

GIRLS' CRYSTAL ^{3^d}

AND "THE SCHOOLGIRL"

Week
Ending
March 9th,
1946.



JEAN'S THRILLING WINTER SPORTS HOLIDAY

Jean Wayland And Her Clever Alsatian, Kim, Return In Another Grand Story Of
Canadian Adventure—By ENID BOYTEN

THE GIRL WHO WAS AFRAID

"GOSH! What a dandy surprise!" exclaimed Jean Wayland. "But who could have sent it? Or is it just a wonderful dream?"

The morning's mail had certainly brought a happy surprise for brown-haired Jean, of Rainbow Ranch. For the twentieth time she scanned the mysterious letter that had brought that excited sparkle to her eyes.

"Dear Jean Wayland," it ran.—"A room has been reserved for you at Mountain Falls Chalet for a week beginning to-morrow. Please come and enjoy the winter sports fun free of charge. And bring your dog; he'll be welcome, too.

"YOUR UNKNOWN FRIEND."

Mountain Falls Chalet! The name conjured up a thrilling picture in Jean's mind.

The chalet was about thirty miles away, in the foothills of the Rockies. It was a luxury winter sports centre where wealthy Canadian folk came to enjoy the fun of tobogganing, ski-ing, and skating.

But never had she dreamed of going to this expensive resort herself as a guest. And now had come this mysterious invitation.

Perhaps the most mysterious part was the postscript to the letter. Jean read it again with puzzled eyes:

"You will give your unknown friend great pleasure if you will wear the enclosed brooch at the chalet," it said. "And please let your handsome dog wear this new collar."

Once more Jean gazed at the objects enclosed with that surprising letter.

One was an hotel reservation form made out in her own name. And then there was a dainty

brooch, with a curiously carved jade beetle set in it. And, lastly, a new dog collar with three of those same jade beetles set in its silver-plating.

Jean became aware of an excited whimper beside her. Kim, her big Alsatian, was standing there, ears pricked up, red tongue lolling out, tail waving to and fro.

Kim didn't know what it was all about, but he had sensed that something thrilling was in the air. With a joyous bark, he reared up, placing his forepaws on Jean's shoulders.

"Yes, you're in this, too, old fellow!" Jean laughed, giving him a hug. "I guess our mystery friend knew I wouldn't go anywhere without you. And he's sent you a present as well."

Excitedly she turned to greet her father as he came into the ranch living-room.

"Just look at this, daddy!" she cried. "What do you make of it? Who could have sent it? Maybe—Gosh, maybe someone is hoaxing me and it's just a jape!"

Her father shook his head as he examined the letter.

"It seems genuine enough," he commented. "I'm wondering if it's your Uncle Ben, Jean. You know how he likes planning surprises for people."

"If it's Uncle Ben, he really shouldn't have done it," Jean said warmly. "Because I'm sure a week at Mountain Falls costs more than he can afford."

"Anyway, here it is," chuckled Mr. Wayland. "And it's my guess you'll collect a few silver cups for winter sports while you're at the chalet, my dear. Maybe you'll find who sent the invitation when you get there."

"Then it's O.K. for me to go?" cried Jean. "Sure you can manage at the ranch without me and Kim for a week, daddy?"

"Sure! We'll miss you, but we'll manage," he laughed. "Go and enjoy yourself, girlie, and—"

He stopped short, and both turned in surprise as a low, rumbling growl came from Kim.

The big Alsatian's attention was riveted on the new collar, which Jean in her excitement had let fall on a chair. Then he cautiously raised a forepaw and touched one of the beetles, growling more loudly than ever. Jean laughed merrily.

"Kim doesn't like beetles, daddy!" she chuckled. "In fact he'd rather face a mad grizzly any day than a beetle. I guess he's wishing our mystery friend had decorated his collar with something else!"

Yet when she picked up the collar and examined the jade beetles more closely Jean felt an odd pang of uneasiness, which she couldn't explain. There was certainly something weird about those carved insects. Perhaps it was due to the tiny golden eyes that seemed to peer out watchfully from the green jade.

Why, she wondered was their unknown friend so insistent that she and Kim should wear the brooch and collar ornamented with these eerie jade beetles?

"Oh, well! Why worry?" She shrugged. "I've got something more exciting to do."

There was plenty to do in preparation for her week in Mountain Falls. Her single party frock of dainty white taffeta would be just the thing for the evening dances at the chalet. Then her skating boots needed attention, and she had to get a pot of ski-wax from the store at Pine Bend, and make a dozen other preparations.

The hours flew past. Almost before she knew it she and Kim had boarded the local train at Pine Bend and she was waving a cheery goodbye to her father.

"We're off, Kim, old fellow!" she smiled. "Come and sit on the seat beside me and look at the scenery. This is going to be the grandest winter holiday of our lives!"

An hour's trip brought them to Silver Lake, a little township in the foothills. And from there a short run by horse-drawn sleigh and they had reached their destination.

Jean caught her breath as the gables of the chalet came into view, surrounded by spruce and pine, and with the snowy peaks of the Rockies forming a glorious background. Faintly she heard the shouts and laughter of boys and girls on a toboggan run near by.

And suddenly she found herself wondering: Suppose that mysterious invitation was a joke after all, and they weren't expecting her here?

But she need not have worried. A smiling receptionist assured her that all was in order and conducted her and Kim to a pleasant room overlooking the mountain slopes. Lunch, she was informed, would be in half an hour, so she had just time to get ready for it.

"Kim, we're in clover!" Jean chuckled. "But we still don't know who our unknown friend is. Maybe we'll find out before long."

A few minutes later there was a tap at the door, and a pretty, fair-haired girl stepped into the room.

She was, Jean felt, one of the most attractive-looking girls she had ever seen. And somehow her face seemed familiar; Jean felt sure she had seen her visitor before, somewhere or other.

"Sorry to butt in on you so soon," smiled the girl, "but we're organising a ski race this afternoon, and I wondered if you'd care to compete. I'm Carolyn Kent and they've made me junior sports organiser for the week."

Carolyn Kent! Now Jean knew where she had seen that friendly, smiling face before.

Carolyn was the daughter of a Canadian millionaire who had died some time ago, and Jean had often seen her picture in the papers.

"Sure! I'd love to compete," Jean dimpled. "That's grand!" Carolyn laughed. "You've got the looks of a ski wizard, Jean, so maybe

you'll walk off with that silver cup. And, gee, what a dandy dog! I wish I—"

She broke off abruptly as she turned to gaze at Kim, and Jean stared at the swift change which came over her face.

The sparkling colour faded from Carolyn's cheeks; her blue eyes held a look of unmistakable terror and dismay. She stood as if rooted to the spot, her mouth half open, her breath coming quickly.

She turned back to Jean, and her eyes widened, their expression of fear deepening. She threw up a hand as if to ward off some unseen peril.

"No! Please—please—!" she whispered, backing towards the door. Next moment she had turned and gone rushing out of the room.

"Well, of all the strangest things!" Jean gasped. "What on earth was she so afraid of?"

And she had seemed so friendly at first. Jean had felt an instinctive liking for her.

"It was when she looked at you first of all, Kim, that she seemed to change," Jean murmured. "Golly! I've never seen anyone look so scared! And you were just getting ready to give her a friendly paw-shake!"

She shook her head bewilderedly, then turned to her pet.

"Oh, come on, Kim! Let's go down and meet the others."

And with Kim beside her she ran downstairs to join the jolly crowd of boys and girls in the dining-hall. She was introduced to half a dozen of them, and was soon chattering gaily away.

Kim, of course, came in for a great deal of admiration.

"Say, that's the handsomest dog I ever saw!" exclaimed Sadie Miller. "And what a quaint collar, with those cute little carved beetles!"

"Just like the jade-and-gold beetle on your brooch, Jean!" smiled another girl.

Jean laughed and nodded, glancing around her at the crowded dining-hall. Was her unknown friend amongst that gaily chattering throng? If so, he—or she—gave no sign.

"But where's Carolyn?" cried Sadie as she tucked into fried chicken. "She's chief organiser of the ski race this afternoon and we can't do without her. Les, you're her cousin and you ought to know. Where is she?"

Leslie Roper, dark and good-looking, was sitting opposite Jean. He smiled easily at Sadie's question.

"Oh, Carolyn's O.K.," he drawled. "But they've put the ski race forward by an hour because the weather looks like turning bad. So Carolyn thought she'd have lunch quietly in her room and rest before the great event. But she's feeling fine."

Jean glanced quickly across at the boy. Was that the real reason why Carolyn had stayed away from the gay lunch-time throng? She didn't look the type of girl who would want lunch alone in her room when so many exciting events were afoot.

Or—was it because she was afraid? Again doubts crowded into Jean's mind. Again she asked herself the puzzling question: Why had Carolyn become so suddenly afraid? Why had she turned and fled from the room as if Jean and Kim were her mortal enemies?

"Maybe she mistook Kim and me for another girl and another dog," reasoned Jean as she poured maple-syrup sauce on a delicious pudding. "She can't possibly have any reason for being afraid of us, for she has never even seen us before. I'll go and see her after dinner—clear the matter up," she decided.

Jean was a straightforward girl who hated mysteries. If there was any trouble, then the sooner it was cleared up the better.

After lunch there was half an hour to get ready for the great race. Jean made her way to the lobby and inquired the number of Carolyn's room from the clerk.

A few moments later Jean, with Kim beside her, was outside the fair girl's door. Before she

could make her presence known, however, a voice reached her ears.

She felt sure it was Leslie Roper's.

"No good going to the police, Carolyn," she heard him say. "They can't help much in a case of this sort. The best thing for you would be to disappear—just fade quietly away from Mountain Falls."

"Disappear? Oh, if only I could!"

That was Carolyn's voice. And it was not the voice of a girl who was "feeling fine," as Leslie had declared at lunch. It was a voice haunted by fear.

Jean was no eavesdropper, but she was so struck by that note of terror in Carolyn's voice that for the life of her she could not move or make her presence known.

"I was afraid something like this might happen," Leslie went on. "And I've got it all fixed up for you, Carolyn. You want to disappear just when they'd least expect it. During the ski race we'll—"

His voice trailed away and Jean heard no more. But she had heard enough to make her ten times more uneasy.

Not only was Carolyn scared, she was so frightened that she was planning to disappear from Mountain Falls—to run away from all the fun and excitement of the winter sports holiday.

And Jean could not get rid of the feeling that, in some inexplicable way, she herself was responsible for this. She and Kim! But how? What did it all mean?

She would find out. Decisively she raised her hand and tapped smartly on the door, then swung it open.

JEAN MAKES AN ENEMY



A STARTLED cry broke from Carolyn at sight of Jean and her dog on the threshold. The fair girl's face was still pale; her eyes still held that look of terror. She shrank back behind her boy cousin, who took a step forward.

"O.K., Carolyn, I will deal with this!" he said quickly.

"Slip down the fire-escape and join the other girls. Leave it to me."

"No, wait, please—wait!" Jean burst out. "Let me explain—"

But she had no time to explain anything to Carolyn. In an instant the fair girl had snatched up a ski costume that lay on a chair and had dived out through a french window on to the balcony, whence an iron ladder led below.

And as she went the expression on Leslie's face changed. He no longer looked harsh and stern. He eyed Jean with his easy smile, a twinkle in his eye.

"It's my guess you're feeling puzzled, Jean," he drawled.

"Puzzled? My head's fairly in a whirl!" cried Jean. "Why is Carolyn so scared of me and Kim? Why does she run from us as if we were poison?"

Leslie grinned.

"I know it's strange," he said. "But there is really a very simple explanation. Carolyn is afraid of dogs."

"Afraid of—dogs?" Jean echoed.

"Sure! She was bitten by a dog when she was a kiddy," went on Leslie easily, "and she's never been able to get over her fear of them. So if you'd be good enough to keep Kim out of her way while you're here I'd be very grateful."

Leslie was a good-looking boy and he spoke in an easy, plausible tone as he stood there smiling at Jean.

Yet Jean felt utterly convinced that he was deceiving her.

If it was just a question of Carolyn's fear of dogs, why had he been urging her to disappear? And why had he spoken of the police? And she remembered, too, that when Carolyn had first called on her she had seemed struck with

Kim, had called him a "dandy dog"—until that inexplicable fear had gripped her.

"So that's that," Leslie smiled, his dark eyes fixed on her. "Now you can go right ahead and win the ski race with an easy mind, Jean, and good luck to you!"

He drew a handkerchief from his pocket, and as he did so a small object dropped out and fell with a faint tinkle to the floor. With a murmur of annoyance, Leslie stooped to pick it up; but Kim was too quick for him.

Amazingly the big Alsatian sprang forward. He rested a forepaw on the gleaming object which had fallen from Leslie's pocket. He gazed up at Carolyn's cousin with bared teeth, growling, menacing.

"Keep off!" he seemed to be saying. "Don't touch!"

Leslie drew back, his face darkening, a strange glint in his eyes.

"Say, what's wrong with the dog?" he exclaimed. "That's my property he's got there. Call him off Jean!"

And Jean wonderingly stepped forward and caught Kim's collar, pulling him back. Then a gasp of amazement left her lips as she saw the object which Kim had been guarding under his paw.

It was a gold brooch with a carved jade beetle set in it—an exact replica of the one she was wearing on her frock!

Kim had recognised it in a flash, had guarded it because he thought it was Jean's.

"It's exactly like mine!" Jean cried in astonishment. "That's why Kim wouldn't let you touch it, Les. He thought it was mine, but—"

She broke off, checking the puzzled questions that rose to her lips.

It was her unknown friend who had sent her the brooch with the carved beetle. And now it seemed that Leslie had a similar brooch. Did that mean he was connected in some way with the mysterious unknown who had invited her to Mountain Falls Chalet?

Another thought flashed into her mind for the first time. Was it possible that Carolyn's strange, unreasoning fear was caused by the sight of those weird jade beetles?

It seemed impossible, and yet—

"There are dozens of these brooches about," Leslie remarked, stooping hastily to pick it up. "I bought this from a junk shop in Montreal last fall, and meant to give it to a girl chum of mine. That dog of yours is too clever, Jean!" he added, with a sneer, as he held open the door.

It was plain that Kim did not trust Leslie Roper. As Jean, her hand on Kim's collar, passed out into the corridor he gave a low growl.

Troubled and uneasy, she returned to her own room, and slipped into her ski suit.

Was Leslie plotting against Carolyn? Was the fair girl in danger? How did Leslie mean to spirit her away during the ski race?

"And somehow or other we're mixed up in the plot, Kim!" whispered Jean. "If only we knew what it was all about! If only we could help Carolyn!"

A whistle sounded on the terrace. Pierre Dupont, the French-Canadian owner of the chalet, was giving the signal for everyone to start for the ski-run, which was about a mile away.

"And hurry, please, my friends!" he exclaimed. "Zere is a black cloud hanging over ze Rockies—and zat means bad weather coming. But wiz luck we shall get ze race over in time."

"Get cracking, all you ski aces!" Sadie Miller laughed.

The race was causing a great deal of excitement at Mountain Falls. All the chalet servants had permission to watch the contest, and for a while the building would be practically deserted.

Jean, with Kim at her heels, joined the chattering crowd on the terrace. And at once

her glance sought Carolyn, who was standing pale and silent with Sadie and some of the other girls, while Leslie Roper chatted easily to his girl friends near by.

If only she had some clue as to what Leslie was plotting? Jean thought. Suddenly an idea flashed into her mind.

"Kim!" she called softly.

The big Alsatian had bounded a little way ahead, but at her low call he swung round to join her. The rest of the party were now screened by snow-laden bushes.

"We're going back, boy!" Jean whispered. "This way!"

She turned and sped back towards the deserted chalet, Kim racing noiselessly beside her. She knew the number of Leslie Roper's room. So certain was she that Leslie was plotting some harm to Carolyn that she had decided to search his room in the hope of finding some clue to the cause of Carolyn's strange fear. She could do it swiftly, while everyone was out of the way, and still reach the starting-point in time to take part in the race.

Breathlessly she raced up the wide oak stairway. She found Leslie's door unlocked, and, with fast-beating heart, she slipped inside.

Where should she search? Now that she was here her impulsive move seemed rather hopeless. If only she could find some hint as to the significance of the carved jade beetles!

She stepped to the writing-desk, scanning it closely. Her glance fell on the blotter which lay there, and eagerly she bent forward.

Plainly Leslie had written a letter in ink not long ago, and blotted it. Some of the ink-marks had been transferred to the top sheet of new blotting-paper, though, of course, they were the wrong way round.

Jean picked up the blotter and carried it to the mirror, holding it so that the reflection would show the blotted words the right way again. And as she read them she caught her breath.

"... Have sleigh waiting ... Pine Valley Carolyn properly scared ... beetles ... to-night we can ..."

The odd words were just fragments of a letter Leslie had written, but surely they provided the proof that Jean was seeking. The jade beetles were the cause of Carolyn's fear, strange though it seemed. She was so afraid that she had consented to disappear from Mountain Falls during the race.

And once the fair girl was out of the way, what then? What was Leslie plotting to do to-night?

A dozen puzzling questions buzzed in Jean's brain, though she could find no answer to them. So intent was she on the clue she had discovered that she did not hear a soft footfall in the corridor.

But Kim heard it, and his deep growl gave her warning.

She swung round, her heart thudding, in time to see the door open and Leslie Roper standing on the threshold.

No longer was there a pleasant, boyish smile on his face. His eyes held a dark menace as he glared at Jean.

"So! I thought as much when I saw you dodge back to the chalet!" he rasped out. "You interfering little spy! Do you think I'm going to let you spoil my plans? Do you think you can match your wits with mine?"

He took a step towards Jean, and at once Kim leapt in front of his beloved mistress to guard her.

"Call that dog off!" snarled Leslie, "or he'll get what's coming to him!"

And as he spoke Carolyn's cousin slid a hand to his hip pocket and brought out a revolver.

Probably he meant only to frighten Jean. But Kim saw the gun, and to his doggy mind a gun meant danger. Jean was in peril and he must defend her.

Before she could utter a word Kim sprang

forward. At the same moment the revolver cracked, and to Jean's utter horror her dog chum dropped and lay quite still on the floor.

Behind her there was a large strongly built cupboard, and before Jean could recover herself Leslie had pushed her back into that cupboard and slammed the door.

The lock clicked. She heard him draw out the key and fling it into a corner of the room.

"I'll deal with you when I get back!" his harsh voice reached her. "A girl who is caught snooping in other people's rooms doesn't stay long at Mountain Falls, as you'll soon find out, Jean Wayland!"

She heard his footsteps fade away as he hurried off. And then at last Jean found her voice.

"Kim!" she cried, and there was a note of despair in her call. "Kim boy, can't you hear me, old fellow? Oh, Kim, are you hurt?"

In vain she threw herself at the locked door of the dark cupboard. In her mind's eye was a picture of Kim falling limply as the revolver-shot echoed out. He had fallen like a stone and had lain there motionless, seemingly lifeless!

"Kim! Kim!" she called, a sob in her voice.

And still there came no answer to her calls, no sound to break the silence that had settled over Mountain Falls Chalet.

KIM FINDS A WAY



TO Jean, in the cupboard, it seemed as if hours had passed, but really it was only a few seconds before Kim, with a start, opened his eyes and found himself lying outstretched on the carpet.

He felt no pain, but he was certainly puzzled. He blinked, pricked up his ears, and shook himself.

Where was he? This wasn't the familiar surroundings of Rainbow Ranch, but—he cocked his head on one side as he sprang to his feet—he could hear Jean's voice calling, on a note of frantic appeal.

"Kim! Kim!"

Desperately the big Alsatian strove to remember what had happened.

The truth was that Kim had been stunned for a few seconds. The bullet from Leslie's revolver had grazed his neck at a spot where a glancing blow of that kind can sometimes stun an animal without seriously hurting him. And now all Kim's strength and alertness were coming back with a rush.

He remembered there had been an enemy in this room, a dark-faced boy who had threatened Jean. He had sprung at that enemy with the harsh voice—and then everything had gone black.

Had harm come to Jean while he had been lying there? The thought caused Kim to break into a volley of sharp, anxious barks. And what a joyful response came from inside that cupboard!

"Oh, Kim, you can hear me at last!" Jean's voice burst out. "And you don't seem badly hurt. If only I could get to you!"

Kim surveyed the cupboard door. Jean was behind that door which kept rattling and shaking. She was a prisoner, and surely it was up to him to rescue her!

Again his deep bark rang out. Then he threw himself at the cupboard in an effort to break down the door.

But that was a task beyond even Kim's splendid strength. He was forced to give it up, panting and ruffed, worried little whimpers coming from him as he stood in the centre of the room, seeking another way to help Jean.

The door of the room was closed, so that Kim himself was a prisoner. He couldn't get out to fetch help, even had there been anyone

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The Boy Who Bossed the Castaways

NEIL GILSON TAKES THE LEAD

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

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

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

While searching for water Julie came across Larry, preparing breakfast. Yielding to temptation, she accepted his offer to join him.

Neil Gilson, secretary to the Maynards' uncle, arrived on the scene with the boys, and scornfully declined Larry's offer of food.

IT was not a pleasant journey back for Julie. She felt mean and guilty in the knowledge that she had eaten a good meal while her fellow-castaways still remained hungry. She was conscious, too, of the condemnation of Neil Gilson; though Dick and Roly, like the good sports they were, took an entirely different view of it.

"Well, if I'd been alone with all that grub around me, I don't know that I should have been so jolly strong-minded," Roly declared. "I don't blame Julie for tucking in. But to think," he added, with a mouth-watering groan, "to think of all that lovely food that rotter's got; while we've got—nothing!"

They still had nothing except—the tarpaulin sheet of fresh water they carried between them when they reached the beach. There Julie, anxious to make amends, made the tea, using the chromium picnic-box as an urn.

While Dick and Roly and Hitchcock busily lopped off the tops of small green coconuts and emptied out the milk, Gilson and Mr. Fry and the professor, exploring the motor-boat again, discovered a fishing net.

"We'll try our luck after—er—breakfast," the

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professor declared. "I used to be pretty good at fishing. But tell me, Roly," he added, "what happened when you saw Woodstock again?"

Over the tea—a really fragrant brew—the story was told. But it was Gilson who did most of the telling. Again Julie flushed as she caught looks of shocked reproach, though nobody except Ada Henshaw and Gilson thought of condemning her. It was Gilson's description of Larry's retreat and the stores he had accumulated which provoked most interest and discussion.

"And mostly our own ship's stores!" Neil Gilson said indignantly. "Stuff which was in the motor-boat the wretch stole. That food and so on should be here by rights!"

"Er—er—" the professor muttered doubtfully. "Er—yes, I suppose it should. But it's pretty difficult, in these extraordinary circumstances, to claim it. Anyway, let's get to the fishing."

He, Gilson, and Mr. Fry went off to the fishing, Gilson with a thoughtful look on his now important-looking face and a calculating gleam in his keen eyes. Dick and Roly and Hitchcock were, in the meantime, busily making rough bows and arrows—bows of bamboo and arrows of limewood, their points sharpened by being burned in the fire, and flights made out of lime leaves.

They departed after a little while, leaving Julie and the womenfolk alone. It was then that Ada Henshaw spitefully attempted to work off the resentment which had been showing in her face ever since Julie's return from Larry Woodstock's camp.

"Well, there's the washing-up to do," she said. "And the tidying-up. If you ask me, it's the strongest girl who should do it—the one who's had a good feed, while we've been left practically to starve."

"Oh, do be quiet about it!" Elsie said uncomfortably, while Julie flushed. "Come on, Julie, I'll help wash-up."

Together they finished the chores. Then, because Julie did not want to invite further spite on Ada's part, she walked along the beach, looking out for a camping ground near some cave or hollow in the cliff which would at least

afford shelter. And presently, after a long walk, she did find it. An ideal spot.

It was a cave in a little lagoon, well away from the water's edge. A hill of shingle and sand led up to it and the tidemark in the middle of that hill showed that the sea never entered. It was snug and small, sunk deep in the cliff and protected on every side save its seaward entrance. When Julie explored it she was even more delighted.

For, inside, the cave split up into three roomy apartments.

"Sleeping quarters for the men and the boys; sleeping quarters for the women and the girls," she murmured. "The big cave will serve as a sort of Common-room. Golly, it's perfect!"

She ran back to announce her discovery. By that time the professor and his fishing party had returned with a netful of huge scallops and large prawns, which were now cooking on the fire, watched by half a dozen pairs of hunger-sharpened eyes.

Then Roly, Dick, and Hitchcock appeared, carrying two small swamp hens which by dint of much patience and skill they had shot inland.

"They're not much," Roly said, "but anything's better than nothing. Only hope," he added anxiously, "there'll be enough to go around."

There wasn't. The fowls were old and tough; the scallops utterly uneatable, though the shells were big and strong and made excellent plates for future use.

The prawns alone were a success, but they were so few that they did little except to remind the castaways still more of their hunger. At the end of the meagre meal Gilson stood up.

His face was set and purposeful. He seemed to have grown more important, seemed to have assumed a leadership which, in their present state of gloom and uncertainty, no one disputed.

"It's no use," he said. "We can't go on like this. At this rate we shall all be lucky to be alive when the Daffodil returns."

"Oh, I don't know—" Dick began. "We want food," Gilson went on determinedly. "We must have it. We know there's food on this island—enough to keep us for a fortnight, if we'll only go and get it. It's our own food and we've every right to it. I refer," he added, with a meaning glance round, "to the stuff the boy Woodstock is living on."

Julie's heart, for some reason, missed a beat. "Yes, but you don't think he's going to hand it over!" Roly objected.

"There are six men here," Gilson said significantly. "There is one lawless boy in charge of what we want. Are six of us going to starve because that one boy has stolen our food? Are we going to remain here, hungry, while he lives in luxury? I'm suggesting," Gilson went on, "that we take what we want, I'm suggesting that we raid Larry Woodstock's camp, and if necessary grab Larry Woodstock himself. We'll show him who's going to be boss on this island."

There was a murmur. Julie felt her heart pumping. She longed to say something; longed desperately to point out that if they only joined forces with Larry there would be no need for such measures. But she sensed the feelings of the party; sensed the growing dominance of Gilson and knew that he would call her traitor if she should even dare to make the suggestion.

She remained silent. She found herself waiting on tenterhooks for the decision.

It came. "Gilson's right," the professor said. "It is about time we asserted ourselves and taught that young scoundrel a lesson. If everybody is willing—"

Everyone was. "Then we raid Larry Woodstock's cave to-night!" Gilson decided.

THE ATTACK



"BUT—but isn't there some other way?" Julie found herself blurting. "Larry will fight," she added.

"Hope he does," Gilson said. "I know who'll get hurt most. Because," he added, staring round, "apart from collaring those supplies, we're going to

collar Woodstock himself!"

"And—and then?" Julie asked.

"Then we'll show him who's running this island. We'll show him who's the real boss. He thought he was hard done by on the Daffodil, but that's going to be a holiday compared with what's waiting for him. In any case, you're not sticking up for him, are you?" he demanded sharply.

"N-no," Julie said, and wondered for a moment if she were telling the truth. "But I thought—"

"What?"

"Well, he did offer to share everything with us. He—"

Gilson gave a derisive snort.

"Share!" he echoed. "Share what? Our own food! And on what terms? That he should order us about! I know you haven't too many scruples, Julie Wallace," he said, with a cutting reference to Julie's breakfast that made her flush. "But we happen to have some pride. So I'd be obliged," he added curtly, "if you wouldn't interrupt."

The professor's secretary outlined his plan, while Julie, more unhappy than she had ever been since she set foot on the Island of the Golden Palm, listened. Certainly Gilson was proving to be an organiser. He, Dick, and Hitchcock would be the first "wave" of the attack, he said. They, as the strongest members of the party, would creep forward, overpower Larry Woodstock, and once they had him trussed up would yell for the second wave—the professor, Mr. Fry, and Roly—to come along and take possession.

Then Larry's camp would be theirs, Larry's food theirs, and Larry himself their captive.

Julie listened with a sickening sense of helplessness. She winced as she thought of Larry a captive again—wincing as she pictured that snug nest of his surrendered to his conquerors. But it wouldn't be for long, she guessed. At the earliest opportunity Larry would be free, more bitter, more reckless and insolent than ever.

But she said nothing. She saw it would be of no use. Gilson was in command at the moment, and his hungry followers assured him of their full support.

How she disliked Gilson, Julie thought, and wondered why she had never felt like this about him before. She said nothing now of her own discovery of the three-chambered cave along the cliffs. What would be the good of that now the castaways were thinking only of Larry's stronghold?

"And as soon as it's dark we start," Gilson said. "Ada, you'd better stop here in charge of the ladies. You, Elsie, and you, Julie, had better tack on to the professor's party and come along when the scrap's over. Unless," he sneered, "Julie has any further objections."

"I'll come," Julie said in a stifled voice.

She didn't want to go—and yet she did. For one thing, she didn't want to remain in the unpleasant Ada's company while Elsie was away—for another, she would rather be with Elsie than with anyone. But overriding those considerations was a certain curiosity to see how the whole campaign turned out. Perhaps—she did not admit this—to be on hand to see Larry, perhaps to give him a secret word of cheer, or a surreptitious helping hand.

Why? He had done nothing for her except to provide her with a breakfast. On the other hand, he had once tried to rob her of her precious locket, and might have renewed the attempt that morning had it not been for the arrival of Gilson and the others. Odd how

mixed were her feelings regarding Larry Woodstock. Strange that one moment she should think of him as a boy she ought to help, the next, as the enemy who had designs on her property.

And so, to everybody's satisfaction, the plans were made. With an hour or two of daylight still remaining, the party applied themselves to gathering fuel and a rummage round in search of oddments that might have been overlooked. Gilson, with the assistance of Hitchcock, cut several stout sticks from the bundles of branches brought in.

"Better have some sort of weapon," he said. "If he gets tough we'll use them. Here's yours, Dick—"

"Thanks," Dick said a little curtly. "I don't want it."

"Nor do I," Roly said. Julie turned away, more sickened than ever, but liking Dick and Roly more in that moment than she had ever done before. Gilson did not seem in the least put out, however. He chose a stick for himself, swung it to test its strength, and handed one to Hitchcock, the professor, and Mr. Fry.

Somewhat dubiously Mr. Fry accepted his. Brightly the professor handled his.

"Fine!" he said. "Just the thing to help one to get about on this island. Useful, too, for digging small specimens out of the sand."

It was with a strange sort of dread that Julie watched the evening approach. Once the sun began to sink it seemed to rush down to earth like a comet.

And then suddenly golden stars were twinkling in the velvet sky above, and a pale moon, hiding shyly behind the clouds, was transforming the island into a mystery mound of silver and shadow.

"All ready?" Gilson called commandingly. And the two parties moved forward. He addressed them with the conscious air of a leader. "You know your jobs, don't you? I'll lead. We'd better follow the track that we followed this morning—"

"It's the only one," Dick pointed out. "At least, we've never been able to find another in this light."

"O.K.! Follow me!" Gilson said importantly. "You two girls bring up the rear."

He tramped off, Hitchcock behind him, Dick behind the sailor. After an interval went the professor, looking quite excited, Roly, looking rather woebegone, and Mr. Fry, gaunt, lean, and miserable. Elsie looked at Julie.

"Come on!" she said, and paused. "Oh dear, I—I do hope they won't hurt him!" she breathed.

Julie hoped so, too. It seemed suddenly as if her heart were made of lead. She wanted desperately to run back, yet a frantic sort of curiosity, of desire to be near the scene when the worst happened, forcibly drew her on. Now, carefully making their way forward, they were traversing the thicket, a faint breeze stirring in the leaves, the soft hum of a million insects about their heads.

Without incident they got through the thicket to find themselves in a wide, shadowy trench. Panting a little, the parties pressed on, until at last they came within view of the thick wood which hid Larry Woodstock's stronghold.

It was dark here—a darkness rendered all the more tantalising by darting patches of shadow—while faintly through the trees came a glow of firelight and a distant crackling.

"That would be Larry, Julie thought, probably sitting in front of his cave, peacefully cooking his supper: with no thought of the fate so stealthily approaching.

There came a sudden halt. A hissing whisper was passed back through the darkness:

"First party going through. Second party follow twenty paces in the rear. Tell the girls to stop where they are—but keep quiet."

"Suits me," Elsie said, and at once dropped to the ground, while the rest of the party dis-

appeared into the trees like ghosts. "We— Julie, what's that?"

For Julie, also seating herself, had given a little gasp.

"It's something—something hairy—something rough," she said. "I put my hand on it. It— And then, turning, she again felt the object which had caused her astonishment. Now, stepping aside so that it was revealed by the moon, she gave a gasp. "Elsie, look!" she thrilled.

"Gosh, is it dead?" asked Elsie nervously. "As mutton—or pork, I should say!" Julie laughed. "It's a wild pig, Elsie, don't you see! Larry must have killed it. He probably intended to collect it after supper. Elsie— In sudden joy she stared at her friend, and then in sudden consternation wheeled towards the wood. "What's happening?" she cried.

Something decidedly was happening. For the quiet night air of the island was suddenly split by a crash; a cry followed by a series of agonised yells. And among those yells, louder and more powerful than any, could be heard that of leader Neil Gilson.

"He's trapped us! Trapped us, the scoundrel! Oh, help! Help—help!"

"By Jove!" they heard the professor roaring. "You young vagabond, Woodstock!"

There came the sound of a laugh, faintly scornful—Larry's laugh. It was followed by yells from the other.

Julie had forgotten the pig now. She felt her heart jumping. Something, obviously, had gone wrong with Gilson's carefully thought-out campaign. The plan for the capture and humiliation of Larry Woodstock had not turned out as hoped. Julie felt glad of that. But she had to see for herself what had happened.

"Come on!" she gasped to Elsie.

Elsie needed no second invitation. Eagerly she followed on Julie's heels as that girl went crashing into the undergrowth, almost at once to sprawl forward as her feet caught in the thick liana which coiled and twisted like snakes about her feet.

But in a moment she was up again—was rushing on.

The red glow of the fire, gradually becoming more and more distinct, led her on. There was a sort of rough track following the floor of the wide, shallow trench—a floor of fallen leaves and twisted creeper stems, with disconcerting patches of swamp here and there into which her feet squelched unpleasantly. And then, ahead, she saw what was happening. Momentarily she slowed in her steps.

"Just look!" Julie breathed.

They both stopped. Both stared. For there, heads projecting above the ground, were Gilson, Dick, and Hitchcock, the sailor. They were sunk in a pit of some sort and on the brink of the pit stood the professor, Mr. Fry, and Roly, each grasping a stick and each grimly pulling back as the hapless victims of the pit clung desperately to the stick's other end. And behind them, a powerful silhouette in the glow of the fire, stood Larry, his hands on his hips, his head thrown back, laughing uproariously.

"What happened?" Elsie stammered.

But it was plain to see. The pit, of course, had been dug by Larry and carefully camouflaged with creeper and leaves. Gilson and his two followers, warily creeping ahead, had not been conscious of the trap until they had pitched headlong into it. And now—

"Heave!" Gilson croaked. "For goodness' sake heave! The confounded pit is filled with pitch, or glue, or something! I'm stuck fast! We— And then, as Julie ran forward to lend a hand: "Get me out of this!" he barked.

But it was not to the leader's assistance that Julie ran. It was to Dick's. He at the moment was clinging desperately to the stick handled by Roly. Fiercely Julie grasped it also, fiercely she pulled, just as Elsie ran up to give the professor a hand. With a squelch Dick's foot came out of the mire. With a gasp, Dick himself followed it, flinging his arms over the side of

the pit. Anxiously Julie and Roly leaned down and grabbed him by the arms.

They heaved. There was a terrific sucking sound as Dick's other foot came free, and then, floundering, gasping, he dropped on the bank. At the same moment Gilson shot out of the pit with a force that unbalanced the professor and toppled him backwards on his heels with a furious splutter.

And now Julie, Roly, and Elsie were running to the assistance of Hitchcock, Julie coughing in the fumes that floated up from the pit. In a few moments they had Hitchcock, gasping like a fish, on the bank. By that time Dick had recovered.

"The rotter!" he grated, glaring over the undergrowth at the still lounging Larry some thirty feet away. "You dug that pit!" he cried.

"Sure I did!" Larry nodded. "But I didn't fill it with the pitch. That happens to be natural to the island—the island's volcanic, you see—and it's bubbled into the pit of its own accord. I rather expected this visit, you see. It never occurred to you that a lout like me might guess your gentlemanly tricks, I suppose?"

"Why, you impudent young scoundrel!" the professor roared.

"How brave!" Larry giped.

Then he stooped and picked up something—something which glistened yellow in the light—the bright nozzle of a hose.

"But I wouldn't be rash," he advised thoughtfully. "This is a pretty powerful jet and I'm sure you don't want a wetting after your pitch bath. Apart from that, there're two more pits between you and me, to say nothing of a dozen hornets' nests I planted this afternoon. The hornets might get annoyed if you trod on them now and woke them up. I should stay put, if I were you."

They stood and glared, baffled, helpless, and suddenly cautious. Julie felt an inward admiration.

There was no doubt that Larry had the whip-hand. No doubt, in spite of the odds against him, that he had beaten the castaways. None of them felt like exploring farther. Hidden pits of sticky pitch and sleeping hornets ready to buzz out at them in angry thousands were enough to check more adventurous spirits than theirs. Gilson, his face a mask of hate in the crimson glow, showed his teeth.

"So you defy us?"

"Definitely," Larry agreed. "And shall go on defying you," he added. "So don't try any more tricks. The surprise might be even more unpleasant next time."

They all glared. But again Larry, supremely confident of his mastery, only grinned. "Do we say good-night," he mocked, "or will you cross the barriers and have a cup of cocoa with me?"

He waved the hose nozzle mockingly as he spoke. Humiliated and realising now that they must look rather ridiculous, the castaways turned away.

"All right—just wait!" Gilson growled.

"I will," Larry promised. "If you get tired of going hungry, don't forget that you've only to fly a rag of some sort from the tree on the cliff. My offer to join forces with you still stands. 'Bye!' he called cheerfully.

They did not speak. Their feelings were too deep for words as they tramped back. And Julie, following in the rear, smiled, glad that Larry had won, and glad that the self-appointed leader, Gilson, had suffered such a crushing setback. And then, just as they were passing the spot where she and Elsie had waited, she remembered the pig.

"Wait a minute!" she said softly. "We're not going back empty-handed. Look!"

"Gosh!" Dick breathed, and his eyes popped as he stared at the carcass. "How did you get it?"

"By finding it!" Julie laughed. "It's Larry's, I think. If somebody will give me a hand to carry it—"

"Here, give it to me!" cried Roly. At once his spirits were revived; at once his face was radiant with joy. "Gosh, a feed—a feed at last!" he whooped. "And enough for all, Goody, Julie! Count yourself my pal for life from now on. Phew, it's heavy!" he puffed delightedly as he attempted to lift it. "Here, Dick, give me a hand!"

The discovery rendered them all joyful—all except the still savagely scowling Gilson.

With spirits growing in cheerfulness they carried the pig. By the time they had reached the camp they were almost cheerful again. And there another small but pleasant surprise awaited them. For during their absence Aunt Martha and Mrs. Fry and Ada had been searching around and they had found, apart from the professor's geological hammer, a find which delighted the professor almost as much as the discovery of the pig—a whole unopened box of ship's biscuits.

"Are we going to have a feed—at last?" Roly cheered. "But who's going to do the cooking?"

"I am," Julie said. "And, while we're about it, why not let's move into the new home I've found—a cave along the cliffs there. There's more wood and stuff around there and we shall need a big fire."

"But what's this?" Elsie cried. "Julie, this is the first time you've said anything about a cave."

Julie told them then of the three-chambered cave she had found, and once more the spirits of the castaways rose. One and all agreed that the first real meal on the island should be eaten in their new home. The professor gave the order for the possessions they had acquired to be shipped, with Mrs. Fry and Aunt Martha, on to the motor-boat. And with the boat chugging merrily away, he and the rest of the party followed the now eager Julie on foot along the glistening shore.

The moon shone down brilliantly, lighting up the shore so vividly that Julie could see the feelers of tiny scorpions moving in the sand. It shone obliquely on the cliff-face, picking out the coloured strata as distinctly as though they had been painted there by some human hand.

"Jolly good spot!" the professor exclaimed happily. "Those cliffs look to me to be full of fossils. What about starting a Golden Palm Island collection?"

He seemed to forget his discomforts and his hunger in the joyous anticipation of that prospect. With a genial interest he followed Julie until at last the lagoon was reached. And then, as Julie pointed out the cave, its mouth gaping against the shining silver background of limestone, a general gasp of delight went up.

There and then the party insisted upon an inspection. With the motor-boat arriving in the lagoon at the same moment, and Aunt Martha and Mrs. Fry disembarked, that inspection was quickly made. The snug, weather-proof caves appealed to them all immediately, but to none more than the professor, who became wildly excited when he discovered that the limestone walls were almost entirely composed of a species of small fossil shell.

There and then, of course, nothing would satisfy the party but to go gathering great armfuls of bracken and fern to serve as beds for the night, to collect stacks of brushwood and branches, and to construct, under Julie's instructions, a long trench fire such as Larry had used for the cooking of his pig.

Julie herself cooked the pig, and, with the tin of biscuits opened and clear spring water from the rivulet near by made into refreshing tea, the castaways enjoyed the first hearty meal they had known on Golden Palm Island.

And so, contented and replete at long last, and happy in the knowledge that a full side of cold pig and a half-tin of biscuits awaited them on the morrow, the castaways retired to their bracken beds in their new home. As far as it was possible they were happy then—with the possible exception of Neil Gilson, who, since his

defeat at the hands of Larry Woodstock, had relapsed into a mood of bitter brooding.

But not one of them guessed what a startling change in their lives to-morrow was to bring.

THEIR ONE HOPE



THE events of that fateful day commenced quite early in the morning. During the night it had rained—hard, heavy rain—but none of it this time disturbed the weary castaways. But in the morning—

Julie was first up—or she thought she was—and, stepping out into the brilliant sunlight, was rather disconcerted to discover that the rain had brought down a quantity of cliff from above. Gazing up, she was still more disconcerted to discover Professor Maynard perched thirty feet above her head on a rocky ledge and clinging dizzily to the cliff with one hand, while with the other he tapped at its face with his geological hammer.

"Professor!" she cried. "Professor, what on earth—"

He heard. Beamingly he peered down over his shoulder at Julie; and she saw that his face was full of excitement.

"Morning, Julie!" he cried. "A find—a wonderful find! Bones, Julie—fossil bones of a brontosaurus."

She did not understand at first. Her heart was thumping with wild anxiety for the professor who, perched so precariously upon the glistening ledge, was so overcome with excitement that he seemed completely unaware of his peril.

But she understood when she saw a white streak gleaming out of the cliff on a level with his nose. The professor undoubtedly had made a find. But Julie was not so much concerned with that as with his own safety.

"Oh, professor, do come down!" she cried anxiously.

"Come—what?" he snorted. "No fear, Julie! Not until— Ugh!" he added, and furiously tugged at a new projection he had found in the cliff. And as he did so—

"Professor!" Julie shrieked. For she saw the beginning of disaster before the all-absorbed professor himself. She saw the ledge on which he was standing slipping bodily from the face of the cliff.

"Pro—" she cried again, and then froze, tongue-tied and numb with horror.

For with a crash the whole mass of rock—tons of it—slipped. It came downwards with a rush, and with it came the professor. In horror Julie watched the great mass turn into flying dust and stone. She was momentarily deafened by the roar and crash it made as it thundered on to the beach, completely blocking the mouth of the cave and sealing it in a flash as though it had never existed. For a moment she stood there, bewildered, in a storm of flying stones and dust and rocks.

"Oh, my goodness!" she cried. Then she saw the professor—lying twenty yards away. He was still clinging grimly to his hammer and lay on top of a sloping pile of debris as though he had just clung there. In a flash Julie was at his side.

"Mr. Maynard, are you hurt?" she cried frantically.

He blinked, staring at her as though considering the question. Then he shifted.

"No—I don't think so. I came down with the earth and so on, you see. I— Give me a hand, Julie. Gad, I've done something to my foot, though."

Heavily he rose as Julie willingly helped him, and then she wheeled again as a second thunderous crash heralded the arrival of another landslide at the cave's mouth.

"Looks as if the whole island is on the move," the professor said grimly. "And that means,"

he said glumly, "that my bones—my fossil bones, I mean—are probably all in fragments. I— Drat this foot!" he added, and lifted it and then dropped it again. "Julie, I must have hurt it."

"Let me see," Julie said. She pulled off the professor's pitch-stained shoe and stocking, then looked at the ankle, bruised and already swelling. She knew what had happened then.

"You've sprained your ankle, I think," she said. "Please sit down, professor." She forced him, grunting, into a sitting position, tore the hem from the linen frock she was wearing, and, dipping it into a clear-water pool left by the rain, bound the ankle up.

Then she became aware of a new tragedy—a muffled banging from the blocked-up cave, a smothered voice.

"Oh, my golly! Dick!" she cried. "Dick and the others, professor! They're sealed up in the cave!"

Her heart thumping with a new dreadful anxiety, she was on her feet and darting towards the great pile of rock and earth, which now blocked the cave mouth. Desperately she stared at it.

"Professor, what can we do? What can we do?" she cried as the professor came limping up. "We've got to get them out! If—if we don't they—they'll suffocate!"

The professor bit his lip. His face was grey suddenly.

"What can we do?" he said helplessly. "I'm crooked. You're only a girl. We haven't any sort of a tool except my little hammer—"

They stopped, staring in anguish at each other as they realised the plight of their comrades, of the sheer impossibility of the task of rescuing them. If only they could get help! If only—

And then Julie had an idea. A desperate idea, but the only one she knew which could possibly save her fellow-castaways now.

"There's one way," she said. "One way only. We haven't tools. If we had I doubt if we'd be able to do the job on our own. But there's someone else who has the tools—someone who's strong and capable enough to get through and rescue them all before it's too late—"

He looked at her, his lips suddenly tightening. "Woodstock, you mean?"

"Yes. Professor, you remember what he said?" Julie cried. "If we wanted him we were to run up a rag on the tree yonder. We— And almost unconsciously she was tearing off the linen jacket she wore over her dress. "Professor, he's our only chance—and one hope. Shall—shall I fetch him?"

"You know what it means, Julie." "It means rescue," Julie steadily informed him.

"It means that—yes!" He spoke softly. "But it means something else. It means that we surrender to that young scoundrel—that we accept him as our leader and obey his orders." It's a big decision to have to make, Julie—

"And you and I are the only ones to make it," Julie declared. "Professor, we can't help ourselves. Our friends are in danger. Professor, I'm going to fly that flag. I'm going to call him! And if you don't agree—"

But the professor was over his qualms now. For better or worse, the decision had to be made. He nodded.

"Go on, Julie—fly it!" he said quietly. "When we've rescued these poor people we'll stand by our decision."

And Julie, though filled with anxiety, felt a sensation of joy sweep over her.

She waited for no more. With feet hardly fast enough to carry her, she went tearing up the hill towards the lonely tree on the cliff-top, her white jacket waving in her hand.

Will Larry be able to rescue the imprisoned castaways? And if so, what will their attitude towards him be? You'll enjoy every word of next Friday's thrill-packed instalment of this splendid serial—in the **GIRLS' CRYSTAL**.



The CASE OF THE Frightened Girl

By PETER LANGLEY

A SHOCK FOR JUNE

JUNE 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.

It was suspected that the Green Rajah was Jack Linton, a boy who had mysteriously disappeared from Glen Hall.

June found Jack in a cave, his leg injured. He told her that he was really out to unmask the Green Rajah, and also to prove the innocence of his friend, Ronnie Baring, who had once been secretary to Colonel Raikes, and who was now a fugitive from the police.

June found a cigarette-case belonging to the Green Rajah, and decided to use it to trap him. Telling the guests that it bore the Green Rajah's finger-prints, she locked it in the bureau in the drawing-room.

That night she hid herself in the drawing-room, and, to her delight, the Green Rajah came to steal back the cigarette-case. Switching on her torch, June shone it full in the intruder's face.

HARDLY able to believe her eyes, June stared at the furious face which the torchlight had revealed.

"Mr.—Mr. Standish!" she gasped.

It seemed incredible that the intruder could be her host's best friend, and yet there could be no mistaking those glowering features.

Then Roger Standish was the Green Rajah!

It was a staggering thought, but, as the girl detective saw the gold cigarette-case still clutched in the man's hand, she drew in an excited breath, for she knew that at long last she had discovered the truth. That cigarette-case clinched matters. Unless he were the Green Rajah, Roger Standish would have had no reason to break into the writing bureau to remove the incriminating clue.

As she stood there, her head whirling from

the shock, she heard voices and footsteps on the staircase. In response to the alarm she had sounded, practically the whole household was hurrying to investigate.

Urgently she shouted:
"Quick—this way! I've got the Green Rajah! I've—"

She broke off with a gasp of dismay, for her torch had flickered and gone out. The battery had exhausted itself. And at the same moment she heard Roger Standish turn and go plunging across the room, heading for the french windows.

Desperately she hurried herself forward, flinging her arms around him.

"You're not going to escape!" she panted.
"Let me go! You interfering pest, you shall suffer for this! Let me go!"

And, with a furious wrench, Standish tore away her hands. Desperately she tried to grab him again, but her fingers only succeeded in closing over one of the ornamental buttons of his dressing-gown. The button came away in her hand, as he gave her a violent push.

Reeling back, she tripped over a foot-stool, and as she fell her head struck the edge of the table. She gave a cry of pain. Momentarily a dazzling light seemed to flare out, and then a wave of blackness engulfed her. She was not even conscious of hitting the floor.

How long she lay there she did not know, but when she did regain her senses she saw that the room lights had been switched on and that an anxious crowd of people were gathered around her. Someone was holding a glass of water to her lips, and there came a relieved gasp as it was seen that her eyes had flickered open.

"Thank goodness, she's come round!"
Faintly Billie Murdoch's voice reached her, and dimly she became conscious that Mr. Henley was bending over her.

"Are you feeling better, my dear?" he asked.
"What happened?"

Her head still spinning dizzily, June forced herself to sit up and look around. The first thing she noticed was the open french window.

"The Green Rajah!" she gasped. "He managed to escape after all!"

There came a startled cry from everyone. "The Green Rajah! Was it he who attacked you?"

"Yes." June nodded, then placed a quivering hand to her head as another spasm of pain pierced it. "I laid a trap for him, and he fell for it. And, though he got away, I know who he is. He's Mr. Standish!"

"What?"
There came a horrified chorus, and incredulously Mr. Henley regarded her.

"What are you saying, my dear?" he asked. "You must be feeling delirious. It's that blow on the head. Roger Standish the Green Rajah? Oh, but that's fantastic."

Conscious of the shocked faces surveying her, June strove to struggle to her feet, only to fall back again, as another wave of faintness seized her.

"It's—it's true," she whispered. "I saw his face, and—"

"Now, now, my dear, calm yourself, please. You have had a frightening experience. You must lie back and relax. And try to forget this fanciful notion of yours."

Again it was Mr. Henley who spoke, and, shaking his head sympathetically, he smoothed her flushed brow with an anxious hand.

The realization that they all thought that she was suffering from some absurd delusion brought on by the blow on the head she had received made June struggle furiously with her faintness, and she gave a little gasp as she saw that she was still clutching the button which had been torn from the Green Rajah's dressing-gown.

"I didn't imagine it!" she gasped. "I saw him, I tell you! I—"

And then she broke off, as the door opened and the butler entered, looking pale and agitated. He gestured across at Mr. Henley.

"Excuse me, sir, but Miss Gaynor is not the only victim. Apparently that villain broke into Mr. Standish's room before he came down here."

"What is this? Another robbery?" exclaimed Mr. Henley, while everyone stared in startled surprise.

The butler nodded.
"I'm afraid so, sir. Mr. Standish caught him red-handed going through his dressing-table, and when he tried to capture the Green Rajah, the scoundrel struck him over the head. I heard groans on my way down here, sir, and on investigation I found Mr. Standish lying on his bedroom floor."

"Great goodness, is there no end to this villainy!" In distress, Mr. Henley raised shocked hands, then he turned to where June sat. "This at least proves you are mistaken, my dear," he said. "Not that I believed what you said could be true for a moment, of course. You are not yourself, Mildred!" He turned to his daughter. "See the poor girl up to her room, will you? I must see how Mr. Standish is getting on."

And, flinging up his hands again, he rushed out of the room, followed by most of the guests.

"Come on, June. Ups-a-daisy. We'll soon have you tucked up in bed."

Smiling reassuringly, Mildred put her hands under the girl detective's arm. One of the other girls took her other arm, and before June could protest she found herself supported across the room.

Her head was still going round and round, making it difficult for her to think, but as they helped her up the stairs, she strove desperately to grapple with this latest startling development.

Surely she could not have been mistaken in thinking that she had recognised Roger Standish?

"I know I'm not," she told herself, and frowned.

Then what had really happened upstairs? There was only one possible explanation. Roger Standish had told the butler that sensational story in order to create an alibi for himself:

in order to make certain that June's story was ridiculed.

"Well, of all the tricksters!" June murmured to herself. "But he shan't get away with it. I know the truth now, and I won't rest until I've convinced everyone else."

But she felt too weak to try to make plans now. She allowed herself to be taken to her room, and there Mildred and the other girl helped her into bed.

She was asleep almost before Mildred and her companion had tiptoed out of the room, but still clutched in her right hand was the button she had ripped from Roger Standish's dressing-gown.

When she awoke the following morning she felt perfectly fit, and, indeed, if it had not been for the bruise on her forehead she would have had nothing to remind her of her unpleasant experience.

Dressing, she arranged her hair so as to hide the bruise, then made her way downstairs. As she gained the hall she heard voices coming from the dining-room. Mr. Henley and Roger Standish were already awaiting breakfast.

Mr. Standish had a bandage tied around his head, and he was leaning earnestly across the table.

"Of course, I don't blame the girl at all," he was declaring. "As you say, Henley, it was just an unfortunate delusion caused by that blow on the head which made her accuse me. Nevertheless, I hope it does not persist. You know, Henley, I have a feeling that June Gaynor does not like me, and when she learns this latest news—well, you know she's always had a soft spot in her heart for that young scoundrel, Jack Linton."

June caught in her breath.

What was Roger Standish up to now?

As she stole forward towards the open dining-room door, she heard Mr. Henley's voice.

"You are sure there's no doubt about it?" he asked.

Roger Standish shook his head vigorously. "No doubt about it at all," he stated. "During our struggle the scoundrel's false beard fell off, and I got a clear view of his face. It was Jack Linton right enough. Yes," he added grimly, "that young jackanapes is the Green Rajah!"

THE BUTTON CLUE



FOR a moment June stood there, almost dazed by the efrontery of the man she knew for a villain.

That Roger Standish should pretend to have been attacked by the Green Rajah was bad enough, but that he should dare to pretend that his attacker had been Jack Linton was intolerable.

A rush of hot blood flooding her pale cheeks, June went hurrying into the room, and indignantly she faced the two men.

"It's not true! It's not true!" she burst out. "Jack is innocent! He has nothing to do with all this business! He has nothing—"

"There, there, my dear, sit yourself down and calm yourself." Mr. Henley, jumping up, laid a distressed hand on her shoulder. "You shouldn't have got up, you know," he added, as gently he forced her down on to a chair. "You are still distraught and ought to see a doctor."

His kind, friendly face surveyed her anxiously, but June was hardly conscious of him. Her gaze was concentrated on Roger Standish, and the sight of the bandage he wore and the sardonic grin on his lips, made her feel angrier than ever.

"It's not true," she said again. "But, my dear, Standish recognised him clearly."

June gave an unsteady laugh.

"When I said I'd recognised the Green Rajah you wouldn't believe me," she pointed out. Mr. Henley looked more distressed than ever.

"But that was different, my dear. You were half-dellirious. Besides, your suggestion was so absurd."

"That remains to be seen," said June; then, as she saw the shocked look on her host's face, she jumped to her feet. "I'm sorry," she breathed. "You've been so good to me that it's horrid to upset you like this. Perhaps you're right. Perhaps I had better go and lie down again."

She forced herself to smile, and made her way to the door.

"Things have reached a climax," she told herself. "If I don't expose that villain quickly he'll convince everyone I'm no good as a detective."

She sighed heavily as she thought what a blow her detective reputation had already received. Uncle Noel had been sent for, and once he arrived she would politely but firmly be asked to pack her things and depart.

"And it's not only my future that's at stake," she murmured, as she reached the first-floor landing. "There's Jack to think of."

Her eyes grew troubled as she thought of Jack, now forced to find refuge in a lonely cave, with an injured leg. Then there were Eva and Ronald Baring to remember. They also had suffered cruelly at the hands of the Green Rajah.

Her fingers closed instinctively around the button in her pocket.

One quick look around she gave, then, satisfied that no one was in sight, she entered Roger Standish's bedroom and softly closed the door behind her. His dressing-gown lay over the back of a chair. Snatching it up, she examined it eagerly, and then she frowned, for, to her surprise, none of the buttons was missing.

"But I'm certain this is the gown he wore last night!" she gasped. "I'm certain—"

She finished with an angry gasp, for as she examined the buttons more closely she saw that one of them had only recently been sewn on. The fresh, new look of the thread told her that; besides, a different coloured cotton had been used.

"He thinks of everything!" she muttered. The fact that Roger Standish had replaced the missing button confirmed all her suspicions, but she knew that no one else would ever believe her.

Tossing down the dressing-gown, she surveyed the room, a thoughtful furrow between her eyes.

Wasn't there any other way in which she could expose him?

It was obvious that it had been Roger Standish and not Ronald Baring who had committed the original thefts at Glen Hall. As Colonel Raikes' partner, Standish would naturally have known all about the colonel's efforts to discover the Lost Secret of the Purple Mountains, and so, disguised as the Green Rajah, he had tried to steal the crystal goblet on which was engraved a clue to the mysterious secret.

Unfortunately for Standish, Colonel Raikes had become suspicious, and had hidden the goblet, but not before Ronald Baring had been branded as the Green Rajah and forced to flee.

After the colonel's death, Standish had managed to intercept the package from India before it could be delivered to Mr. Henley, and had stolen its vital contents, with whose aid the hieroglyphics on the crystal goblet alone could be deciphered.

June gave an excited start, as her ruminations reached this point.

"He's bound to have brought the contents of that package with him," she told herself. "For he would want to use them once he'd found the goblet. Now I wonder where they can be hidden?"

Thoughtfully she set to work to search the room. If she could only find the original contents of the package which had been sent from India it would be a magnificent scoop—

perhaps sufficient to open Mr. Henley's eyes to the truth!

She looked in the wardrobe, in the dressing-table, under the bed—everywhere—but without success. Finally her gaze went to the suitcase, that stood, with its lid open, on a chair. It seemed to be full of clothes, but it was possible that what she sought was concealed underneath.

THE NOTE IN THE CAVE



HER fingers trembling with excitement, June lifted up the clothes, only to meet with another disappointment. Nothing was hidden beneath them. Ruefully she replaced them, and then, abruptly, she stiffened. Footsteps had sounded out in the corridor, and even as she whirled in alarm the door swung open and a tall figure stepped into the room.

Roger Standish! "What are you doing in my room?" he demanded. "What—"

He finished with a startled snarl, as he saw the open suitcase, and in two strides he was at her side.

"If you have been prying about in there—" he began savagely, and, snatching up the case, he locked it with hands that quivered.

Wonderingly, June stared at him. What could be responsible for his agitation? She had already thoroughly searched the case and found nothing. Then why—

She caught in her breath as an exciting suspicion came to her.

Suppose the case possessed a false compartment! Suppose, after all, the vital clue was secreted there!

She got no chance to ruminate on the thrilling possibility, for, like a tiger, the man whirled on her, pointing furiously to the door.

"Get out—and stay out!" he ordered. "I'll see this is reported to Mr. Henley! You've about outstayed your welcome here, my girl. One more false move and you'll go!"

There was a venomous look of fury in his dark eyes, and though June involuntarily recoiled from it, yet in her heart there was a glow of fierce satisfaction. Roger Standish was becoming scared of her.

Hurrying from the room, June went downstairs again and joined the other young guests in the dining-room.

She ate a good breakfast, reassuring her inquirers that she was quite fit again. Afterwards she stayed for some time talking to them; then, excusing herself, she left to don her hat and coat. She must visit the cave in which Jack had found refuge and tell him all that had happened. He might be able to help her.

On her way she stopped at the little wayside shop and bought some more provisions.

Then she took to the mountain path. Carrying her parcel of groceries, she at last reached the cave, but, to her disappointment, she could see no sign of the boy she had befriended.

"Jack!" she called. "Jack, where are you?"

And then, as she saw a sheet of paper lying on a flat lump of rock weighted down by an empty tin, she hurried forward.

"It must be a note from him," she murmured.

She bent to pick up the paper, but before her fingers could close on it—

"Thank you, but we'll take charge of that," declared a grim voice from the cave entrance.

Round June whirled, then she fell back in dismay, for confronting her was not only Roger Standish, but also Mr. Henley.

Here is yet another set-back for June. What will be Mr. Henley's attitude? And where can Jack be? Don't miss next Friday's enthralling instalment of this exciting serial—in the **GIRLS' CRYSTAL**.

The Merrymakers at College



By DAPHNE
GRAYSON

A BLOW FOR SALLY & CO.

"OUR luck's in to-night!" whispered Sally Warner in the darkness. "Nearly home now—costumes and all!"

"Wish it was to-morrow night," breathed Fay Manners, "and we were just on our way now to this fancy dress dance!"

"Sshhh!" cautioned Don Weston.

"Just coming to the cross-roads now," whispered Johnny Briggs. "Keep well into the hedge—never know who's about!"

It was nearly midnight, and the four chums were wending their way back stealthily to Roxburgh Co-ed College, their arms laden with parcels.

Those parcels contained costumes for to-morrow night's gala dance—the biggest fancy-dress dance of the year in Roxburgh City. The great event always meant that the dress shops had to work overtime, in order to meet the rush of orders. So Sally & Co. had made sure of getting their costumes to-night—by breaking bounds.

"Good thing there's no moon!" Sally was murmuring, then drew back alertly as a beam of light suddenly flooded one of the fork roads. "There's a car coming!"

All stood back rigid in the shade of the hedge. But their gaze was riveted now on the curiously unsteady beam of the car's headlights.

"What's the matter with it?" whispered Fay.

"Bad driving, I should say!" muttered Don.

The words weren't out of his mouth when the car gave a crazy lurch, swerving clean off the road, careering on to the fields that fringed it.

Crash!

Sally & Co. heard the thud as the car crashed into a tree. Then as one they were rushing to the scene, rushing blindly in the darkness to see what assistance they could give the driver. There were no lights to guide them now; they had been extinguished in the shock of the crash.

"Where are you? Are you all right?" Sally

shouted, dashing across the road and keeping a straight course through the field.

It was a hasty sound in the trees, over to the right, which told Sally where the crashed car was. She saw its dark outline. She saw a figure scurrying away from it. A tallish, gawky figure of a youth, who was swallowed up in the darkness before she had time to gasp.

"That's the driver!" cried Don.

"And he's scooted!" muttered Johnny.

"Well, he isn't hurt, anyway—that's a good thing!" Sally said, rather bewildered.

It was the only thing that mattered as far as the chums were concerned. But in that same instant they heard the shrill siren of a police motor-bike. A patrolman had heard the crash and was coming to investigate.

"Beat it—quick!" Sally gasped to her chums. "He'll want our names as witnesses—and we're not supposed to be out!"

Never had they covered the ground faster—not even on the college cinder-track. Sally found her way in the dark with a skill that a cat might have envied. She was thinking of to-morrow night's dance. It would never do to get hauled up before the dean for breaking bounds to-night. He might refuse them a late pass to-morrow!

It was an unnerving moment, when they reached the road again under the very college walls, to hear the patrolman's bike droning behind them.

"Say, he's following us!" gasped Johnny.

"He didn't see us. How could he?" Don whispered breathlessly.

Sally dumped her parcels down, and climbed nimbly on to the top of the wall. The rest of the parcels were handed to her rapidly. In two shakes the chums were over the other side, racing softly and safely across the campus—the boys to their chalet, the girls to their own.

At breakfast next morning, in the college cafeteria, Sally & Co. were surrounded jubilantly by their chums of J House.

"Did you get the costumes, Sally?"

"Yes, all of them for our crowd," Sally

answered radiantly. "The whole pack of diamonds!"

Whoops of joy came from Bunty Shane and Micky Rogers and all the rest of Sally & Co.'s chosen party. It had been Sally's idea that they should represent the suit of diamonds at the fancy-dress dance to-night. The king and jack of diamonds were Don and Johnny. Sally was queen. Fay was ace. The rest represented each of the remaining cards in the suit, their dresses as novel and colourful as Sally's ingenuity could plan them, and designed by the skill of a Roxburgh costumier who had formerly been wardrobe mistress at the Follies Theatre.

Jubilation at the breakfast table wasn't spilt now by a cautious remark from Pat Waters—who was as lovable as she was superstitious.

"There's only one thing against this diamonds idea, Sally," she murmured tentatively. "There's thirteen in the pack, and thirteen's an unlucky number!"

She was interrupted by a pompous step in the doorway. Mr. Grittall, Head of J House, stood there, his face inscrutable but grim as he called for silence.

"The boys," he said carefully—"the boys will assemble in main hall immediately after breakfast. The dean wishes to speak to you. The boys only!"

He retired then, in his impressive way, and Sally and the other girls indulged in much speculation as to why the dean should want to see only the boys.

The boys having departed, Sally took the girls of her party along to her chalet, and showed them the costumes. Their glittering tinsel diamonds looked stunning in the sunny daylight. The humorously ornate king and jack suits drew forth peals of ecstasy.

"What about having a try-on and a parade before lecture—in costume?" came excitedly from Bunty Shane.

"Gee, yes!" whooped Sally. "Any sign of the boys yet? Let's get their costumes all ready for them!"

Carefully Sally unpacked the costumes, and with the girls' help removed the pins and pressed out the creases. Then, amid much laughter, they donned the attractive costumes.

"Oh, Sally, you do look sweet!" burst out Fay impulsively, glancing at her chum.

Sally gave a mock curtsy, dimpling with pleasure.

"Thank you, ma'am! Now—all ready? Then off we go to meet the boys." And brightly she led them along main hall.

They hadn't emerged from the dean's presence yet. The door was closed, scarcely a murmur breaking the austere hush within. Sally winked at the girls. Wonderful how quiet and demure the boys could be while the dean was addressing them.

Then the door swung open at last—but no boisterous clamour broke out.

The boys crowded down the steps in a kind of stunned silence.

The girls rippled with amusement. Sally made a rush for Don and Johnny and Micky.

"Come on, boys! Just time for a fancy-dress parade!" she cried. "Rehearsal for to-night's dance!"

But the boys didn't respond. Their faces were drawn and glum. They stood quite still. Then Don said in a flat voice:

"There won't be any dance to-night, Sally—not for us!"

A chill swept Sally. She was aware of a tense hush amongst the girls—a glum cloud on the faces of all the boys.

"What?" she whispered.

"Seems that one of the fellows took the dean's car out last night, without permission, and had a smash!" Don said in strained tones. "No one would own up. So the dean's gated the lot of us—all the fellows! It means that we're barred the dance to-night!"

GLOOMIER THAN EVER!



THE shock left Sally mute. She gazed in stricken dismay at Don and Johnny, trying to collect her thoughts, while all around her she heard the voices of the other girls:

"No boys!"

"Gated for the dance to-night!"

"But—but what are we going to do? It won't be any fun without the boys!"

"Oh, it isn't fair! It's punishing everybody all for the sake of one!" And now disappointment rose in an outburst. "Who took the car, boys? Who was he? Make him own up!"

Sally's gaze travelled over the crowd of boys, but all were seething with righteous indignation, all looked guiltless, and her thoughts flew off at a tangent—to that mysterious scene she had witnessed last night. The motor smash, and the runaway driver!

"If the fellows here amongst us now, and he has any sense of honour, he'll speak up!" she heard Don saying tensely. "If he doesn't, he'll not only cheat all us chaps from going to the dance to-night. He'll let the girls down. He'll leave them without partners and spoil the fun for them all! Does he hear that?"

Everyone waited—the hush was painful—but no response came from any of the boys. The door opened behind them, and the dean came silently down the steps, ushered by Mr. Grittall.

"Go to your quarters, everybody—don't stand talking here!" Mr. Grittall ordered in hollow tones. "If the culprit is a member of J House, I despise him for not coming forward!"

All the gaiety had gone; dejection hung over everybody, as boys and girls dispersed in seething groups. Sally moved away with Don, Fay and Pat following with Johnny. The breaking up of their party to-night, the prospect of going to the dance without the boys, just made the dance itself seem an empty mockery.

"Then that smash we saw last night, Don," Sally said tremblingly, "it was the dean's car?"

"That was it!" muttered Don. "That was why the fellow at the wheel scooted, Sally, before we could get to him!"

Sally gave a start.

"But, Don," she burst out, "I caught a glimpse of him as he was running away. A tall, clumsy-looking fellow. You saw him. Are you sure—?" She broke off, then burst out excitedly: "I don't believe it was one of our fellows at all!"

"What?" Her words startled both Don and Johnny. "But who else could have taken the dean's car?"

"I don't know. Anybody," Sally rushed on wildly. "All I know is that he didn't look to me like one of the students, and I'm certain he wasn't. His figure—"

"There's plenty of our chaps as tall as that," put in Don.

"But I know what Sally means!" Johnny cried. "He was a lumbering sort of figure. Besides, remember the way he was driving? There isn't a chap in J or K who can't handle a car better than that!"

"Gee, you're right there!" gasped Don.

"You boys are being blamed, and I'm certain it was somebody else!" panted Sally.

"Then why not go to the dean, Sally, and tell him what you saw—?" began Pat excitedly, then broke off in mute dismay.

The chums had slumped again into helpless despair.

"That's just what we can't do!" Sally said with a groan. "We had no right to be out! It would make things worse instead of better if the dean knew we were breaking bounds. There's no hope at all unless someone owns up to taking the car, or"—she paused, her eyes

smouldering—"or unless we could prove who it was!"

How could they prove it? That problem tormented Sally throughout the long hours of morning lecture. Her suspicion might be wrong. That hazy figure in the night might after all have been one of the students, though she still didn't believe it.

She hurried across to Fay and Pat immediately they dismissed from lecture.

"Look here, we're going to find out a bit more about this car business!" she told them vigorously. "We know where the smash happened, and we're going to examine the car, if it's still there, for clues!"

"The driver wouldn't have left any clues!" Fay said dismally.

"It's a chance," insisted Sally. "Even if it's only one in a million. Come along!"

Not very hopefully, Fay and Pat set off with her on the ten-minute walk to the cross-roads. They came to the fringe of the field, to the tree with its bark ripped away where the car had collided. But a groan came from Fay as soon as she sighted it.

"No good, Sally. The car's gone!" Sally swallowed her dismay and ran across to the tree. Fay and Pat were following her listlessly when she gave an excited shout.

"Footprints—look!—where the driver ran away! Buck up, you two—see where they lead to!"

Her chums brightened instantly and dashed to join her. It wasn't easy to pick out the trail in the loose leaf-mould. But when one lost it, another found it. Soon they were wending their way deep into the woods, led unswervingly by the footprints of the runaway in his flight last night. Engrossed in their task, they lost all count of direction till suddenly a familiar wall loomed up beyond the trees.

"It's the coll.,!" Sally said faintly. "That's where he went—over that wall!" gasped Fay. "It was one of our chaps, you see, after all!"

Sally frowned. She could see plainly the marks on the wall where the culprit had climbed over. It proved beyond doubt that it was someone belonging to the college. Yet still she wouldn't give up. She swung herself over the wall, and she was searching the ground on the other side when Pat and Fay joined her.

"You won't find any clue here, Sally," Fay began.

"Won't I?" And in sudden excitement Sally pounced on a small object lying in the soil. "Whose is this? It's something the bounder dropped last night!"

It was a stub of pencil she had picked up, and there were initials cut into the blunt end of it: "T. C."

"Gee, you're on a clue there, Sally!" Pat burst out. "If we can trace the owner by those initials—"

"Out of four hundred fellows?" put in Fay with a shaky smile. "Well, I can think of a dozen first go. There's Tim Cameron, Tom Cook, Tony Curtis, Tony Clegg—"

But Sally was gazing closely at the pencil, not at the initials. Its yellow wood was stained a deep black in places, she noticed, but those stains were curious. They were not ink stains.

"Blacking!" she murmured, a queer glimmer in her eyes. "Now who in the coll. uses blacking?"

"Nobody that I know of," Fay said, staring. "Only the bootboy."

"Young Chivvy!" And Sally gave a jump. "Chivers! Golly, I don't know what his first name is! But the second initial fits—and the blacking fits! Wait here, Pat and Fay. I'm going to have a talk with Chivers."

She was dashing off towards the college kitchens before they could blink, leaving them standing gaping in the bushes.

The kitchens were close to that point in the wall. That was the first thought that struck Sally now as she made for the kitchen door. If any of the staff—if Chivers, for instance—had been forced to make a hurried return over the college wall, he couldn't have chosen a handier spot.

Then with a start she paused, her hand in the very act of pushing open the kitchen door. Someone was talking on the service telephone, just inside that door, and it was Chivers.

"Hallo, Bessie! That you?" Sally heard him saying in furtive tones. "Tom speaking. You heard what happened after I left you last night? It's all O.K. Nothing to worry about, as long as you don't let on. Eh, what's that? No, they haven't found anything of mine—and they won't. I believe in locking up my luggage, eh?" And he gave a nervous laugh.

Sally held her breath. Luggage? What could he mean? Was he talking about the car—about something he had carried in it?

"They're bringing it back here at five," Chivers went on in a meaning tone. "Soon as it comes, I've got the key, and I'll— Oh!" He broke off with a jump.

In her excitement Sally had leaned too heavily on the door. It swung open and sent her toppling almost headlong against Chivers.

"D-did you want me, Miss Sally?" he spluttered.

"It's all right!" Sally gasped, improvising swiftly. "I only came about the boys' shoes."

"Why?" His rather tall, gawky figure fidgeted curiously, and his eyes were shifty. "All the young gents are gated—they won't want their shoes to-night."

"That's what I came to say," Sally said disarmingly. "I just thought you ought to know, Chivvy." And with a nod she hurried out.

Were her suspicions true? Was it Chivers' guilty conscience that made him nervous? He didn't know that she had overheard what he was saying on the phone. None the less, Sally was taking no chances. He could see her from the kitchen door. So deliberately she walked in the opposite direction from her chums in the bushes, making a detour all round the outbuildings.

Fay and Pat peeped out impatiently from the bushes, but it was several minutes before Sally breathlessly joined them at last.

"Where have you been, Sally?" they both clamoured. "You didn't think Chivers had anything to do with it?"

"I've got strong suspicions!" Sally answered in soft excitement. "If the dean's car comes back at five this evening, from repair, then I'll prove that Chivers knew something about it!"

"Chivers?" gasped her chums, while Sally briefly recounted what he had told his friend Bessie on the phone.

"If it's the car he was talking about, then there's some of Chivvy's stuff locked in the luggage dickey that would give him away," she finished up softly. "We've got to beat him to it. We're going to get hold of that evidence first—and make him answer for it!"

"Goody—!" Fay and Pat began breathlessly; but with a finger to her lips Sally swiftly silenced them.

She heard a faint movement somewhere behind the bushes. Without another word the chums drifted unobtrusively away, to put their plans into preparation. Only one thing was needed—a key to fit the luggage dickey of the dean's car. It was a standard make of car. Sally whispered a word to Don—the whisper was passed quietly amongst all the boys who owned cars—and before Sally went into lecture that afternoon, a key of the identical pattern was safely in her pocket.

It seemed a long afternoon, but it was over at last. Shortly before five, Sally and Fay and Pat gathered in their chalet, The boys kept an eye on the dean's garage. The

girls donned raincoats and hoods to defy any risk of recognition. Shortly after five, the repaired car droned through the gates and was duly returned by the mechanic to the dean's garage.

The door was no sooner locked and the coast clear than Don and Johnny gave the signal.

"Good luck, girls!" they breathed.

While the boys took up ambush near the kitchen, ready to waylay Chivers if he emerged too soon upon his own errand, Sally & Co. darted under cover to the back of the dean's garage.

No moment could have been better timed. All was still and deserted. The garage stood detached at the side of the dean's house, and its back window could not be seen from anyone inside the house.

Noislessly Sally raised the flap of the window and propped it wide open. Noislessly she wriggled through and dropped down into the gloom of the garage. Her hand dived eagerly to her pocket as she saw the car standing there, its locked dickey backed towards the door. Her eyes glistened up at Fay and Pat, who were clambering in after her through the window.

"Get inside and hide. Be ready to pounce on Chivvy when he comes!" she whispered to them.

Then, key in hand, she darted to the back of the car. She was fumbling in the dark for the lock of the dickey, when there was the sudden ominous rasp of a heavier lock.

"Who's here? Who is it?" cried a stern voice—and the garage door was flung open.

Sally caught one hair-raising glimpse of the figure framed there. It was the dean!

Then round she spun. At a dive she leapt for the open window. The hooded figures of Fay and Pat grabbed her out to safety. All three were scurrying like hares into the shrubbery before the dean could grasp his senses.

"How did he happen along?" gasped Sally.

"Awful luck!" panted Pat.

"He didn't recognise us—didn't have time!"

puffed Fay.

That was their only consolation, as Sally led a breathless flight through the shrubbery and over the fence into the wooded fringe bordering the campus. Their hoods had saved them from recognition. They whisked them off now and began feverishly hiding them in the trees.

But their relief was short-lived. The great bell suddenly pealed out over main hall. It was the assembly bell!

"Gee!" gasped Sally. "The dean's mustering the whole coll!"

Foreboding seized all three as they joined the hurrying throngs all making for the main hall.

On the rostrum stood the dean, very pale, very stern. Sally's face was pale as she gazed mutely at Don and Johnny who had joined her. What had she done to make the dean go to this extreme? Why summon the whole college? Suspense was agonising till silence fell at last.

"Members of the college," the dean began heavily, "I do not, as a rule, pay heed to anonymous communications. But to-day, in the interests of justice, I felt it my duty to do so. An anonymous note was sent to me, explaining why none of the boys would confess to borrowing my car last night, and telling me how I could catch the real culprits!"

Sally's heart thudded. An anonymous note! Who—who could have sent that note except someone—

"I know now," the dean went on remorselessly, "that the real culprits were not boys, but girls of the college. They have betrayed themselves to-day, in an attempt to remove any trace of their guilt. I withdraw the ban I imposed on the boys, and instead"—he

measured each word—"every girl will be confined to college until further orders!"

IN THE DEAN'S GARAGE!



THE blow fell like a bombshell on the girls. It was the second blow, and it was even more devastating than the first—for it released their boy partners, only to cheat them in turn of company at that ill-fated dance!

Sally groped her way out of the hall, her face white and her blue eyes blazing.

"I'm wondering if it was Chivers who sent that anonymous note!" she said, panting. "It could have been Chivers. If he thought I suspected him, he might have been snooping in the bushes when I was talking to Fay and Pat!"

Fay and Pat nodded agreement.

"What do you think, Sally?" asked Don tensely. "It's only a suspicion against Chivers, but if we could prove it—"

"Wait!" Sally cut in.

She was calmer now. There was need of a calm head, she realised. The boys were furious, the girls were openly rebellious. It would be madness if they defied the dean's ban—madness to accuse Chivers without some kind of proof. But something had got to be done. Sally was never more determined in her life. Somehow they were all going to that dance!

"Cut off to your chalets and get dressed, girls!" she said in a queer, breathless tone. "Get into your costumes and stay put. Leave the rest to me!"

"What's the idea, Sally?"

"What are you going to do?"

They all swarmed round her in a state of excitement, but Sally would answer no questions. She hustled them off to their chalets. Then lingered for an earnest talk with Don and Johnny before hurrying off to her own chalet with Fay and Pat.

A restless stillness descended over the college.

Dusk came, and it was getting near to the hour of the dance, but it might have been any ordinary commonplace evening. Lights twinkled in the boys' chalets, and not a single boy emerged to go off to that partnerless dance.

Don and Johnny pushed across to the cafeteria at last, where plump Mrs. Barwell was polishing the counter before closing up for the evening.

"Have you seen Chivers, Mrs. Barwell?" Don asked carelessly. "There's a girl looking for him—name of Bessie Something."

"Bessie Mullins?" Mrs. Barwell inquired.

"That's it!" said Don.

"I suppose she's all right," murmured Johnny, "only she was hanging round the dean's house, by the garage, and I wondered if—"

"I don't know what to make of that girl or Chivers, either, Mr. Johnny—they both fly their kites a lot too high," put in Mrs. Barwell warmly. "Thank you, I'll tell him!"

CHIVERS was brilliantining his hair in front of the kitchen mirror, and admiring the vivid pattern of his new tie. He was meeting Bessie Mullins at seven-thirty. He liked her to see what a smart guy he was, and Bessie expected it.

Couldn't always take her joyriding, of course, like last night. But they could go to that swell new soda fountain off East Street.

"Chivers!" The door opened and Mrs. Barwell put her head in. "That girl Bessie's

(Please turn to the back page.)



JEAN'S THRILLING WINTER SPORTS HOLIDAY

(Continued
from
page 424.)

in the chalet to whom he could have appealed. And although Kim did not know it, every second was precious if the plot against Carolyn was to be foiled.

What could he do? What could any dog, even the cleverest, do in a situation of this kind? He gave a series of worried little yelps.

And then suddenly he was silent. He stood as still as a statue, his magnificent head raised, every nerve tense and alert. What was that sound he could hear coming from the cupboard?

It was a peculiar little whistle, and it stirred his doggy memory.

It was the whistle Jean gave every morning when she went to the stables at Rainbow Ranch. They were kept padlocked, and Jean had trained Kim to fetch the key which always hung on a certain nail in the kitchen. That little whistle was the signal for him to fetch the key.

But they were not at Rainbow Ranch now. There were no stables here; no key hanging from its familiar nail in the kitchen.

But still Jean kept giving that peculiar little whistle.

"Kim, please understand!" her urgent, pleading voice reached him.

She wanted something—the whistle told him that. Quivering in every nerve, he stared this way and that; peered into every corner of the room. And suddenly his gaze fixed on a gleaming object lying in one corner.

It was a key. It was, in fact, the key of the cupboard door, which Leslie Roper in his anger had pulled out of the lock and thrown away.

Kim, of course, didn't know what key it was. But it was much the same shape and size as the key of the stable padlock, and it was linked in his mind with the whistled call Jean kept making from the cupboard.

Was that what she wanted? Kim's whole body fairly quivered with excitement as in one swift bound he reached it. Head lowered, neck stretched out, he contrived to pick it up, and trotted back with it to the cupboard, his tail slowly waving to and fro.

He dropped it with a tinkling sound close to the cupboard door, and then waited, head on one side.

"You've understood, Kim!" Jean's glad voice reached him. "But I want the key in here, boy—in here!"

There was a gap between the bottom of the door and the floor, and she bent down, pushing her finger-tips through. Kim's first instinct was to jump forward and give those fingers a warm lick.

Then he remembered the key, and he sprang back, whimpering eagerly. With a deft fore-paw he patted the key closer to the cupboard, until at last Jean's fingers could grasp it.

"You wonder, Kim! You've rescued me!" gasped Jean.

It was the work of a few seconds to open the door. Kim's joyful bark rang out as Jean appeared and dropped on one knee beside him, examining him from head to foot and breathing a sigh of relief when she found how slight his injury was.

"If the bullet had been a few inches lower it—" she whispered.

She put the thought away from her, with a final hug of that sleek neck. Then she glanced at her wrist-watch, surprised that so little time had passed.

"We've got to catch up with Carolyn, boy!" she exclaimed, straightening up. "We've got to make her understand that she mustn't run away. We have got the proof now that Leslie Roper is plotting mischief!"

They covered the snowy track to the starting-point in record time, but as they neared the flag that marked the start of the race, a cheer rang out from the spectators and the line of skiers swooped away down the first lap of the course.

"You're too late, Jean!" someone exclaimed. "You'll never catch them now!"

Jean hardly heard those words as, with trembling fingers, she strapped on her skis. Her father had taught her to ski almost as soon as she could walk, and she meant to make the biggest effort of her life now.

She paused only for a whispered word to Kim, and then darted away, crouching forward, her ski-sticks trailing behind her, the cold air whistling past.

The trail zigzagged down the mountainside. She knew that Kim would be able to take short cuts, and would not be far behind her. She had a feeling that she might need his splendid strength and courage before long.

"Say, that girl will come to grief at the first bend at the pace she's going!" burst out one of the watchers. "She'll go right over the edge!"

The first bend was a tricky one, with a steep slope beyond its outer edge. It would certainly be very easy, by taking the bend too fast, to fly over the edge and flounder in the snowdrifts below. But Jean took it easily.

Now she could see the racers spread out before her. Like a flash, she threaded her way through a bunch who were lagging behind; then soared round another bend. She caught a startled gasp from Sadie Miller as she swept past her.

"Gee! Was that Jean—or was it a streak of greased lightning?" panted Sadie, striving to keep her balance on a difficult stretch. "That girl has certainly got what it takes to make a ski-racer. She's passing them all, and she didn't even start with the rest of us!"

Never did Jean forget that swift downward rush, with the wind singing in her ears, and in her heart the firm resolve to save Carolyn from the mysterious plot that was being hatched around her.

Another racer was passed, and another. Only two remained ahead of her now, and she was quite sure that they were Leslie and Carolyn, speeding side by side.

They were at a lonely part of the course. Not a single spectator was in sight here; only the loneliness of the snow-clad peaks rose up all around them.

And suddenly Jean caught her breath.

A dark, narrow valley opened out to the left of them, and Leslie was steering Carolyn towards it. It was beyond this gap, no doubt, that the sleigh would be waiting to take Carolyn away.

"Carolyn! Don't go—don't go!" Jean called breathlessly.

But the rising wind blew her voice away long before it reached the pair who were vanish-

ing into that shadowy gap. Jean could only set her lips and swerve into the valley behind them.

It was much harder going here. Fallen tree-trunks and boulders littered the trail, and Jean could go at little more than a walking pace. She heard a pattering sound and an eager whimper behind her, and, looking round, saw to her joy that it was Kim, plastered with snow and as breathless as herself.

How good it was to feel she had her four-footed chum by her side again! Somehow or other, by taking short cuts, he had contrived to catch up with her. But now, as they struggled on, she heard an anxious little whimper break from the Alsatian.

Kim, born and bred in the West, was a weather-wise dog. He could read the signs of a coming storm much better than Jean could.

His sharp ears had already caught the distant scream of the storm wind sweeping towards them from the north-west. And he well knew the significance of those dark clouds scurrying across the sky. A gleam of puzzlement showed in his faithful eyes as he glanced up at Jean.

"We ought to be seeking shelter, instead of going farther into the wilds," he seemed to be telling her. "But you know best, of course."

And he wagged his tail and sprang closer to Jean, as if to assure her that he was by her side, come what might.

Jean's mind was too intent on her quest to notice the weather. Breathlessly she pressed on. She had taken off her skis now, for they were useless over this rough ground. And suddenly, as she rounded a snow-custed boulder, she gave a startled cry.

Carolyn and her cousin were at the end of the valley, and the first thing Jean saw was a sleigh drawn by two horses, with Carolyn just climbing into it, reaching out to grasp the reins.

She had taken Leslie's advice. In the sleigh he had provided she evidently intended to drive up the northward trail to some refuge far from Mountain Falls.

And Leslie Roper—where was he? Next moment Jean glimpsed him. Having conducted Carolyn to the sleigh, he was now skiing along a path that would bring him back to the ski-race course again. And as he rounded a bend Jean just caught sight of a slim, girlish figure darting out from the bushes to join him, and skiing by his side till they were lost to view in the spruce trees.

A cry of amazement left Jean's lips, for at last she had an inkling of the cunning plan Leslie Roper meant to carry out.

And already Carolyn was grasping the reins and urging the horses forward.

"Carolyn! Don't drive away—please!" Jean called frantically.

This time her voice reached the fair girl's ears, and as she glanced over her shoulder and saw Jean and Kim, that look of terror came over her face again. She shook the reins, urging the horses to a gallop.

"We must stop her, Kim!" Jean panted. "Stop her, boy! Quickly!"

Without her dog Jean would have been helpless, for already the horses were breaking into a gallop. But next instant Kim was leaping forward like a dark streak across the snow; breaking into a volley of excited barks, he drew level with the horses.

Jean caught her breath at what happened next. There was a snowy bank close by, and as the horses swerved away from Kim the sleigh shot over the edge. For a moment it looked as if the horses would go down, too, but next instant, with a sharp, snapping sound, the traces broke.

The horses galloped away, seeking the shelter of the woods, and the sleigh and Carolyn and Kim all rolled down the bank together.

When Jean reached the spot she found Carolyn lying propped against the overturned sleigh. Pale-faced and wide-eyed, the fair girl looked from Jean to Kim in helpless terror.

"So you—caught me!" she breathed. "Les tried to save me, but he failed. I'm trapped!"

Jean dropped on one knee beside the frightened girl.

"Carolyn! Please listen!" she burst out. "Ever since you first met me and Kim you've been scared, and I don't know why. We're not your enemies, we're your friends. We want to help you! Can't you believe me?"

But Carolyn's fear-stricken eyes had turned to Kim's new collar, with those three carved beetles set in its metal-work.

"It's the jade beetles that are worrying you!" Jean exclaimed. "Look! This is what I think of them!"

She unclasped the collar and flung it away into the snow.

"I never liked them, and neither did Kim," she went on breathlessly. "They were sent to me by some unknown person who asked me to wear them at Mountain Falls. It was a trick to make you afraid, Carolyn—though I still don't understand it. Just look at Kim! Do you think a dog like that could harm you?"

For Kim was doing his best to make friends with this strange girl. He had nuzzled her hand with his cool muzzle, whimpering softly. Now he sat back on his haunches, holding out his forepaw to shake hands with her.

It was that action of Kim's which, at last, seemed to conquer the fair girl's fears. A little colour crept back into her cheeks, and the look of terror had changed to puzzlement.

"Maybe I've been wrong," she breathed. "You mean to say you're not a member of the Secret Six?"

"The Secret Six? I've never even heard of them!" Jean burst out. "I'm just Jean Wayland from Rainbow Ranch, and this is my dog Kim. But there is some underhand plot being hatched against you, and we've got to get back to the chalet and stop it."

And now at last Jean became aware of what was happening around her, and her heart sank.

She and Kim had achieved their purpose of getting Carolyn to trust them. But now another obstacle lay in their path.

Like a dark curtain, the blizzard was sweeping down between them and the Mountain Falls Chalet.

No doubt the rest of the party from the Chalet had already reached shelter, but Jean and Carolyn and Kim were cut off in this lonely valley.

Carolyn's urgent voice came to her ears.

"I sprained my ankle when I rolled down the slope, Jean!" she exclaimed. "You'd better leave me here, while you and Kim hurry back to the Chalet before it's too late. If there's some crooked work going on, you'll be able to deal with it. I'll be O.K. here."

The scream of the wind seemed to mock her words, while Kim swung round and, with lifted head, barked defiance to the storm.

A PLOT UNMASKED



"LEAVE you alone?" Jean laughed breathlessly. "Kim and I don't do things like that, Carolyn. We're sticking together, all three of us."

Already Jean was getting busy. In the back of the sleigh was packed a small sleigh, which was sometimes towed behind it. Jean lifted this out and harnessed Kim to it.

"I'll help pull as well," she panted. "And between us we'll have you back at the Chalet in no time, Carolyn."

In spite of Carolyn's protests, she helped her on to the sleigh, and made her as comfortable as possible.

"Mush, Kim!" Jean cried, giving the well-known signal with which sleigh-drivers start their dog teams. "And I'll mush, too, boy! We'll win through between us!"

She spoke gaily, confidently. But she well

knew the peril of the Canadian blizzard; she knew how fatally easy it would be to lose their way and wander helplessly into the storm, until they had strength to go no farther.

She was trusting Kim, trusting his wonderful instinct to see them through.

"Why don't you leave me, Jean?" Carolyn's appeal reached her ears during a brief lull in the wind. "You might make it on your own, but you'll never do it with me to hamper you!"

Jean's only answer was to shake her head doggedly and struggle on.

Yet, as time passed, Jean's hope slowly faded, though she would not admit it. They seemed to be lost in a world of blinding whiteness.

Where were they? Had even Kim's sense of direction failed him? Were they wandering farther and farther into the wilds?

She felt her strength slowly ebbing. Every limb ached, and she was numb with cold. She stumbled as she tugged at the rope, her steps faltering.

And at last, with a despairing cry, she could go no farther. She stopped, swaying on her feet.

"I'm through, Carolyn—finished!" she gasped out. "I just can't go another step! I'm sorry—"

Half-fainting, she sank on to the snow beside the sleigh. She felt the fair girl's arm around her shoulder.

"Oh, Jean, why didn't you save yourself when I begged you to?" Carolyn whispered. "You could have reached shelter if it hadn't been for me. Look, your dog is wiser than you are. He means to save himself, and I don't blame him."

Kim was certainly behaving strangely.

For a few moments he had stood looking back at Jean, as she sank exhausted against the sleigh. Now he was frantically snapping at the traces which secured him to the sleigh, biting them through with his strong white teeth, till he had freed himself.

Then he gave one deep bark, and vanished into the curtain of falling snow.

"He's gone!" Carolyn breathed. "And—and we're alone, Jean!"

With the wind-driven snow piling around them, the two girls clung together.

THE fascinating rhythm of a South American tango drifted through Mountain Falls Chalet. The gay throng of dancers took little heed of the blizzard that was howling outside.

A huge log-fire blazed in the big hall, which had been cleared for dancing. Leslie Roper was there, full of high spirits. And a fair girl whom everyone called Carolyn was standing with a grey-haired lady and gentleman near a small table on which stood a silver cup and a large jewel-case.

The lady and gentleman had arrived at the Chalet just before the blizzard broke, as the skiers and spectators were hurrying back to shelter. Everyone knew that they were Carolyn Kent's uncle and aunt, who had acted as her guardians since the death of her father.

"I guess they're glad it was Carolyn who won the race," said Eric Yorke, who was partnering Sadie Miller. "It was sure a smart piece of work for her and Les to take that risky short-cut through Pine Valley. And she just beat Les by a short head."

Sadie nodded rather doubtfully.

"All the same, that race seems to have changed Carolyn," she replied. "I spoke to her just now, and she just gave me a haughty nod and turned away. And she always used to be so friendly."

"Oh, well! Maybe she's getting het up about the Kent emeralds," grinned Eric. "I guess even you might get a bit swollen-headed, Sadie, if you were going to be presented with an emerald necklace worth a fortune."

Everyone knew that the Kent emeralds were a family heirloom which had been left to Carolyn by her father, though up to now the jewels had been in the care of her uncle and aunt.

To-night Mr. Kent was to present them to Carolyn, and everyone was agog to catch a glimpse of these famous jewels.

At that moment the tango came to an end, and with a burst of clapping, Mr. Kent took up his stand behind the small table, beaming at the happy throng.

"Well, folks, you know why I'm here," he smiled. "I have to present this silver-cup to the winner of your ski race this afternoon, and I must say I'm very pleased to know my niece won it. Step up, Carolyn, my dear, and take your prize."

Everyone noticed how nervous the fair girl looked. She glanced at Les Roper, who smiled encouragingly at her. Then she stepped forward and Mr. Kent handed her the cup amidst a round of applause.

"And now a little family ceremony, if you folks will pardon us," went on Carolyn's uncle. "I want to present a family heirloom to Carolyn."

He snapped open the lid of the jewel-case and took from it a necklace of gleaming, winking emeralds.

A gasp of admiration broke from everyone. As for the fair girl, she gazed at the glittering stones as if she could not take her eyes off them. Leslie Roper, too, took an eager step forward, his breath coming quickly.

Mr. Kent lifted the necklace to slip it round the fair girl's neck.

But he was interrupted. There came a sudden dull thud at the door, which fairly shook the woodwork. It was repeated, echoing above the shrill scream of the wind.

"Ma foi! Is it zat someone is out zere in ze storm?" exclaimed Pierre Dupont. "One moment, please, ladies and gentlemen! Pardon me!"

While all gazed wonderingly, he stepped to the door and unbarred it, throwing it open to let in a flurry of snow.

And he let something else in, too!

A big dog, plastered with snow from head to foot, sprang into the brightly-lighted hall. He shook himself, sending a shower of glittering snow all around him. Then he threw back his head and uttered a deep bark.

"It's Jean's dog!" gasped Sadie. "Then where is Jean herself? What—"

Les Roper had recognised the dog, too, and a look of anger—of fear—flickered in his dark eyes.

But Kim had no time for Leslie now. The big Alsatian sprang back to the door, looking at them all over his shoulder, barking and whimpering.

And still they couldn't understand what he wanted them to do. Pierre Dupont made as if to close the door, but Kim jumped at him, driving him back. Kim wanted that door left open.

"He's trying to tell us something," Sadie murmured. "He—look!"

The glitter of the emeralds held by Mr. Kent had caught Kim's eye, and into his doggie mind had flashed a memory of Rainbow Ranch. He had been having a romp with Jean and some of her chums, and just for fun he had grabbed a necklace belonging to Jean and had raced out with it into the yard, and they had all chased him.

That was all he wanted now. He wanted these human folk to follow him a little way into the storm.

Again he uttered his deep bark. Then he sprang to the little table where Mr. Kent was standing, the necklace still held loosely in his hands. Before they could stop him, Kim had leapt up and caught the glittering necklace between his teeth, jerking it from Mr. Kent's grasp.

The winking, glittering gems dangling from his jaws, Kim sped back to the open door and leapt into the whirling snow.

"Stop him!" Carolyn's uncle managed to gasp out. "That necklace is worth fifty thousand dollars! After him!"

THE MERRYMAKERS AT COLLEGE

(Continued from page 436.)

If Kim had wanted to create a sensation, he had certainly succeeded. Half a dozen men and boys, huddling on their fur-lined parkas, chased him into the blizzard.

They could see Kim waiting, glancing back over his shoulder, some distance from the doorway. He stayed there until his pursuers had nearly caught him, and then ran on, still grasping the necklace.

So Kim led them into the storm, till at last they reached the spot where two exhausted and half-fainting girls lay in each other's arms on a tiny sleigh.

When Jean's strength had finally ebbed away she had not been more than a hundred yards from the chalet, though she had never dreamed she was so close to friends and safety. But Kim had known, and had bitten through his harness so that he could fetch help.

But when the two girls were carried into the chalet a gasp of wonderment went up.

"But this can't be Carolyn, my niece!" Mr. Kent exclaimed, staring incredulously. "Carolyn is here—she's been here all the time. I was just going to present her with the necklace."

But the girl who had been impersonating Carolyn was no longer there, nor was her accomplice, Leslie Roper. Both had preferred to sneak away and endure the dangers of the blizzard rather than face up to certain exposure.

Jean and the real Carolyn were not long in recovering from their ordeal, and bit by bit the whole truth of Leslie Roper's cunning scheme came to light.

Years ago, it seemed, Carolyn's father had helped to put down the activities of a society known as the Secret Six, whose badge was a carved jade beetle, and some of its members had vowed vengeance on Mr. Kent and his family.

Carolyn had never forgotten that vow. Always at the back of her mind had been the fear that one day she would see the jade beetle again and would know that the sinister society was seeking vengeance.

Leslie Roper had cunningly played on that fear. It was he who had sent Jean the mysterious invitation to Mountain Falls, asking her to wear the brooch bearing the sign of the Secret Six and to let Kim wear a collar with three more of the sinister jade beetles.

That was the reason for the strange fear the fair girl had shown at first sight of Jean and Kim. And, as Leslie had hoped, she had become so terror-stricken that she had consented to disappear.

Leslie's partner in crime was a girl who very much resembled Carolyn, and he had intended to let her take Carolyn's place, so that they could make away with the Kent emeralds.

And at supper that night Mr. Kent expressed his gratitude to Jean and her wonder dog.

"And I want to say this, folks," he beamed. "Everyone agrees that Jean was the best skier in the race, and would have won if she hadn't turned aside to help Carolyn. We all want her to accept the silver cup, and I only wish I had another one to give to her wonderful dog."

Later on Jean received a beautiful diamond pendant from Mr. Kent as a mark of gratitude, but most of all she valued the whispered words of Carolyn.

"I was afraid of you both when I first met you," Jean said softly. "Now I know you are the grandest pair of pals anyone could have. I'll never forget what you did for me—never!"

And as if to add to their happiness, the blizzard blew itself out before morning and the sun shone once again.

So, after all Jean and Kim were able to enjoy the finest winter holiday of their lives.

THE END.

THE GIPSY VIOLINIST'S WARNING—that is the title of next Friday's grand long complete.

called for you, and you'd better tell her to come here to the kitchen another time!"

"Why? Where is she?" asked Chivers rudely. "She's hanging round the dean's garage, and there's been enough trouble in that quarter," quietly answered Mrs. Barwell.

Chivers gave such a jump that he dropped his comb and upset the brilliantine. Bessie snooping round the garage! She must be crazy. Did she want to give him away? Why didn't she meet him down at the ferry, as he told her?

Bursting out of the kitchen, he dashed round the outbuildings to the back of the dean's garage.

Funny! No sign of Bessie anywhere here. Then his gaze went to the garage window, and he nearly had a fit. The window-flap was wide open!

Quivering with wrath and agitation, Chivers ran across to it and put his head inside.

"Bessie!" he whispered hoarsely.

"That you, Tom?" came a girl's whisper from the gloomy interior.

"Well, of all the lunatics!" he hissed. "D'you want to get me the sack? What are you doing in there?"

"Come to get my purse," the girl hissed back. "You locked it in with your luggage last night."

"Your purse?" gasped Chivers, climbing through the window into the dark garage. "I never even saw it. Here, I'll soon show you're mistaken. I've never had a chance to unlock the dickey since we took the car out. You can see for yourself there's no purse there."

Click! And in the darkness he found the lock and snapped open the luggage dickey.

Click! And in that same moment the garage door burst open and the light snapped on.

"We've heard all you said, Chivers!" came the grim voices of Don and Johnny.

"Every word!" cried the dean's voice behind them. "And every word from the girl Bessie, too!"

Then the dean suddenly swayed as his gaze fell upon the girl hovering in the corner.

It was Sally Warner!

"I'll talk to you later, Chivers!" the dean said faintly; and he turned to Don and Johnny. "You led me here, telling me that you could hear suspicious voices. Am I to understand that you knew, all the time we were listening, that the girl was Miss Warner?"

"It was the only way to get the truth out of Chivers, sir!" Sally spoke up.

The dean's face twitched.

"I can only tell you that I'm terribly sorry, my dear, and ask you to convey my sorrow to all the young ladies," he said in stricken tones. "Is there any hope that you might even be ready in time for the dance?"

"Rather, sir!" Sally cried, her eyes sparkling. All three chums threw open their coats, and in a daze the dean was gazing upon the queen, the king, and the jack of diamonds.

A very shamefaced Chivers told Bessie Mullins, afterwards, that it was this gay moment that saved him his job.

The dean forgave him. The dean could have forgiven anybody anything when he saw, trooping out of their chalets, the gayest pegeant of fancy-dress revellers ever seen at a Roxburgh dance.

(End of this week's story.)

Look for another cheery complete tale featuring these popular and lighthearted favourites—in next Friday's GIRLS' CRYSTAL.