas-trees decorated the doors of all the hotels and shops.

Toddes was making steady progress and had been allowed to get up.

"You'll be able to come home soon, dear," she told him before she left. "Then we're going to have a great big celebration."

On her way out of town Sheila met a sleighing party coming from the lake. It was Corinne Lieve and the rebel Bluebirds, now housed in the chalet Sheila's enemy had taken over. One or two recognised Sheila and waved, but Corinne and the rest gave her a stony stare.

From the way Corinne had advertised herself and her group in the town Sheila knew she was going to make a desperate effort to beat her and her friends.

Time was short now and practice meant everything. Larry, the Bluebirds president, made that clear when they were all gathered in the clubhouse that night.

"I've roped in one or two new members to fill up our ice ballet chorus," he stated. "Now, all of you, remember this is our great chance to put Juniper Bend and the Bluebirds on the map. I'd no choice but to agree to hand over part of the funds to Corinne and the others. We're crippled financially for the moment, but that won't matter as long as we keep enthusiastic and work hard."

There came a chorus of agreement, and, donning their skates, the Bluebirds started rehearsing. They had finished one of the ballet movements and were gathered together, waiting for Larry's signal to begin the next, when Sheila suddenly saw someone standing watching them.

It was Mr. Cooper, the new guest at Chinook Lodge. Standing on the bank, he clapped his hands.

"Very good, young folks!" he acclaimed. "I've seen the whole performance."

"Who's that?" asked Larry in a suspicious whisper. "We don't want anyone spying on us."

Sheila flushed. "It's our new boarder, Mr. Cooper," she explained. "He's a newspaperman who's going to report the carnival. I'll introduce you."

She did so, one by one, and Mr. Cooper greeted them genially.

"Aren't you going to ask me in for a cup of coffee," he asked. "Everybody will want to know about you young folks who are doing so much for the carnival. I'm a stranger and I would like some details. I had a very nice reception from your rivals down the lake, you know, the 'Emerald Belles.'"

Larry looked from Sheila to the others, then gripped Sheila's arm.

"A reporter, did you say?" he whispered. "Look, if he's been to Corinne & Co. it'll pay us to be extra nice to him. Shall we ask him in?"

Sheila hesitated. She was still very doubtful of Mr. Cooper, then she nodded. So the visitor was invited to supper, and afterwards, at

Larry's suggestion, was made an honorary member of the club.

The newspaperman seemed to enjoy himself, and when the party broke up he thanked them all for a most entertaining evening, then escorted Sheila back home.

"Those friends of yours are a fine, cheery bunch of young folks," he declared. "I'm glad to have met them."

In the days that followed Mr. Cooper often attended the club's activities. He was quite a proficient skater and also loved tobogganing. He became very popular with everyone, and even Sheila found herself losing her suspicions about him. Only one thing marred the skating girl's happiness, and that was the fact that she had neither seen nor heard from Red Eagle. Then, two days before the carnival, Jerry, her young brother, gave her a mysterious wink when he came in from school.

The first moment she could manage it Sheila got him alone.

"You've seen Red Eagle?" she asked excitedly.

He nodded. "Sure thing—and he asked me to give you a message, sis. He wants you to meet him tomorrow afternoon down at the lake point."

Sheila smiled in relief and rewarded Jerry with a bar of candy. As her young brother rushed off her father came in, looking very excited.

"I've got an appointment to-morrow, Sheila," he informed her. "I'll be leaving early in the afternoon."

"With Norman Wayne and his agent?" she asked.

Her father nodded, and said he was sorry her home duties and the fact it was the day before the carnival kept her from coming with him.

"Yes, I'd have liked to see Norman Wayne," said Sheila. "Don't let him drive too hard a bargain, daddy. I really hate giving up Chinook, and if you can try to save the clubhouse for the Bluebirds, or get him to agree to keep on renting it to us." Then she laughed. "Of course, if Lee Farrell makes me a film star," she added, with a chuckle. "I'll buy it and give it to them as a present!"

She laughed again, excited at the prospect of her forthcoming meeting with Red Eagle. A thrill went through her as she realised that he might now have a definite clue to the gold of Chinook. Soon all the mystery might be cleared up.

That night Sheila went down for the Bluebirds' last meeting before the carnival. Everything was now arranged. The skating tests would be held the first day. On the subsequent days there would be the ice ballet, hockey games, and a whole host of other exciting events. Judges were coming from all parts of the country, but Lee Farrell would not necessarily pick the best performers. He would be judging what he wanted for his picture.

"Oh, I'm sure he can't help liking our ice ballet," Sheila told herself.

After their last rehearsal the Bluebirds locked up their clubhouse and parted, all feeling cheerful and confident. One more day, and the great test for which they had worked and waited so long would begin.

Lee Farrell, to the annoyance of everyone in Juniper, had not arrived in town yet, but he was expected for certain on the opening day. Sheila could scarcely contain herself with excitement when she rose to look after the household.

This afternoon, when her father had gone, she would be meeting Red Eagle. But before that she would have everything ready packed for her stay in town and send it off with Jerry and his toboggan to the lake road, where he would be sure to get some passing sleigh to tow him in with it.

Mr. Cooper had been out early, and now he arrived, definitely in a hurry, demanding an early lunch.

"D'you mind, my dear?" he said to Sheila. "I've got to leave now instead of to-night. I'll go into town on skis, and send for my things. Just give me a snack lunch."

He raced upstairs, while Sheila prepared it, then came down dressed for the journey, ate hurriedly, and took his departure. The moment he had done so, Sheila cleared up, and was entering the kitchen when Jerry, looking very excited and mysterious, came into it by the back door.

"Sis, has that Mr. Cooper gone for good?" he asked.

"Yes. Why?" Sheila asked.

"He's a secret enemy," was the startling reply. "I've been keeping an eye on him. I climbed into a tree opposite his bed-room window, and I saw him putting on his beard! It's false, and he wears a wig, too!"

"What!" cried Sheila, in dismay.

"Yes, he's disguised," affirmed her brother. "Honest Injun. You can get Red Eagle to scalp me if I'm not telling the truth."

### DANGER FOR HER FATHER



THIS new development shocked Sheila. Anyone living in Chinook Lodge in disguise could only be some ally of Corinne's, on the look-out for clues to the hidden gold.

Now more than ever it was vital she should see Red Eagle, and the moment her father had taken his departure by sleigh, Sheila set off for the lake. She had a feeling that everything was approaching a crisis now. On arriving at the meeting-place she paced impatiently up and down. Then at last she saw an ice-yacht skimming in towards the point. Aboard it was Red Eagle. He brought the yacht skilfully in to his favourite berth and leaped ashore.

"Oh, Red Eagle, I've important news for you!" she gasped, and instantly blurted out Jerry's information.

"Your brother has been a good scout for us," said the young Redskin excitedly. "But whether the paleface is spy or not, Red Eagle has come to see someone more important—your father. The time has come to tell all."

"You want to see daddy?" exclaimed Sheila. "But he left by sleigh some time ago. He's keeping an appointment on the other side of the Grizzly Back, at a shack in Lone Wolf Valley. He's going to meet Norman Wayne and arrange about the sale of our property here. That's why I wanted to see you so much, to ask you—"

Red Eagle's face had gone suddenly pale.

"What's that you say?" he gasped. "Your father has gone to Lone Wolf Valley to meet Norman Wayne? Then we must get after him at once. He is in great danger. It is a trap, laid by our enemies. For Norman Wayne will not be there. Red Eagle knows it."

"A trap?" exclaimed Sheila, in horror and surprise.

"Yes," said Red Eagle grimly. "And we've got to stop it from closing in on your father, or everything will be lost! I have skis hidden near here. You must come with me. It will be dangerous. But our only quick way to Lone Wolf Valley is by taking a short cut over the Grizzly Back and ski-ing down the other side."

When he had got his skis, they took the trail, away up the steep slope past Chinook Lodge. It was hard, toiling work, and several times Sheila was forced to stop and take a rest.

"I'm holding you back, Red Eagle," she panted once. "Perhaps it would be best if you went on alone."

Red Eagle shook his head.

"Red Eagle will be happier if you are there," he said. "Besides, it is your father

we seek. He may not understand if you are not there to speak for me."

So they plugged on, and gradually arrived at the top of Grizzly Back. The moon was out, but even here going was difficult. There were patches of treacherous snow where a slip might send them over and start an avalanche in which they themselves might be buried.

Sheila left herself entirely in Red Eagle's hands.

He knew his way and would choose the quickest and shortest route to their destination. At length, after coasting down through a wood of pines and spruce, Red Eagle came to a stop and pointed below.

"Lone Wolf Valley," he declared. "It is down there we have to go."

As he spoke Sheila gasped and fell on her knees. She was almost all-in with exhaustion.

Immediately Red Eagle's anxiety to attain his objective was replaced by remorse for his forgetfulness.

"You are but a girl," he apologised. "Red Eagle forgot. Forgive him. You are tired. Rest, and I will find a quick and easy way down."

He set her down, made a cushion of snow against her back, and removed her skis, then his own.

"What are you going to do?" she asked, as the young Redskin lashed thick pieces of broken branch across the four skis, joining them together.

"I am making a toboggan," he laughed. "When I have finished we will lie on it, and push off. That will get both of us down swiftly and in safety."

When the improvised toboggan had been completed they lay down on it, and Red Eagle pushed off. Slowly at first, then faster and faster the toboggan went careering down the steep hill.

Sheila clung tightly to the young Redskin. Every moment she expected the toboggan to overturn, but skilfully he piloted it, and at last he brought it safely to a halt at the foot of the long slope. As he got to his feet he pointed.

"Look!" he cried. "The shack!"

### RED EAGLE'S DARING PLAN



SHEILA looked in the direction of his pointing finger, and saw a small building, half covered with snow, not five hundred yards away.

Close to it she made out what seemed to be the shape of a sleigh. Was it her father's?

"We must hurry. They are there. I see a light, and a sleigh!" panted Red Eagle, as he started stripping the ski-toboggan into pieces again and sorted out the skis. "Put these on."

Sheila quickly donned her skis, and soon they were cautiously approaching the shack.

"It's daddy's sleigh!" whispered Sheila, as they drew nearer.

On reaching the shack they crossed to the window and peered in.

"Look—daddy!" exclaimed Sheila. "And Karl Olsen and another man!"

Red Eagle nodded. Seated on a chair, to which his arms had been bound, was John Wayne. In front of him stood Karl Olsen, and to his right was another man, a stranger. Could this be Mr. Cooper, the man who had come to Chinook Lodge in disguise, and been made a member of the Bluebirds?

Sheila and Red Eagle could now see what lay on the table in front of John Wayne. Three objects. One was a replica of the mystery totem that Sheila still wore around her neck; the others were metal replicas of the heads of a wolf and a bear.

"All three totems at last," whispered Red

Eagle. "They are trying to get your father to translate the signs."

Olsen was talking in a threatening tone. The words were indistinguishable, but his actions proved what he was after. John Mayne, very dignified and angry, shook his head again and again.

"I tell you, I cannot translate these," he shouted at Olsen. "I don't understand the signs. What was the idea of trapping me here?"

Sheila, watching from the window with Red Eagle, felt a sudden wild desire to rush in to her helpless father.

But Red Eagle, seeming to read her thoughts, placed a firm, restraining hand upon her arm. "No, Sheila, it would do no good," he whispered. "They would catch you, too, then."

Sheila realised the truth of his words. "But, Red Eagle, what can we do? We must rescue daddy somehow."

Red Eagle gave a reassuring smile. "Do not worry, Sheila. Red Eagle will think of something. Now—hist!" he added, and turned again to the window.

Karl Olsen was looking at his accomplice, scowling ferociously.

"I believe he speaks the truth," he snapped. "He doesn't know the secret. But if we had Red Eagle here, he could read them. Then we could get our hands on the treasure of Chinook—the gold that Rupert Mayne hid there years ago."

"Not much chance of getting hold of Red Eagle," the other man snarled. "We've wasted our time. Now what are we going to do with Mayne? When he's missed they'll make a search for him, and he knows now what we're up to."

The pair started muttering, and Red Eagle turned to Sheila.

"The time has come for us to act," he whispered. "Now all the totems are there together. I can read them and find out the secret. I cannot miss this chance. I am going inside."

Sheila stared at him aghast. "But they'll capture you," she gasped.

Red Eagle nodded. "Yes," he smiled. "But they will not think I am accompanied. You hide in the sleigh, and do not move for at least five minutes. Then creep out and watch at the window." He leaned closer.

"First thing they will want when they get me is to translate the Indian signs for them. They are two against one, so they will not tie Red Eagle's hands. He will need them to examine the totems. That is where it will be easy. I shall take time. When you see me seated, with the totems in my hands, run to the sleigh, get in, crack the whip, shout, and start off the horse."

Sheila nodded.

"You mean, draw their attention?" she said. "Yes; drive off," said Red Eagle. "Leave the rest to me. If Red Eagle is successful he will outwit these wicked ones. You will halt a little distance away, and wait, ready to flee if Red Eagle fails. If he does not, he will light a stick at the stove and come out and wave it. Then you can come back!"

"I understand," murmured Sheila. "Are you sure you are not risking too much?" "It is the moment Red Eagle must risk all," he declared. "It is too great a chance to miss."

He started tiptoeing for the door. Sheila, climbing on to the sleigh, peeped from under the rugs, trembling with excitement. Red Eagle was about to beard their foes alone, unaided, relying only on his wits.

Would he be successful? Could he obtain the totems, and overpower the two rascals who had captured her father? Would the secret of Chinook at last be solved?

Don't miss the final instalment of this enthralling story in next Friday's **GIRLS' CRYSTAL**.

## THE CASE OF THE FRIGHTENED GIRL

(Continued from page 328.)

believe that a splendid boy like Jack had ever done anything of which he could be ashamed. Anyway, she would soon know the whole truth now.

Boom! Boom!  
The church clock, clanging out again, roused her from her thoughts.

"Half-past ten!" she exclaimed. "Goodness, what can have become of Jack?"

In an effort to smother her rising uneasiness, she entered the temple. She would while away the time by looking around; perhaps she might be lucky enough to find some clue which would lead her to the hidden Crystal Goblet.

She went from shelf to shelf, lifting up all the various curios there, examining each one carefully, but without result. Next she turned her attention to the grotesque wooden figures which stood against the walls. A sudden thought occurred to her, as she surveyed their garishly painted faces.

"Suppose one was hollow!" she exclaimed. "You could hide a man, let alone a goblet, in one of these idols!"

Fired with excitement, she went from figure to figure, tapping on them with her knuckles. But all of them seemed to be solid, until at last she came to a life-sized figure that stood on a square plinth. The figure itself seemed to be innocent of any cavity, but when she kicked the plinth it gave out a ringing, hollow sound.

"Perhaps there's a secret cupboard in there!" she exclaimed, and, dropping to one knee, surveyed it with keen eyes. "Yes, there's a crack!" she told herself excitedly. "I'm certain this panel opens!"

Eagerly she ran her fingers over the woodwork, but suddenly she stiffened. The church clock on the mainland was booming out again.

Eleven o'clock!  
It looked as if Jack was not going to keep his appointment with her, after all.

Pale and worried, June again turned her attention to the plinth, and as she pressed and probed, there came a sudden click, and the whole of the panel swung open like a door, revealing a black, square cavity.

Wonderingly, she thrust her hand into the cavity. It closed on a leather handle. She gave a pull and a small attache-case slid into sight. She gave a gasp as she saw it, for instantly she recognised it. This was the case which Jack had been so agitated about a couple of nights ago when she had accidentally knocked it off the seat of the rowing-boat. Yes, there were his initials painted on the lid.

But what could Jack's case be doing hidden in the base of the Indian idol?

Despite herself, she knew a terrible anxiety. This discovery, coupled with the boy's failure to keep his appointment, brought a sudden shiver down her spine. Try as she would, she could not prevent those old, disturbing suspicions crowding back to her mind.

Was it possible that, after all, her faith in Jack had been misplaced? Was it possible that all along he had tricked her?

She felt furious with herself for even thinking such a thing, and yet the horrible suspicion refused to be smothered, and agitatedly she snapped open the fastenings of the case and lifted the lid.

One look she gave inside, and then the blood drained from her face and a horrified groan escaped her lips. For the contents of that case seemed to answer all her uneasy questions—seemed to make clear why Jack had not kept his appointment on Temple Isle.

What can the case contain? Be sure not to miss next Friday's enthralling chapters of this mystery and detective serial in the **GIRLS' CRYSTAL**.

# The MERRYMAKERS AT COLLEGE



## SALLY'S COUSIN

"MIND my birthday cake, Johnny!" laughed Sally Warner gaily.

"We shan't demolish that till the party, Sally!" promised Don Weston, who was jubilantly helping Johnny Briggs carry the borrowed table with the enormous iced cake on it.

"There are lots more presents arrived for you, Sally—Pat's bringing them!" panted Fay Manners, her own arms loaded with borrowed crockery.

"Tell us where you want this table, Sally," puffed Johnny, breathlessly dodging the chairs Micky Rogers & Co. were humping.

It was Sally's birthday, and all J House were vying to make it, as Don said, the gayest and certainly the greatest occasion that had ever happened in Roxburgh Co-ed College.

True, their rivals of K House, and notably Nat Piggot, had enlivened the occasion with a few little jokes against Sally—but all in the kindest humour. On a day like this K were willing to admit their own liking for popular Sally. They had gladly lent the furniture and crocks which were now being crowded into J House community room.

"Are you sure we'll get everybody in, Don?" Sally asked with a laugh as a triumphant team came struggling in with a piano from the Merry-makers' clubhouse.

"We'll get them in somehow, Sally, if we have to use a shoehorn," grinned Don.

"You see now why we couldn't hold it in the clubhouse—much too small!" stressed Johnny, and exchanged a mysterious glance with Don.

Funny, mused Sally, but she'd noticed that mysterious look between them each time the clubhouse was mentioned. Before she could ask them about it, however, in came Pat Waters with her arms full of parcels and mail.

"All for you, Sally! Didn't I tell you your birthday falls under a lucky star?" exulted Pat, who was keenly superstitious.

"You're right, too, Pat!" chuckled Sally, and started on the thrilling task of opening this second windfall of presents.

A scrumptious box of candies—a beaded bag—a hair ornament in blue enamel—half a dozen hankies—gloves—more candies—and, joy, a pair of stockings guaranteed not to ladder! It was a wizard bunch of presents, that!

By DAPHNE GRAYSON

"Do help yourselves to these candies, everybody!" she cried.

Eagerly enough, the order was carried out as Sally began opening her mail. Uncle Jim's letter first, of course, with the Hollywood postmark. Her eyes shone. Dear old Uncle Jim, he'd sent her fifty dollars—fifty whole dollars! Why, the things she could buy! She hadn't got her breath back while she opened the next three or four letters.

They were all greetings. And what was this next one? It had been posted locally, but she didn't recognise the writing, though she had a very faint, distant recollection of having seen it before somewhere. Who—

And then her face became suddenly still as she read the letter in its shaky, boyish handwriting:

"Dear Cousin Sally.—You know very little of me, and not much that's good, I'm afraid. I have no right to expect your sympathy when I tell you I am in serious trouble. My reason for writing you is that I'm trying desperately to save this worry from our Uncle Jim, who has been such a real brick to us both. He mustn't know. It is the kind of worry that would break him up. We've got to keep it from him and put matters right somehow—and with your help I think we can. I must see you. Urgent! Shall be anxiously waiting for you in Dooley's Cafe, off Harbour Street. Tell no one, and please come as soon as you get this. Your cousin,

"HAROLD WARNER."

Sally's heart lurched. A shadow had stolen over her happiness. Anxiety was gnawing—not for her cousin, who was only a name to her and a poor name at that—but anxiety for Uncle Jim, so often worried by him in the past.

"You look very pensive all of a sudden, Sally," said Don.

"I don't wonder—just look at her wealth!" cried Fay.

"Golly! She's a millionaire!" gasped Johnny. The ten five-dollar notes—Uncle Jim's present—were still clutched in Sally's hand. Brightly she forced a laugh, brightly she made those the excuse for her preoccupied look.

"Can't believe my luck even yet! I'm still dazed! Dear old Uncle Jim!"

Not a word did she say about her sudden worrying news from Cousin Harold. It needed no injunction from him to make her hide her trouble from her chums—especially to-day, when the one thought of them all was to give her a happy birthday.

"Where are you off to now, Sally?" Johnny asked quickly, as she moved to the door.

"Just going to put these presents along with the others," Sally said lightly.

"We'll come with you!" both Johnny and Don said in one breath. And out they went with her, carrying her parcels for her.

Sally's presents were all in the clubhouse, spread out in gay display on the tennis-table. It had been the boys' idea. Why they should accompany her there now and take this mysterious interest in her visits to the clubhouse, Sally no longer pondered. Her mind was on a more anxious matter. But she hid it, laughingly, while Don and Johnny set out the new presents beside the others, giving pride of place to the fifty dollars.

"Going out, Sally?" Don asked, as Sally made a move back to the door.

Sally nodded.

"Yes; shan't be long. Mustn't be late for my party!" she said gaily.

"You'd better not!" they warned her, and leaving them standing on the steps of the clubhouse Sally waved cheerfully and went out through the college gates.

Her cheerfulness dropped then. Anxiety took full grip of her as she turned her steps towards the sea front and the cafe her cousin had named, near the harbour.

She knew little indeed about Cousin Harold—had only met him once when he was a small boy. His many scrapes and follies since then had always been hushed up—by big-hearted Uncle Jim. All she did know was that Uncle Jim had sent him eventually to sea, and now proudly believed that Harold had made good.

Could she help to save her uncle from this new worry connected with Harold? That was Sally's gnawing anxiety as she hurried through the quiet streets behind the harbour and came at last to Dooley's Cafe.

A boy was sitting restlessly at a table near the window, obviously watching for her. He jumped to his feet as she came in.

"I remember you, Sally! D'you remember me?" And with an eager though agitated smile he held out his hand, drawing her to a chair in the quiet window-corner he had chosen. "Thank you a lot for coming!"

"And you're Harold," Sally murmured, trying to return some sort of a smile. She remembered him vaguely, though it was only a shadowy likeness she recalled after so long. "I thought you were at sea now, working as a wireless operator?"

"Yes, I still am!" And he signed jerkily to the waiter to bring them coffees. "Uncle Jim got me the job, you know—if only I can keep it!"

Sally faced him, coming straight to the point.

"Tell me, Harold, what is this trouble you're in?"

"It happened ashore, when we put in here—no one on the boat knows," he said, lowering his voice and speaking rapidly. "You see, Sally, I—I borrowed a car—"

"Borrowed it?" she echoed him steadily.

"Well"—his eyes shifted—"took it without permission. Mad thing to do, I admit. And it was a Rex super-sports. It was standing outside the Harbour Hotel, and I had an urge to try it out, just for a little joy ride—you know how it is?" And his eyes pleaded without success for Sally's sympathetic understanding.

"Trouble was, Sally, I was unlucky. I—I crashed the car into a lamp standard!"

"And then?" asked Sally.

"The owner caught me—he'd followed in a taxi!"

"And now what?" she demanded.

"He's given me until seven o'clock this evening to pay for the damage. If not—" And Harold paused as the waiter brought the coffees.

Sally looked at the table. She couldn't pretend to feel sympathy for Cousin Harold. She was pondering just how Harold's escapade would get to Uncle Jim.

"If I don't pay up by seven," Harold went on, as the waiter withdrew, "the owner's going to the police and it'll mean p-prison for me. It's Uncle Jim I'm thinking of, not myself, Sally! The shock and disgrace would be too much for him!"

Sally's face went white as she realised the full implication of her cousin's words. He was right, too—such a shock might completely break up her uncle.

"How much," she jerked out—"how much is the car owner demanding?"

"Sixty dollars!" Harold said tensely.

Sixty dollars! Sally winced. She was thinking feverishly of her birthday money sent her to-day by Uncle Jim himself.

"I haven't got as much as sixty dollars—"

"But you could raise it for me, Sally, at the college?" he put in rapidly. "You've got lots of friends?"

"My friends are having nothing to do with this!" she retorted. "I'll do what I can—for Uncle Jim's sake—but I can't do it all. How much have you got?"

She watched him turning out his pockets, producing seven dollars and a few odd cents.

"Honest, Sally, this is all I've got," he was at pains to assure her; but that fact was obvious.

"Then we can just about manage it between us," she said slowly, and got up, leaving her coffee untouched. "I—I'll bring you the rest. I've got fifty dollars at college, and a bit over. Wait here!"

But he was already on his feet beside her.

"As if I would," he said, his voice husky now with gratitude. "You've been just—just wonderful, Sally. I'll come with you—I'll pay it all back as soon as ever I can. I know how you feel—only I feel just the same about dear old uncle. You must believe me!"

She wished he had stayed in the cafe. She just didn't want to talk as he walked at her side through the gathering dusk.

"I didn't want you to touch your savings," he kept saying. "I thought you could borrow the money so easily, Sally, from your friends!"

To borrow from one's friends seemed such an easy way out to Cousin Harold. Sally flinched inwardly. Her own chums must know nothing of this. Nothing must be allowed to mar the happy day they had planned for her.

She left him waiting in the road by the edge of the woods when they came within sight of the college gates.

"You stay here," she said crisply. "I'll get the money. I'll bring it to you in five minutes!"

She was resigned to the sacrifice of her birthday money. It was for the sake of Uncle Jim, who would have sacrificed anything for her. She would get it straight from the clubhouse and give it to her cousin, then forget all about it and on with the party.

Gay sounds of preparation from the Community Room brightened Sally a whole lot.

She ran across to the shrubbery, to the clubhouse where her presents were all laid out. She ran up the steps, and then two laughing figures burst out from the door, waylaying her. They were Johnny and Don.

"Just stopped you in time, Sally!" And in merry excitement Johnny locked the door and pocketed the key. "You can't come in here!"

"Not yet!" cried Don, and gaily they both took her arms and rushed her away. "We've got a big surprise for you, Sally, but we're saving it up till the party!"

## SALLY KEEPS SILENT



SALLY'S breathless laughter hid her dismay.

"Whoa! Steady on, boys, I've got to go in—"

"No admittance 'till six!" they insisted.

"But I've got to get something!"

"We'll get it for you!" laughed Don, still rushing her away. "What is it?"

She couldn't tell them that she wanted her money. The whole of her money—fifty dollars! They would know at once that something was amiss. They mustn't know. It would spoil their fun, spoil all the good time they were trying to give her. She must get the money herself somehow—secretly.

"It's just a trick to see our surprise. But you've got to wait!" laughed Johnny, echoed by Don, and both of them galloped her off into the cafeteria.

Half J house was there, gathering up trays of waffles, jellies, trifles, and ices for the party. Plump Mrs. Barwell, red from cooking but beaming all over her motherly face, came bustling to Sally to wish her many happy returns.

Sally thanked her, but she was battling with the problem of how she could give them all the slip. How could she nip away unsuspected into the clubhouse? Cousin Harold was waiting now for the money! But Johnny and Don were glued to her side.

Though outwardly completely happy, Sally was tense with worry for the next ten minutes. If only she could get that money, get rid of Cousin Harold and forget all about him—Then her thoughts were interrupted by Mr. Grittal's heavy tread in the doorway.

"Is Briggs here?" he asked in a pained voice. "Oh, there you are!" And he came striding in. "Briggs, Weston, I have a bone to pick with you. It concerns a remark—an offensive remark—that was made as I was passing the window of your clubhouse—"

"We can explain that, sir!" burst in Johnny. "If we can have a word with you alone, please, sir!" pleaded Don breathlessly. And both went dashing across to Mr. Grittal, guiding him out through the door to talk to him in secret, where Sally shouldn't hear.

It was just the chance Sally had been hankering for! She edged towards the back door, unnoticed by the rest of her House-mates with their trayloads, and out she sped into the dusk.

By roundabout ways she ran breathlessly towards the clubhouse. The door was locked, she knew. But there was always a way in through the window. No one must see her, however. It would look rather mean—as if she were spying out the boys' secret before they wanted her to.

On tiptoes she approached the side window. She couldn't have been more stealthy. But all her care was wasted. She was detected.

A shrill whistle rang out—from inside the clubhouse!

Sally darted back with a shout of dismay. She had chosen the wrong moment! Someone was there on guard!

That warning whistle had scarcely echoed away when she heard her name shouted across the campus.

"Sally!" It was Fay's voice calling eagerly in the dusk. "Anyone seen Sally?"

Keeping under cover of the shrubbery to conceal where she had been, Sally ran out to meet her near the path by the gates.

"Oh, here you are, Sally! Got another surprise for you!" Fay greeted her jubilantly. "Look who's come! Your cousin!"

With a chill, Sally saw a boy walking at Fay's side. It was what she had dreaded most—it was Harold!

"Sally's cousin, did you say?" And now Don came hurrying up heartily, followed by Johnny and half a dozen others. "Well, this is great!

A real birthday surprise! You've hardly seen each other before, have you? Introduce us, Sally!"

The chill deepened at Sally's heart. She saw Harold gazing at her in anxious questioning.

"I saw Harold outside, but I didn't think he'd have time to meet you all," she said lightly. "He's in a hurry!"

"But he'll stay for the party?" cried Don.

"Rather!" echoed Johnny.

"Well, thanks!" answered Harold, his eyes fixed feverishly on Sally. "I can stay nearly till seven."

Welcoming cheers came from the boys. Fay skipped into the Community Room to arrange an extra place for him at table beside Sally. Don and Johnny grabbed his arm, inviting him cordially along to the cafeteria for an iced kola.

"I'll bring Harold along in two jiffs, boys. You be ordering!" Sally bade them merrily.

But her merriment vanished as soon as she was left alone with Harold.

"Why did you come here?" she asked him.

"Well, I waited twenty minutes and you didn't bring the money," he said, his own face accusing. "Why did you let me down, Sally? Where is it?"

"Where I can't get at it—for the present," she flashed back. "I told you I'd bring it to you. The least you could do was to wait!"

"You don't want me to meet your friends?" he said resentfully.

"Frankly, no, Harold," she replied. "I don't want them to know your record, and I don't want you to have the chance to try to borrow money from them!"

"All right, all right!" And his eyes turned away. "Where is the money you promised, anyway? What's stopping you getting it?"

"It's locked up in our clubhouse!" Sally said curtly. "I'll get it as soon as I can—then you'll make an excuse and leave at once, understand? That's all I want to say. Now come, the boys are waiting for us!"

Her suspense eased a little when they joined Johnny and Don in the cafeteria. Harold made himself very good company. He soon had her chums listening intently to his yarns, laughing heartily at his jokes. But he was only playing a part—playing for time until he had got that money he so desperately needed. Sally would know no peace till she was rid of him.

"It's after five, boys—I'll be giving Fay a hand with the tables," she said lightly, and went out.

Breathlessly she made for the shrubbery near the dean's garden. There was another entrance there, a secret entrance by an underground tunnel into the Merrymakers' clubhouse. It was a thousand to one Johnny or Don had sealed it up to-day. But if they hadn't—

"Oh, Miss Warner?" It was the dean's voice that accosted her as she nearly bumped into him in the dark. "I understand I have to wish you a happy birthday."

"That's very kind of you, sir—thank you!" And Sally pulled up with a flustered laugh. "I'm surprised that you should know."

"My dear young lady, everyone in the college knows that it's your birthday," said the dean with grave amusement. "and from some aspects Mr. Grittal will be rather glad when it's over. However, he joins me in wanting to give you a small present. Will you please come to my study?"

It was very kind, but Sally cast longing glances towards the clubhouse as she accompanied the dean to his study. She guessed that the present would be something "improving." It was a book. Any book she cared to choose from the shelves. And Mr. Grittal was there to help her choose.

It was five past five when Sally entered the study. It was turned half-past when she escaped at last with a volume of Byron.

Now for the clubhouse! She made a straight sprint for it in the darkness, keeping well in the shade of the shrubbery.

Was it her fancy, or could she hear other

steps running just a little ahead of her? Muffled steps, as if someone else were making the same errand as herself!

That her heart gave a sudden jolt. She paused electrically. She saw a boy's figure dart up the steps of the clubhouse. It was her Cousin Harold!

He was trying to open the door. It was locked. He crept along the terrace. He was trying to open the window now. Sally felt a sick sense of alarm.

She must stop him. It would be appalling if anyone else saw him.

And in that instant—as Harold edged the window open—a voice shrilled out from inside the clubhouse:

"Go away, Benny Cook! Back to the ship—back to the Swanee!"

Harold leapt, panic-stricken, over the rail of the terrace. Before Sally could grasp her senses he was doubling back on his tracks like a frightened hare.

## THE BIG SURPRISE



"SIX O'CLOCK and all's ready!" Johnny was shouting eagerly as he burst into the festive Community Room. "Where's Sally? Hey, where is she? Hasn't she turned up yet?"

He blinked perplexedly in the dazzling lights. All the guests were here. All J House was waiting excitedly for the march to the clubhouse to launch the big surprise. Fay and Don had lit the last candles on Sally's birthday cake. Her Cousin Harold was hovering beside them. But everyone was buzzing with the same question, where was Sally?

"She's nowhere in the col., Johnny—we've searched everywhere!" came a bewildered chorus.

"Wh-what?" gasped Johnny. "B-but she couldn't have gone out—she wouldn't be missing for the party, for the big surprise!"

"Can't make out what's happened to her!" Don said uneasily.

"Gosh, she's working up a surprise for us, that's what Sally's doing, I bet!" Johnny cried in sudden inspiration. "Let's catch her out, everybody, before she catches us!"

There was a hilarious rush through the open door. Don made to follow the others more slowly, but a nervous hand clutched at his arm.

"I say, Weston, I—I don't want to worry you," Harold said agitatedly, "but I don't think Sally's larking. She's upset over something—she's trying to keep out of my way!"

"Upset? Sally?" Don's colour drained as he stared into Harold's face. "What do you mean? What have you done to her?"

"I haven't done anything!" Harold denied. "All I came for was something that belongs to me. Some money of mine that Sally's got!"

"Say that again!" Don invited in a dangerous tone. "Are you trying to tell me that Sally's got money of yours that she doesn't want to give you?"

"Just that!" And Harold faced him doggedly. "She owes me fifty dollars and a bit over!"

"I don't believe it!" Don said flatly.

"I wouldn't have told you if I could have helped it!" Harold said with an air of distress. "You may have noticed the change in Sally as soon as I came here and how she tried to get rid of me. Now she's bolted. She's missing for the party you were giving her—so I just had to tell you why!"

"I—I don't believe it," Don repeated. "I'll make you repeat every word of this in front of Sally!"

"She won't be back while I'm here!" And there was bitter conviction in Harold's voice, because he fully believed this was true. "She knows I wanted the money before seven. She made all kinds of excuses not to give it to me. Now she's cleared out of my way. I'm sorry she's ruined her party and everything." He

paused and his eyes narrowed calculatingly. "You're one of her friends, so if you would care to raise the amount—"

He broke off sharply as a cheerful step sounded in the doorway, and in came Sally, looking gayer than ever.

"Sorry I kept you waiting for the money, Harold," she said brightly. "We'll get it now, shall we?"

"Oh—er—oh, thanks, Sally!" And Harold could hardly speak for confusion. "Thought you'd gone out!"

"Then"—Don was staring at her faintly—"then it's true, Sally, what your cousin was telling me?"

"Hope I haven't held the party up, Don. Afraid I'm a bit late," Sally said as if she hadn't heard him. "Let's hurry along—we'll soon get this little matter settled up with Harold!"

She was hustling them both out in the direction of the clubhouse. Yet Harold, in spite of his eagerness for the money, seemed to hang back a little as they approached. It was as if there were something about the clubhouse that he didn't like.

"We don't want the others to know, Sally," he said hastily. "You get the cash, I'll wait somewhere."

"What about here?" suggested Sally, and she led him straight to a dark patch under the trees.

"This'll be all right," nodded Harold, and then, with a jump, he nearly collapsed on the ground.

A burly sea captain had stepped out from behind the trees.

"Here's the boy, skipper. Is his name Harold Warner?" Sally asked softly.

"No!" thundered the skipper, while Harold cowered back with his knees knocking. "He's a lazy young scamp who's not fit to black Harold Warner's boots, and his name's Benny Cook!"

"Th-then he's not your cousin, Sally!" gasped Don.

"I'll tell you who he is!" raged the skipper. "He's a sort of ship's clerk aboard my craft—the Swanee. He knew Harold Warner, who sailed as our radio operator last trip. Even looks a bit like him in an unflattering way. It was that sketchy likeness that gave him the idea of cheating Harold's cousin—trying to squeeze money out of the young lady. He knew it was her birthday. He heard what you boys said when you came aboard to buy—"

"Shush!" Sally joggled his elbow. "Supposing Har—I mean, Benny Cook, tells us the rest himself? He'll have just time before he's handed over to the police at seven—"

"No, don't do that! I'll own up!" burst in the bogus Harold frantically. "There w-wasn't any car accident. I—I only told you that to g-g-get the money out of you. I knew about your Uncle Jim and how k-kind he's been to Harold and you, and so I th-thought it would be easy. But I was wrong. And I didn't get the money. And all I ask for is—"

The captain seized him by the scruff of the collar.

"You'll get what you've asked for all right, my lad!" he vowed, and he looked over his shoulder at Sally as he hustled him away. "All my regrets, miss, and all my wishes for a happy birthday. This young beauty won't trouble you again. But you can take it from me that your cousin, the real one, is a grand lad with a great future in front of him!"

Sally was smiling, but her eyes were a little moist. Don noticed, as he gazed at her in a kind of daze.

"Sally, I—I just can't figure it out yet," he said huskily. "But you were worried to-day—must have been terribly worried. And you didn't give us one little hint about it!"

"It's all right now, Don!" she whispered happily.

(Please turn to the back page.)





# Their Helper

IN THE

# SCARLET CLOAK



(Continued from page 324.)

in with her plans, and after lunch next day they cycled off to Ridingsford to purchase the decorating materials, leaving Kitty behind to carry out her scheme for securing that vital key.

"Wonder why Delia's so keen on hiding the key of that bookcase?" Kitty had asked herself. "After all, it isn't her property. It belongs to the school."

Every half-holiday, as Kitty knew, Delia shut herself in her office, presumably to get on with her secretarial work. Probably she would use the bookcase, and the key.

So the only way to discover its hiding-place was to keep observation on Delia, and Kitty had already thought of a way to do this.

The windows of the big upstairs class-room, looking as they did over the quad towards the office, also showed a large mirror hung on the office wall.

Armed with a pair of opera glasses, Kitty installed herself behind the window curtains of the empty class-room directly after lunch. By peering through the glasses she got a clear view of the mirror, which reflected almost the whole of the office.

She had a long, anxious wait. Delia had come into the office directly after lunch and had settled down at the table, apparently poring over some books.

It was not till Kitty had been keeping watch for over an hour that the secretary made a move.

Kitty stiffened as the secretary jumped up and walked to the mantelpiece. Here she turned the clock round and removed the back, and from it she took—a key!

But it wasn't the key of the clock. Trembling with excitement, Kitty saw Delia walk over to the bookcase and unlock it, putting away the volume she had been studying so closely.

"At last!" Kitty breathed in relief. "I've found the hiding-place, but—can I get hold of the key?"

Again she wondered why Delia should take such trouble to hide that key. And what was it that the girl in the scarlet cloak wanted so urgently from the bookcase? Something that was linked, so it seemed, in some mysterious way with the regatta contest.

"I can't puzzle it out," Kitty confessed to herself. "I only know that we're going to back up our secret chum in every way we can."

She had already planned her next move. On half-holidays tea was served in the mistresses' Common-room at four o'clock. The room was only across the corridor from Delia's office, and there was every likelihood that she would step across for a cup of tea without locking her office door.

Kitty concealed herself in an alcove in the corridor, waiting breathlessly.

The tea-bell rang. A few moments later, as Kitty had expected, Delia stepped across the corridor and vanished into the room opposite.

With one swift glance to make sure the coast was clear, Kitty darted into the office, and in

a few moments had taken the key from its hiding-place in the clock.

Joyfully she sped away to the cloisters, where she placed the key under the big stone at the crypt entrance, with a brief note saying where she had found it, so that their unknown friend could return it to its hiding-place when she had borrowed what she needed from the bookcase.

"So far, so good!" Kitty laughed excitedly. "Now to see how Madge and Nina have been getting along."

She found her two chums in the school boathouse. They had lost no time in making their purchases, and were already beginning to decorate the four-oared gig that was to be turned into a replica of Good Queen Bess' royal barge.

"Everything is hunky-dory, girls," Kitty told them. "A certain object has been safely tucked beneath a certain stone. And now we've jolly well got to work like billy-o!"

The three Fourth Formers certainly put their backs into their task. They missed their tea, in their anxiety to push on with the work of decorating the boat.

It couldn't be finished in one day, of course; but they had made fine progress by seven o'clock, when it was time to start back for school if they were not to be late for prep.

And now at last, after the afternoon's excitement, a mood of uneasiness fell upon them.

Not a single line of their impots had been done. True to their pact with the girl in the scarlet cloak, they had ignored the punishments so as to press on with their preparations for Saturday's regatta.

And to-morrow morning, at nine o'clock, Delia would demand those lines and arithmetic problems.

"Suppose that mystery girl lets us down!" Nina exclaimed. "What then?"

"She won't," cried Kitty stoutly. "You'll see."

As the hours passed, however, even Kitty became a trifle doubtful and worried. Night came and went, and there was no sign of their mystery helper. In the morning there was still no message.

It was just as if the girl in the scarlet cloak, having got what she wanted, had vanished completely from the scene.

The bell rang for morning lessons, and Kitty's face was grim as she rejoined her chums at the class-room door.

"Nothing doing," she murmured. "So we can look out for squalls!"

"Squalls! You mean we can look out for a jolly old earthquake!" exclaimed Madge, her plump face dismayed. "We've been in some tight corners in our time, but this is one I'd rather miss!"

There was no help for it, however. They had to sit down at their desks with the others, waiting for the storm to burst. Perhaps Kitty felt worst of all, for it was she who had pinned such faith to the girl in the scarlet cloak.

And then Delia stalked in, glaring round the class in her usual fault-finding way.

"Kitty, Madge and Nina," she snapped. "I gave you some impositions to be handed in this morning. Will you give them to me at once, please."

There was a dead silence. For the life of them, none of the chums could speak, and a frown gathered on Delia's thin face. Before she could say anything further, however, there came a knock on the door.

For one wild instant Kitty thought it might be the girl in the scarlet cloak, making a last-minute dramatic appearance to save them.

But she saw it was one of the school maids, with rather a smudgy face, wearing an ill-fitting overall and holding a large broom.

"Please, miss, can I put this back in the class-room cupboard?" the girl asked Delia in a hoarse tone.

In each class-room there was a large cupboard containing brooms and cleaning materials, and Delia nodded impatiently.

"Yes, but don't interrupt a class again in this way," she snapped, glaring at the maid. "Hurry up!"

The girl shuffled between the rows of desks, passing close to Kitty, Madge and Nina, who sat with thumping hearts. This interruption had only given them a moment's respite. Already the maid was shuffling out again, having replaced the broom.

"Now, you three girls," Delia rasped, as the door closed behind the maid. "Hand me those impositions at once."

"Certainly, Miss Stanley," Kitty replied calmly. "I have them here."

So saying, Kitty rose and walked to the mistress' desk, handing her a neat pile of papers.

Madge and Nina watched, utterly dumbfounded—unable to respond to the merry wink which Kitty gave them as she returned to her place. Madge rubbed her eyes, convinced once again that she was dreaming.

It was not till mid-morning break that they fully understood what had happened. No sooner were they out of the class-room than Nina and Madge fairly flew at Kitty.

"Are you a conjurer?" panted Madge. "Where did those papers come from—or did we just dream them? Were they really the impots?"

"I should jolly well say they were," grinned Kitty. "It was the maid, Madge, you old goose. She wasn't a real maid at all. She was our mystery friend in disguise, and she slipped me the papers as she passed my desk."

The audacity of it! Madge and Nina could only gape in silent wonderment.

"She must have been just too late to hand us the impots before class," Kitty went on, her dark eyes sparkling. "So she carried out that daring plan to outwit Delia—and it came off. Gosh, she's a friend worth having!"

Their spirits rose. Now that those impots were out of the way, they could go right ahead with their plans for the regatta—their big effort to win the cup.

And then suddenly, out of the blue, came a blow that destroyed all their hopes.

They had just finished their mid-morning cups of cocoa when they received a summons to go to Delia Stanley's office.

"I hope she hasn't spotted that those impots were done by somebody else," Kitty murmured as they went.

It was far worse than that, however. Reaching the office, they found Miss Thwaites there, and the Head's scholarly face was graver than they had ever seen it. And beside her stood Delia, her cold blue eyes filled with malice.

Kitty noted, too, that the oak bookcase was wide open.

"You three girls," Miss Thwaites began, her voice stern. "I wish to inform you that something most serious has happened."

She paused for a moment and the chums' hearts sank. Then Miss Thwaites pointed to the bookcase

"In that cupboard was a set of volumes dealing with the history of St. Celia's," she went on. "It was a rare first edition by a famous author, and it was worth at least fifty pounds. Last night those valuable books were stolen by someone who evidently had the key to the bookcase."

A gasp broke from the three chums as the full meaning of this dawned on their minds.

It was, of course, the girl in the scarlet cloak who had raided the bookcase in the night. She had told them she urgently needed to borrow something from the case, but they had never dreamed it would be a set of volumes worth fifty pounds!

"Miss Stanley tells me," the Head went on sternly, "that her office was raided once before and that you warned the intruder, Kitty, and prevented her from being caught."

"And I've proof of it!" Delia shrielled, her eyes blazing with spiteful malice. "Here is the warning note, Miss Thwaites, torn from Kitty's exercise book. I am convinced that these three girls are in league with the thief—that they've been helping her, shielding her!"

"That's not true," flamed Kitty. "We don't know who the intruder was, but—but she wasn't a thief."

"Wasn't a thief? And yet she has taken fifty pounds' worth of books!" Delia laughed in scorn. "Are you crazy, Kitty? Do you expect us to believe that?"

"I am inclined to believe that you three girls have been the dupes of a clever trickster," Miss Thwaites said sternly. "You may not have known she was planning a robbery, but by your folly you have certainly helped her. I must take a very grave view of your actions."

There was a brief silence, while Delia flashed a look of spiteful triumph at the chums.

"You will all three be gated until further notice," the headmistress declared. "You will not leave the school premises until this matter has been most thoroughly investigated."

"But, Miss Thwaites, there's the town regatta!" Kitty burst out. "We're decorating a boat for the contest, and—"

"You will, of course, take no part in the regatta," Miss Thwaites told her sternly. "That will do, Kitty. If I need to question any of you again, I will send for you. You may go."

Conscious of Delia's spiteful glances, they went out, feeling as if the world was coming to an end.

Their hopes, which had seemed so rosy a short while ago, had crumbled into ruins. They were banned from the regatta, and had been accused by the Head of being the dupes of a thief.

## THE SILVER CUP



The rest of that day was perhaps the most miserable Kitty and her chums had spent at St. Celia's. The news of the missing books had spread around the school, and they were conscious of suspicious glances thrown in their direction from all sides.

They were glad when bedtime came, but even when she was lying down in her cubicle, sleep was a long time coming to Kitty. She must have dozed at last, however, for she was awakened suddenly by a light touch on her shoulder.

The bright moonlight flooded her cubicle, and by its light Kitty's wondering eyes fell on a familiar figure in flowing scarlet cloak, a black mask hiding her face.

The girl in the scarlet cloak had come back! And as she saw her there, Kitty's heart knew a throbbing relief.

Their secret ally had not deserted them,

after all. Perhaps she had come to explain the meaning of her mysterious actions—to make everything clear.

"Dress quickly, Kitty—and follow me!"

The words came from the unknown girl in an urgent whisper, and in a twinkling Kitty was out of bed and had pulled on some clothes. Putting her finger to her lips, the cloaked girl beckoned her to follow.

Down through the silent school they went to the moonlit cloisters. Here Kitty's masked companion switched on a torch, and by its light touched a knob of stone in the ancient wall, causing the stone to swing back, revealing a hidden stairway.

Again she beckoned, and Kitty, her heart throbbing with excitement, followed her.

They descended a winding stair, passed along what seemed to be an underground tunnel. And suddenly the torchlight lit up a scene that brought a cry of amazement from Kitty.

The passage had opened out into a long cave, through which ran a stream. And moored to the bank was—

"Our boat! Our decorated boat!" gasped Kitty.

A smile flashed on her companion's face.

"I brought it here myself," murmured the unknown girl. "And though you've been gated, Kitty, you can still carry on with your decorating. You can come down here by way of the secret passage without passing the school gates."

"Yes, but—but we've been banned from taking part in the regatta altogether!" Kitty objected, though new hope was leaping into her heart.

The masked girl seized her hand.

"Kitty! I want you to trust me," she said in an urgent whisper. "I haven't failed you yet, have I? I want you to carry on, just as if nothing had happened. You and your chums have got to win that cup, for only by doing so can a cunning plan be defeated and a villain unmasked. Promise me, Kitty!"

And again Kitty was convinced, in spite of everything; never could she doubt the sincerity and honesty of this masked girl who pleaded with her.

"O.K., we'll back you up," Kitty promised. "I know I can speak for Madge and Nina, too. We'll carry on."

Her brain was whirling with excitement as she made her way back to the dormitory, leaving her secret friend in the shadows of the cloisters. On her way she had to pass the door of Delia's office, and was surprised to hear the secretary's voice.

Late as it was, Delia was speaking to someone on the telephone. And Kitty could not avoid hearing a few words:

"Everything's going as we planned, Felix—Yes, they're definitely out of the regatta. You will win the cup, and then we can—"

The voice sank lower, and Kitty heard no more. But her thoughts were busy as she tipped to to her cubicle.

So Delia had a special interest in the regatta contest! Was that one of the reasons why she had put obstacles in the way of Kitty and her chums, and confiscated their design? Who was Felix, and why was Delia so keen on him winning the cup?

Kitty's lips set determinedly as she climbed into bed once more.

"Delia thinks she has won the battle," she murmured. "But she's reckoning without the girl in the scarlet cloak. And she won't let us down—I just know it!"

THE day of the town regatta dawned fine and clear. The girls of St. Cella's thronged out to join the crowds on the towpaths, to watch the races and other contests.

"Gosh! I'm really sorry for Kitty & Co.!" Ena Parker said. "They're gated, and they

can't even watch the regatta, let alone take part in it. And they had such a ripping design for a decorated boat."

"Well, it's their own fault," Muriel Nokes sniffed. "If they hadn't helped that mysterious thief who's been lurking around the school—"

"Oh, rubbish!" Ena cried. "None of us really believes that Kitty would help a thief."

"Anyway, I can tell you who's going to win the decorated boat contest," Muriel said, tossing her head. "It will be Delia's brother, Felix, who has entered a really wizard effort. You'll see! Here comes the procession of decorated boats now."

Necks were eagerly craned as the vividly colourful array passed slowly down-river towards the judge's stand.

"There's Delia's brother!" Muriel exclaimed. "You see, he has turned his boat into a Venetian gondola, and he's the gondolier. Jolly good, isn't it!"

Muriel began to clap loudly as the gondola passed, looking round to see if Delia was noticing her.

But the rest of the Fourth Formers were gazing towards the end of the procession.

"I say! Look at that last boat!" Mae Morris cried. "Surely we've seen something like it before!"

The last boat of all was certainly causing ripples of applause to break out from the crowd as it passed by. It was a beautiful replica of a royal barge in Elizabethan days, and under the silken canopy at its stern sat a girl in auburn wig and Tudor costume, plainly representing the great queen herself. Two other girls in ruffs and farthingales plied the oars. And in the bows sat a striking figure in a crimson cloak, holding aloft the royal standard, which fluttered bravely in the breeze.

All four occupants of the boat were masked, but as the Fourth Formers stared at them, horrified whispers were heard on every side.

"It's Kitty and Madge and Nina!" somebody gasped. "You can recognise them, even though they're wearing masks. And that boat is exactly like the design they were working on."

"They've defied the Head's ban!" whispered Mae. "Have they gone crazy? After being gated and forbidden to enter the regatta, they're competing right under the Head's nose. They'll get expelled!"

"But who is the fourth figure in the crimson cloak?" somebody else asked.

No one knew. The Fourth Formers gazed in mingled excitement and horror at the scene, hardly daring to think what the outcome might be.

It was plain to all that only two boats stood a chance of winning the cup. One was the Venetian gondola entered by Delia's brother. The other was the Elizabethan barge—and the cheers of the crowd quickly proved that the latter was favourite with most of them.

"They'll never be allowed to take the prize," shrilled Muriel. "Look! Delia has recognised them, and so has the Head. Golly! I wouldn't be in their shoes for anything!"

They could all see Delia, her face twisted with anger, talking quickly to the headmistress, pointing to the decorated boat in which the four girls sat. Miss Thwaites, too, was looking angrier than they had ever seen her. With Delia beside her, she began to press closer towards the judge's platform.

The Mayor of Ridgingford was judge, and already he had made his decision. He was smilingly beckoning to Queen Elizabeth and her three companions, holding in his hands the silver cup.

"All will agree, I'm sure, that you deserve the prize for a most artistic effort," he beamed. "This cup, which I am about to present to you, is a most interesting relic of ancient

Eldingford Abbey, and I am sure you will treasure it—"

"Stop! Don't give them that cup! They're not entitled to it!"

It was the voice of Delia Stanley that rang out, hoarse with anger. Not waiting for Miss Thwaites to act, the secretary flung herself forward. With trembling fingers she tore the mask from the face of the girl who represented Queen Elizabeth.

"Kitty Benton!" she burst out, her voice shrill. "I was sure of it. This girl was forbidden to enter the regatta by her headmistress, your worship, and she and her companions have no right to the prize."

But then a startling thing happened. It was the girl in the crimson cloak who had taken the cup from the hands of the mayor.

She held it aloft, her fingers pressing the embossed silver at its base. And suddenly the base fell away, disclosing a cavity from which the unknown girl took a small, folded parchment.

"It's here!" she cried in ringing tones. "Here is the clue to the old abbey treasure which rightfully belongs to St. Celia's."

At the same instant she tore aside her mask. "It's—it's Pamela Gray!" Miss Thwaites exclaimed in utter amazement, while Delia shrank back quickly as if in fear.

Pamela Gray had been a prefect at school last term, but had left under a cloud.

"Yes, it's me, Miss Thwaites," Pamela said calmly. "I came back in disguise, because that was the only way I could enter the school. And with the help of three loyal chums in the Fourth I have unmasked a plot to rob St. Celia's."

Briefly Pamela told her story, while they listened in wonder.

Pamela, too, had entered for the secretarial exam last term, but had been accused of cheating and been disqualified. A letter she had found in Delia's office, during her secret stay at the school, proved that it was Delia who had falsely accused her.

"Delia wanted the job herself because she was on the track of the abbey treasure," Pamela went on. "She knew that a certain code message was hidden in a set of volumes kept locked away in the office, and she wanted the secretary's job because it would give her a chance to decipher the code. And she found, through her researches, that a key to the code was hidden in the old silver cup which was to be given as a prize in the regatta."

There and then Pamela produced letters which proved that Delia and her brother had plotted to win the cup, so they could decipher the code completely, and make away with the precious abbey relics which were really the property of St. Celia's.

The daring work of the girl in the scarlet cloak, and her Fourth Form chums had, at the last moment, foiled the plot.

Delia Stanley did not stay to hear the whole of Pamela's disclosures. She and her brother slipped furtively away, and were never seen again at St. Celia's.

Kitty and her chums, of course, were forgiven for disobeying the Head. In fact, when the treasure had been unearthed, later on, they were publicly thanked for their clever work.

"And you're going to be a prefect again, Pam!" Kitty laughed gaily, when it was all over. "There'll be no need for you to hide away in secret passages, or wear a mask and scarlet cloak. All the same, we'll never forget those thrilling days when you were our mystery friend!"

THE END.

THE CAFE OF STRANGE HAPPENINGS—that is the title of next Friday's double-length story.

## THE MERRYMAKERS AT COLLEGE

(Continued from page 336.)

"But—but how did you put it right? How did you come to bowl out that rascal?"

"He was sneaking round the clubhouse, Don, after my money," Sally said carefully, "and I heard someone call him Benny Cook and tell him to go back aboard the Swanee!"

"Heard someone!" Don gave a start. "Gee, Sally, then you know our secret?"

Sally hugged his arm quickly. "I went straight down to the harbour, Don, to the Swanee, so I couldn't help but know the secret, and what it was you'd bought from the crew," she whispered gently. "Don't tell Johnny I know. Not till after my birthday. Don't tell anybody. It was such a lovely, beautiful surprise, and I'm not going to spoil it for them all. I'm still going to pretend it's a surprise. Quick—they're calling me now!"

"Sally!" voices were snouting everywhere, led by Johnny. "Say, where is Sally?"

"Coming, Johnny!" cried Sally, darting out from the trees.

There was a boisterous rush, and in a flash she was swooped off her feet and J House were carrying her shoulder-high towards the locked door of the Merry-makers Club.

"We know you're rolling in money and birthday presents, Sally," cried Johnny, "but never in your wildest dreams would you guess the birthday present that we now have waiting for you within these mysterious portals!"

Amidst gay excitement he thrust the key into the lock. With an eloquent flourish he threw open the door.

"Happy birthday, Sally! Happy birthday!" shrilled a piercing voice.

There on the table, surrounded by the array of presents, stood a huge green cage, and inside it a lively, cheeky-eyed parrot.

"Oh!", Sally rushed to him in joy. Her surprise was pretended, but her delight was the purest delight. "Oh, he's lovely, he's adorable!"

"He's taken to you, Sally. He's telling you his name's Abdul!" grinned Johnny.

"Abdul's the name. Abdul's the name!" chirped the parrot, breaking into a merry jig.

"It's just what I've always longed for—a parrot!" Sally said, in rapture, and gazed up with glowing eyes. "Thanks a million, Johnny and Don and everybody! He's a glorious present and he'll be such glorious fun! He's coming along with me now to the party, aren't you, Abdul?"

"Now we're off—now we're off! Happy birthday, Sally!" gleed Abdul, jiggling wildly.

There was a shake in Sally's laugh as she carried him out in his cage. What a pet, what a pal he had proved to be already! He had saved her from being robbed of her fifty dollars by the scamp Benny!

"D'you like him, Sally?" Johnny asked a little shyly.

"Like him? I love him, Johnny!" breathed Sally.

It was just as they were approaching the gaily lit Community Room, scene of the party, that Abdul spotted Mr. Grittal walking with dignified tread to his study.

"Get your hair cut!" he squawked.

"Oh, really!" And Mr. Grittal paused in pained despair. "That is the second time—"

"He didn't mean you, sir—truly!" gasped Sally. And stifling her mirth, she fled with Abdul into the Community Room, where Sally had the happiest birthday party ever.

(End of this week's story.)

Sally Warner and her cheeky chums will appear in another delightful complete story next Friday in the GIRLS' CRYSTAL.

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