

SCHOOLGIRLS'
WEEKLY

Adorable Blue Stone Lucky Ring Given Away Within

**FREE
INSIDE**

*This
Charming*
**BLUE STONE
LUCKY
RING**



Schoolgirls'

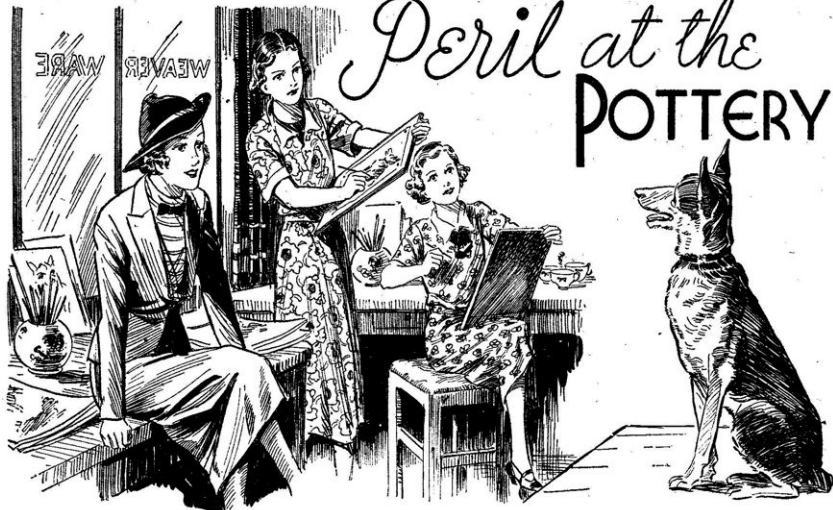
WEEKLY 2^D

No. 785. Vol. XXXI. November 6th, 1937. Every Wednesday



FELCHESTER'S FIFTH ENJOY THE FIFTH! See the delightful complete story in this issue

Peril at the POTTERY



It was the Eve of Guy Fawkes Day—and it produced for Valerie Drew, Famous Girl Detective, one of the strangest cases she had ever tackled, as this vivid Complete Tale describes.

THE TOWN OF SMOKELESS CHIMNEYS

VALERIE DREW, the famous girl detective, sat in her luxurious London flat, engaged in a fascinating occupation.

The catalogue she was studying with such interest was full of vivid descriptions of the very latest—fireworks!

The famous "Fifth" was drawing very near. Ever since she could remember, Valerie had always regarded it as one of the jolliest, most exciting nights of the year.

Naturally she couldn't have a show on her own, but she thrilled at the thought that came to her.

Why not buy her fireworks, and with them visit some poor locality—some little town where the local industries had sadly failed and times were hard. How the kiddies there would welcome a free show!

In a moment she was getting busy with her pencil.

"One dozen super Roman candles," she murmured, then, glancing up, her eyes twinkled mischievously as she surveyed Flash sprawling so lazily on the Chinese carpet. "I'm afraid they won't be entirely to your taste, old son!" she whimsically reflected. "But in such a good cause—"

The telephone-bell rang at that very moment. Dropping her dainty gold pencil, Valerie promptly took up the receiver. Her pretty face lit with pleasurable surprise as she cried:

"Why, Dick Godfrey—you dreadful slacker! You and Eileen haven't been round to see your chief bridesmaid even yet! What's that?" Her expression had changed suddenly as she listened. "You've been reporting a case that's rather worrying you? Suspected 'share-pushing'? What's that? Of course I—know—it's—just—another—name—for—swindling—unsuspecting—people—out—of—all—their—savings—you chump! Think I'm in the infants still! Yes, I'd like to hear all about it."

And Dick, in that crisp way that made him such a successful reporter, at once told Valerie what was clearly a highly disturbing story.

He had just returned from the hard-hit little Midland town of Claychester, where his paper had sent him to watch the present activities of a certain Simeon Strandway, a notorious confidence trickster.

Strandway, when Dick got there, had vanished as though into thin air. Instead, a certain Humphrey Bolland, claiming to be a wealthy Canadian, but bearing a remarkable resemblance to the missing Simeon, had appeared in his place.

His interest seemed to be centred entirely in a Mrs. Weaver, who, following the death of her husband, had recently become the owner of Weaver's Pottery.

Mrs. Weaver, Dick explained, had two young daughters still at school. Two older ones, twins, had recently decided to leave art school, where they were showing considerable promise, and work in the pottery instead.

The man professing to be Humphrey Bolland claimed to be an old friend of the late Mr. Weaver. He declared he was under a debt of gratitude to him, and was now apparently anxious to spend his money generously in entertaining Mrs. Weaver and his family.

"Do you see the idea, Val?" Dick asked at that point. "It's the old game confidence tricksters always play. They start off by being very affable and generous, just to make a good impression and appear trustworthy. Then comes the swindle."

Swiftly Valerie glanced from her open fireworks catalogue to a map on the wall. Claychester was situated right in the heart of one of those unhappy "distressed areas" she had been thinking about.

"Dick, you've given me the very idea I wanted!" she assured her reporter friend. "I can turn up in Claychester without arousing suspicion. You'll hear from me again quite soon!"

IN a high-powered sports car, hired at short notice, Valerie Drew was speeding north.

At her side sat Flash, snapping playfully at the rush of air that plucked so mischievously at his fine coat. In the back seat reposed the hamper of fireworks he had purchased before leaving town.

Nearly everything Valerie saw, when she reached the vicinity of Claychester at last, was sad and depressing.

There were empty shops and houses to be let. Men who had been out of work for months hung dispiritedly about the silent streets. Factories that had once been scenes of busy activity were forlornly closed. Only one tall chimney, of the many to be seen, still sent its smoke curling to the sky.

It was the chimney of Weaver's Pottery. A visit to a London firm which stocked "Weaver Ware" was as the Weavers' products were known had already told Valerie a lot. She had been assured that the pottery, although it had passed through a bad phase, was now turning out high quality stuff of an original kind, and that their trade promised to revive.

She had been shown a new series of designs called the "Dinkum Dog" series—china ware with lovable doggy pictures glazed upon it. Obviously, this charming idea had originated in the minds of the twin daughters fresh from the art school. New blood and enthusiasm was already making its mark.

Outside the pottery Valerie parked her car and got out. With Flash trotting eagerly beside her, she entered the office, situated in the middle of the long, low works buildings. She presented her card. Within a minute the Misses Weaver were greeting her, obviously delighted to have such a famous visitor.

By ISABEL NORTON

Illustrated by Shilton

"And this Mrs. Weaver—you've met her, of course!" Valerie quickly responded. "Is she the sort to be taken in easily?"

She heard a gloomy grunt at the other end of the wire.

"Frankly, Val, I'm afraid she is," Dick answered. "The pottery business has been in terribly low water lately. I hear things are better at last, but Mrs. Weaver's losing her confidence. Everything worries her, and she hates being so poor. She's just the sort to jump at a chance of making 'easy money,' only to find out that she'd lost everything. The trouble is that the police can usually get nothing on these tricksters until it's too late. That's why I thought you might be interested."

They were named Dolly and Joan, and Valerie judged they were little more than sixteen. In their bright print working smocks they looked as pretty as they were evidently efficient.

"It's terribly sweet of you to come!" Dolly declared, when Valerie had explained how their London samples had intruded here. "I'm sure you'd like to see all over the pottery now you're here."

Readily Valerie accepted the offer.

First they showed her where the raw clay, obtained locally, was "puddled," washed, and blended for use. The potters who then worked it by hand into such clever and delightful shapes were mostly elderly men who had never known any other kind of occupation. But for the keen enthusiasm of these two girls the pottery might even now be closing, and these skilled men numbered among the innocent victims of the slump that affected the rest of the town.

The painting-room proved most fascinating. For, there, on the still unburned clay, girls deftly copied the charming designs that these clever twin sisters had originated.

"And what a lovely lot of new designs you have ready!" Valerie admiringly exclaimed, when they reached the little studio itself.

Dolly and Joan exchanged a meaning glance. They had, of course, long ago made friends with Flash. In the same breath they began:

"Do you think Flash would mind—"

They broke off, laughing breathlessly.

"Acting as a model?" Valerie asked, with twinkling eyes.

"He's such an old dear!" Joan enthused. "And we want to do a new series of cups and plates for a little nursery set. He's just the beauty we've been searching for!"

"Flash would love to sit for you!" Valerie warmly agreed at once.

She was delighted at the idea. With her own deep affection for all dogs, Valerie thought it a happy idea that toddlers should learn, from their own pretty nursery crockery, to love animals, and especially one like dear old Flash.

Flash sat perfectly still whilst two talented netters studied him expertly. In a few words Valerie told the two girls about the hamper of fireworks, tactfully inferring that her proposed display was the main reason for her visit to the district.

"The poor kiddies around here will love a treat like that!" Molly enthusiastically declared. "And, Joan, the paddock at home would be just the place for it. I'm sure mother would be delighted."

It was the very excuse Valerie wanted for being able to call on Mrs. Weaver.

THE Weavers' home was just outside the town. It was clear that it had once been the home of very prosperous folk. Now, alas, it bore unmistakable signs of neglect. Poverty had left its mark everywhere in Claychester.

Valerie's knock was answered by Mrs. Weaver herself. Valerie, with her practice of judging strangers almost at a glance, saw that though her expression was kindly, she had a worried manner that made her look weak and nervous.

"To the girl detective's amazement, Mrs. Weaver's smile fled the moment Valerie made her suggestion about the fireworks.

"Molly and Joan should have had more sense!" she exclaimed, almost crossly. "I couldn't possibly lend the paddock. We are having a private family party, and a firework celebration of our own." She took a swift, significant half-glance back into the house. "A very kind friend is most generously paying for it," she explained. "I'm sorry that I must ask you to give your show somewhere else."

And the door, after a hesitant moment or two, closed abruptly!

VALERIE DREW had not gone. Certainly her car had moved, but only through a near-by gateway. Through the thick hedge she could still watch the Weavers' home without being observed herself.

Mrs. Weaver's strange manner had made her suspicious. Valerie was sure it wasn't her real nature to be so rude. Her nervous backward glance had suggested, instead, that there was someone already in the

house whom she was anxious not to offend in any way.

Was it that mysterious Mr. Humphrey Bolland, concerning whom Dick Godfrey entertained such grave suspicions? If so, why was he giving a firework display? And why was he so anxious for him to have the paddock to himself?

A quarter of an hour elapsed, then the front door opened again. Mrs. Weaver, now all smiles reappeared. She shook hands warmly with a man with red hair and a reddish moustache, about to take his departure.

"Do you come to tea?" George at four this afternoon?" Valerie heard him cordially invite the twins' mother.

"Thank you, Mr. Bolland," answered Mrs. Weaver. "I'll be very pleased."

They exchanged another handshake after a few more words, and the door closed again.

Valerie's eyes narrowed, and her manner grew stern. In an instant she had witnessed an astonishing change in the mystery man who was observing.

With swift glances to right and left as though anxious not to be observed, he divined a hand into his inside breast pocket. Then taking out a folded paper, he turned and dropped it liberally on to the top step of the house. With a curiously cunning but satisfied smile, Mr. Bolland then turned and sauntered towards the lane. Reaching it, he stopped again.

Valerie was breathing hard. What paper had he dropped there so carefully—and why? Suspicion filled her.

"There's a paper—fetch it!"

She knew that Flash, keeping close to the ground, could retrieve that vital paper without being seen by anyone in the lane.

But what was the red-headed man doing now? Moving quickly about, he suddenly stooped and picked something up. Valerie saw that it was only an ordinary stone. What did he want it for?

Just as Flash came creeping triumphantly back to his mistress' side, Valerie's eyes widened with amazement at what she beheld. With careful aim, Bolland threw the stone so well that it fell squarely against the knocker of the house. Apparently completely satisfied, he turned at once and made off quickly down the lane.

A few moments later the door naturally opened again. Astonished to find nobody outside, Mrs. Weaver looked perplexedly from side to side, shrugged, then vanished into the house.

A thrill of excitement filled Valerie as she understood the meaning of the amazing pantomime at last.

Bolland had left the paper deliberately, believing that when Mrs. Weaver opened the door she would find nobody outside, and would discover the paper there and believe it had been dropped by accident.

What was the paper about?

Valerie took the folded slip from Flash, and opened it. A moment later, her eyes bright with amazement, she was reading the following:

"To Humphrey Bolland.—Buy all Shalhbahr gold mining shares you can possibly get. Price will leap four times at any moment now.—Mervyn."

STOP PRESS

"**C**AN you really be sure of that, inspector?" Valerie drew asked, her hand unconsciously tightening on the telephone receiver she held to her ear. Is it really a fact that the Shalhbahr Gold Mine hasn't produced an ounce of gold for two years?"

From the Black Lion Hotel, in Claychester, where she had booked a room, the girl detective was already in direct communication with her old friend Inspector Routley at Scotland Yard.

"Valerie, we've all got to be very careful," the inspector at last responded. "We believe this particular mine is defunct, and the shares are not even worth the paper they're written on. But we might have to go to South Africa to prove it. There's always the chance—even though it's one in a million—that a fresh seam of gold has been recently discovered, and the news has been kept secret."

Valerie compressed her lips. She knew that

these men who heartlessly robbed widows had the shrewdest brains. If Valerie made one mistake it might be an easy matter for a man so adroit to turn the tables on her completely.

"Are you making further inquiries, inspector?" she asked.

"Surely," he gruffly agreed. "We've already cabled to South Africa, and out there they'll ask questions as quickly as possible. Unfortunately it may take two or three days. You must do all you can to warn this Mrs. Weaver not to part with any money until she's sure what she's doing."

Valerie thanked him and rang off. For several minutes she sat at the table, deep in anxious thought.

She had Dick Godfrey's word for it that Bolland was, in reality, a notorious "con" man whose name was Simeon Strandway!

Her eyes gleamed. Two, she reflected, could play at that game. Bolland was meeting Mrs. Weaver at four o'clock in the George Hotel, which was only a short distance along the road.

In a suitable disguise Valerie might turn up at the same moment, pretend that she had known Bolland under some very different circumstances in Canada, and raise serious doubts in Mrs. Weaver's mind concerning his honesty!

IT was exactly four o'clock.

In the George Hotel, Valerie, her appearance so changed that even her best friends would have passed her without a second glance, sat in the comfortable lounge, apparently immersed in a newspaper.

A few minutes passed, and the swing doors opened. Valerie glanced in the mirror told her that Humphrey Bolland had just arrived.

Valerie laid down her paper.

Her plan was to rise, saunter across the lounge, and come face to face with him apparently quite by accident. Then, with a cry of joy she intended to hail him as a long-lost acquaintance.

Humphrey Bolland lit a cigarette.

At almost the same moment, the swing doors flashed open again. A woman whose every nervous gesture betrayed suppressed excitement hastened into the hotel. To Valerie's dismay she beheld none other than Mrs. Weaver.

"Mr. Bolland, it's almost a miracle!" she declared, making no attempt in her joy to keep her voice to a low pitch. "I've had an offer from a big firm to buy the pottery, lock, stock, and barrel!"

Valerie caught her breath with amazement and dismay; she had never expected such a dramatic development as this.

"How pleasing for you!" Mr. Bolland heartily exclaimed. "And will you think of selling?"

"If I can invest the money in something safe," the anxious widow replied, clearly enough for Valerie to overhear every word. "And you'll remember, Mr. Bolland, that you dropped a hint that you knew of something very good."

Valerie had risen to her feet. She had been taken completely unawares. She had not been given a moment to put her own plan into operation.

"Mrs. Weaver, one has to act very quickly in these matters, so we won't stay here for tea, after all!" she heard Humphrey Bolland swiftly decide. "This is a matter in which you certainly should have proper advice. If you will come with me, we will call and see my solicitor immediately!"

And the pair of them, to Valerie's dismay, swept out of the hotel before they had even observed her presence.

"**M**ISS DREW, I can hardly believe it, even now!" Dolly Weaver hoarsely protested. "I know mother's afraid that we can't get back all the trade that's been lost, but she did promise we could have a try to sell the 'Dinkum Dog' designs before she did anything!"

"And that Mr. Bolland—neither of us has ever liked him!" Joan, her twin, warmly added.

Having shed the disguise that had proved so useless, Valerie hastened immediately to the pottery to decide.

Knowing how vitally their future was concerned in any hasty action their mother might take, she told them the true reason for her

visit to Claychester, and all she had since discovered.

"I think you must go straight home and see your mother," Valerie decided. "It will be best for you to have a perfectly frank chat with her."

Two smart print overalls came off as one; with grave concern on their pretty faces, the twins put on their hats and coats.

A moment later, their faces strained and anxious, they left the studio; and Valerie, taking a last glance round, suddenly found her attention arrested by a coloured picture on the easel where they had been working.

It was of Flash—her own Flash to the life! The likeness they had caught in their pencil studies had been translated into this brilliant coloured portrait for the new set of nursery crockery.

Valerie compressed her lips as she turned away. If the pottery was really sold, all that work would have been wasted.

It was Mrs. Weaver herself who, to Valerie's surprise, answered her knock on the door.

Her smile was cool, her manner self-possessed. She seemed, in some way, more resolute and capable than when Valerie had seen her last.

"Come in, Miss Drew," she invited; and, a moment later, Valerie was joining the twins who awaited her in the front room.

"It was rather a shock for me, Miss Drew, to learn that you have come specially from London on my account," Mrs. Weaver calmly declared. "Even though some people might regard it as unusual inquisitiveness on your part, I will say frankly that I do appreciate your motives. But I am thankful to say that I am not the foolish woman you believe me to be."

Valerie met her challenging glance squarely. "I only want you to believe, Mrs. Weaver," she answered bluntly, "that Humphrey

land, making a quick move to take the paper back. "You mustn't tell other people!"

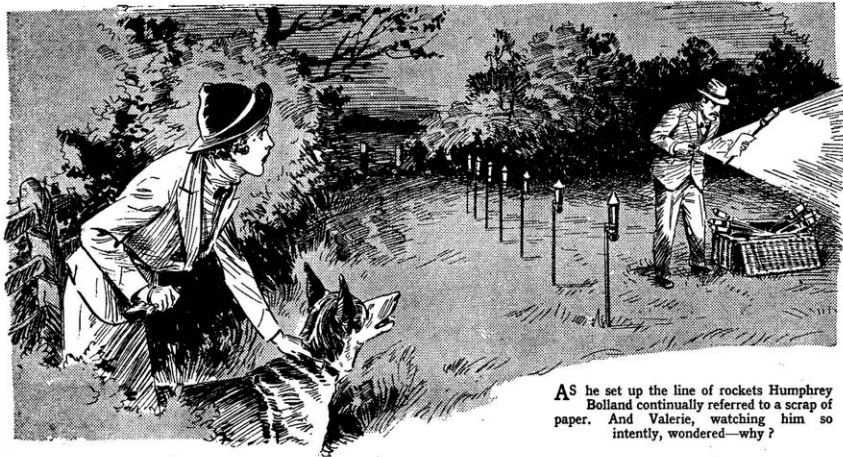
But Valerie, in one swift glance, had already read the paragraph. To her still greater confusion it ran as follows:

"Late City News. The Kafir market was astonished to-day by a sudden brisk demand for Shalibahr gold shares."

Bereft of speech, she watched Mr. Bolland fold the paper and put it sharply into his pocket.

"Mrs. Weaver, I've just one little change of plan to mention," he remarked. "Although it's only the 4th of November, I propose that we have our little fireworks celebration to-night, a day in advance of the proper day. I may have to go to London to-morrow; if I don't—well, I promise you shall have another show!"

Seldom having felt more embarrassed,



AS he set up the line of rockets Humphrey Bolland continually referred to a scrap of paper. And Valerie, watching him so intently, wondered—why?

"Valerie, listen to me," Inspector Routley's voice came over the telephone wires that once more connected the girl detective with Scotland Yard. "I've made further inquiries—there can be scarcely any doubt that this Shalibahr mine is a fraud. Are you willing to take a chance?"

Valerie's pretty face set in a look of deeper resolution.

"Certainly I am!"

"Good!" She heard a short, characteristic chuckle at the other end of the wire. "In that case, waste no more time—tell this fellow Bolland straight out that he's a fraud. It will at least make Mrs. Weaver think. Maybe he'll bluff pretty hard and threaten you with libel, but I promise you'll have all the support we can give you."

"I'm terribly grateful for the advice," said Valerie, as she rang off.

She had hardly replaced the receiver when the bell tinkled again.

"Hallo! Is that you, Miss Drew?" came the agitated voice of Dolly Weaver. "We want you to come along straight away if you possibly can. We're terribly worried. It seems that mother's already practically sold the pottery, and she won't listen to a word from us. She's going to invest all the money she gets in a gold mine, and she's sure she'll make a fortune!"

"I'll be along," Valerie promised, "within a few minutes!"

FORTIFIED by that last talk with the wise old Inspector Routley, and deeply perturbed at the plight of the anxious twins, Valerie walked briskly to the home of the Weavers—attended as always by faithful old Flash.

Bolland is a complete fraud, and nothing like the man he professes to be!"

Mrs. Weaver smiled tolerantly. "As you are so frank," she answered, "I will be frank as well. I happen to be convinced that he really is my friend. You suspect him of trying to sell me some worthless gold shares. Will you, therefore, kindly look at this report for yourself?"

She opened a drawer as she spoke, produced an official-looking printed pamphlet, and handed it to Valerie. Headed "Confidential Advance Information," it was from—The Shalibahr Gold Mining Company.

Quickly Valerie scanned what followed. The document, issued recently in South Africa, reported the striking of a rich vein of gold, and promised tremendous dividends for the lucky share-holders as soon as production started again.

How on earth, Valerie blankly asked herself, was it that the best-informed officers at Scotland Yard apparently knew nothing about this sensational document?

Bereft of speech, Valerie was still holding that amazing report in her hand when a fresh knock was heard at the door. Again Mrs. Weaver answered it, to return, this time, accompanied by none other than the suspected Humphrey Bolland himself.

He was whispering in a confidential manner as they entered the room together. Taking an evening paper from under his arm, he pointed, with obvious satisfaction, to the stop press news.

With a gasp of amazement and delight, Mrs. Weaver read it and impulsively extended the paper to Valerie.

"Oh, please!" sharply protested Mr. Bol-

liver, as she turned away.

THE moment she got back to her hotel Valerie had herself bought a copy of the evening paper. Failing to find that sensational item in the stop press news, a startling thought had leapt to her mind.

Hastening to her room, she had immediately phoned the office, and was now speaking to the editor himself.

"Certainly, Miss Drew," came that gentleman's courteous, clear-cut reply. "It is definitely a fact that no item referring to Shalibahr gold shares has appeared in the stop press of our paper to-day!"

"Thank you very much!" breathed Valerie, as she hung up the receiver.

She knew the truth at last. The paragraph that audacious Humphrey Bolland had been so anxious for her not to see was—a forgery. He had himself had it printed on after the paper was issued.

That could only mean one thing. The glowing report, purporting to have been printed in South Africa, which had convinced Mrs. Weaver that the proposed investment was quite genuine, was a forgery as well.

Humphrey Bolland's audacious plan was almost an accomplished fact!

MESSAGE IN THE SKY

THERE'S just one missing link, Miss Drew," the superintendent at Claychester Police Station reluctantly declared. "Even though there's the strongest possible suspicion that both these

papers Bolland has shown to Mrs. Weaver are forgeries, we still can't arrest him without actual proof."

Valerie Drew nodded.

Having reported all her discoveries to the police, she had been told, in return, that they had themselves been watching Bolland closely—and with equal lack of success.

The one missing link in the chain of evidence collected so far was the printer who had actually done the work for Bolland.

Feeling almost in despair, Valerie left the station.

Night had already descended, and the lane was very dark. Valerie bit her lip with vexation, whilst her steps took her almost automatically back to the Weaver's home.

Now she was actually passing the paddock, where she had first planned to give her own show. Alas! there would be little pleasure—

Valerie stopped sharply. Beyond the trees she had unexpectedly glimpsed what appeared to be the light of a shaded electric torch.

Feeling instantly curious, Valerie silently worked herself through a gap in the hedge. Warning Flash not to make a sound, she crept nearer to the flickering light.

Within a minute she was discreetly able to see all that was going on. The man using the light was none other than—Humphrey Bolland!

He was busily arranging a line of rockets, ready for his promised show. But why, she asked herself, was he constantly consulting that folded paper he held in one hand? While, after reading it, did he sort carefully through all the waiting fireworks, and only make his choice after rejecting many?

When fifteen of the carefully selected rockets stood planted in a firm line in the soft earth, Bolland emitted an audible sigh of satisfaction.

Placing the folded paper on the open lid of the hamper, he took the rest of the rockets briskly. This time making no attempt to arrange them according to a preconceived plan, he stuck them quickly into the ground, extinguished his torch, and made for the house.

Valerie smiled grimly as she watched him go. For, audaciously clever though he was, she believed Humphrey Bolland had blundered at last.

Behind him, on the drooping lid of the still-open hamper, he had left that mysterious folded paper!

In a few moments Valerie had possessed herself of it. Quickly she crept with it to a nearby shed. Then, producing her own torch, she looked to see what it was.

The paper contained a number of familiar words, against each of which appeared a different combination of colours. In an instant Valerie knew she had practically solved this strange puzzle already.

The rockets were simply—a code!

Each was different from its companions. When it burst in the air in its own combination of colours it would stand for a particular word. Anyone in the vicinity knowing the pre-arranged code could read the fiery message like actual writing!

Just when he was least suspected Humphrey Bolland could, by this ingenious method, send a last and obviously vital message to a fellow-conspirator.

Was it the printer? Valerie tensely asked herself.

She crept back to the carefully arranged line of rockets, and, with her torch shaded, read their printed descriptions. From the code she had so fortunately captured their secret message was revealed at once.

"Everything arranged," it triumphantly declared. "Leave share certificates usual hiding-place and remove printing plant soon as possible."

Valerie's lips set in a line. Rockets standing for a number of other words that appeared in the code had not been employed at all. But they could be! With a few shrewd alterations Valerie could make a vital change in Mr. Bolland's clever message—a difference he would never suspect until too late!

"All ready for my little fireworks show!" Humphrey Bolland cheerily invited the Weaver family less than an hour later.

Mrs. Weaver looked very happy, and the two younger children were naturally delighted. But the twins, their eyes still full of smouldering suspicion, said nothing. Though Valerie, seemingly baffled, had not reappeared, they were still sure in their hearts that this "affable" stranger was not to be trusted for a moment.

His paper touched the first of the rockets, then went quickly to Nos. 2, 3, and 4.

One after the other they went off. Each with its own noisy fizzing, they soared up into the sky.

The first burst in a volley of red-and-blue sparks. The next was pure gold. The third broke in a shower of white radiance in which red lights appeared as well. The fourth filled the sky with dancing lights of vivid green.

And Humphrey Bolland, watching them, suddenly gazed in horror and dismay at those lovely patterns in the sky.

Thinking of the words for which each combination of colours had been chosen, he saw in a moment that this wasn't the message he had intended to send!

"I say, I'm very sorry, Mrs. Weaver!" gasped Bolland, in confusion. "I'll have to ask you to wait another half an hour, after all. I've had a surprise—"

"Another," a voice struck in sharply at his

elbow, "is waiting for you now! And remember—Flash only warns once!"

With a gasp of sheer horror, Humphrey Bolland whirled round. There, confronting him fiercely, was an Alsatian dog—with Valerie Drew at his side!

"What on earth do you mean?" Humphrey Bolland shrilly asked.

"Flash, watch him—don't let him move a step!" Valerie crisply instructed. "And now, ladies—the show goes on!"

She stooped as she spoke, touching the taper to the rockets still waiting to race aloft to their fiery doom.

One after the other they went off. Each in its turn they tore into the sky, to burst in swift succession in their brilliant pageant of light.

There followed a pause, but it was of brief duration. From one of the youngsters came a sudden cry:

"Look, more rockets over there—just as though they're answering ours!"

"That, my dear, is exactly what they are doing!" Valerie quietly answered. Then, as she turned, her manner changed in a flash. "See those car lights moving along the lanes, Simon Strandway?" she sternly asked the man who had called himself Bolland. "They're police cars that have been waiting for this very moment for your confederate to reveal where he lives. I altered your clever little message, as you've already guessed—and I told your friend the printer to reply with two red rockets to show he'd received it. The police will now find him easily and bring him here, straight away. If you'll kindly keep as still as you are now Flash won't touch you at all!"

SIMON STRANDWAY, so dramatically caught, gave in without a struggle.

Faced, within a few minutes, by the confederate who had done his secret printing for him, he was wise enough to realise that nothing but conviction awaited him.

To the utter horror of Mrs. Weaver, he admitted that the fabled South African mine would never produce another ounce of gold, and any money she had given him in exchange for its shares would have been lost for ever.

Quickly, the sale of the pottery had not been completed, and there was just time for the contract to be cancelled. And, after the near catastrophe from which Valerie had so brilliantly saved her in the nick of time, Mrs. Weaver was only too anxious that her clever twins should have a proper chance to prove the merits of their beautiful Dinkum Dog designs.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

"HERMIT OF HAUNTED VALLEY," by Isabel Norton, is the intriguing title of next Wednesday's thrilling complete story of Valerie Drew and Flash—a story that will grip you from beginning to end.



She's Off to Order Her Copies of the November Issues
of the Ever Popular

SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN LIBRARY

These are the titles:

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No. 610: "THE MYSTERY GIRL FROM THE EAST," by Audrey Nicholls.
No. 611: "WHEN PAM CAME TO MORCOVE," by Marjorie Stanton.

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OUTFIT

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