

## The Project Gutenberg eBook of Mimi at Sheridan School, by Anne Pence Davis

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Mimi at Sheridan School

Author: Anne Pence Davis

Release date: July 25, 2014 [EBook #46404]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Roger Frank and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net>

\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK MIMI AT SHERIDAN SCHOOL \*\*\*

### Mimi at Sheridan School

*By*

ANNE PENCE DAVIS

THE GOLDSMITH PUBLISHING COMPANY

CHICAGO

---

COPYRIGHT 1935 BY  
THE GOLDSMITH PUBLISHING COMPANY  
CHICAGO

MADE IN U. S. A.

---

FOR KAY AND DIANE

*Who still have all the  
fun of school ahead.*

A. P. D.

---

## CONTENTS

- I. [HOME](#)
- II. [MISS JANE'S WEDDING](#)
- III. ["SHERIDAN, MY SHERIDAN"](#)
- IV. [FOLLOW THE LEADER](#)
- V. [TUMBLE INN](#)
- VI. [GREEN CAP WEEK](#)
- VII. [AN ACCIDENT](#)
- VIII. [MIMI GETS A BID](#)
- IX. [CLORISSA'S SECRET](#)
- X. [BETSY SPRINGS A SURPRISE](#)
- XI. [THE THANKSGIVING GAME](#)
- XII. [TEA FOR TWO](#)
- XIII. [DECK THE HALLS WITH BOUGHS OF HOLLY](#)
- XIV. ["THE LAND OF COUNTERPANE"](#)
- XV. [DADDY SENDS A CLUE](#)
- XVI. [THE LAKE FREEZES OVER](#)
- XVII. [SATURDAY ESCAPADE](#)
- XVIII. [THE HORSE SHOW](#)
- XIX. [TENNIS TOURNAMENT](#)
- XX. [ROOF GARDEN PARTY](#)
- XXI. [DEATH BELLS](#)
- XXII. [THE LAST OF PREP HALL](#)
- XXIII. [WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARED AWAY](#)
- XXIV. [WHO IS CHLOE?](#)
- XXV. [HOME AGAIN JIGGETY JIG](#)

---

## Mimi at Sheridan School

## CHAPTER I

### HOME

For the first time in ever so long Mimi was rude! She shoved, pushed, crowded, stepped on other passengers' toes, jabbed them with her elbows. She forgot that every other camper on the train was as eager to be at home as she.

For long minutes, Mimi had been poking her red-head out the window and then pulling it in, to report. A lady Jack-in-the-box, Sue thought.

"That was Bristow. The next stop is B. G."—"There's Howard's house on the hill—only two miles from there—I know, I've hiked it."—"Ooo-oooh we're crossing the river into town—"

At the first soft p-s-s-s of escaping steam and applied brakes, Mimi leaped to her feet. This was the signal to stampede the vestibule. Because she had more "junk" to pick up, drop and pick up again, Mimi was not the first to rush down the aisle, but by some miracle of shoving and crowding and complete forgetfulness of manners, Mimi was at the head of the steps when the train pulled under the long shed and stopped. Only the restraining arm of the flagman kept her from diving off headlong before the train came to a dead stop.

"Careful, Miss."

But Mimi neither heard nor heeded. She was searching the faces of the crowd—Sue's mother, Margie's daddy, Miss Jane's Dick—but her own darling family, where were they?

"Hello, Mimi—my child, you're freckled." "Be seein' you, Mimi"—"Goodbye"—"Bye."

Mimi seemed rooted to one small spot under the shed and all the happiness in the world was passing around her and leaving her alone. What could be the matter? Something dreadful must have happened!

Then she saw—

A black coupe swung down the drive and raced right up to her—as near as it could come for the tracks, and stopped under a big sign which read, "No Parking."

The gravel was still flying from under the wheels and the dust was still making fitful little clouds when the door popped open and Daddy jumped out. Mimi remembered later that he did not even wait to open the door for Mother Dear and Junior but let them scramble out the best they could. Daddy came striding toward her and scooped her up into his arms, bundles and all.

"I simply wouldn't have a doctor for a Daddy," he was saying.

And Mother Dear, quite out of breath from dragging Junior at a rapid pace, was adding—

"We had to go by the Hospital and Daddy was detained—"

But none of that mattered in the least now. They were here—the baggage was stowed away in the back of the coupe. Junior was stretched out on the shelf blocking any view out the back window—an ideal place to pull Mimi's hair or tickle her ear—and Mimi, Daddy and Mother Dear were scrouged up together as Daddy stepped on the starter.

One long happy sigh escaped Mimi as she cuddled down, and not two minutes ago tears were, well, not quite in her eyes, but in her heart to say the least. Mimi's blue eyes were usually merry.

"Psst, psst!" in her ear. Junior's warm breath against her ear. "Secret!" in a hoarse stage whisper.

"James Sherwood Hammond, Junior," in Mother's sternest voice as she glared at Junior. A booming big laugh from Daddy who received the tail end of Mother's stern glance. He immediately swallowed the smile and began asking Mimi about camp.

"Did Sue's ankle get all right?" Daddy wanted to know. "Were there any stomach aches after the big Sunday dinner we brought? What finally became of Pluto?"

"Yes—No—No," Mimi was answering. "Oh it was too perfectly precious—all of it—and Daddy, Mother Dear—I am an honor camper! See!" She fished in her purse and held up the felt emblem.

"And you are something else, too. Today you are—"

But stop—Mother scowled at Daddy over Mimi's head and would have put her hand over his mouth if she could have reached it; wondering frantically if it were harder for big boys or small boys to keep a secret, she changed the subject swiftly.

"Is Miss Jane very tired from having the responsibility of you wild young things?"

"Not at all—she's grand—wonderful. Next to you Mother, I love her best of nearly any one—and oh, Mother! She is—"

Then Mimi nearly told a secret. She stopped herself in time. Perhaps she would have gone on but Daddy was turning in the driveway. At the first sound of the car, Von, abandoning his watch on the porch and forgetting the restrained manners of German police pedigree, came bounding toward them. Mammy Cissy was standing in the door grinning.

The striped runners of wandering jew falling over the edges of the hanging baskets brushed her hair as she ducked under and her swinging arm almost knocked a fern pot from its pedestal, for Mimi had jumped on to the porch neither from the porte-cochere nor the front steps. With Von barking boldly at her heels, she had cut across the lawn and leaped on to the porch to Mammy—Precious old Cissy, who this instant hugged her close, and the next was holding her at arm's length saying:—

"Lan's sakes alive, Miss Mimi, yo sho is brought home a good crop of freckles and this newfangled sun tan both!"

Then Daddy calling from the drive, "Here, camper, help take your things in. What good is this old land lubber with a bulging sea bag?"

Daddy made such fun of things. He was unusually entertaining today (Mother had told him to be). While he and Mimi carried the things upstairs to her room—her own room with its ivory furniture and crisp swiss curtains tied back with green taffeta bows—Mammy, Mother and yes, Junior too, had disappeared. Daddy knew they were in the kitchen, busy putting last touches here and there and lighting candles—lighting candles in the middle of the day!

"There," Mimi said depositing the last load on the cedar chest under the double front window. "Can it be possible I smell food?"

"Quite," answered Daddy catching her mood. "It could even be probable, honey, that the nose tickling, delectable odor assailing your nostrils is *fried chicken!*"

Mimi ran for the stairs. Before Daddy caught up with her and took her arm, Mother's voice halted her rush for the kitchen.

"Mimi, wash that train dirt off. You and Daddy both freshen up, for dinner is ready."

There was an excited undertone in Mother's voice that should have told her something special was afoot but she didn't suspect a thing until she and Daddy went downstairs together and walked right into the blue velvet portieres! The dining room was shut off! Before Mimi could solve the puzzle Daddy pulled back the curtain and bowed very low. This was the cue for the music to begin. Mother, Junior and Cissy in three entirely different keys were grouped at the foot of the table facing her singing, "Happy Birthday to you!"

Mimi was speechless—

There was a white cloth on the table. She was somehow aware of Mother's good plates stacked at Daddy's place, of the good silver which caught the candle light, and most of all of the big white cake in the middle of the table with fourteen yellow candles. Mimi knew without counting how many there were. It was her birthday. She was fourteen! How could she have forgotten?

"I believe she really is surprised!" beamed Mother very pleased with it all. "We put something over on her once."

"Sho she is," exclaimed Cissy ducking to the kitchen as soon as the song ended.

"I nearly told," commented Junior slipping into his place and adding in the same breath—"Give me the drumstick, Daddy."

There was a deep note of gratitude in Daddy's voice as he asked the simple blessing. He was thankful to have his small family all together again. It had been a long two weeks to Daddy without Mimi. There were not many more days to have them all four together at their own table. Daddy knew something Mimi was yet to find out.

While Daddy served the plates, Mother helped; while Cissy hovered behind Daddy's chair with hot breads, while Junior clamored for both drumsticks now instead of one, Mimi made a discovery. She found a plain white envelope that was flat on the table, hidden under her napkin. She hadn't taken her napkin up immediately as Daddy finished the blessing the way she usually did. She was watching tiny streams of tallow run down the candles and hoping they would not spoil the cake icing; admiring the snowy white cloth and Mother's thin, etched glasses, so different from the bare tables at camp and the thick glasses and heavy china. Not that camp wasn't all right—No siree! But it was so grand to be home again.

"A-hem" said Daddy. He had finished serving the plates and all eyes were focused on Mimi waiting for her to rip open the white envelope.

"It's for me?" Mimi asked picking it up and turning it over. No name, no anything—

"Look and see."

It was so thin and flat, it couldn't have much in it, Mimi thought as she tore the end open with scalloped little pinches. When she ran her finger in the envelope, it seemed empty. Then she shook it and out tumbled a check. It was for more money than Mimi dreamed existed.

"For you, daughter," Daddy said (and when Daddy said "Daughter" she felt very grown-up and dignified if a slightly snubbed-nose person with unruly red hair and such merry blue eyes can ever be dignified).

The check instead of being payable to Mimi was made out to Sheridan School for one year's room, board and tuition for Mimi—in full—

"But—?" said Mimi looking dazedly from Mother to Daddy. She wasn't old enough to go to college and she had heard Mother say she did not approve of Prep Schools when there were good High Schools at home.

"Daughter, Daddy is going away a year," Dr. Hammond said—"taking a leave of absence from his practice and going to Leipzig, Germany, to specialize."

"But what will we do without you?"

"I was coming to that. You see, daughter, Mother is going along with me—" Daddy reached over and patted Mother's hand. "And Junior is too small to leave so we are taking him."

"But me, Daddy—what about me?" Mimi's voice was getting thinner and higher.

"You, daughter, are going to Sheridan School."

For an awful moment Mimi was silent. No Mother or Daddy for a whole year? She wished she were too small to leave too. They wouldn't leave her; then without moving her lips she whispered "Sheridan School." The very words were healing magic. How often with great longing she had said them. "When I get big I'm going to Sheridan School." She wasn't big yet, but fourteen is quite a responsible age.

She began to understand that the long looked forward to "someday" would be September.

"Of course, of course," she burst out. Holding her head high and her chin firm, and without the least bit of quiver in her voice, she looked Daddy squarely in the eyes, "I am going to Sheridan School!"

## MISS JANE'S WEDDING

If Daddy's office nurse hadn't called and said that he had an emergency case there is no telling when the Birthday dinner party would have ended. Even as the telephone rang and Cissy drawled, "Doctah's residence," Daddy glanced guiltily at his wrist watch and stood up.

"Tell Miss Gould I'm on my way, Cissy," and that quick Daddy was gone.

Mimi was off too, but out the back door, not the front. She stopped at the buffet on the way out taking an apple out of the fruit bowl.

"Surely, child, you can't eat anything else."

"No ma'am, it's for King—I'm going out to see him."

"King isn't here, Mimi—he's at the veterinarian's."

"What for? Is he sick?"

"Nothing at all. Dr. Kirby wants a friend to see him. Daddy will explain."

"Dr. Kirby isn't trying to sell King, is he, Mother?"

In the instant Mother hesitated, Mimi knew.

"That's entirely up to you and Daddy."

"Oh," said Mimi going on out the door toward the stable. She had no word for Von who trotted at her heels, only a pat on the head. Together they stood before the empty stall; Mimi leaning against the rail, Von pressing against her knees. No proud head nuzzling against her shoulder, no welcoming neigh, no pawing. Daddy wouldn't sell King without asking her; Mimi knew that, but King was a valuable horse and Daddy might need the money to go to Germany. He couldn't take the horse with him. She couldn't take him to Sheridan—or could she? Boarding horses out a whole winter was dreadfully expensive. They'd have to do something with King. Wrapped in her calculations and nibbling at the apple intended for her pet, she wandered back toward the house and upstairs to her room.

There was very little breeze. The scent of honeysuckle was heavy. She was full and tired and had no inclination whatever to open her duffle bag and begin putting things in place.

"No wonder, I'm sleepy. It's quiet hour by camp time." So saying she skinned her linen dress off over her head, kicked off her sandals, stretched out on her own bed and in two winks and no blinks was sound asleep.

Two hours later when Mother opened the door, Mimi opened her eyes but she did not get up. She rolled over on her stomach, doubled her knees up and propped her head in her hands.

"Could you stand another big surprise today?" Mother asked, handing Mimi the afternoon paper. The paper was turned inside out putting the Society Page on the outside.

"There," Mother added, putting her finger on an item.

Mimi was too sleepy to hurry. She had to shift her position to hold the paper and as she moved leisurely she said to her mother:

"I suppose it says the charming and 'onliest' daughter of Dr. and Mrs. James Sherwood Hammond has returned from an extended vacation at Camp Mammoth Cave"—a big yawn—"and that her parents were tardy at the train?"

"Hurry, Mimi. This is important."

Mother, who usually had all the calmness and poise a doctor's wife soon acquires, was weaving her hands like Zasu Pitts before Mimi focused her blue eyes on the column.

"Mrs. Josephine Herold announces the engagement and approaching marriage of her daughter, Alicia Jane, to Mr. Dick Donnell. The wedding will be an event of early autumn."

"Umph! That's no surprise to me. I've known it all day long—for sure," said Mimi superiorly. "Why, we even planned Miss Jane's wedding for her on the train this morning coming home."

"And what are her plans?"

"Well, I don't know exactly," Mimi had to admit, "but we're going to be in the wedding—all five of us who were in Miss Jane's hut at camp, and Miss Millie, too. We told her we were."

"And where will the wedding be?"

"Oh, Mother," laughed Mimi, "you sound just like that silly old nursery rhyme about 'Mr. Frog went a courtin' and he did ride, umphum' saying 'where shall the wedding supper be?' and if I answer like the rhyme, 'way down yonder in a hollow tree,' that could be true for all I know. I don't care where it is just so I'm in it."

"A church wedding would be frightfully expensive for Mrs. Herold, I fear; and since Mr. Herold passed away and Mrs. Herold had the house made into two apartments, their present living quarters are rather crowded. I wonder—"

Mimi did not know what Mother wondered until they were dressed for the afternoon and had driven over to Miss Jane's. Mimi had wanted to go by the tennis court for two reasons; to show off her improved game and to see Honky and return his tennis racquet he had let her take to camp. The way things turned out she was glad she went with Mother Dear because now she was in on the ground floor of all the lovely plans.

Mrs. Herold, Miss Jane, Mimi (who sat near the open door to wave hello in case any of her friends passed), and Mrs. Hammond were no sooner seated than Mrs. Hammond, with that charming directness of hers, came to the point.

"Jane, my dear, Dr. Hammond and I are so grateful to you for the splendid care you took of Mimi at camp that I want you to let me do something for you. You see, your mother and Dr. Hammond's Aunt Gay were in Sheridan together and that almost makes us kin." Mother was laughing and being her most winsome. Mimi had turned from the open door and was watching her Mother and listening intently. "What I am trying to say, my dear, is, won't you and Dick marry at our house? It is so

perfectly suited to a simple home wedding, the stairs, the living room, reception hall and dining room arranged as they are."

"Why, Mrs. Hammond, I don't know what to say. I never heard of anything so wonderful! I love your house! I've been in and out there all my life and feel it's partly my home, too. What do you think, Mother?" she asked turning to Mrs. Herold.

"Jane," little Mrs. Herold had tears of happiness in her eyes, "it's your wedding and have it as you please. It could be a beautiful wedding there—the white columns and the floor plan. It always has reminded me of the big house down on the plantation where your father and I were wed." Her voice had trailed away to a soft whisper.

Jane rose from her chair and sat on the needle point stool at her Mother's feet and leaned her head against her Mother's knees.

"I'll have to speak to Dick, Mrs. Hammond."

"Only one thing I must add, Jane. We are closing our house the middle of September. The doctor has definitely decided to go to Leipzig. I have to get Mimi ready for Sheridan. If you could move the date up two or three weeks, say to the first week of September, we could manage beautifully."

Everyone listening knew Mother Dear could do just that, manage beautifully.

That is how it happened that when twilight, September the seventh, came, all the streets for three blocks around the Hammond house were blocked with cars. The driveway was kept open and cars were rolling up to the porte-cochere to deposit wedding guests, circling the back flower bed and moving out again. Well dressed ladies in dainty summer frocks, gay young things, well groomed gentlemen were strolling up the front walk and lingering in the cool shadows on the veranda until the music invited them in.

Inside the house there was more commotion and excitement than on the outside—florist helpers, caterers, two dressmaker's helpers, who were serving as maids, were putting last touches here and there. No one was more important than Cissy. Even in the years to come when her own Mimi would be a regal bride trailing down the steps of this same old house where Mammy had already seen two generations of joy and sorrow, she would not be busier. There was, first of all, the caterer from Louisville who was "acting Frenchy and puttin' on airs" and "bein' an abomination" to Mammy's soul. Yellow Fanny, who had helped Mammy on special occasions before, was as nervous as a cat. The yard boy was dressed up in a fresh white coat opening car doors and the front screen door and at every possible chance slipping back to the kitchen window to tell those in the rear of the house what was going on out front. Fanny couldn't stay far from the window, and Mammy herself, as eager as any one not to miss anything, would listen intently and then declare she couldn't do anything with "so many distractions." But she had done a great deal. The furniture was pushed back in the dining room to make room for the guests. There was a pile of white napkins on the buffet, but every available inch in the kitchen was stacked with plates and there were rows and rows of tall thin glasses waiting to be filled. Tiny rolled sandwiches, what looked to Mimi like a tubful of chicken salad, beaten biscuits—and most wonderful of all, the wedding cake, tiers and tiers of cake with a miniature bride and groom on top. The caterer knew it was a work of art but it was Mammy in her new black uniform and crisp white organdy apron and cap who, after the ceremony, would carry it in with candles flickering, place it in the center of the table and hand Miss Jane the silver cake server.

There was a green bank of luxurious ferns before the living room fireplace forming an altar. Even now, the florist's helper was lighting the tall cathedral candles on either side. The white satin stool for the bride and groom to kneel on was placed just so. There was a profusion of cut flowers everywhere. The delicately turned bannister was wound with southern smilax and a big white satin bow crowned the newel post. Downstairs all was in readiness.

Upstairs there was an orderly confusion. Mother Dear seemed everywhere—keeping order where chaos might so easily reign. She was the puppeteer behind the scene pulling the central strings making the wedding party act. There had been so many things.

Miss Jane had been ducky about having a rainbow wedding. Nothing else would satisfy her five little campers, who were now her junior (and only) bridesmaids. She had chosen palest yellow for her gown palest yellow highlighting the deep waves in her golden amber hair and striking little sparks of fire in her deep grey eyes. She had let her hair grow longer since camp and it curled softly to her face. Her gorgeous sheaf of sunburst roses added the perfect finishing touch to the picture of a beautiful bride.

Miss Millie had been more fun at rehearsals than all the rest together. She always amused Mimi and since camp Mimi knew she would never be able to be around Miss Millie long without being happy and gay. Miss Millie was not pretty, but in her sweeping green dress she made a very dashing maid of honor. To Mother Dear's great relief she had arrived with Miss Jane fully gowned and been smuggled up the back way—one less to dress upstairs.

The trouble lay with the five, and had from the beginning. Even before the color-of-dresses-difficulty arose, there was this matter of not being able to divide five into pairs, and bridesmaids must saunter down the stairs two and two. Mimi was positive any deviation would ruin the whole wedding! Perhaps because she was in the habit now of taking charge of the five, or maybe it was to keep unpleasantness out of anything connected with her wedding; at any rate, Miss Jane settled the first dispute most tactfully.

"But Sue," she had said and Sue, flattered, had heeded, "Sue dear I wanted you to *play* at my wedding—I must have a violin and I had pictured you in a blue bouffant organdy dress with your violin under your chin, playing and facing me as I came into the living room. My knees may be a bit wobbly by the time I get my long dress down the stairs—if I get that far without tripping—and I'll need to see you playing, 'Here comes the bride, here comes the bride!'"

Who could resist Miss Jane? Not Sue—

Then Jean, who had been superior at camp because she-had-been-to-camp-before, was meek and agreeable because this was her first time to be in a wedding—the first time for them all—at least the first grown up time. Margie had been a flower girl once but she was such a baby then that didn't count. She and Jean had thrilled over pink for their frocks and they were to come down first. That

coming down *first* had been another matter. Dottie had to be convinced (she with the logical mind and the determined-to-do-or-die disposition) that she and Mimi should be second because they were taller—start with the short girls and work up to the tallest. If only Miss Jane were taller than Miss Millie it would be perfect, but she wasn't. At this point Mother Dear had mentioned orchid dresses and peace prevailed again.

Now the dark days of running to the dressmakers for fittings, and trying to stand still and not to yell when a pin stuck, were over. Even the satin pumps, which, to be alike, had had to be bought white and dyed, had turned out successfully. Only getting the dresses on and the pumps on remained.

At the moment Mimi's arms were stretched high over her head, her hair was caught on something or other, and she was wriggling and Mother was tugging trying to get the orchid dress over her head and down without messing up her hair.

"There, we must hurry," said Mother giving the final jerk as Mimi's head popped in view again.

"If I can balance on these heels and don't fall—why, oh why, didn't Mr. Zeigler finish them in time for me to practice wearing high heels—oh, Mother if—"

And then she saw herself in the full length mirror of the closet door.

"Oh," was all she could gasp at her radiant image.

"Sue, ready for you," called Mrs. Herold gently—"Reverend McKenzie is here and we're about ready. You girls look so fresh and sweet." Mrs. Herold looked sweet herself.

"Thank you," from all five. They had brought the ensemble idea home from camp—when one spoke all spoke.

"Now, run along, Sue—careful—"

Sue met the pianist and soloist in the upstairs hall and the three quietly moved downstairs.

A—A—A—squeak, squeak, E—E—E—A—D—G—plink, plink.

The four girls giggled as they heard Sue tuning her violin. Dottie put her fingers in her ears and grimaced.

At the first strain of Cadman's "At Dawning" every trace of grin disappeared. A strange quiet pervaded the whole house. Voices hushed to a whisper, then died altogether. Fans ceased fluttering—"When the dawn flames in the sky, I love you—" The whole assembly had caught its breath in a lover's knot.

The bridal party assembled in the hall—all but Miss Jane. Her door was still closed. The minister, Dick and his best man had remained downstairs. They were to enter from the dining room and Dick would meet Miss Jane at the foot of the stairs and give her his arm.

Mimi gripped Dot's arm.

"Oh, my gosh, I forgot something," she gasped in a stage whisper. Leaving Dot to remark, "You would" to thin air, Mimi caught her full long skirt up around her and ran on tiptoes into her room.

Bang went the cedar chest top against the window sill. Out came two boxes to be dumped in vain in the middle of the floor. Desperately Mimi grabbed up her camp count book and holding it by the backs shook the pages till they rustled against each other.

"I must find it—I must!" she repeated. She was beginning to despair when a downy blue feather fell out. Clutching it firmly between her thumb and forefinger, Mimi headed for Miss Jane's door.

"Miss Jane, Miss Jane," she whispered tensely, turning the door knob as she spoke—"I have something for you—you have to have it, please."

"Come in," Miss Jane invited as Mimi slipped through the door—"What in the world?"

Mimi held out the feather.

"Here, Miss Jane. Stick this on you somewhere for luck. It's a blue bird feather I brought from camp."

"Luck?"

Miss Jane smiled as if Dick were the only luck she ever needed to be happy, but while Mimi explained she stuck the tiny feather under the ribbon of her corsage.

"Yes. Every bride must wear:

'Something old, something new,  
Something borrowed, something blue.'

And you see Miss Jane, that's all of them. Oh, there goes the music—"

Before she finished talking, Jean and Margie had started. As soon as they turned the landing, Dottie and Mimi fell in to the measured step. Holding their bouquets tightly against them and counting, listening carefully for the accent of the music and—trying to go slowly—the bridesmaids descended to the living room. Their tiny high heels made prints on the soft satin laid over the carpet. Everything inside Mimi was singing with Sue's violin and the piano. Again her magic trail of beauty stretched out before her. When the final triumphant chords sounded and Miss Jane paused for one moment at the head of the stairs Mimi almost ceased to breathe. It was all too perfectly thrilling. Her Miss Jane could have stepped out of fairyland.

The ceremony, the reception and going away were events of a dream to Mimi. She moved here and there and yet had no part in it. She kissed the groom. She shrieked with glee when she bit down on the ring in her piece of wedding cake. She hugged Miss Millie with the rest as Millie's long arms caught Miss Jane's bouquet which she tossed over the stairs when she ran up to put on her going away ensemble. She threw rice and rice and rice. Then all too soon it was over and the last car was disappearing down the driveway.

Mother and Daddy stood on the steps waving. Mimi was between them a step below. She could not see the long look they gave each other over her head which meant that some day, not so very many years away, their own daughter would be going down the same driveway, a bride.

## CHAPTER III

### “SHERIDAN, MY SHERIDAN”

*A cannibal king  
With a big nose ring  
Once loved a Zulu maid;  
And every night  
When the moon was bright  
Across the canal he'd wade;  
To hug and kiss  
His dusky Miss  
While under the greenwood tree,  
And when they met  
They sang a duet  
That went like this to me:*

*Sheridan,  
Sheridan,  
Green and white against the sky;  
Sheridan,  
Sheridan,  
We'll love Thee till we die!*

Afterwards, Mimi wondered how they ever lived through it all—cleaning up after the wedding, putting slip covers over the living room furniture, packing away blankets in moth proof containers, putting linens in the cedar chest—the frenzy of shopping and sewing—the packing.

The nicest thing happened to Mimi during those busy days. Mother bought a small new light-weight trunk and gave Mimi her big wardrobe one. Mimi had always wanted a wardrobe trunk but she hadn't hoped to have one of her own until she was ready for college. In fact, she had already made up her mind to take the big metal trunk out in the garage and like it, but Mother was going to pack things in it that could go straight to Leipzig without being opened, except, of course, for the Customs. Mimi kept the wardrobe trunk open in her room with the hangers pulled out and every time another dress was finished and pressed she hung it up and admired it. It was fun to see it fill up. Mimi knew she was a lucky girl to have six dresses; the peacock blue jersey was new and so was the plaid wool. The orchid organdy was, practically. It was such a grown-up thing to pack. The long full skirt had to be looped over the hangers twice. Such care had to be taken so as not to crush the sash. The others were made-overs but they did look nice. No one at Sheridan would know them.

“It seems foolish to put so much time on your clothes when you will have to wear navy blue uniforms like all the other girls in the Preparatory Department,” Mother said. She was being sure that Mimi packed neatly. She was having a terrible time with her boots.

“But there will be many times I can use them, Mother.”

“I know and I want you to have plenty to last you. I will be away, so far away, and so long—anything could happen—”

The quaver in Mother's voice caused Mimi to look up quickly. For a poignant instant they looked at each other and then Mimi's arms went around her Mother's neck. Tightly they clung to each other and all the dread of parting, which each had been choking back, rushed around them. Again mother was holding her baby and, with all the self assurance her fourteenth birthday had brought melted away, a baby Mimi was clinging to her Mother.

“There, there, child,” Mother was saying in a steadier voice—Mother was so brave—“I must get the rest of your underclothes. You polish your tennis shoes so they will be dry enough to pack.” Mother had gone quickly.

That day the packing was finished and the trunk snapped shut and Mimi hung the key around her neck on a blue ribbon.

That day, Mimi said goodbye to Von, to King, who was being sent to the pasture for the winter, to Honky, to the campers, to Cissy, and to her dear, dear family. She couldn't say goodbye to Miss Jane for she was still honeymooning.

And the next day, Mimi arrived at Sheridan School. She was a day early, but Mother and Daddy wanted her safely there before they left and they were sailing soon now; consequently, she was the only Sheridan student on the train. She was one more than was expected apparently.

“Heah you is, Miss,” said the Red Cap, who bundled Mimi off the train—Daddy had given him fifty cents and told him to “see after the young lady.” The porter looked up and down the empty platform and back at Mimi, “Shall I put you in a cab?”

“Yes,” Mimi answered the porter, trying not to appear nonplused by not being met. “To Sheridan School—Preparatory Hall,” she said aloofly to the driver as if taking a cab was something she did every day. That was the last time she ever said Preparatory Hall. From then on it was Prep Hall.

Though outwardly composed, Mimi was upset inside. She had always imagined arriving at school in the midst of a great hubbub, old girls rushing up to greet you, new girls making friendly approaches, chaperones taking your baggage checks. She knew Daddy had wired Mrs. Cole, the matron. Here she was alone in a taxi going no telling where! The taxi had skirted the business district and turned off the main thoroughfare. Mimi clutched her pocket book. Suppose—no she mustn't imagine such silly things, but the papers were full of taxi hold-ups—last week in Chicago—but this wasn't Chicago. It was a sleepy southern town—bump, bump, and just as Mimi was about to convince herself that she was

being taken to a desolate wayside, the taxi turned right on to the Boulevard—bump, bump, right again on to a long winding gravel driveway. Leaning forward Mimi made a mental picture of Sheridan School, the size of the windshield. Between the winding rows of deep-set pin oaks and frost-kissed maples, Mimi saw the enormous red brick building with its three colonial porches set at intervals, dividing the building into sections called “halls.” The center point of the horseshoe curve of the drive practically touched the concrete steps of the central porch.

The taxi stopped here and the driver blew his horn.

Although there were many signs of activity—windows open, mattresses airing, gardeners busy—it was several minutes before the door opened and a very flustered Mrs. Cole popped out. She was setting her hat aright and buttoning the coat of her blue suit as she came out.

“Oh, dear, dear!” she was sputtering to the driver. “I must meet that one-forty train.” All the time she was speaking she was hurrying toward the taxi.

“But Ma’am—”

Then she saw Mimi—

“Why—” And Mrs. Cole’s eyebrows arched up like a cat’s back and her whole face was one big question mark.

“I am Mimi Hammond,” Mimi announced calmly. She adored being very cool and collected when other people were confused. It gave her the most grown-up, fourteen year old feeling.

“I was going to meet you, child! Dear, dear, what a day—everything upside down. I just this minute found your father’s wire. Are you all right? Here driver, take the bags to the last entrance down. That is the Preparatory entrance. Come with me, Mickey—I mean—what did you say your name was?”

“Mimi.”

She’ll have to stop eventually to get her breath, Mimi thought. She bit her lips to keep from giggling. In that minute she did three things: she liked Mrs. Cole, felt sorry for her and knew by Mrs. Cole’s apologetic manner that she had the upper hand of her. As she followed Mrs. Cole down the corridor to room 207, she was convinced that Mrs. Cole’s job was too big for her. “She’s not a bit like Miss Jane or our camp director. I bet they keep her because they hate to fire her,” Mimi was thinking.

“I’ll put you in here for the time being—er—er—Mimi.” She had the name at last.

“Thank you.”

“You’ll have to get along the best you can the rest of the afternoon. The supper bell will ring at six-thirty and you be there.”

Mrs. Cole didn’t say where the dining room was; she didn’t say a lot of other things that Mimi discovered for herself that sunny autumn afternoon. The campus paths, the friendly trees, the inscription on the corner stone:

“SHERIDAN SCHOOL, DEDICATED TO CHRISTIAN  
PIETY AND FEMALE EDUCATION.”

All informed her. The lonely corridors rang with her echoing footsteps. Once she glanced around quickly, as if a dainty hand had patted her shoulder saying, “Don’t be lonesome—we’re here.” She wondered which rooms they had lived in—great Aunt Patricia, Auntie Gay and Mother Dear.

The great dining hall with only one of so many tables set for supper did not bewilder Mimi. The faculty members who had been arriving all afternoon did not awe her. They rather ignored her or looked bored as if to say, “Can’t we have a last fling without a student butting in?” Mimi sat next to Mrs. Cole at the end of the table. Of all the faces about her, one in particular stood out. It was fresh and the voice was crisp and vigorous. From that supper time on, Mimi loved Miss Bassett, the physical education teacher who still remembered her school days at Sargeant and planned things the girls enjoyed. She had the knack of making fun out of work.

“You needn’t be afraid to stay in your room by yourself, Mimi. Several of us would hear you if you called out. I shall be up early myself. Run along now and write your parents.” When all else slipped her mind, Mrs. Cole said, “Write your parents, dears.”

Mimi intended to. She located her fountain pen, dusted off the study table, but then she pulled the curtain back to let the breeze in and saw the harvest moon rising full and splendid from behind a dark bank of clouds and treetops. She rested her red head on her arms and gazed up at the moon as a seer would gaze into a golden crystal. What lay ahead of her here at Sheridan? Sometime later she picked up the pen, wrote a few feverish impressions into her new diary and, putting on her gayest new pajamas, went to bed.

She was awakened next morning by hurrying feet, excited voices. Over night the corridors had come to life. Some Magic had peopled the cave-like halls and summer-musted rooms with an ever increasing number of chattering girls. Mimi had slept through breakfast, a thing she would not be permitted to do again unless she were ill, and the arrival of the station wagon which had met the first train.

Which of those strangers would be Mimi’s roommate? How she wished one of the campers could have come to Sheridan, too! “I do hope I get somebody peppy and cute!” Mimi wished aloud as she finished putting on the plaid wool dress and started to the office of the registrar.

“Freshman?” one of the most attractive girls Mimi had ever seen asked as she entered the office.

“No—Prep.”

“Sorry,” the girl replied, and turned to another “lost sheep” and asked the same question. The new girl answered, “Yes.” The attractive girl took her in charge immediately. Mimi looked after them.

“That inimitable, incomparable creature of the inferior species,” said a sassy voice over Mimi’s shoulder, “is Elizabeth Lewiston, known to her fellow inmates of this particular prison as ‘Dit.’ She is a Senior in the College, Physical Ed major and assistant to Miss Bassett.”

Mimi already loved Miss Bassett and from afar she adored “Dit” the entire year.

“What oracle do I thank for this information?” Mimi turned to her informer to size her up.

“Ah! Charming! You understood—comprehended—savvied, in other words. I’d feared my comprehensive vocabulary was past your feeble comprehension and ’tis not!”

By now Mimi was laughing, but the girl, whom Mimi never heard speak the entire year without

making some one goggle-eyed at her vocabulary, continued:

"You have the honor of addressing Olivia Pendleton, near-child prodigy, who this year with a straight A card, God wot, shall graduate from the Sheridan Prep. Yo—a—a Sheridan——"

"I'm new," Mimi replied but she felt neither new nor strange as, arm in arm with Olivia, they went from hall to hall, room to room, visiting and getting acquainted. Olivia seemed welcome everywhere in spite of her bookwormish appearance and Mimi was welcome with her. In fact, many other new Preps took it for granted Mimi was an old girl; she seemed so at ease and was smiling and saying hello to every one. Friendliness was natural with Mimi, and her sunny disposition plus adaptability and independence developed by her camping experience made her popular immediately.

That evening when all the girls new and old, college and preps alike, gathered in the spacious, historic old parlors for a get-acquainted rally, it was only natural that Mimi be in the center of the group of new preps. Mimi knew so many cute yells and songs and she plunged into the task of teaching her group a yell with characteristic enthusiasm. The old preps had centered around Betsy Buchanan. Betsy, till now, had been their undisputed leader. She was a striking looking girl of perhaps fifteen; her short brown hair was slicked back from her forehead making a peculiarity about her eyes more noticeable. She had one blue eye and one brown eye, and the thickest, curliest eyelashes imaginable. Mimi had admired her all afternoon but hadn't met her. She looked questioningly toward her now. Mimi could feel a crisis. There was always a shaky feeling in the pit of her stomach when something vital was about to happen. She felt that way now.

Steadily she returned Betsy's look.

Olivia pulled Betsy's sleeve, forcing her attention. "Let's give a locomotive for the new girls." Betsy repeated, "Locomotive for the new girls—One, two, three." The cheer went up.

For answer Mimi drew the heads of the new girls closer to her and in a stage whisper had them repeat after her a long yack—yack—yack, ending in a sky rocket for the old girls. Twice they rehearsed it. "Pitch your voice low—make it snappy—now! One—two—three——"

Another yell went up.

As Mimi jumped up in the center of her group and flung her arms up wildly to end the sky rocket, she saw something she couldn't believe—a short plump girl with a weekend bag in one hand and a violin in the other was standing in the hall with Mrs. Cole.

"Sue!" Mimi gasped. "Sue!" and dived through the crowd. As she ran she had shed her worries about a roommate. Here was Sue and what could be more perfect! She did not dream she was racing to a disappointment. She did not know that Betsy was glad she was gone.

## FOLLOW THE LEADER

"You'll *love* our room, Sue!" Mimi was saying as she relieved Sue of some of her luggage as they trailed Mrs. Cole's swishing serge skirt toward Prep Hall. Styles could come and styles could go but Mrs. Cole's dark gored skirts with tails and her white shirt waists would be at Sheridan forever. "Mrs. Cole wears a uniform, too," a last year's girl had already informed Mimi.

"How did you manage to get here? Why didn't I know? How could you keep from telling me?"

"Honest, Mimi—I didn't know—I'm pinching myself to see if it's I; that I'm actually here in the flesh. I'm scared to death I'll wake up and be back in B. G."

"Tell me before I go mad and bite myself!"

"The folks decided I'd do more with my music here. Mother isn't very well. My honorable male parent made some quick money in the stock market. I heard Mother telling him plenty about that, although they don't know I did. Oh boy, was it good? Mother said it was gambling of the worst kind. Father said she must listen to reason. Finally in desperation he offered her half of it and Mother took him up and scared him sure enough. 'All right, I'll take it—I'll take it and—and—send Sue to school!'"

"What an inspiration!"

"That's all it was, I'm sure. She had been talking to your Mother on the telephone, saying goodbye or something and talking about how happy you were going to be here. I know that just popped in Mother's head. But Father took her up on it. Whatever miracle it was, I'm here. My uniforms won't get here for a week."

Handicapped by bundles, they hugged each other the best they could.

Mrs. Cole turned and spoke to them.

"Young ladies, don't make public displays of your emotions."

The parrot-like way she said it, Mimi knew she had laid that law down a thousand times. She looked at Sue and said, "Br-r-r" and made motions of turning her collar up.

Mimi slowed up at 207 but Mrs. Cole kept right on.

"Excuse me, Mrs. Cole, but here is 207."

"Well?"

"I am in 207."

"Yes, goodnight, Mimi. Er—er—Lou."

"My name is Sue, Sue Hawkins."

"Yes, yes, Sue dear. This way. I am putting you in 321. It is a single room and I hope you'll like it. Your reservation came in so late."

"But Mrs. Cole—" Mimi had not stopped at 207. As soon as it dawned on her what was happening she hurried after them. "Mrs. Cole, please, Sue and I want to room together. I don't have a roommate. You see we are both from B. G., and we know each other. We were in camp together this summer."

"Our parents would want us to be together," Sue took up Mimi's desperate appeal.

"My dears, we have a policy here at Sheridan that new girls from the same town are not allowed to room together their first year. It breeds homesickness and cliques—we want neither. Next year if you still feel this way, we'll see. Besides, Mimi, you have a roommate. I have assigned Clorissa Madison to 207 since supper. The adjoining room is full now. You may come with us, if you wish, and help Lou—er, I mean, Sue, unpack."

There was nothing further Mimi could do—not then. As soon as she and Sue closed the door of 321 behind Mrs. Cole, they put their heads together. Sue looked disgustedly at the narrow room.

"Even if I can't room with you, I won't stay in this room. I'll go home first!"

"Forget it for tonight. Fix up and go back down to the parlors and meet some of the girls. I want to get back to 207-209 and see who has moved in. I am in a suite, the only one in Prep Hall, and if I don't like the other three girls I may envy you this single room. Go on down and I'll join you later. In the meantime I hope to 'scum a scheme.'"

Mimi was so absorbed that she absent mindedly turned in the open door of 209 and stumbled against a trunk in the dark. The hall light shown in through the open door on the name painted across the end in white letters—*Betsy Buchanan*.

"Whew!" Mimi whistled between her teeth. "Now that's something!" She had wanted the cutest and the peppiest in her suite but this was more than she expected. Delighted as she was she felt strangely uneasy. Mimi backed away from the trunk and into the hall instead of cutting through the bathroom to 207. Here again she stumbled, another trunk tagged *Clorissa Madison* blocked her way again.

"Clorissa Madison," Mimi said aloud and the sound was pleasing to her. "I wonder which one of all that mob downstairs is you, Chloe?"

She turned toward the parlor to find out.

Even as she arrived Chloe faded into the background of her mind. The scene had changed since she left. The college girls, instead of being grouped by classes as they were when she left, were massed in one large group. The new preps who had clustered so eagerly around Mimi had joined the old preps. Betsy was standing in front of the whole group giving directions.

Mimi watched from the edge of the crowd. Betsy, she knew, had what it took—pep, poise, and that innate gift of leadership.

Between the end of the last yell and the singing of Alma Mater, Mimi was conscious of lowered voices behind her. Two faculty members strolling through the hall had paused to listen.

"The Buchanan girl is a born leader," one of the voices said.

"I am too," Mimi wanted to answer. Instead, she resolved to show them. "Actions," Cissy had told her so often, "speak louder than words."

## CHAPTER V

### TUMBLE INN

Under ordinary circumstances Mimi would have liked Chloe. If Sue had not come she might even have chosen her from all the Prep students for her roommate. Chloe was exquisite to look at—shining black hair, wide dark eyes which were never looking squarely at you but beyond you; slim hands with shapely well cared for nails. She was sensitive and shy and lived way down inside of herself somewhere. It seemed strange to Mimi to have slept in the same bed with a girl, to run in and out of the same room a whole day and not exchange more than a dozen words with her. If Mimi couldn't be friendlier than this she shouldn't have been an honor camper. The two girls were dressing for supper, it was supper at Sheridan every night but Friday; then it was dinner with candle salad (pineapple with a banana standing in the hole topped with a flame colored cherry). Betsy was stirring around in the bathroom humming "Sheridan, My Sheridan."

"Chloe," Mimi began. She couldn't stand the reticence any longer—"Do you want to change roommates? Don't you like me?"

Mimi didn't get to finish then for Sue popped in.

"Uniforms!" she gasped. "You look swell!"

"We do at that, don't we?" Mimi answered pirouetting before the mirror. The plain dark-blue dress with the white collar and cuffs was flattering to Mimi and even more so to Chloe. White framed her delicately carved face—you forgot the rest.

"I'll be glad when mine comes—I feel odd."

"You get to wear them long enough," Betsy called out.

"Come on in," Sue called. She was greatly impressed with Betsy. She moved out of the chair and flopped on the edge of the bed. But Betsy did not sit down; she stood in the door combing her curly hair.

"The worst thing has happened to me. Laura Lou Mitchell—last year's most popular Prep—who reserved this room with me last June is not coming back. Mrs. Cole just told me. Gee! I was scared to death when she sent for me. I thought, Oh, my gosh! What have I done now? Believe me I was relieved when she told me about the wire from Laura Lou's dad. Of course, I'm terribly disappointed. The worst of it is I could have got Magdalene or Lida or anyone I wanted." Betsy did not say this conceitedly. She was attractive, popular, and she knew it but never, never, could she be called a snob or overbearing. "They're all signed up now. Mrs. Cole is so cranky about changes. Anyhow, they'd feel second choice now."

Chloe fastened the safety catch on her brooch, gave her hair a final smoothing down and turned her eyes away quickly. She knew about second choices. "It's just as if Mimi knew about me," she was thinking for the hundredth time. "But she doesn't; none of them do—I've never told a soul."

"Say!" Sue exclaimed grabbing her head as if it were hurting and rolling her eyes, "I've an idea!"

"It must hurt terribly," Mimi laughed, "but do tell us."

"Summoning all the nerve and courage I have, I shall plainly and simply state my case."

"Simply," Betsy interrupted. "You sound like Olivia already and I loathe the sight of the dictionary."

"Scuse me for living," Sue murmured, "I just thought I had an idea."

"Oh, come on," urged Mimi.

"O. K.; here goes. Betsy, if you can't find anyone else to room with you"—Sue hesitated—"you might try me; you could do a whole lot worse."

"Perfect!" Mimi clapped her hands.

"Why, I'll have to speak to Mrs. Cole about it." Betsy was used to choosing and not to being chosen. When she saw Sue's round happy face darken, she added, "I hope she will let us; I believe we'd get on!"

The supper bell rang and Betsy was gone. The minute Betsy turned her back, Mimi and Sue danced wildly around the study table in anticipation, then started down the hall. Chloe was left to turn off the light and close the doors. Half way down the stairs Mimi remembered.

"Come on Chloe," she called back. "Please excuse us, but you don't know how badly I want Sue with us."

"Yes, I do," Chloe answered quietly as the three girls moved toward the dining room.

One-half minute before heads were bowed for the blessing Betsy stepped up behind Mimi.

"Mrs. Cole says 'Yes.'" She had to stand by Mimi during the blessing and all but fly to her table to be seated with the others.

During supper Mimi was absorbed with the moving plans. That "scheme" she had been "scumming"—Mimi had picked up many of her unique sayings from Cissy—was working on her again.

Then, too, she was busy getting acquainted with girls all over again. They seemed so different in their uniforms.

Since this was the last free night for some time, Betsy had so many callers she could not help move. Chloe had an art conference so it was Mimi who helped Sue throw her things together and shut her trunk. The janitor would bring it in the morning. They felt like intruders when they butted Betsy's half-opened door wide open—they had no hands to turn the knob. "Lazy Man's loads" Cissy would call them.

"Landslide?" a caller asked Betsy.

"No, my roommate."

"But I thought Laura Lou?"

"So did I, but she isn't, girls, this is Sue and you all know Mimi by now I imagine. Red-headed people always manage to be known."

"Couldn't be a dirty dig?" Mimi flushed.

"Compliment," Betsy replied.

"Which end of the closet is mine?" Sue asked relieving the tension.

When Betsy rose to show her and to help, the callers left.

"As soon as Chloe comes home"—the suite was already home—"we must have a family conference." Mimi wanted to get them together to explain her scheme. "Sue, don't unpack yet," Mimi ordered. "I'm going after Chloe."

She was gone leaving good-natured Sue who took orders alike from Betsy and Mimi.

"207-209 is called a suite," Mimi was explaining to her suite mates when she had rounded up Chloe. "That's wrong. It's nothing but two bedrooms with a connecting bath. The only difference I see in it and the other second floor rooms is that we don't have to use the community baths. A real suite," Mimi assumed her fourteen-year-old manner of wisdom, "has a sitting room as well as a bedroom."

"I know it." Betsy couldn't have them think she didn't know what a suite was. "When father and I were in Memphis at the——"

"I suggest we make this a *real* suite," Mimi was not to be interrupted. "Let's move both double beds in this room, it's larger, and both dressers and fix the tables and chairs in the other room. We can put pillows on the trunks—that is your trunks—mine is a wardrobe and I will leave it open flat against the wall and hang a cretonne curtain over it, they will be a sort of divan."

"Grand!" from Sue.

"I don't care" from Chloe. The opinion of second choices didn't matter.

"Let's do it right now!" from Betsy.

The next hour saw 207-209 transformed. Pictures, scrapbooks, pillows, Betsy's table lamp, Sue's violin and music cabinet made the sitting room quite livable. Photographs, quite a clutter of them. The best looking one was Jack, Betsy's grown brother. Mimi's tennis racquet and Betsy's tennis racquet were hung crosswise on the wall, the way Mimi had seen in pictures. The closet space was allotted, towel rods and tooth paste spaces designated, the beds made. Lots were drawn for bed fellows and Mimi and Chloe were still together. Then again, numbers 1 to 10 were guessed for the bed nearer the window. Betsy won. Sue was glad because she was a fresh-air fiend.

"Isn't this much better?" Mimi asked proudly as the four tired girls relaxed in their bright pajamas in the living room.

"It calls for a celebration," Betsy agreed.

So saying she opened her dresser drawer and pulled out a large square tin box. "My treasure chest," she informed her suite mates. "Cake—a date cake—I've been saving for a very special occasion."

"Precious! Too precious!" sighed Mimi happily. "Only one thing to make our plan perfect. A name for the suite. 207-209 sounds too ordinary for anything so grand."

"Let's call it Tumble Inn," Sue suggested, licking her fingers. "I wanted to name our hut at camp that. I think it's cute."

"Not ritzy enough," Betsy said, shrugging.

"I like it," said Chloe, who had spoken only once or twice all evening.

"Good!" Mimi said with an air of finality. "I like it too, because that's the way I came in last night—tumbled in—and that will be the way we will get in most of the time unless y'all are better housekeepers than I."

"We got hut honors at camp *once*, Mimi," Sue remarked.

"Yes, I know. Chloe, can't you make us a card for the living room door?"

"I'll try," Chloe answered. The way she said it, Mimi knew it was as good as done—clever, neat.

Mimi went to sleep with a smile on her face. Tumble Inn was a nice place to live. She would make Betsy like her. She would make Chloe like her. She would like them so much they couldn't help but return it. Sheridan was nice, too. It would take more than the hectic trials of Green Cap Week, which began tomorrow, to change her mind.

## CHAPTER VI

### GREEN CAP WEEK

Even though Mimi heard the announcement in chapel that Green Cap Week began today, something had to happen to her before she realized its significance. She was hurrying down the hall to English. Classes were under way and she was having a time finding the different rooms and getting there on time.

"Wait a minute," Olivia said, holding out her arms and blocking the door to the room. "Another girl whose hearing is deficient, whose eyesight faileth. Away, lowly one, and wash that powder off your face."

"What?" Mimi stammered incredulously.

"Go read the bulletin board. Ever hear of Green Cap Week?"

Mimi couldn't be late to English. She didn't want to get a bad start so she ducked under Olivia's arm into the classroom, only to collide with Betsy.

"Trouble?" she asked Olivia.

"A mere trifle—Miss Hammond hasn't time to remove her make-up."

"Yes, she has."

"I'll be late," Mimi protested. She could feel her cheeks burning. Why hadn't she collided with anyone else in school but Betsy?

"Be late, but when you do get here, your face will be so bright and shining Miss Lipscomb may mistake it for intelligence." Betsy's tone left no alternative. Mimi turned in her most dignified manner and walked toward the stairs. She did not run until she turned the landing and was out of sight.

Only last night she had been sure she and Betsy would be friends and now—

In her confusion she opened the bathroom door with such violence she almost knocked Chloe down. Chloe was drying her face and Sue's roly-poly figure was doubled over the lavatory. She was still scrubbing.

"What! Y'all too?"

Then Mimi saw how funny it was. Going without make-up was no trial for her. She used very little anyhow. She only side-swiped her nose with a powder puff on special occasions. But Sue couldn't set her hair! Chloe couldn't put polish on her nails! No rouge, no powder, no lipstick, no mascara for a week. It would be much worse in College Hall than in Prep Hall. Green Cap Week had started in College Hall for the freshmen. In a year or so the Preps had taken up this light form of hazing and applied Green Cap Week regulations to all new girls regardless of class. Mrs. Cole was constantly on guard for fear they would overdo it. She heartily approved of one rule, however. No college freshman or new girl could leave the campus the entire week. Prep girls never could leave unchaperoned. Thinking over the rules, Mimi wondered if there'd ever be time to go to town.

Even Chloe smiled broadly before they hustled back to their classes. About as well be a good sport.

Mimi had recovered her poise when she dashed by Tumble Inn between dinner and class time. Betsy and two other old girls were there grouped around the treasure chest finishing the date cake.

"Scuse," Mimi apologized, "but I live here, too."

"Glad you came." Betsy's tone made it evident they were waiting for her. "I didn't stop for my mail. Bring it up, please. They will let you have it. I have arranged with the girl."

"I mustn't let her see she is getting under my skin—I mustn't—I mustn't," Mimi gritted her teeth together.

"Be a pleasure. Going by anyway. So long."

"Oh Mimi," one of the other girls called, "Since you're going that way, stop in 223 and pick up my laundry and take it down to the maid's entrance. It's all tied up and tagged."

"223? Just love to," Mimi fibbed. They couldn't see her flushed face. They mustn't know she was teased. There were ruts and bumps on the trail now but Mimi would forge ahead. Once she determined to do something she kept at it doggedly. At camp she had resolved to find the beautiful in life, and where it was not, to create beauty. She had chosen as her watchword, "Hojoni," a Navajo word meaning "trail of beauty." In darkest moments she uttered it prayerfully. As she turned in 223 she whispered to herself, "Hojoni." Gingerly she picked up the soiled clothes tied up in a big bath towel and holding them at arm's length away from her averted nose, fled down the back stairs and left them.

She reached the post office just in time to have the windows closed in her face—and there was a letter in her box! It could be for Chloe but again it could be from Mother Dear! All period she tried to concentrate on the fact that "a straight line is the shortest distance between two points," but who could focus her attention on geometry when she had been humiliated? When she might have her first news from home? The post office wouldn't be open again until three-thirty. How could she wait?

Going to her first gym class helped, or she thought it would.

Getting out of her uniform and putting on black shorts and a clean white shirt perked her up. Mimi loved the freedom of gym clothes. She liked to fling her arms, stretch her legs, to run and dance and play. The greatest disappointment she had had so far at Sheridan was the fact that there was no swimming pool. Plans for the completion of a modern swimming pool with lights beneath the water were under way but that didn't help Mimi this year. To make up for not having a pool, there were macadam tennis courts and an excellent hardwood basket ball floor. Today she would find out about them and from Miss Bassett! Dit might be there, too.

Again Mimi was disappointed. Something besides play was happening in the gymnasium. Girls were huddled in the anteroom. Two doctors, two nurses and half a dozen college seniors—yes, Dit was one of them—majoring in Physical Education were busy. Miss Bassett was here and there.

"In line alphabetically," she said as Mimi straggled in. "New girls in anteroom to the left,

alphabetically, please.”

When Miss Bassett spoke, people acted.

“What is it all about?” Chloe asked Mimi. There was something so appealing about her wide-eyed question, Mimi put her arm around her. Chloe looked so small and helpless in her gym clothes. Her legs and arms were paper-white in contrast to Mimi’s ruddiness.

“Physical examination,” Mimi guessed, and she was right. “I took one to get my medical card for camp and it isn’t bad,” Mimi reassured Chloe.

She was not half so composed as she sounded. Daddy had examined her for camp. Hastily he had run down the card, checking the contagious diseases she had had—measles, mumps, whooping cough—writing yes or no after questions about vaccination and serums. He had thumped her chest a time or two, pressed his ear above her heart. Laughing heartily he had said:

“Go to it, camper! Swim, ride, row—shoot the works! Nothing the matter with *my* girl.”

Daddy was so proud of his tomboy. Mimi sensed this examination would be different, and it was.

First a senior ushered you into a dressing room where another senior was seated. The senior with the fountain pen and stack of cards looked up at Mimi—

“Last name first, please.”

“Hammond, Mimi.”

“Age?”

“Fourteen.”

On and on the questions came. Mimi had to think hard to remember all the answers. When the senior handed her the card with instructions to take it to the nurse in the next room, Mimi was not at all sure she had answered truthfully.

Here Mimi had a new experience.

Suddenly the nurse struck a match quite close to Mimi’s eye. She closed her eyes and flinched.

“There. All over. Merely testing your reflexes.”

She hadn’t known she had any.

The nurse wrote on the card while the doctor listened to her heart, thumped both her chest and between her shoulder blades. Carefully he noted her posture. She was weighed, height measured and before it was over her footprints noted.

Mimi had laughed about this. First, she had stepped in a basin of water and then made wet tracks like the ones she left in the hall when Cissy called her to the telephone from the bathtub. One more test and the examination was over. The last nurse wiped the tip of Mimi’s finger with alcohol, stuck it so skillfully that it did not hurt, and squeezed a drop of blood on a small glass plate. Then wiping the finger again she sent Mimi to her room.

Sue was there before her, crosswise of the bed, sobbing softly.

Homesick, Mimi guessed. Then she remembered the letter in Box 207. She ran all the way downstairs and when she got it, it was for Chloe. She took the letter back upstairs and put it on Chloe’s dresser.

“Sue, honey, can I do anything about it?” Mimi asked gently.

“No,” Sue blubbered, “it’s done. Miss Taylor cut my finger nails nearly to the quick so I wouldn’t fray my violin strings and peck the keyboard and now that old nurse sticks my middle finger. I know my fingers will be so sore I can’t practice for days. I hope I can’t!” She dabbed at her eyes with her middy collar. “Whose letter?”

“It is *not* Betsy’s. She didn’t have any and I am glad! It’s Chloe’s. Say, we have to keep study hall tonight seven-thirty to nine. I thought we stayed in our rooms and studied that time like the college girls, but we don’t. We have to sit at those desks in the chapel. I’ll never live through it. Cheer up, Sue. If I can sit still an hour and a half *every* night, you can surely stand your fingers a little bit sore. What a life!”

What a life it was that week—

Since this was the last year Sheridan would have a preparatory department, the old girls greatly outnumbered the new; consequently, Mimi and Sue flunked all week long. They made beds, shined shoes, swept rooms—thank goodness the maids swept the halls—carried towels to the floor showers and worst of all wore silly green felt caps all week. They dared not take them off until lights out. Sue’s hair was stringy and Mimi’s freckled nose shone.

Chloe got off easier. She kept every rule. Her first waking thought was to put her green cap on. She obeyed so meekly and was so shy the old girls soon let her alone. They picked on Sue and hounded Mimi. It was more fun to tease girls who resented it and had to battle themselves to remain good sports. Mimi felt like a martyr but she gritted her teeth and bore the persecutions.

This was a week Mimi never forgot. She completed her schedule, became acquainted with her teachers, tried out for soccer and tennis. Sue tried out for orchestra and was assigned second violin. Chloe began spending all her spare time in the library or better, the art studio. Betsy tried out for the same things Mimi did. She was good at them. Her chances for soccer looked better than Mimi’s. Mimi admired her skill, her sense of fair play. Only once did her admiration waver.

Mimi was stretched out on the window ledge in the gym when she heard two girls talking below her outside. She recognized Betsy’s voice immediately. It was tense with repressed excitement. After becoming interested in their plot, Mimi peeped over the ledge and recognized Magdalene.

“This has been the tamest green cap week I ever heard of,” Betsy was saying.

“It sure has and it ends tonight.”

“Wish we could stir up a little excitement. Don’t you remember last year we rolled that trash can down the stairs, nonstop flight from third floor to basement, at midnight?”

“Do I remember? I’ve never heard such a clatter in my life. It nearly scared me out of my wits. I wasn’t in on it. I was one of the ones it awakened.”

“Oh boy! Did Mrs. Cole rave!”

“I never shall forget how funny she looked with that outing kimona wrapped around her and her hair twisted up on kid curlers. She was a fright.”

"She never did find out who did it."

"Betsy, surely you can hatch up something as good as that. Think hard."

"I have thought of something better, only I can't think of anyone with nerve enough to do it."

Magdalene's eyes gleamed. She was a nervous, high-strung girl. She adored Betsy and would run any risk to win favor in Betsy's eyes. Betsy knew this.

"Dare me, why don't you?"

"Why Magdalene—you'd be afraid!" Betsy certainly knows how to work her schemes, Mimi thought.

"I would not! Name it and see!"

Betsy lowered her voice until Mimi had to strain her ears to catch what she was saying. She did not get it all but she did hear "alarm bell," "basement," and "midnight."

Because Mimi liked to play pranks herself, her first thought was, Will that be a riot? It won't scare me. I'll be listening. I'll tell Sue and Chloe and we'll stay up for the fun.

Then she saw more clearly what the plot was and what its consequences might be.

Evidently there was, somewhere about the building, an emergency alarm. Betsy wanted Magdalene to wait until the building was quiet and dark and then set it off. Mimi remembered all the stories of panic she had heard; how people jumped out windows, trampled each other, fainted from fright. Chloe might faint, and in spite of the resentment she had felt toward Chloe for being forced on her, she was beginning to love her. She loved her so much she didn't want her badly frightened. Poor Mrs. Cole. She had had a miserable week getting things organized and running.

"What to do?"

By the time Mimi had made up her mind that the alarm must not ring tonight, supper was over and she was seated in study hall. "I'll ask permission to speak to Betsy and tell her I know." No. She couldn't do that. She wouldn't have time to explain all her reasons and Betsy might think she was a sissy. Besides, she was afraid Betsy didn't like her much anyhow.

Suppose she spoke to Magdalene? She didn't know her well enough to interfere. Suppose she told Mrs. Cole? That would only get the two would-be culprits in trouble. Mimi had already heard how you received long campus sentences for even small offenses. They might be sent home for this prank. Besides, she couldn't be a tattletale.

Tick-tock-tick-tock—

The hands of the study hall clock were getting around too fast. Before she chose her course of action, study hall was over. Gathering up her books, which had been open before her but unread, she started after Betsy and Magdalene who were strolling down the hall together.

Dit detained her. She came striding down from College corridor, one hand in the pocket of her big white sweater with the green letter, the other holding a list she was carefully scanning.

"Mimi, you are on number one soccer squad and number one tennis club." Everything had a number. "That doesn't mean *team* but it means a good chance. Report at two-twenty tomorrow."

"Oh thanks, Dit. Thanks a lot."

"Where's Betsy?"

"Gone." She and Magdalene had disappeared. Mimi ran upstairs. She must find them.

They were not in Tumble Inn. Sue, who was brushing her hair one hundred strokes every night paused long enough to say—

"Fifty-five—Betsy is spending the night with Madge—I guess Mrs. Cole gave her permission." Then she changed her hairbrush to her other hand and continued brushing—"fifty-six, fifty-seven."

So that was it. Madge's room (Sue insisted on calling her that) was on the third floor at the head of the stairs. It would be easier to sneak down from there. Perhaps she should ask Sue what to do. But no, Mimi was a lot like the cat who walked by herself. She could figure this out and act alone. If she ran the risk of being caught out of her room after light bell, and if her plan did not succeed she might be caught and considered a plotter herself.

Mimi tried to be natural as she undressed, cleaned her teeth, and said her prayers. Chloe almost sat on Mimi's flashlight she had sneaked under her pillow.

"Chloe." Sue sounded so lonesome in the darkness. "Please, come sleep with me. I can't go to sleep by myself."

"Move over and give me your warm place and I will."

Mimi didn't stir until several minutes after she heard Chloe's bare feet patter across the floor. She could get up now without disturbing anyone. Carefully she eased up to a sitting position, then lifted herself noiselessly to her feet. The bed springs squeaked as she stood up and Mimi stood rigid listening. She slipped into her felt slippers and bathrobe and, inch at a time, opened the door.

The hall was twilight dark—only dim lights above the bathroom entrances. Staying close to the wall she moved toward the stairs. She froze in her tracks, one foot on the first step, as she heard a door close softly and a whisper "sh-sh." Then acting without knowing why, Mimi hid in the bathroom and waited. Peeping out she saw Madge and Betsy creep by, casting goblin shadows against the wall.

For a mad instant Mimi wanted to join them rather than foil their plans. Then she decided to have some fun of her own. She'd pay Miss Betsy back for some of the insults she had endured during Green Cap Week.

Giving the girls a safe start she followed them down, down, down to the basement. At the foot of the stairs the two girls turned right and back. Mimi ran on tiptoe left and back to meet them under the stairs. She crouched down behind a large trash container and waited. Betsy's flashlight was playing against the wall.

"There's the buzzer," she whispered. "Give me a minute to get back to the foot of the stairs so you can find me by the light and so we can run."

The alarm buzzer was right over Mimi's head. She could reach up and touch it herself. But she had decided on her course. Better to scare one girl or two girls out of their wits, than turn the whole school inside out.

"O. K." Betsy whispered tensely. "Let'er go and scram!"

When Madge's thin white arm reached up, Mimi grabbed her wrist and with her other hand she

threw her flashlight in her own face so that Madge would know instantly she would not be harmed. "Steady, steady," she whispered.

Madge did not cry out. All sound died in her throat but Mimi could feel her trembling all over. Mimi was thinking fast now. She extinguished her light, and pulled Madge toward her.

"What's wrong?" Betsy called in a low tone.

"Tell her—nothing—bell out of order," Mimi hissed in Madge's ear.

"Nothing—it won't r-r-ring—must be out of fix." She was still shaking.

Mimi couldn't hear what Betsy said but she was shoving Madge toward the stairs.

"Go to bed. Not a word about me."

"Y—yes," Madge promised, running toward Betsy and light.

Mimi followed them as soon as she dared. Her speed increased as she neared Tumble Inn. She was almost safe when Mrs. Cole's door popped open and a light snapped on.

"Who is it?" Miss Cole asked coming toward Mimi.

It was Mimi's turn to shake with fright and she did.

"Mimi Hammond, Mrs. Cole—I—"

"What are you doing out of your room at this hour?"

"I am sick at the stomach, Mrs. Cole, and I started to go to the kitchen to see if I could find some soda but I got scared."

Mimi hadn't known before she could fib so readily. Once she started there was no stopping.

"Don't you know you shouldn't prowl around the building at night? Why didn't you call me?"

"I'm not scared," another fib, "and I didn't want to disturb you."

"Come in my room now."

Mimi followed meekly. Anything to keep Mrs. Cole from going to Tumble Inn and finding Betsy out. She was sure all along Betsy did not have permission. She watched Mrs. Cole pry the top from a box of salts.

"I'd rather have soda water, please."

"This will do you more good," said Mrs. Cole, stirring vigorously. "Here, drink it."

What else could Mimi do?

While the bitter taste was in her mouth she wished she had let the alarm sound, that Mrs. Cole had been scared worst of all. But as she finally closed the door of Tumble Inn safely behind her, she knew that one dose of salts was better than two girls suspended, especially when one of them was Betsy.

## CHAPTER VII

### AN ACCIDENT

Things were happening thick and fast these days. Classes and study hall were realities. Rainy weather cut the soccer season short. Mimi, to whom the game was new, stayed on first squad but did not make the team. She was flashy and fast but she was used to making goals with her hands and not her feet. Now when basket ball practice started—and it did this week—she would show them something. There had been a long letter from Mother Dear from New York mailed the day they sailed; a letter from Dottie with all the B. G. Hi news. Mimi had answered Dot with news that she was on the Prep tennis double team. She omitted soccer. Dot didn't play soccer anyhow. The literary clubs had started rushing, placards of the first artist concert were posted and six weeks' tests were beginning to bob up their ugly heads. Sue was gaining weight, Chloe growing most distant, and Betsy and Mimi continued to admire each other secretly but antagonize each other publicly. Something was bound to happen to break the growing tension. Two weeks later it did.

When Mimi grew up and looked back at her school days, she knew that the scene of her most exciting moments was the gymnasium. Here she yelled her breath out, played her heart out, knew defeat as well as victory. Here she was her best or her worst. Basket ball meant more to her even than swimming. You swam by yourself but basket ball depended on the perfect timing and teamwork of your team mates to whom you felt closer than any other group of girls, ever.

The first day the notice was up, Mimi reported for basket ball. Strangely enough she and Betsy both signed up for the forward berths. When Mimi saw Betsy's square, back-handed signature under her own, she had a bad moment. Perhaps she should have signed up for running center. She had played running guard but Sheridan kept strictly to girls' rules. As guard she could not score and, being a good shot, she wanted a position where she could prove her ability.

Mimi never forgot those first skirmishes. How hard she tried to pass accurately, aim carefully, catch the ball firmly and be light, sure, fast. Miss Bassett was a splendid coach. She tried first one combination and then another. Betsy and Jennie forwards, Mimi and Jennie centers. Evelyn and Betsy centers. Matilda and Mimi guards. She had let the girls choose tryout positions but she wanted to be sure they were playing where they would give the team most. Then came the combination which clicked. Betsy and Mimi at forwards together. Mimi made what appeared impossibly long shots rather than pass to Betsy under the goal. Betsy called loudly to guards and centers for the ball and shot quickly from any angle she received it rather than pass to Mimi. They looped goal after goal.

"How about that combination?" Miss Bassett asked Dit while the girls rested. Dit was calling the game and Miss Bassett had been studying the players from the side lines.

"Best yet," Dit answered, tapping her forehead thoughtfully with her whistle, "if we can get that individual starring idea out of their heads and make them play for the team."

"Signal practice will do that," Miss Bassett assured her. She had taken individuals before and welded them into a team that put, "team, team, team" above everything.

"Give them ten more minutes of drill and dismiss them, please, Dit. I'm going to the office."

"All right, girls," Dit said, and when she spoke they listened closely. "We are going to practice pivoting and shooting. Divide up quickly in two line, one on either side the basket and let the leaders be as far back as the first court line so that there will be room to run and pivot before you shoot. Here I'll show you."

She didn't need to show Mimi. She knew. Nothing was more fun than catching a pass solidly as she ran forward. Usually Mimi leaped forward to meet the ball. Then with one foot rooted firmly, she knew how to pivot away from the guard and let the ball fly swiftly toward the goal. Mimi held her breath those times when the ball would loop around the edge of the hoop before it finally slipped through the knotted string basket.

Happily she trotted to her place. Today she would show Dit how fast and accurate she really was. She would show up better than she ever had. Out of the corners of her merry blue eyes she saw Betsy in the opposite line with the same determined look on her face. The whistle blew. Thump, thump, thump went the ball against the slick floor as the first passer dribbled down the side line before throwing the ball. Thud—the ball hit the backboard. A girl rushed in to catch it before it hit the floor, ducking to keep from colliding with the girl who had just shot. Two girls more and it would be her time. Mimi was impatient—smack—she caught the ball—thump, thump, thump she was running beside it. Accurately timing the speed of Betsy who was coming in fast she passed, then as swiftly as her legs would carry her, she raced toward the goal. She forgot everything in the world except the fact that she must keep her eye on that ball and catch it before it hit the floor. Betsy was moving rapidly with the same idea, "keep your eye on the ball." Coaches have preached it year in and year out since there have been coaches.

Thud—the ball against the backboard again. Mimi's arms up to catch it—Betsy rushing away, arms up from having shot—Whack!

The two girls collide—

Betsy is knocked out. Mimi staggers back, her hands covering her face. When Betsy moans she drops her hands. The stunned feeling vanishes. Betsy is hurt, badly hurt Mimi fears. While Dit dismissed the girls, Mimi drops on her knees beside Betsy. Betsy's mischievous eyes are closed, the lids fluttering slightly. Her face, usually so rosy and animated, is white and still. Her short hair is stuck to her head with perspiration. More than anything in the world, Mimi wanted Betsy to open her eyes.

"Dit, please, open both those windows," Mimi pleaded, choking back a sob. "Oh, Dit—"

"There, there, Mimi. She'll come around soon. Here, bathe her face with this wet towel."

Mimi lifted Betsy's head to her knees and holding it gently, she put the cold cloth on her forehead. A

lump was rising on Betsy's temple. She flinched and opened her eyes as Mimi unwittingly touched it.

"Oh," Betsy cried.

"Take it easy, Betsy. You're all right now. A nasty bump. Here, Mimi, let's help her up and get her to her room. I've sent for Miss Bassett to meet us there."

"I can get up," Betsy said weakly.

Mimi lifted from one side and Dit tugged at the other. Mimi avoided Betsy's eyes. She hoped against hope Betsy wouldn't think she had done it on purpose.

Miss Bassett was waiting in the door of Tumble Inn. Sue and Chloe were out.

"Lie down, Betsy. There, now let me look you over."

Miss Bassett bent her arms, arched her knees.

"Nothing but a 'goose egg' on your head. Massage it with Mentholatum, Mimi. Better rest until supper."

When Mimi leaned over Betsy to rub her forehead she felt a warm gush from her nose.

"Why, Mimi!" Dit exclaimed. "Your blouse—blood—it's your nose."

"Yes ma'am. It hurts!"

Mimi sank down on the bed by Betsy.

Miss Bassett was instantly alert. Light as her touch was, it hurt fearfully. The blood was dripping down her throat gagging her. Pains were shooting through her head. She could feel her nose swelling. What a sight she must look!

"Fracture," Miss Bassett pronounced gravely. "Dit, go for Dr. Ansley. She left me a short time ago for the Infirmary. Don't be frightened, Mimi. It isn't serious. I don't believe you'll need splints but we'd better let Dr. Ansley take a look."

"Will I have to go to the Infirmary? Please, please, let me stay here."

"Please," Betsy added earnestly. "I'll take care of her and keep things quiet."

Daddy never seemed so far away—Daddy with his sure, skilled hands and his make-you-feel-better manner. But Mimi was brave. She sat quietly in the straight chair by the window while Dr. Ansley worked on her. Betsy watched intently. She was smiling at Mimi, her eyes saying, "good sport, good sport, be brave." Returning the smile, Mimi swallowed the two capsules the doctor held out.

The thing which hurt most was the slow realization that she was out of basket ball for the season. Some one else would play forward with Betsy.

Betsy must have known her bitter thoughts, for after the Doctor, Miss Bassett, and Dit had gone she said:

"I'd rather play forward with you than any one."

Knowing what the admission must have cost, Mimi replied: "Me too, and now I can't play at all!"

"It's my fault because I didn't watch where I was going."

"I didn't either."

"I am going to do something nice to make up for it."

Mimi fell asleep wondering what it would be. Nothing could be as precious as what she had lost but Betsy had said it was nice and Betsy kept her word.

## CHAPTER VIII

### MIMI GETS A BID

Mimi blotted the page and closed her diary quickly at the first knock on the door of Tumble Inn. She felt her eyes with the back of her hand to be sure there was no trace of tears. Never any time or privacy to do anything, be homesick, or tell all your troubles to your diary.

The last few days since Mimi had been excused from gym because of her swollen nose, she had found time to get a few things done. She was up with all her notebooks; had clinched every word of her Spanish vocabulary, and today had written the following in her diary. (Mimi always considered her diary a person; a person to whom she told her secret joys and sorrows.)

Oh, Diary, there's no one to tell but you how it hurts not to be forward on the basket ball team. If I wasn't such a good player it wouldn't be so bad but I *am* good. I can dodge and pivot and shoot. Yes, I know what I've resolved to do. I am going to spend every spare minute of my free time in the gym at goal practice as soon as they'll let me. There's always room for a crack shot on any team. I'll be one.

Do you know what I've discovered? I must be kin to Pollyanna. I have found several consoling things about having a "busted snoot." First place, I couldn't wear an "S" if I *had* made the basket ball team; no Prep can. Those class numerals wouldn't mean so much—I'd always be explaining them after I got home.

Betsy must like me, Diary Dear. That first night when I could not go to supper, she brought me her dessert (oh me! I shall probably die wondering if there is one "s" or two "sses" in dessert). Chloe has been sweet, too, but she acts so strange. Every time we are alone she acts like she wants to tell me something and can't. There is something queer about her—Oh here comes somebody—No, it wasn't; they passed by.

I don't know why I don't want any one to know I keep you, Diary, unless it's because some one might try to find you and then I should die! It's no fun to have you if I can't tell you my very insidest thoughts. Sue is the only one who knows and she won't tell. Here's the most private thing I have to say today:

I am getting popular!

I know it. The Delphians and the Ruskins are both trying to get me to promise to join their society. I don't know what to do. I'm so thrilled to be asked but the Ruskins want Sue and the Delphians want Chloe and Betsy is already a Ruskin. I hate to see our suite family split up. Maybe I won't join either. They seem silly, in a way; the Ruskins bragging on themselves and slurring the Delphians and the Delphians slurring the Ruskins and bragging on themselves. But the pins are perfectly precious! Solid gold with tiny pearls.

There really is some one coming—

"Anybody home?" Madge called at the door of two hundred and nine.

"Just me," Mimi answered hastily hiding her diary in the top drawer of her wardrobe trunk. "I'm in the sitting room—Come on through."

Mimi could tell Madge was upset. She was paler than usual and her hazel eyes were unnaturally bright. But she didn't seem happy. Mimi felt she was not up to hearing any bad news.

"Are you keeping training?" Mimi asked.

"No, I'm not that good. Oh, Mimi, since—the other night, I've decided I'm not good for anything."

"Don't be foolish, Madge. Here try some peanut butter on a graham cracker and forget it. Another advantage of a swollen nose, I can eat and eat and eat!"

"I don't want to forget it until I tell you something—then, if you please, let's both forget it. You see, Mimi, I came to thank you for keeping me out of a scrape. I didn't stop to think—I never do—and I can not take a dare; I simply can't."

"I can't either," Mimi admitted. "I don't know why I ever butted in, an excitement-eater like me, but I did."

"And I'm so glad, so glad." Madge pulled herself together for the final confession. "Mimi," she said levelly, "I am in school this year on borrowed money. I wouldn't have come at all if I were not going to graduate. Suppose I had rung the alarm and they had caught me and sent me home? I would hate myself the rest of my life."

"I'm glad I butted in then. But let's forget. You—you make me feel like a heroine—and I'm *not!*"

"Yes, you are—you're the grandest all around sport in school—you and Betsy."

While she was in a confidential mood she continued:

"Every one in Prep Hall is sorry you won't be on our team. Betsy is sorriest of all. She keeps going around saying it was all her fault but she is going to make up to you for it. She is—please, cross your heart not to tell a soul. She wants to surprise—"

But before Mimi had time to promise, Sue dashed in to get her music, leave Mimi a candy bar and a letter from Jean. Before she left for her practice room, Chloe was home. She seemed quieter and more occupied with her own thoughts than usual.

So beautiful, Mimi was thinking as she watched Chloe stare out the window, so perfectly beautiful like a Magnolia or a lily or a tube rose; something that darkens and withers if you touch it. Chloe's mother must have been beautiful, too—and what about her father? All the girls knew about Chloe's family was that her allowance came from her Aunt Marcia. Bad as they wanted to know, they did not ask. Maybe her parents were divorced. Her mother must have been so beautiful that men might have kept on falling in love with her.

"Guess I'd better go," Madge said putting the top back on the peanut butter jar. She had been eating and hoping Chloe would leave as Sue had but Chloe seemed settled for the afternoon. "Please, don't mention anything I've told you."

"Certainly not."

Giving Mimi an impetuous hug she hurried out.

"Isn't she queer?" Mimi said to Chloe.

"Kind of. Almost as queer as I am," Chloe answered quietly.

"You, queer?"

"Don't pretend, Mimi. You know I am. Someday I'll tell you about it and maybe you'll understand. Oh gee, I am supposed to be at meeting in chapel this minute. All the Preps—

"No one told *me* about a meeting."

Chloe colored.

"Maybe it's art students only. I'd keep quiet if I were you. Be a lady of leisure while you have a chance. If you were supposed to go and they call your name, I'll say you are excused."

By the time Chloe finished talking she had closed the door and Mimi heard her join Olivia and Gretchen.

"Aren't you lending your charming presence to the gathering?" she heard Olivia ask some girl who was evidently in a great hurry.

"Certainly, I am. Who do you think called this meeting?" The breathless voice was Betsy's.

So? Mimi figured. That "something nice" is going to happen today. What can it be?

Class officers had already been elected. Since the Prep Department would end this year the seventy-five girls in it had chosen to organize as one class. The very first week of school they had done that and old girls had carried president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer with practically no competition. Maybe they were going to give her a fruit shower or a fudge feast.

Whatever she guessed she was wrong. None of the guesses were thrilling enough. It was something she had been off and on unofficially but now she could be officially and wear a white uniform on special occasions.

Although the meeting time seemed long to Mimi, her elephant's-child curiosity prickling her 'til she couldn't sit still, it was short. It took Betsy five minutes to have President Gretchen call the meeting to order, to present her motion, have it adopted by acclamation, and give a yell of victory.

Standing by the open window, Mimi heard the echoes of the fifteen rahs coming up from the chapel ell. The ending blurred. What was it they were saying?

Soon she knew for the same yell was repeated outside her door.

She did not hear Betsy signal "one-two-three" but the rahs were so low and snappy and lusty Mimi knew Betsy was leading.

Now she knew the ending. It was; "Mimi, Mimi, M-M-Mimi!"

Mimi's merry blue eyes danced.

"Shall we huff and puff and blow Tumble Inn down or will you open the door?" Gretchen called.

Before Mimi could answer the girls threw the door open themselves and stormed in; all the Preps. They piled on the beds, propped against the window sills and the radiator. Olivia pompously mounted the stool to the vanity and rapped the wall for order.

"Madam chairman," (this to Gretchen) "ladies and Mimi, with regret I announce Sheridan Prep has, for the season, lost a great forward. But even this dark cloud has a silver lining. By this loss she has gained a great cheer leader. Ladies, I give you Mimi Hammond, a red headed pepper pot who, henceforth, will direct your vociferations! Youzza!"

Here Olivia paused for a deep breath and looked at Betsy. This was a signal to begin the song. To the clapping of hands and the stamping of feet the Preps sang to Mimi:

"The peppiest girl I ever knew  
She never comes a pokin',  
If I were to tell you all the pep she had  
You'd think I was a jokin'.  
It's not the pep of the pepper pod  
Nor the pep of the pop corn popper,  
It's not the pep of the mustard jar  
Nor the pep of the vinegar stopper.  
It's the good old fashioned P-E-P  
The pep you cannot down,  
Sheridan pep *Mimi pep* the peppiest pep around. Heh!"

"Mimi, we realize you can't do your stuff in true Terpsichorean style with that cotton in one side of your nose, but do by some speech or symbol signify your acceptance."

Mimi hopped up on the stool beside Olivia. She was grinning from ear to ear, wide mouth, bandage and a carrot top.

"At a precious place like Sheridan, I'd rather be cheer leader than President! Thank you too much for this honor. Olivia is right. 'The spirit am willing but de flesh am weak' as my Mammy Cissy says but I *can count* a feeble 'one-two-three' for y'all to give fifteen for Sheridan——"

That fifteen was never finished. Mrs. Cole pushed her way in.

"Girls!" Her voice drenched them with ice water. "There are music lessons, and office work and college classes going on around the building in spite of the fact that the Preparatory Department seems to be making a Roman holiday."

That was enough. She turned sourly and walked out, the tails on her serge skirt flopping behind her at every prim step. The girls scattered after her.

"Did anybody say 'kill-joy'?" Betsy laughed.

"Not I!" Mimi declared. "Take more than a little thing like that to take me down when I'm so thrilled. Oh Betsy," Mimi moved toward her, "you did it, you did it every bit. You're a good sport!"

"What about yourself?" Betsy answered smiling.

For an instant Sue thought they were going to embrace. She was such a sentimental little piece she hated "scenes" unless she was in them.

"I am going to write Dot this minute," Sue said, "and it will be all over B. G. Hi two days from now."

Mimi wished the news would spread on to State University where Walter, sophomore camp life guard of the previous summer, could hear it. However, she didn't say so. She never mentioned Walter except to her diary unless she was showing the pictures in her camp count book.

"At present, I have only one worry worth mentioning," Mimi sighed contentedly. "These bloomin' Society bids. Betsy, forget you're a Ruskin and tell me what to do? I am thrilled to death they want me, but to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth, I don't care a hang about joining either one of them."

"Be a Ruskin," Sue interrupted.

"Why a Ruskin? Why is it the one to join?"

"I don't know, except—I've joined it." There it was out and she wasn't supposed to tell until Friday.

"You have!"

"Please be a Delphian, Mimi." Chloe spoke quietly, but she was pleading. "I've pledged Delphian."

"Divided we fall," Mimi quoted. "What does that make me? Nothing, absolutely nothing. I won't join either!"

"Good for you," cried Betsy to their amazement. "You'll be the first Prep who ever had courage enough to refuse. I am proud to know you. Whatta' girl!" Then realizing she belonged herself she added, "Not a word of what I said goes outside this suite."

"Not one word," agreed three voices.

It was their first four-sided secret. For the first time they were close together.

Mimi felt quite important and lady-of-the-worldish as she sat down and wrote two notes of refusal.

Sue found her pen. Chloe took the stopper out of the ink bottle. Betsy offered two sheets and two envelopes of her special stationery with the Sheridan crest.

"I'd better write it with a pencil first and then copy it," Mimi suggested. "Now just what does one say?"

They went into a huddle. After much erasing and scratching out and rewording, Mimi made two copies of the following note. It sounded sophisticated and mysterious. She really did not know what mysterious was until later, when she found out about Chloe. But not stating any reason for declining the bids seemed very mysterious. Changing only the headings, Mimi copied.

"Dear ——:

"You were so kind to ask me to join your splendid club. For various reasons, it is impossible to accept. Believe me, that I am grateful and flattered that you ask me. Accept my regrets.

"Sincerely,  
"Mimi Hammond."

## CLORISSA'S SECRET

Clorissa's "someday" to tell Mimi her troublesome secret came sooner than either expected. The revelation came about unexpectedly Friday night. It was the surprise climax to an unplanned party.

Study hall had not subdued the suite mates. They were still excited over Mimi's honor of being chosen cheer leader and over the campus discussion Mimi's notes would cause.

Mimi tried to lie still so that Chloe could go to sleep. She could hear Sue and Betsy turning and whispering. Then Sue spoke aloud.

"I am going to get up. I have a bad case of something, a cross between the heebie-jeebies and the jitters. I'm naturally wild on Friday nights and want to celebrate."

"Believe I'll get up, too," Mimi whispered.

"Let's all get up," Betsy said and they were all four out of bed and tiptoeing to the bathroom by the time she finished.

Mimi with her hands in front of her, walked slowly and slipped her feet along. She mustn't run into a door facing with that nose.

Betsy fumbled for a match, checked to see that the bathroom shade was down, and then lighted a candle. Keeping the flame shaded carefully with her hands, she dripped some tallow in the bottom of the bathtub and stuck the candle in the thickening puddle.

"Success!" she breathed as she withdrew her hands and the candle stood alone.

"What do we eat?" Sue asked. "I'm starving."

"No!" Mimi teased and almost giggled out.

"Sh-sh." Betsy warned. She had been to too many such after-lights-out parties. Keeping quiet was rule one.

"Alas the cupboard is bare," Mimi wailed, as she stepped down from the side of the tub where she had climbed to search the high shelf.

"The treasure chest is empty, too," Betsy lamented.

"We do have some white sugar and some cocoa in the sitting room," Chloe remembered.

"My kingdom, not for a horse, but for a cow! We need only butter and milk to have fudge." Sue had them all giggling now. "Let's make hot chocolate—sugar, cocoa, water—not rich, but I could drink ink with sugar in it."

"Far be it from me to be a kill-joy, but, we have no canned heat." Betsy sounded hopeless. "Why did we ever bring up food at all? I was hungry but not ravenous until we talked about fudge. If we go to bed now, and there seems nothing left to do, I'll be delirious with visions of fudge and sugar plums dancing through my head. Oh me, oh my. My mother had such hungry children!"

"Fudge? Did you ask for fudge, ladies? You shall have it. I finish everything I start," Sue's eyes were round with excitement. "Dit's roommate keeps canned heat all the time and I am going to borrow some."

"Sue! You mean you'll go to college hall?" Betsy asked. That meant getting safely through the intervening corridor and stepping in to the lighted halls. The chances of being caught were great.

"I'd walk a mile for—fudge." Sue concluded.

"I'll go with you, then," Betsy said. "Now if we can get to the first floor-bath and luckily catch some one we know well enough, we can hide in a shower while she goes and borrows the canned heat."

Betsy certainly knew her way around.

"If you all get caught I'll die," Chloe whispered after them.

"We won't," Betsy assured her. "Into the valley of death strode——" Betsy and Sue were out the door.

"Gee! I've been thinking about Daddy and Mother so much since I got hurt," Mimi confided as she and Chloe huddled on the bathroom floor in the dim light. "You'd love my Mother and Daddy. They're keen! My Daddy is the best doctor in the world and Mother is a darling. When they visited me at camp this summer all the girls raved over them. Some of them who have cranky old 'stick-in-the-mud' parents, envied me."

"I'd envy you any kind of mother and daddy—even old fogies." Chloe's whisper was pathetically small and lonely.

Mimi didn't know what to say. She wanted to ask, "Where are your Mother and Daddy?" but somehow she couldn't. She reached over and squeezed Chloe's hand and continued staring ahead. Minutes passed and Mimi could not find her tongue.

"I believe I hear them coming back," Chloe said. Both girls stiffened and sat up straight.

The door to two hundred and nine opened almost noiselessly, then clicked to. Mimi and Chloe rushed to meet Betsy and Sue.

"We have it!" Sue could hardly keep from shouting. "Not a whole can, but enough."

"Sh—sh—" Betsy cautioned again. "We nearly got caught. Oh Gosh! Mrs. Cole, of all people, was over there. She stopped right outside the floor bath door and talked to Virginia, I thought she'd never go on. Whew!"

Sigh of relief all around.

"Now for the dirty work at the crossroads." Betsy said. "Chloe get the chafing dish. Sue, stuff towels against the bottom of the doors into the hall. Can't have this larupin' good smell oozing out. We'd have half of Prep Hall in here, not to mention Mrs. Cole. Mimi get to stirring, we'd better cook in the tub. The light won't show so plain."

The whispered instructions were carried out silently and quickly. Five minutes after the daring visit to College Hall, sugar and water and cocoa fudge was boiling away in the chafing dish which stood in the bottom of the bathtub. Mimi was stirring away, foamy brown bubbles. She mustn't let it boil over,

not waste a precious drop—

"Want a cup of water to test it?" Chloe asked.

"Shoot no," Mimi answered. "I can tell by the way it boils when it's done. When it begins to boil heavy and the bubbles spit little balls, it's ready to beat. Can I wait or can I wait?"

Betsy in the meantime had greased a platter with cold cream.

"I really feel like I'm at boarding school now," Mimi murmured happily as she continued stirring.

"You'll *know* you are at boarding school if Mrs. Cole catches us and you get *campused*," Betsy warned. "What a divine smell!"

"Look!" Chloe was pointing at the canned heat. Her face was tragic. "It's going out!" Slowly the blaze flickered, flared up, and while the anxious girls looked on, sputtered out.

"There goes the old ball game," Mimi whispered.

"Not for me, I'll eat it with a spoon." Sue declared.

"Never say die," Betsy said. "It's nearly done, I know it is. Lift it up Mimi and we'll finish it over the candle. We mustn't let it stop boiling. Here."

"Dit has an electric perculator," Sue volunteered. "She's made tomato soup in it. Why not fudge?"

"Don't be silly," Chloe said.

"No," agreed Mimi, "you'd better thank your lucky stars you made the last trip safely. Besides, the lights are out over there now."

After ten slow passing minutes of feeble boiling over the candle, Mimi declared the candy finished. The candle was about gone, too.

"Pour it up, please—" Sue urged.

"Control yourself, Wimpy," Mimi teased Sue.

After each girl beat and beat, the candy was poured up, setting as it fell, spreading in circles which heaped higher and higher to the center leaving a topknot.

"Dubs on licking the pan."

"Go to it, but no holes in the chafing dish please," Mimi cautioned, handing her the pan. "We might want it again, sometime."

Betsy dried the nail file she had been scrubbing and while the fudge was still hot, she cut it with the file. Then spreading an oiled bread paper flat on the floor she turned the platter upside down. Slowly the fudge fell out.

"Let's eat one piece apiece now and let the rest cool," Mimi suggested.

"Since I licked the pan, maybe I can hold off," Sue agreed, turning on a slow stream of water and putting the pan to soak.

"Knock on wood y'all, but we've had better luck with our first after-lights fudge party than my great Aunt Patricia and her crowd did."

"What happened to them?" Chloe wanted to know.

"You know, my great Aunt Patricia, Pattie to her chums, came here when Sheridan was a Seminary for young ladies, I mean ladies. Did they have it easy? Needle work, china painting, French and grammar. Penmanship was a heavy course. Imagine! I've heard Aunt Pattie tell what an enormous place Sheridan seemed to her when Uncle Mose and her father drove her up the drive in the family barouche. Prep Hall was all there was here then. The rest of the building has been added. She was being left all of twenty-two miles from home. Think where my Mother and Daddy are! Uncle Mose, the coachman begged his little Missie not to forget him while she was 'getting edicated' and her father kissed her solemnly on the forehead and gave her a Bible marked with daily readings."

"But what about the fudge party?" Betsy interrupted. She knew all about the founding of Sheridan and its growth from a small private Seminary to a Preparatory School with college course added; how it was outgrowing finishing school requirements and, by abolishing the preparatory department all together next year, would be an A-1 accredited college for women. Not that Sheridan tradition bored her, but tonight her main interest was fudge. "It's cool enough for seconds," she added, as Mimi continued.

"Aunt Pattie was full of fun. She didn't do anything bad or break any big rules, but she got plenty of demerits."

"Don't we all?" interpolated Sue.

"This night of the fudge party things were just getting in full swing, when there was a rap on the door. Some one snuffed the candle quickly. The window was open and they hoped the smell would go out. Each girl sat or stood as she had been, you know like slinging statutes—and hoped that the matron would go on. But she didn't!

"Aunt Pattie had all the demerits she could have that term so she was scared stiff. In spite of all her hopes the door opened and there stood the matron holding an old timey oil lamp in front of her. The hall proctor was close behind her. Before either of them had time to make out any of the girls' faces, the suction sucked the light out. Aunt Pattie did some desperate thinking and then did a desperate thing.

"Knowing that if the matron succeeded in lighting her lamp again they were all in for it, while the matron fumbled for a match, Aunt Pattie crept toward her on all fours. When her hair lightly brushed the matron's heavy skirt, she stopped. For one calculating second she checked her bearing, then swift as a shot and sure as a good marksman, she jumped up to her full height knocking the lamp out of the matron's hands! Wide flew the oil, the wick, the base.

"In the panic which followed the girls fled to their rooms. Other than the girls who were hostesses to the party, only one girl was caught—"

"Not Aunt Pattie?" from three distressed voices.

"Yes, Aunt Pattie."

"But how?"

"When Aunt Patty went down to breakfast the matron was standing in the doorway supposedly saying good-morning to the girls but she was really playing detective, or better, bloodhound. She had been doing some desperate thinking, too, and had found an excellent clue. Carefully she looked down

on each girl who entered. Not that one, nor that one. She was about to despair when Aunt Pattie came tripping in, in her flowered cashmere.

"Pattie come to my office immediately after your meal."

"Aunt Pattie pitifully murmured, 'yes, ma'am.' She was dumbfounded."

"But how did she know it was Pattie?"

"She had been sniffing each girl and when Aunt Pattie passed she simply reeked of kerosene. When she upset the lamp she had baptized herself in oil. Scrubbing had changed her appearance but the smell lingered.

"What did they do to her?"

"Sent her home I think. Aunt Pattie always avoided that part. She didn't want me to know any of my family had ever been kicked out."

The candle was out and the fudge had disappeared miraculously.

"We'd better get to bed, I expect," Sue suggested. Full and warm, she was ready to cuddle down.

"I wish y'all weren't too sleepy to hear about *my* family," Chloe said faintly. "You see, I've tried to tell you so many times and somehow couldn't. While it is so dark and nobody is running in and out, maybe I could tell you."

"See that's it." Mimi hated herself for thinking. "She's ashamed of them!" but she was the first to say encouragingly—"Do tell us, Chloe. I'll admit I've wondered why you told about your Aunt Marcia, so much and never mentioned your Mother and Father."

"I haven't any," Chloe said bluntly. There it was out. Mimi felt her quiver. They were all crowded together in a small circle, crossed legs touching.

"Oh." Three soft Oh's again. What else could they say?

"You mean, they're—dead?" Sue whispered. Her tender heartbreak was in her voice.

"I—don't—know," Chloe replied.

"Don't know if your own Mother and Father are dead?" Mimi prayed that wasn't rude. The question had popped out of its own accord.

"No. I don't know. You see—"

"Yes?"

"I was—kidnapped."

Chloe's whisper left them paralyzed. Their excited breathing rasped the silence. All the eager questions died unspoken. Now that the ice was broken Chloe was the calmest of the four. In her soft, languid voice louder than a whisper, but much lower than her usual speaking tone, Chloe lisped her heartbreaking story. Telling it helped. She spoke easier as she went along. When she had finished it was as if she had unclasped an iron necklace and left her throat free from choking bruises.

"Aunt Marcia is not my aunt at all. She selected me at The Home and adopted me. There is only one incident I remember about my real family.

"When I was very small, I couldn't have been more than three, I was playing under two big trees by a big white gate at the end of a drive. Two men slowed up in a touring car and watched me play, then drove on. Soon they came back. The big one with the tattooed arms jumped out of the car and grabbed me. As he slung me over his shoulder like a sack of cotton seed and ran for the car, I heard a shriek. My head was hanging down over his shoulder bumping up and down as the man, whom I later learned to call Fritzie, ran. I couldn't see very well, but I shall always remember the blurred picture I saw. A beautiful lady was running down the drive screaming frantically. As long as I could see she kept holding out her arms running after us and pleading. She must have been my Mother. She must have loved me very much."

Chloe's voice died away.

Not a soul moved. Even the raspy breathing was stilled. The whole night had paused to hear Chloe's touching story.

Chloe's voice and girls breathed again.

"The little man drove us miles and miles. Fritzie put coveralls on over my dress. Threw my little white shoes away and put sandals on me. The buckles pinched. Then Fritzie took some big scissors out of the car pocket and cut my hair off until I must have looked like a little boy. When the little man put Fritzie and me on the train he said, 'So long Sonny.'

"Then there was a time, I have no idea how long, that I lived on a farm with Fritzie and a large slow moving woman called Freida. Callers seldom came but when they did I was hidden in the cellar.

"After a time something happened. I don't know what but Fritzie and Freida packed up and left, leaving me at The Home. I stayed there 'til that happy day Aunt Marcia came."

"But why didn't you tell the people at The Home you'd been kidnapped?" Mimi asked.

"I tried to once and the nurse said I'd had a bad dream. Of course, I didn't know the word kidnapped and I remembered so little by then. I even had a new name and didn't know the old one. When I'd say —'two men grabbed me,' the nurse would say, 'there, there; no one is going to get you' and move on to the next child. You see there were so many of us in The Home.

"Once I tried to tell Aunt Marcia. I could tell by her eyes she was scared but she turned it off as if I didn't know what I was talking about."

"She's afraid some one would identify you and take you away from her." Mimi was shrewd.

"I've thought of that. It's awfully nice to know somebody wants me, but I wonder all the time who I really am. Sometimes I wake up in the night and think I hear my real mother screaming."

"You are just you, honey, and that's good enough for us." Mimi spoke for all three. "We swear we'll never breathe a word of your secret."

How could Mimi ever concentrate on geometry again when she was living in the midst of an unsolved mystery?

## CHAPTER X

### BETSY SPRINGS A SURPRISE

Mimi and Olivia sat back to back under one of the biggest trees on the campus. Each held an open Spanish Grammar on her drawn-up knees. Each had her nose between the pages.

"I think I know the first five vocabularies now. Ask me, Olivia."

"Spanish or English?"

"You say English and I'll say Spanish and spell it."

"O. K. Here goes—the table?"

"La mesa. L-a—M-e-s-a."

"Every day?"

"Todos los dias—T-o-d-o-s l-o-s d-i (accent)-a-s."

Olivia kept on down the list and could not catch Mimi on a single one. Then they changed and it was Mimi's turn to quiz. Olivia knew them all, too.

"Guess we're pretty good, huh?"

"Gee, we ought to be; it's all review but, oh, those verb forms! I hate to have to cram but I have to think about Dr. Barnes mailing my grades all the way to Germany and how terrible Daddy and Mother would feel if mine weren't good."

"You needn't worry. You may not be an A or an A plus but you're an A minus or B plus easy."

"Wish I could believe you."

"But you can. With my excellent 'I. Q.', intelligent quotient if you don't follow me, I can classify people by their mentalities; predict such trivial matters as grades."

"A-hem! All right, Miss Brainless Wonder tell me when I'll get an answer from a very important long letter I mailed my Daddy one week ago, to be exact."

The thought of that letter made prickles of excitement up and down Mimi's spine. She'd love to talk to Olivia about it. She hoped she hadn't broken her promise to Chloe not to tell a soul, when she had written it to Daddy. No matter what you cross-your-heart-and-vow-not-to-tell you can always tell your parents. Mimi was sure of that when she had written Chloe's tragedy to Daddy. She had felt better ever since. Not that Daddy could do anything about it—he was too far away—but again he might when he came home. At least there was some one to whom she could unburden when she couldn't keep from talking about the mystery another minute.

"Bad habit I have acquired—talking to myself. Mimi! Look at me. I've explained twice already about the answer to your letter and you haven't heard a word of it. Atten-shun, please! Now, for the third and last time, you will—"

Before Olivia finished waving her arms around and succeeding in clouding her eyes as if she were going into a seance, Betsy came running toward them from the gym. She ran easily and lightly, arching her knees high. Her middy collar was streaming behind her. Her socks had flopped down over the tops of her gym shoes.

"Guess what?" she panted.

"Must be something grand the way your eyes are shining."

Betsy's one blue eye and one brown eye with their frames of thick curly lashes always fascinated Mimi but when Betsy was thrilled as she was now, her eyes were the cutest things Mimi ever saw. "Hurry and tell before I die."

"Yes, before she with the carrot top is devoured by her ravishing curiosity."

"Jack, my big brother who graduated from Vanderbilt last June, is coming to take me to Nashville to the big Thanksgiving football game!"

Mimi and Olivia jumped to their feet. Away went the text books and away almost went Olivia's shell rimmed glasses. By throwing her head back, she managed to balance them on the tip of her nose. While she and Mimi joined hands ring-around-the-rosie-fashion about Betsy, all three shrieked.

"And that's not all!" Betsy gasped when the three had let off the first burst of steam. "I can invite a guest and I'm asking you, Mimi—can you possibly go?"

"Can I? Can a duck swim?"

"I mean, will Mrs. Cole let you without a written permission?"

"She'll *have* to. Oh Betsy, I'll be a wreck if she won't. Let's ask her *now*."

Leaving Olivia to gather up the notebooks and Spanish grammars, Betsy and Mimi clasped hands and ran toward Prep Hall—up the steps two at a time—knock, knock on Mrs. Cole's door.

"If she's not here!" wailed Mimi.

Mimi despaired that the door would ever open and doubled up her fist to pound her impatience out on the door before they gave up and left. She drew back her fist. As it went forward it met thin air. The door opened back before the advancing fist and Mimi almost pummeled Mrs. Cole in the stomach! She tripped trying to balance herself.

"Come in young ladies," Mrs. Cole invited. They had interrupted her tea. "Have seats."

"Thank you, Mrs. Cole." Betsy found her voice first. "We're too thrilled to sit down. We came to ask permission to go to Nashville, Thanksgiving, to the football game."

"Nashville?" Mrs. Cole humped her eyebrows as if she had never heard of the place before when every Thanksgiving for more years than she'd care to admit she had been besieged for permissions to go there to the game.

"Yes, ma'am. My brother Jack will drive by on Wednesday afternoon and pick us up. We can get to Nashville early Wednesday night and come back Thursday night after the game."

"With proper permission from your parents, Betsy, you, of course, may go but, Mimi, it is different with you. This school, in the absence of your parents, is fully responsible for you. I cannot think of giving you permission without consulting Dr. Barnes."

Mimi was wilting under Mrs. Cole's droning.

"You would have to take a chaperon, of course."

"But my brother is going."

"He is not Mimi's brother." Mrs. Cole bit off the words. "You may see if you can find a teacher to accompany you in case Dr. Barnes gives consent. Now run along."

Run along they did. As fast as they could go they went to Miss Taylor's studio. They stopped outside and listened. Miss Taylor was giving a lesson. There was nothing to do but wait. They sat down in the corridor and leaned against the wall.

"Concentrate, Betsy, concentrate. Say over and over to yourself, Miss Taylor go to Nashville, Miss Taylor go to Nashville."

"O. K."

For five minutes neither spoke. By then Mimi was so sure Miss Taylor would go to Nashville that she began to think of other things.

"What are you going to wear?"

"That tweed suit. Your plaid wool and camel's hair coat would be grand."

"Are you sure? I want to look nice. I'll wash my pigskin gloves and get a new beret. Oh, but my nose! Does it look very bad to you, Betsy? Tell me the truth."

"In another week we'll never know anything was ever the matter with it. The swelling is gone and the bruises are fading fast. You don't have a hump."

"That was the good part about the fracture being a little to the side of the bridge and the wound on the inside. Oh, Betsy if she won't let me go—I'll—cable—Daddy!"

"With what?" A voice asked. Sue had stepped out of the studio and had been listening, "What's up?"

Disregarding Sue and knocking her violin case awry they grabbed Miss Taylor one on either side.

"Thanksgiving? I'm sorry but I am going to Memphis for that whole weekend."

Blam! That quickly a bubble bursts. One pin prick and a balloon is flat. Two dejected figures slink down the corridor to Tumble Inn.

"Why not ask your beloved Dit? Seniors can chaperone." It was Sue's voice and she had been lagging near. She couldn't help but be interested in other people's business.

"I couldn't bear to have her refuse me."

"I'll go ask her by myself," Betsy volunteered. "I'll take Jack's picture and tell her she can ride in the front seat with him and—"

While Betsy was gone Mimi rummaged in the closet for the plaid wool. Right now before another thing happened she'd take it to the office to be sent to the cleaners.

Mimi had never learned that "haste makes waste." She grabbed up the hanger and as she swung out of Tumble Inn, a sickening sound stopped her.

B-z-z-z—

She knew before she looked. She had torn the plaid dress! One of the pockets had caught on the door knob and besides the ripping, there was a tear.

"I would," Mimi moaned.

"Remove the scowl," Betsy called from the landing of the stairs. "Dit can go. We'll have to pay her hotel bill. Do you think you can manage?"

"Sure. I haven't spent anything this month so far. I must have known something like this would happen. But, Betsy—look what this clumsy ox has done to the plaid wool dress!"

Betsy examined it carefully.

"Not so bad," she consoled—"gimme."

"Where to?"

"College Hall. Janice does sewing, mending and darning. You can get any thing done in College Hall; typing, hair set and, best right now, sewing. You needn't go. I'll drop it there on my way to the library. See you at supper. Cheerio."

"Cheerio," Mimi echoed. She was not too cheerful at that. There was still Dr. Barnes' permission or refusal with which to reckon. Unconsciously she started to concentrate, "Dr. Barnes let me go, Dr. Barnes let me go"—I won't think that another silly time. It didn't work on Miss Taylor but I do wish to my soul, I had Mammy Cissy's rabbit foot.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE THANKSGIVING GAME

"Merrily we roll along, roll along, roll along.  
Merrily we roll along over the deep blue sea."

"Not that way." Mimi interrupted Betsy's rollicking song. "This way—Notice I did *not* say this A-way. I've learned one thing at Sheridan. 'Merrily we *ride* along, *ride* along, *ride* along, Merrily we *ride* along over the broad highway.'"

"But highway doesn't rhyme with anything," Betsy protested.

"Who cares! Hurrah—We're off—It could rhyme with gay; if you insist, 'cause that's how I feel. This whole back seat to ourselves and we're going places. Whoopee! I'm afraid to open my eyes too wide for fear I'll find out I'm sitting in study hall instead of zipping along this grand new road. I've held my breath for days, I've been so scared something would happen and we wouldn't get off."

Waiting was the hardest thing Mimi ever did. When she wanted anything she wanted it badly and wanted it RIGHT THEN. The two days she waited before Dr. Barnes finally gave her permission to go on this wonderful spree were a month long to Mimi. From that happy minute when Dr. Barnes, through Mrs. Cole, had said "yes" Mimi had trod lightly lest she burst the shimmering bubble of their precious plans. Now it was all coming true. The weekend bags were packed and stacked at their feet. Dit was on the front seat with Jack evidently having a good time. Mimi could see how she kept turning her head toward Jack and smiling up at him and talking. Strangely Jack was even better looking than his picture. The photographer hadn't caught his friendly twinkle. When he took both Mimi's cold little hands and said, "So you're the kid Betsy keeps writing about. I need another little Sis." Without saying so, he was showing more than how nice he was. He was telling Mimi that Betsy liked her; liked her enough to write Jack about her, to invite her on this thrilling trip. She unfolded a fringed plaid blanket and spread it across Betsy's knees and tucked the other end over her own. She'd make Betsy glad she asked her instead of an older friend.

"Isn't it all too precious?" she sighed contentedly as she nestled down. She stared down the rolling road which cut a straight black strip through the hills. Without opening her lips she said to herself, "Hojoni, Hojoni." No need to say it aloud. Betsy was probably feeling the same thing—beauty and happiness, but let her say it to herself her own way. Mimi liked to keep her magic word private unless some one was in real trouble and needed to find the way.

"How long will it take us to get there, Jack?" Betsy had to ask twice before Jack heard or heeded. He was finding the trail happy, too.

"In time for supper, I hope. I had the dickens of a time getting a reservation for you all. I finally got one room. I'm staying at the House."

Mimi knew that he referred to his fraternity house. Betsy had told her how popular Jack had been at school. She had two of his old annuals and a picture of his chapter.

"We can manage fine," Dit was saying, "can't we, girls? Sleeping is one of the best things we do at Sheridan—sometimes in classes. We aren't coming to Nashville to sleep."

Mimi didn't care if she never slept again. She was so full of tingles and throbs she couldn't sleep if she had her own ivory bed from home. Forever afterward when she recounted her good times at Sheridan, one of the first things she remembered was this trip.

The sun had sunk behind the hills and the bare trees made black outlines against the graying sky before they reached the suburbs. Traffic had increased surprisingly in the last five miles. Once Jack swerved so quickly to avoid a collision that the car had poised the fraction of a second on two wheels before he straightened it. Mimi and Betsy rolled from one side of the back seat and back to the other. Cars, cars, cars, two abreast, often three abreast going to the city. The pigstands were surrounded with carefree travelers making loud boasts about tomorrow's score.

"Might be a good idea for us to eat supper out here, somewhere," Dit suggested. "I imagine every place in town is packed and jammed. What do you think, Jack?"

"Depends on how hungry we are and what you want."

Mimi wouldn't dare tell how famished she was. It wouldn't be polite.

"I had thought we'd go on in, if you all can last another half hour, and eat at a waffle place I know. It is off of the main 'drag' and while it will likely be swamped too, they can take care of us and I believe you all would like it."

"Shall we check in at the hotel and freshen up first?" Dit asked.

"I think you look swell as you are. This is what I'd planned. Speak now, all three of you, or forever after hold your peace, if it doesn't suit."

"O. K.," the three agreed.

"I thought we'd go to the waffle house and eat just as we are. Then I'll get you all settled in your room. While I go out to the House to change, you all can rest, dress, do what you please. Then we'll put the kids in a good movie and we'll do the town." This last was to Dit.

"Couldn't be better," was the verdict.

That's how Mimi and Betsy found themselves jammed in the lobby of a movie waiting for the feature to be over so they could find a seat.

"If Mrs. Cole could see us now," Betsy exclaimed, "no brother, no chaperon, no ball-and-chain of any description, she'd faint." Mimi felt like a bird out of a cage too, as they watched.

The crowd came out.

"Get set," Mimi kidded shoving her head between Betsy's shoulders. "Give me some interference and I'll lug the ball through." Mimi knew a lot about football. She had watched the kids at home play on the corner lot; had even played a time or two herself when there weren't enough without her.

Honky had told her a lot about it, too. He played on B. G. Hi.

"Signals," Betsy answered.

"Seven-Eleven-Hike," Mimi answered shoving hard.

By pushing and scrouging and holding to each other, they managed to plow down the aisle to two seats. The newsreel was on flashing pictures of a suspected kidnapper across the screen.

"I'd like to spit on him," Mimi hissed to Betsy as she popped the folding seat down. All the hatred she felt for Fritzie with the tattooed arms, Freida, and the short man, who had cast a blight on Chloe's life, was in that sentence.

"I'd like to scratch him and kick him," Betsy hissed back. She was thinking of Chloe too.

"Wonder what Sue and Chloe are doing?" Mimi said.

"Study hall," replied Betsy scornfully.

Then realizing how rude it was to even whisper at a talkie they gradually became interested in the comedy. It was Popeye and he made Mimi shriek with delight but the tattooed anchors on his brawny forearms were an ugly reminder. They pricked the back of her mind and she was not quite happy. Before the feature was well begun and, as she was beginning to lose herself in it, a sudden commotion riveted her attention to the back of the theatre. There was a regular stampede. Mimi and Betsy turned to each other inquiringly. Each hated to admit she did not know what was going on. They were not in the dark long. Soon every one in the theatre knew what was up and, at least in spirit, joined in the celebration. The supporters and pep squad of the visiting team had crashed the show. They overran the lobby, the aisles, and the cheer leaders vaulted the orchestra pit to the stage. After five minutes of yelling and bedlam in general they left as suddenly as they had come. The heroine's voice sounded small indeed in the void they left behind them.

What next, Mimi wondered, but nothing else happened until the girls were out of the show. They were only a block and a half from the hotel and Jack had given them explicit directions. He had even spoken to the clerk at the desk. In case they made the wrong turn en route they had only to look up and around to see the big neon sign of the hotel flashing welcome.

"Let's window shop," Betsy suggested before they covered the half block.

"Suits," Mimi replied.

Up and down Church Street, up and down Fifth Avenue, hand in hand, the girls strolled exclaiming in front of this window and that. The jolly crowd jostled them but the girls elbowed along and laughed back.

"I always imagined New Orleans was like this at Mardi Gras time," Betsy commented. "Wouldn't you love to go?"

"If it were any more fun than this, I couldn't live," Mimi replied.

"Let's get a sundae before we go up."

"You think of the grandest things," Mimi answered following Betsy into the crowded drug store. There were no vacant tables so the girls sat on high stools at the fountain and dangled their legs. Two butterscotch sundaes appeared and disappeared.

"Let's make a night of it while we have a chance," Mimi said twirling around on the stool and walking over to pay the check.

"Anything you can think of?"

"Candy! Doesn't this look grand? I'll get a dime's worth of bonbons and you get a dime's worth of caramels, that is unless you prefer some other kinds. Let's end the evening with candy."

It is a wonder they were not ill the next day but they weren't. They felt fine. Mimi could hardly contain herself. They were so sound asleep when Dit had come in that she rolled them over to make room for herself without waking either. They slept soundly as tired babies. That is why they were so fresh this morn.

"Wonder what time Dit came in?" Mimi whispered to Betsy in the bathroom. They had managed to get up without awakening her.

"None of our business," Betsy replied. "Let's dress right quickly and go down to the coffee shop and eat breakfast and have Dit's sent up for a surprise."

"Suits." Mimi had picked up this word at Sheridan and she found it an apt answer to many questions.

The two felt very important walking on the thick carpet to the elevator.

"I don't know if it's being away from Daddy and Mother Dear or being fourteen or what, but I am beginning to feel so grown up. After this hotel experience I feel I could go on most any trip and take care of myself."

"You should never have any trouble, not you, with all the questions you can ask."

"All right, Smartie, I'll ask you one. What do we eat and what shall we order for Dit?"

Whatever they ordered they ate quickly so that they could get back to the room to waken Dit before her tray was sent. In spite of their hurry, someone else had wakened Dit. When the girls walked in, she was standing in the middle of the room in her negligee hugging a cardboard florist's box almost as tall as she.

"Mums!" she cried, "Mums—It couldn't be anything else."

Dit was right. When she had snapped the green tape, raised the lid and torn back the damp oiled paper there were six gorgeous big yellow chrysanthemums.

Mimi and Betsy looked on with envy. Oh to be grown up and have beaux who sent flowers! Mimi was sure at that moment she could never love a man who forgot to send flowers.

Dit's fingers trembled as she took out the card.

For my three girl friends  
To wear to a Vandy Victory.  
Jack.

Mimi's merry blue eyes shone. Betsy's cute eyes glowed with pride. After all he was *her* brother.

There was nothing in the room large enough to contain the flowers. They made the vases top heavy. After toppling the second one over, Mimi tried the metal waste paper basket and it leaked. As a last resort they thought of the bath tub. While they were filling it, Dit's breakfast came.

"Another surprise," she cried. "What nice hostesses you girls are."

Indeed it was a day of surprises and one of them was not so nice.

Jack called for them in a taxi to go to the game.

"This way we can go right to the entrance of our section. Otherwise, we'd have to park, no telling where or I'd have to drive you all up and go park the car and take a chance on finding you again. I don't want to lose you," he added to all three but he meant Dit.

The taxi reminded Mimi of her gloomy arrival at Sheridan. However, this was fun. There was only room for three on the back seat of the cab so Mimi sat on a little seat that folded down from the side. Jack insisted on using it himself but Mimi really liked it. She clung to the strap as they bounced along, sure that nothing in the world could be more fun. She felt so dressed up with her new beret which she wore down over one eye as Millie had worn her sailor hat at camp. Mimi knew everyone they passed admired the big yellow *mum* she had pinned so carefully to her lapel. She had to be careful when she turned her head that way. The cold yellow petals caressed her chin.

When they piled out of the taxi Jack bought them something else—cute little footballs dangling on black and yellow satin ribbons!

"Wait 'til Sue and Chloe see these!" she said to Betsy as they followed the usher down to their seats.

"Be sure and save your program, too," she said to Betsy. "Watch me and if you see me chewing mine or tearing the corners off, slap my hands."

But Mimi forgot even her own program when the team came out. The running, kicking, passing fascinated her. It wasn't the first time Mimi had wished she were a boy. Still if you were a boy you'd have to *send* flowers, not *wear* them.

"Wish they'd hurry and start," Jack said. "It's our game if the rain holds off. The dope says Vandy will win by two touchdowns. But rain would make it anybody's game."

"Let me be a kill-joy for just once," Betsy said to Mimi. "Look."

Mimi's eyes followed Betsy's finger.

"Do you see what I see?"

"Ugh!—Uniforms—almost like ours."

Betsy was pointing to the rows and rows of Ward-Belmont girls.

"I can almost see Mrs. Cole! Betsy, you old meanie!"

The rain held off until the show between halves was over. Mimi would be thankful for that always. This was her first big game and the show of the Pep Squad and the band was a brand new thrill. Marching feet, martial music, perfectly timed yells. Mimi could not keep her eyes from the cheer leaders. She watched their every move. When she got back to Sheridan she would try some of those antics herself. Forming of the great V and the singing of "Alma Mater" took Mimi's breath. She stood reverently and throbbed to every note.

Before the last words were finished the rain which had been threatening since noon began. It came in torrents. This was the only unpleasant thing of the whole trip.

"Shall we leave?" Jack asked.

"No, no, a thousand times no," came three answers.

Jack turned his coat wrong side out and turned his hat down. The girls buttoned up their coats. Mimi wished for her old felt hat so she could turn it down. A trickle from the beret was tickling her nose. She squinted her eyes. She was glad she didn't use make-up or her face would look streaked and ugly as some of the ladies who had looked so lovely in the sunshine.

The game became a scramble. Mimi hated to see the jerseys of the players get muddy. Soon you could not tell one team from the other. Time and time again the referee called time out to dry the ball. It was a mess. Mimi didn't know the final score for sure until she asked Jack. She knew Vandy won and for that she was glad.

"We won't be able to make any time driving back to Sheridan," Jack said when they were safe from the shower in a taxi.

"That means we'd better start as soon as we can throw our things together," Dit said.

"Couldn't stay over?"

"No, I promised Mrs. Cole we'd be back tonight and also that I would not ask for extended permission. That's the usual thing and Dr. Barnes doesn't like it."

"Who minds a little thing like rain?" Mimi asked. "Betsy and I don't. We'll be 'singing in the rain' all the way home."

And they did.

They sang until they were so hoarse they could hardly whisper by the time they arrived at Sheridan. Jack was afraid they had taken cold.

"We aren't hoarse, Mrs. Cole," Betsy said later. "It's so late we are whispering and trying not to disturb."

Mrs. Cole hustled them off giving them time for only the briefest thanks and goodbyes to Jack.

When they turned on the light in Tumble Inn to waken Chloe and Sue, they found only two empty beds.

"Well now that *is* something!" Mimi declared. She was still clutching her weekend bag in one hand and a wilted flower, a wet program and a faded little football in the other.

"You'll have to sleep with me," Betsy said.

That made everything all right except Mimi felt she would pop if she had to wait until morning to tell about the marvelous time she had had. Telling it was going to be almost as much fun as having it had been.

## CHAPTER XII

### TEA FOR TWO

Mimi was in front of the mirror in her green polka dot pajamas trying to do a back flip like a Vandy cheer leader when Sue and Chloe walked in. Betsy was still in bed.

"Pardon me," Sue grinned. "I was looking for Tumble Inn and gracious me, my eyes must be going back on me. I've walked right into Barnum and Bailey's circus winter quarters."

She winked at Chloe who could always manage to keep a straight face and they backed out.

"Here," Mimi called so loud that she awakened Betsy. "Don't dare leave without coming in and telling us where you've been."

"Oh—places." Chloe teased shrugging—"and you?"

"You know good and well where we've been but oh boy! We had a perfectly precious time. Look," Mimi gushed pointing out her souvenirs. She had pinned the football up by the mirror near Jack's picture. The program was being pressed dry under the treasure chest.

Before Sue had time to examine either or Chloe to admire the crushed mums in the window, Mimi was exclaiming, "Out with it. Where have you been?"

"I don't care," Betsy said sleepily. "Don't tell us."

"Aunt Marcia came to see me," Chloe said proudly. It was fine to have a family.

"Where is she?" Mimi wanted to know. She'd like to see Aunt Marcia. She wished she had the nerve to ask her some questions. Was she a large, slow moving woman? If you called her Aunt Freida suddenly as if by mistake would she flinch?

"Gone. We went out to dinner and a movie with her and spent the night at the hotel with her. She left on the early train and sent us home in a taxi."

"That makes us even," Betsy said. "What are we going to do all day. This is only Friday and there's tomorrow, too."

"So few of us are here, I imagine we can do what we please. I know," Mimi raised her voice, "let's ride horseback!"

"Oh, let's."

"We can rent horses out at the Riding Academy. The college girls go all the time and I've just been dying to. Betsy, would you ask Mrs. Cole?"

"I will if no one else will but I asked her just the other day about Nashville. How about you, Sue? Did you or Chloe ask for your permission?"

"Aunt Marcia asked for us," Chloe answered for Sue.

"Sure, I'll ask," Sue spoke up.

While Sue was gone the usual wail went up.

"I intended to wash my hose, write letters, review my geometry, get up my book report——"

All three had a list.

"There's always tomorrow," Mimi quoted solemnly. "It's a perfect day to ride—crisp and clear."

"We can go if we take Miss Bassett," Sue burst in with the news.

"Grand," Betsy cried, "but you know what that means. We will have to pay for her horse. Gee! I'm nearly broke."

"Don't spoil your pretty face with frowns and wrinkles, lovely," Chloe said quickly. "Aunt Marcia gave me \$5.00, *five dollars*, can you hear?"

She ran to her purse and reassured herself it was there.

"We'll pay you back, Chloe."

"Don't worry. It's all in the family."

The girls were beginning to feel like a family, really. Their schedules had smoothed out, they were accustomed to each other's individuality, the ugly head of rivalry and jealousy which leered the first few days had withdrawn. They enjoyed each other and shared their food, spending money, and now for the first time they were wearing each other's clothes.

Mimi, of course, had a beautifully tailored habit. She had taken good care of her patent leather boots. The other girls had jodphurs, so by exchanging blouses and sweaters a few times they managed to fit themselves out becomingly. Chloe had the worst time of all. Everything she had on but her jodphurs was borrowed. She had never been on a horse in her life. She wasn't too keen on the idea but tried not to show how she felt, Mimi guessed.

"We'll take good care of you, Chloe. I can give you a few pointers that will help you. So can Miss Bassett. We'll all ride slowly and keep together. We'll have a grand time."

They did have a grand time; although, Chloe and Sue both limped the next two or three days when no one was looking.

When they returned they stopped in the Post Office. That was one place Mimi never passed without peeking in. Although, she knew exactly when the mail was put up she always had a hopeful feeling. Today she was not disappointed. There was a big fat letter from Mother Dear. Mimi dropped her hat and crop and ripped the letter open.

"Wait 'till Olivia sees this stamp," she said. "She'll go wild."

Mimi devoured every word of the letter. She trailed the other girls on up to Tumble Inn for the second reading which was usually aloud. Sue, particularly enjoyed news of Mimi's family.

Mimi straddled a chair backwards, unfolded the letter and prepared to read——

"Where is Sue? This is getting queer. Has she an invisible cloak? Every time I've looked for her lately she has disappeared."

"She had a notice in her box to come to the studio. Miss Taylor wanted to see her."

"What are you saying about me, Chloe?" Sue asked poking her head around the door.

"Eavesdroppers hear no good of themselves," Betsy quoted.

"Come down to the studio with me, Mimi—'sprise."

She need say no more—at the word "s'prise," Mimi was up and after her.

"You can usher with me at Albert Spaulding's recital!"

Mimi failed to catch Sue's enthusiasm.

"Crazy—you will get to wear your long wedding dress and high heeled slippers—now—say something."

"Swell! I begin to catch on. But how did you manage to get me in? I'm not a music student."

"Simple enough. The college music students are going to receive and serve at the reception and the preps are to usher at the recital. There are so few of us this year that Miss Taylor thought we'd better get one or two outsiders. The minute I caught on I asked her if I could ask you. Here we are and Miss Taylor can tell us exactly what she wants us to do."

The recital was the biggest event between Thanksgiving and Christmas. For Sue it was one of the high points of the year. Mimi tried to be as interested as Sue expected her to be.

Dressing up in the long dress was fun. Thank goodness, Miss Jane had chosen a rainbow wedding. Her dress was orchid and Sue's was blue. Only one or two girls mentioned that they were made alike. Every time Mimi wore the high heeled pumps she handled herself better. Eventually she hoped to walk gracefully in them, to float along as Miss Jane had. Mimi even went so far as to pay a college girl fifteen cents to set her hair. Even though she was wearing it longer than she had at camp, the wave wouldn't make it "stay put." It wasn't that kind of hair. Betsy and Chloe had fussed over them no end, patting and preening.

"Leave your hair alone, Mimi," Chloe despaired.

Mimi tried to. All the time she was greeting people and marching sedately up and down the aisle, she carried her head a bit to one side so the wildest lock of hair would not fall in her eyes. However, she and Sue had not been through their duties and seated ten minutes before Mimi unconsciously tucked the lock behind her ear. Sue did not notice. She was entranced with the music.

To her there were only two people there, herself and Albert Spaulding in that enchanted realm of music. His nimble fingers, supple wrist, the powerful singing tones brought tears to her eyes. She followed with understanding. She was aware of nothing but a violin laughing, crying.

Mimi was moved by the music but she was much more aware of the artist himself. She was pleased that he was tall, that his shoulders were broad. She loved the way he stood with his feet wide apart. How grand to see an artist who was, withal, such a man. Mimi's mind kept hopping to tennis racquets and other sporting goods which had made his family famous. Then she would come back to the music. Several times she checked down the program to see how much longer it was.

She knew exactly how to act at the reception which followed. Only the music students were presented to the artist and Mimi felt she shouldn't barge in on that. She had been very lucky to get to usher. She did, however, go down the receiving line and chatter with many of the college girls. She liked knowing them. She was fast growing into one herself. Nor did she pass up the punch and wafers. Not Mimi. Sue found her there.

"Lead me upstairs, please," Sue plead in such a queer voice that for a moment, Mimi was frightened. Was Sue ill? Had she stood on her high heels too long? Was she going to faint? She was holding out her hand to Mimi.

"What on earth? Why, you're trembling!"

"Oh, Mimi!" Sue gasped, "I shook his wonderful, magic-making hand!"

## DECK THE HALLS WITH BOUGHS OF HOLLY

"What's the matter with Mimi?" Madge asked Sue. "Everytime any one mentions Christmas she flounces out of the room."

"I hadn't noticed but I can guess. It's the first Christmas she was ever away from her folks and that must be it. She has the grandest family. I'll miss them, too. The Hammond's always have open house all through the holidays and our crowd almost lives over there."

"I'm glad I asked you. I was beginning to think it was I. I am queer but I can't help it. I couldn't bear it if Mimi stopped liking me."

"Don't be silly. Mimi likes everybody. She doesn't think you are queer. I don't either. I've heard her say you were a very interesting girl. So there."

"Have you really, Sue? Cross your heart?"

"Yeh."

"Thanks. Thanks too much. I like Mimi better than any girl in school. I always have and since she turned down those bids to join the clubs, I've adored her. Gee! That took nerve. But you won't tell her, will you, Sue?"

"No, I cross my heart again."

"Thanks."

Sue forgot Madge's sensitiveness right away. She had other things to consider in regard to Mimi. Why hadn't she thought sooner that Mimi had nowhere to go Christmas? Gee! It would be terrible if she had to stay here with everyone else home. Sue would write home for permission to invite Mimi to her house. No. That would take too long. Mimi was already dreading Christmas. Sue knew that every other year Mimi had considered Christmas the wish-come-true time of times. She'd ask her now and then write home. Sometimes she had to do things backwards. Her daddy called it taking the bull by the horns.

"A—D—F A—B—F!" Sue thrilled as she walked faster and faster toward the gym. She was trying so hard to memorize Souvenir for the Christmas recital but she couldn't practice until she settled Mimi's Christmas arrangements.

"E-e-e-prettee!" She shrieked the old camp call from the balcony of the gym.

Mimi let the ball fly sidewise as she looked up.

"Hey! Aw Sue, you made me miss."

"Sorry. Getting good?"

"Am I? Seven fouls out of ten. Not bad?"

"Regular dead eye!"

"What brings you here fiddle in hand? Are you going to play a balcony scene?"

"No. I came to invite you to spend Christmas with me."

Bowling Green—Cissy, King, Von, Miss Jane and Dick, Dottie, Margie, Jean, Honky—heaven! As near perfect a Christmas as could be without precious, precious Mother Dear and Junior so far, so very far away. The distance had been widening daily ever since Mimi had mailed their presents to Germany. She had wrapped her packages quietly and mailed them without telling, but she had known they were gone, known how lonely Christmas would be and Sue had guessed. Dear roly-poly Sue who was never lonesome herself.

Mimi blinked and gasped.

"Sue, do you really?"

"No savvy English?"

"Why, Sue! I'd love to, only, do you think it will be all right with your Mother?"

"You don't think I'd ask you if it wasn't, do you? Why—" Sue had to be convincing now. "Mother is writing Mrs. Cole—and Dr. Barnes both so that there can be no question about your permission!" Sue stopped triumphantly. When Mrs. Cole's and Dr. Barnes' names were mentioned, all was said that could be said.

"Providing the permission comes through, I accept. Yes, a thousand times yes."

"Good! See you at supper."

Mimi watched Sue disappear. Sweet Sue. She put the basket ball back in the locker, without putting her sweater on, she jogged across the short cut from the back door of the gym to Prep Hall ell.

So much to do! She hadn't been studying as much as she should of late. The lessons and notebooks had been piling up to be worked on during Christmas while her suite mates were gone. Now that she was going to celebrate too, she would have to make things fly. As soon as she changed clothes, she'd go to the library and get *Greene's Source Book* and catch up on her outside reading in history. At study hall tonight she'd make every minute count. She would not look at the clock a single time, or get permission to speak to a soul, or to sharpen her pencil or to fill her pen unless it was an emergency. After study hall she would mend her hose, straighten her trunk, the dresser's drawers and if there was time before light bell, she'd check up on her allowance and see if she could squeeze out a new pair of gloves. While she was home she could get several things. Daddy had oked a charge account for her and had told her she could order things but so far she hadn't used it. She was trying to spend as little as possible because Daddy's expenses must be terrific. She knew he had not planned on spending so much on her until she was college age.

Plans were racing through her head.

"I'm going to Bowling Green, I'm going to Bowling Green." Her mind played an accompaniment to her marching feet. Thinking was so thrilling, before she realized it, those marching feet were detouring by Sue's practice room instead of keeping the straight trail to the library. She'd only stay a minute. She'd have to rave a while and calm down or she could never sit still in the library with the

source book.

Opening the big door to the practice rooms was like opening the door of a menagerie at feeding time. Standing in the hall from which the cell like rooms opened, Mimi's ears were assailed by squeaks, grunts, and ferociously thundering bass notes. Mimi bumped into the proctor who was looking through the glass windows in the doors to check and be sure that the music students were keeping their regular practice times and—that no one was playing jazz. She scowled at Mimi.

"Could I speak to Sue a second?"

"If you'll hurry and leave before I do. I am not supposed to leave any one here without special permission."

Mimi ducked in Sue's cell. The watchful eye of the proctor cramped Mimi's style but she got in a few hurried expostulations. Who could say much with the feeling that some one was holding a stop watch over them?

"Put your sweater on," motherly little Sue called after her.

"Thanks a lot," Mimi said as she brushed past the proctor on the way out. Some hopeful soprano was singing, "Who Is Sylvia?"

"Not Sylvia. Who is Chloe?" As if she didn't have enough on her mind without being haunted by that.

Mimi had no sooner stored away the mystery about Chloe, the happy holidays ahead, and determinedly buried herself in the source book when some one stepped up behind her and covered her eyes with two cold hands. She started to cry out, then remembered where she was. Placards with "SILENCE" were in plain sight all around in case one was prone to forget. Silently she removed the fingers and twisted around. It was Chloe; her glowing dark eyes lighted up her whole beautiful face. Mimi had never seen her so radiant.

"Meet me outside—quick," she whispered.

Goodbye history reading. Mimi's insatiable curiosity had the best of her. She followed Chloe out as quickly as she could return the book to the desk.

"Guess what?" Chloe exclaimed when they were safely out of the quiet zone.

Mimi could only think of one thing. Chloe had a clue to her identity.

"You have found out—?" She didn't know how to say what she was hoping.

"Not that," Chloe replied quickly sobering up. "But maybe while we're there we can find out—"

"While we're where?"

"At Aunt Marcia's! I just received a letter and she says I may bring someone home for the holidays and, of course, I want you, Mimi. I'm asking you first."

What could Mimi do? As much as she would love to go to Sue's she would miss all that fun for the chance to ferret out more about Chloe. She wanted to meet Aunt Marcia. She and Chloe would have a good time, too.

"That's mighty nice of you, Chloe."

As Mimi fumbled for words she could see Chloe's feathers fall.

"It isn't that I don't want to. Please don't think that—but I've accepted Sue's invitation, but maybe —"

"Oh, it's quite all right." Chloe's chin went up. "I understand perfectly."

As they walked too silently toward Tumble Inn, Mimi was sure she didn't. However what happened next did help. Betsy was rushing to meet them.

"Mimi, I've looked high and low for you. Where have you been?"

"The library."

"No!"

"Yes, I have. Study has caught up with me. Before holidays begin I am going to know more than—"

"Holidays? That's what I want to see you about. Mother says I may bring you home for the holidays. Of course, you'll come?"

"Home-for-the-holidays." Mimi repeated slowly. "What is this a frame up or a song?"

"A what?"

"It is funny," Chloe was smiling now. "You see, Betsy, Sue asked her, you ask her, I ask her! Whew! Is she popular?"

"Please—" Mimi was embarrassed. "You are all honeys to want me. I still think you're kidding!"

"We are not," said Sue having arrived in time to hear the last of the discussion. "We want you. But remember, you've promised *me*."

"What we should have," Mimi said suddenly inspired, "is a house party! Then we could all be together. A progressive house party. Oh, if Mother Dear were only home!"

For several days the girls buzzed with ideas about a house party but as Mimi disgustedly phrased it they, "got no where fast." However, Sue's mother, as Mothers often do these days, had followed Sue's instructions to the letter.

After calling Mimi on the carpet, not the magic carpet by any chance, and impressing upon her what a trying position the school would be in if anything should happen to her, Mimi received permission.

Now on the day before departure she was stacking out her things to pack.

"Sue, I can hardly contain myself."

Mimi went into a rhapsody ending in a clog. She poised breathless, hands on hips, head to one side, face flushed.

"I'm as thrilled as I was when we packed for camp. Far as I am concerned they might as well not meet classes today. All I want to do is 'Deck the halls with boughs of holly, fa, la, la, la, la; la, la, la, la'."

"Why are you holding your head, Mimi?" Chloe asked tumbling in from the hall over Sue's bag.

"I'm kind of dizzy," Mimi replied sitting down on the side of the bed. "I'll be all right in a minute."

She wasn't. When she came up to her room after lunch she was aching and shivering. Soda! That was what she needed, soda water—That would cure anything.

Ca-chew! Yes, if this was a cold soda was the very thing. She'd go right down to the kitchen now and get some. If she went to the infirmary—Well, no use taking a chance. But she was all right. She had to

be—Ca-chew! She remembered her last trip for soda and felt her face burning. Betsy and Madge and the alarm. Betsy still did not know why Madge failed. That was the only secret she had from Betsy now. Ca-chew!

She sneezed once too often. Mrs. Cole passing and hearing poked her head in.

“Who is that sneezing? Here let me feel your head. Child, you have fever. Come with me.”

Too amazed to resist, and aching and feeling much worse than she cared to admit, Mimi allowed Mrs. Cole to lead her to the Infirmary Wing. Nurse took one good look.

“Flu,” she said. “If we don’t have some freezing weather soon, there will be an epidemic. Quarantine, for you, young lady.”

“I can’t come up here. I’m leaving tomorrow.” Mimi protested. “I’m all right, really I am, Nurse.”

“Fever one hundred and one-half; eyes red, nose dripping.”

“Sue’s mother will fix—Ca-chew!—me up—”

“Mrs. Cole have her roommate bring up her robe and pajamas and toilette articles. Mimi is staying with me.”

As Nurse tucked her in and put an ice bag on her hot head, Mimi raised to her elbows.

“What now?”

“The singing,” Mimi said smiling sadly. “Hear.”

Into the open window floated the strains of “Noel, Noel.” The Glee Club was practicing but the glad tidings sounded very faint and far away to Mimi. For once in her life Christmas would come too soon.

## THE LAND OF COUNTERPANE

Mimi ran her fingers up and down the crinkles of the blue and white striped bed cover. She made dents with her fists for lakes then smoothed them all out and began again. This time she made a deep curving gulley which was Green River flowing around Camp. The flat space over her stomach was the open space around the flag pole where the campers had gathered as soon after reveille as they could slide into their bathing suits. The small point she had pinched up with her fingers was the Lodge and the great bump her doubled up knees made was the Hotel far up on the hill above camp.

Chimes rang out in the distance, suddenly her knees collapsed and she burrowed her flushed face in the pillow. A miniature earthquake had leveled her make-believe land. Now it was raining on her pillow. What a great god she was to build country and shake it down and wash away the debris with rain.

After the deluge she was as alone as in the beginning. All of her best friends were gone. They had not been permitted in the ward to say goodbye. When Nurse relayed their farewells from the corridor to the patient some of the sadness melted away, but not all, not by any means.

She had begun all the make-believe nonsense to keep from remembering it was Christmas and that she was sick-a-bed without her family, without her chums. But it was no use. Stubbornly she put her mind back to her "Child's Garden of Verse." She said "The Friendly Cow," "Singing in the Rain," "Sea Cups," and in spite of herself between each one she would revert to "When I was sick and lay abed \_\_\_"

The siege of flu had begun to look like an epidemic. There were six single beds in a row in the Infirmary and this Christmas morning each bed cradled a sick girl. Mimi, however, was the only one awake.

Ding, dong—ding, dong.

Mimi listened to the bells ring out. Perhaps they could do what trying-very-hard and poetry had failed to do. But she gave up. There was no use trying to forget it was Christmas for all day there would be reminders. She must hope that somewhere in Leipzig Junior was dumping the contents of a bulging stocking on his bed instead of racing with her and winning by sliding down the bannisters to their usual tree at home. She hoped the gifts she had sent arrived in time. If it took as long for things to go to Leipzig as it did for them to come from there to America, the gifts would be late. Mimi knew that Mother Dear had sent her something in plenty of time but so far no package had reached her. As soon as Nurse would let her get up she would go to the Post Office and ask them to send a tracer. She was that sure Mother and Daddy had not failed her.

Gray morning was peeping around the cracks of the window shades. Mimi leaned over and eased her shade up the tiniest bit; at least that is what she intended to do but the shade slipped from her cold fingers and went whr-r-r—zip—all the way to the top. Mimi shut her eyes against the sound, and when she opened them and looked out, wonder of wonders a fairy world bade her good-morning. So softly the snow had fallen that no sleeper had heard.

Nose against the pane, breath making fantastic wreaths on the glass, hands clasped as if praying, Mimi gasped in awe. Then because she could never be unhappy long and because it was Christmas inside her, a WHITE Christmas, she sang out:

"Merry CHRISTMAS! Oh wake up, wake up, there is snow!"

Weak hands rubbing swollen eyes. Tousled heads rearing from pillows. Necks craned toward nearest windows.

"Merry Christmas yourself." "Snow." "Oh, SNOW!"

"Merry Christmas!" Nurse's clear, crisp voice rose above the others. "What chance does an amateur Santa Claus have with all you girls already wide awake? I was outside in the hall hanging the last bangles on your tree when 'there arose such a clatter, I sprang to the DOOR to see what was the matter!'"

"Our tree?" came the chorus.

"Yes, your tree. You don't think I'm mean enough to make you stay in bed and feast on orange juice instead of plum pudding without doing something for you?"

"May I come in?" It was Mrs. Cole in a fresh blouse and newly pressed skirt. She looked sweeter than Mimi had ever seen her. "Merry Christmas, girls. If you'll help me, Nurse, we'll roll the tree in."

It was not a large tree; a living evergreen growing in a wooden tub and riding into the sick room on a rolling white hospital cart-table. Mimi had passed it by the steps many times scarcely noticing but today, decked so gayly and glittering so magnificently, it was as new as the snow. As they pushed the tree along the ornaments made an elfin jingle.

Yesterday Mimi had wished her bed were at one end of the ward or the other so that she could lie on one side with her back to illness and forget it. Now she was glad that she was in the center of the room because the tree, placed in the middle of the room, was at the foot of her bed. If nurse had not made up the bed with tight square corners she could wriggle her toes free and touch it.

"There!"

Nurse and Mrs. Cole stood one to either side admiring their handiwork.

"But no presents or mail until baths, temperatures taken all around, and breakfast."

Mimi knew Nurse meant exactly what she said and that no amount of begging would change her orders. Now if it were Mrs. Cole in charge.... But she wasn't. Nurse's word was law and obeyed to the letter. So was Dr. Ansley's. Mimi tried not to show how impatient she was but eagerness danced in her merry blue eyes.

The hour finally came and for once, Mimi had more surprises than she could stand. The last one was the biggest and it brought tears.

First the mail was distributed. Nurse did not call out the names. She had it all sorted and handed each girl a neat stack. Otherwise, she would have read "Mimi Hammond" every other name for Mimi had as much mail as all the others put together.

Now for the packages.

The first one handed to Mimi made her heart leap. From Leipzig.—Careful not the tear the stamps, she ripped it open and lifted out three separate packages. She opened the lumpy one from Junior first. Not a guess what it was. It didn't rattle or move about. What could it be? A peasant doll! Braided hair, crisp white cap, full skirts held in place by a tight bodice. Precious! The doll would sit on top of Mimi's trunk in the living room so that all who opened the door of two hundred and seven could see and admire. And what could this one from Daddy be? Shake it. Feel it. No; guess again. Wrong both times. A Bohemian necklace with a crystal pendant to wear to Christmas parties. Daddy liked every one well and gay. He must realize, too, that she was growing up. This thin, flat package from Mother. Not as thick as a book but about that shape. Careful! Don't tear. A picture and what a sweet one! Mimi did not fully appreciate what she had until the letter came telling about the trip to the Dresden Gallery to see Coregio's, "The Holy Night," and the "Sistine Madonna." The print they sent Mimi was a Hanfstaengel called "The Cherubim," artistically copying the little angels who hover around the Virgin in the full picture of the Madonna. Beaming faces. Mimi loved them. What wonderful gifts from Leipzig!

Then the small packages. Stationery from Chloe with Tumble Inn hand blocked in the upper left corner. Oh, these art students. Mimi's fingers felt thick and clumsy as she untied Betsy's package. It did not look neat but Mimi never judged inside by outside. An enviable black and white sport belt to wear with her riding habit. Two plain sport handkerchiefs from Madge with this verse printed on the card:

"Some hankies for show,  
Some hankies for blow;  
You know which to do  
When you have flu."

She hadn't realized how clever Madge was. Olivia had left sealing wax and a Sheridan signet. Dit's card was almost as good as a present. Under the greeting she had written, "To my Prep." At first glance Mimi had interpreted the back handed phrase as "To my Pup." She laughed aloud. She was reading the cards a second time. Surely that was all the packages but she was wrong. The too big surprise was coming up the steps now. Such a big box Mrs. Cole was having the janitor bring it up. Plop! He put it down beside Mimi's bed.

"That's right." Mrs. Cole was directing behind him. "That's the girl."

"Miss MIMI HAMMOND," the janitor read slowly.

The only reason Mimi didn't guess was because, Christmas or any other time she wore an air of expecting-something-nice-to-happen. So often it did.

"Thank you."

This looked like a crate of oranges. She could make out from the express label that whatever it was, it came from Bowling Green. Grand! Then a wave of suspicion swept over her. This might be a prank. Not too many years ago when Sue played in her first recital, Mimi herself had thought up the joke of sending Sue a box of weeds. Sue, unsuspecting, had opened them before her friends and cried with embarrassment. Come to think of it, Sue had left no present. Maybe—

"I'll pry the lid off, Miss," the janitor was saying as he reached in his hip pocket for a hammer.

The squeak of the first nail drawn commanded silence. Every one in the room who could be up out of bed hovered near. The others sat up and craned their necks. Mimi with one hand held her robe together at the throat and with the other was squeezing the end of the pillow behind her back into a tight ball. Hurry, janitor, hurry but don't get a splinter in your finger.

When he pulled the top off, the first thing Mimi saw was oranges, a whole half crate of them. It was a joke after all. Anyone with any sense would know that after four days of flu she never wanted to see an orange again. But what was under the red tissue covering the other half? One hand to her head to guard against dizzying weakness, Mimi peeked under the red paper. Presents, a whole array of them daintily tied up in green cellophane with silver ribbons and stars; almost the green and white of Sheridan. Mimi's hands shook as she opened the note which lay unsealed atop the presents:

"A gift a day  
keeps the blues away."

The instructions followed. There was one package to be opened each day beginning now, Christmas, and every day thereafter until the holidays were over. The presents were labeled by days. She would find no cards as they had been bought by them all. The signatures which followed, Mimi kept and a year later they were the first page of the autograph book she prized so highly. Sue had planned the box, of course. She had rushed home breathless with the news that Mimi was quarantined. Dottie had taken charge (Mimi could picture her ordering the others around) and under Miss Jane's supervision the gifts had been assembled. Racing down the list of names Mimi's eyes clouded. A round tear splashed down and blurred the second name. She read, Miss Jane and Dick, Dottie, Jean, Margie, Sue, Miss Millie, and the last two surprised her most of all—Honky and Mammy Cissy. Bless their hearts! She had had none of Tiny Tim's spirit when she awakened, but now she was so touched by the thoughtfulness of her friends that she wanted to say aloud. "God bless you everyone. Bless Mother and Daddy and Sonny," she tagged on at the end as if it were her bedtime prayer. Dottie had rounded them up to make the days come out correctly. One-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight—eight days and Sue would be back knowing a thousand things Mimi was eager to find out.

How the days ever would have gone by without a daily surprise Mimi did not know. That certainly

helped. She had been like old King Cole calling for his pipe and calling for his bowl. The difference was Mimi called for a “sprise” and Nurse brought one. Now that she was better, writing letters of thanks filled much of her time. She used Tumble Inn stationery and sealed the envelopes with green wax imprinted with an old English “S.” Something else happened that helped more than that. Miss Millie paid her a “pop call”! That capped the climax.

Mimi had been sitting in a big chair all wrapped up in her bathrobe studying. Yes, studying. But alas that Source Book. Every time she settled down to outside reading something happened.

“Pahdon Mah southe’n accent but is you all studyin’?”

Head around the door one second asking, the next entering and hugging Mimi, flu and all. That was Miss Millie, next-to-Miss-Jane-the-best-counsellor-in-the-world.

Blam!

Source Book to the floor—

“Millie—Oh—Millie! Am I seeing things?”

“No, ’tis I, Millie, former skipper of the Cuckoo’s Nest on Green River and now the most dignified member of the faculty ’way down yonder where I teach.”

It wouldn’t be Miss Millie if she wasn’t clowning.

“I hardly recognize you without your silly sailor hat but oh, Millie! Tell me the news. Where have you been? Where are you going? And that rudest question of all, how long can you stay?”

“Large order but I’ll try. I have been in Bowling Green for Christmas, am en route to the high school where I earn my daily bread, can stay here fifteen minutes. There is a taxi waiting at your door now. He promised to get me to the train in plenty of time. If I stay a second past my allotted fifteen minutes he is to begin blowing and not stop until I appear. One way for a homely girl to cause a panic.”

“Millie, you’re not homely. You look wonderful to me. I never was so glad to see any one! Don’t waste a minute. Tell me everything. How is Miss Jane?”

“You should see her apartment. The McIntosh’s moved out of Mrs. Herold’s house so Jane has her own apartment but she still lives at home. She has everything Early American. Maple beds pegged together instead of screwed or nailed. An elegant Chintz chaise longue with soft pillows. You just sink down to heaven in it. I had tea with Jane and sat on it. She says that after supper she and Dick scramble for it but usually end up by *both* of them sitting on it. She looks prettier than she ever did in her life—rested, fresh and has more pep! She’s been making curtains, made a tufted candlewick bed spread, and now is hooking a rug—whatta’ gal!”

“Isn’t she though?”

One by one Mimi went down the list. How was each? Who gave parties? What was served? What was worn?

When Millie sprang up and jerked her hat forward at the first honk of the taxi, there were still things left unsaid.

“Muchas gracias—er-r-r—for the presents,” Mimi added in English—“and adios.”

She was grateful for the presents and she hated to say goodbye. But it had been an interesting visit. Next to the excitement of opening all the presents, Millie’s “pop call” was the high light of the holidays. One can weary even of holidays but they would soon be over now. Nurse had promised Mimi she could meet the trains and she could hardly wait.

“Imagine me, me of all people, anxious for holidays to end, but I am, Nursie, I sincerely am.”

## DADDY SENDS A CLUE

"Did you have a good time with Aunt Marcia, Chloe?"

"Er-r—certainly, Mimi. Why do you ask?"

"Nothing."

Mimi blushed. She could not fib with a straight face. She edged around keeping her back away from Chloe as she was clutching behind her a letter which had just come from Daddy. Perhaps it was the effect of the letter but it seemed to Mimi, Chloe had looked disturbed and paler since the holidays. In contrast to her wistful dark eyes, her skin seemed ivory white. The other girls had come back sparkling and glowing, telling and re-telling good times they experienced at home. Betsy was radiant. Sue was voluble. The first night she was back Mrs. Cole had had to rap sharply on the door of Tumble Inn to stop the talking after light-bell. They hadn't given Chloe a chance to get a word in edge ways had she wanted it. Mimi had waited hopefully for the slightest word from her but none had come. She had to pull to get much out of Chloe.

"You didn't have an opportunity to ask Aunt Marcia—anything—important?"

"What could I ask, Mimi?" Chloe countered. "The once or twice I have broached the topic Aunt Marcia has hedged or changed the subject. She was so kind Christmas and seemed so happy to have me with her. She must be awfully lonely, too, or she never would have adopted me. She tried to plan things I'd like but right in the middle of whatever we'd be doing I'd think—you're not my Aunt, you're not even kin to me! Who are you?"—Chloe was choking—"Who am I?"

Mimi hugged Chloe close. Chloe did not shrink. She laid her beautiful, tired head against Mimi and sobbed.

"You are somebody beautiful and sweet and lovely. We all love you, no matter who your Mother and Father were."

"I know they were fine, too, Mimi. But it's this awful suspense of not knowing. I might have brothers and sisters and pass right by them any day and not know them. My mother must be tortured imagining horrible things have happened to me. I'd—I'd rather—believe—she is dead than that she has worried about me all these years."

The letter which Mimi had quickly thrust in her belt when she took Chloe in her arms, cracked as the two girls sat down on the bed. Both the chairs and the vanity stool were piled up. Everything was topsy-turvy in term-end confusion.

Mimi was more upset than anything around her. The letter had brought her a spark of hope, so dim, so faint she dared not tell. Yet Chloe needed to know so badly; which would be worse, to give her a ray of hope that in all probability would be shattered or leave her as she was without anything to cling to? If she should tell Chloe she had told Daddy, Chloe might not like it. She might not feel as Mimi did, that any great secret could be shared with your parents without breaking your promise. Mimi could keep secrets. She had struggled hard and won to keep from telling Millie. She had never told Betsy about Madge and the alarm bell. But Chloe was again sobbing softly against her. She trembled delicately as Pluto, the crow, had trembled in Mimi's hands while Daddy patched his broken wing. Poor Chloe! A wounded dark bird snatched from her nest before she could fly.

"Would you know Fritzie if you saw him or saw a picture of him, Chloe?"

She needed a more tangible clue. Something she could tell Daddy definitely yes and no about.

"I've often wondered. You see, it's been so very long ago. I was so tiny. I remember how I laughed at the pictures tattooed on his arms—a lady on one and a sailor on the other. He'd hold them together and we'd play they were dancing. He cackled instead of laughing. When I think back the only picture I have is that blurred one of my mother—hear her frantic screams. Voices—I'd KNOW HIS VOICE, Mimi. I know I would."

Encouraged by her decision Chloe continued.

"When I get in college, I'm going to take psychology. I read it in the library every chance I get now. When I am old enough to travel by myself I'm going everywhere hunting places and faces that seem familiar. Oh, Mimi, I've thought about it so much! Maybe, some day, when I'm sure Fritzie and the short man and big old Freida are dead and can't hurt us any more, I may write my story and have my picture made and published."

"When Fritzie is dead." Mimi repeated slowly. The words in Daddy's letter danced before her eyes. Should she tell? Daddy had written at great length about Chloe's story.

"Chloe, would you care if you knew that I had written my Daddy ALL about you?" She didn't wait for a reply. "You see, I have, and I hope you won't think I've broken my word. I haven't told another living soul and shan't. But Daddy is interested in your case and says he will help. The night you told us your story, I swore never to quit until we knew who you really were but I didn't know where to start. That same night I wrote Daddy. He can do anything. Already he is planning what to do and how to do it."

But Mimi quit there and kept the contents of the letter secret. After asking Chloe several pointed questions, the answers to which were not satisfactory, she talked slowly toward the library to write Daddy in the quiet where she could think clearly.

As she passed College Hall the smell of black coffee came floating out. Cram week was causing a panic Ghostly figures with notebooks, unfinished themes, and reference books had been slipping through the corridors after lights out. Laggards were drinking strong coffee now trying to keep awake long enough to learn a few more answers. The gym was deserted except at class periods. Sue had cut practice hours twice in a row. Betsy was "boning" as she had never done before but the College girls were the busier.

Let them slave Mimi thought. Thank goodness she had caught up with lessons while she was quarantined.

She ignored the librarian as she entered. With a grand disregard for the cramming going on all about her, Mimi unscrewed the top of her fountain pen. This letter to Daddy is far more important. It is the most important document I've ever written. I must think straight. I must tell every little detail that might help, the tattooed figures, the cackling laugh. But first I must answer his questions.

Unfolding the fat letter and rearranging the pages carefully so that the questions were on top, Mimi shook her pen twice and began to write feverishly.

## THE LAKE FREEZES OVER

When the rising bell rang, Sue counted three, then kicked off the covers. She sprang out of bed to pull down the window leaving Betsy shivering.

"Cruel world." Betsy groaned wriggling further down in bed and reaching for the covers.

"Cruel nothing," Sue retorted. "You fresh air fiends will be the death of me yet. Pick the coldest night of the year to throw the window to the top."

For two reasons Betsy could hardly hear the last of Sue's tirade. She had covered up head, ears and all. Sue had run in the bathroom to dress where it was warmer and had closed the door.

"What's all the commotion?" Mimi asked. The bell had awakened her but she had not stirred. If she moved out of her warm place she touched cold sheets.

"The greatest disaster in contemporary history," came Betsy's muffled voice from the adjoining bed. "On this, perhaps the only *Friday* morning of the year when we could miss breakfast and stay in bed our energetic friend, Sue, has to sound a triple alarm and fire a nineteen gun salute! Sue," she yelled poking her head out, "I hope you're freezing."

"What's this rot about not getting up?"

Sue, fully dressed opened the bathroom door and entered, a glass of cold water in her hand.

"We're not getting up! Don't tell me the fact that one may cut breakfast and enjoy a little free time today because of term-end failed to penetrate your skull?"

Betsy was wide awake and chattering away just because she wished she were sleepy. All eyes fixed with dread on the glass of water; she, Mimi, and Chloe watched Sue's expression sag.

"Woe is me! I did forget. Move over Betsy I'm coming back to bed clothes and all."

Sue set the glass on the floor took one jump and landed in bed. Betsy swirled and spiraled and succeeded in wrapping all the covers around her. Sue pulled and jerked without success.

"All right, I'll get in with Chloe and Mimi. They're not old meanies."

But they were. They held tightly to their covers. Sue went to the foot of the bed, loosened the covers and started reaching for their feet. The fight was on. Zip-whizz! Betsy threw a pillow barely missing Sue's bobbing head.

The five minute bell rang. Sue gave up.

"Three against one is no fair. I'm going to breakfast and I hope we have waffles and country sausage and maple syrup and pineapple juice and——"

Blam!

Mimi's pillow struck Sue's retreating figure.

"Go eat grits! Scram!"

But Sue had roused Mimi. She jumped up.

"Come on let's go to breakfast. I could dress for my wedding in five minutes."

When the last bell rang the three were within a half dozen steps of the dining room door. Betsy was pulling the comb through her hair. Chloe was straightening her tie and Mimi was tugging at her stocking but they got in before the door closed.

"Gee! I'm glad we came," Mimi sighed.

She was so full she could hardly speak. More than half the girls were taking advantage of their term-end privilege and had stayed away so there were seconds and thirds! Of course, the menu wasn't all Sue had pictured but they did have pineapple juice for a change and Mimi had two servings. While she was too full to do much talking, Mimi could sit back and listen. She wouldn't have missed Miss Bassett's announcement for anything.

"May I have your attention, please?"

The girls turned toward Miss Bassett, anticipation in their faces. Her announcements were always good news—game schedules, pep squad meetings, hikes or something enjoyable. The one she made today was one she had not made for four years! She might not get to make it for four more or longer because the winters were not as severe as they used to be.

"The manager of Wildwood Park has telephoned that the lake is frozen solid. The temperature is dropping steadily and the forecast for tomorrow is continued fair and colder. *If* there is six or more inches of good ice on the lake, we will have a skating party tomorrow."

Clap! Clap! Clap! Cries of approval. Mimi clapped loudest.

"I am going out to Wildwood today to see for myself how the ice looks. In the meantime all girls interested in ice skating sign the sheet on the bulletin board. Only those girls who are well and warmly dressed will be permitted to go. This is not a definite promise but know this. I want to go as badly as you do, maybe more."

Mimi never doubted the weather man an instant. She felt sure, too, that Miss Bassett would not have mentioned the party at all unless she was practically sure the ice would hold. Mimi's worry was not the temperature, it was getting some ice skates. Here at last was a chance to learn how to do something she had always wanted to know how to do. She realized that there would be only a limited number of skates available and she would have to think fast. That she could borrow a pair was unlikely. Any girl who liked skating enough to own a pair and lug them around with her when there was so little chance of skating in this climate, would be using her own. There was but one thing to do, buy a pair and buy them now before the hardware and sporting goods stores sold out. She had not done one extravagant thing since Daddy and Mother had been gone but she was going to spend practically her whole month's allowance at one crack.

All this had flashed quickly through her mind. Breakfast was over and in another few minutes the girls would start a mad search for skates. Somehow she must get the jump on them. The college girls could go right on to town without permission. Oh, dear! There seemed but one thing to do and Mimi

did it immediately and successfully.

Slapping her napkin quickly to her mouth as if to suppress a hiccup she jerked her head and stood up. Making signs to the hostess she excused herself. As she passed Mrs. Cole's table, still pressing the napkin to her lips, she hiccupped out loud. As soon as she passed out the double glass doors she dropped the napkin and ran.

She went as straight to the office as she could.

"Please, please," she pleaded breathlessly to the girl at the desk, "phone Sweirs for me. Here I'll find the number."

Her fingers flew-P-Q-R-S-Sa-Se-Sw—Sweirs—She could hear the girls now coming down the hall as she gave the number.

"Please ask if they have any ice skates to fit a size five boot."

The girl was so impressed by Mimi's excitement, it never occurred to her she did not have permission to telephone. But Mimi knew she did not have; that was why she was having the girl call for her. Hurry! Hurry! How long did it take Sweirs to answer? They must be terribly busy—probably selling all their skates.

"Sweirs are sorry. They have no ice skates."

Mimi groaned.

"Then we'll call the hardware stores." She was fumbling through the directory again.

"Look in the classified section in the back," the girl suggested.

H-Hardware. There. She had another number.

"Yes, size five please," the girl was saying. "Just a moment."

Putting her hand over the transmitter she turned to Mimi.

"He has some. What shall I say?"

"Have him send them out collect—and special delivery."

Ten or twenty-five cents more wouldn't matter. Mimi couldn't wait.

"Bring your money to the office now so that I can pay the boy."

"Thank you. Thank you so much."

The money. Mimi was down to earth again. She was taking one problem at a time and doing splendidly but she was up against something now. She had only one dollar and seventy-five cents in her purse and that was not enough. She had forgotten about buying three cans of heat, the brown sugar and the movie magazines.

Knowing full well that no girl in school is as despised as one who borrows, she risked her popularity to raise the money. Everywhere it was the same. Term end was a time of celebration and each girl Mimi asked needed all she had and more.

There was but one thing left to do. She went back to Tumble Inn and taking the key from around her neck she unlocked the secret drawer of her trunk where she kept her diary. She took out one of the blank checks Daddy had left her for emergencies. It would be the first one she had used and she was spending it on something frivolous but after all, Daddy wanted her to have a good time. He'd be the first person to say, "Go ahead and get them, Honey." She felt very important as she made out the check in the office. In her best writing she signed Dr. J. S. Hammond by Mimi. Her name ran sideways off the bottom of the check.

The thirty minutes she loafed around where she could see the office entrance and pounce upon the messenger and grab her skates, she had time to think.

She had been very selfish. She had thought only of getting skates for herself. What about her suite mates? She could have ordered theirs at the same time. One special delivery fee would have brought them all. Sorry that she had been so thoughtless she raced upstairs to make amends and was not in the office when the skates were delivered.

"Did you ever hear of anything grander?" Betsy asked as she dangled a pair of rusty skates. "Jill says if I'll clean them, I can use them. She is going on that sketching party Chloe is going on."

"You mean you're not going skating, Chloe."

"Is that so strange? I'm going hiking all right and will be in on the food but while you all skate, some of us are going to sketch, if our fingers aren't too numb. You might be posing for me for all you know."

"I'm not going skating either," Sue declared. "Olivia had already invited me to the matinee and had gotten special permission. She is giving a movie party. Five of us are going and—without a chaperon!"

"Well blow me down!" Mimi declared. "Imagine doing anything else when one could ice skate, especially an ordinary thing like seeing a movie." She slapped her hands together in front of her.

"Betsy, outside quick—idea!"

They whispered together, then dashed off.

"Oh, if only Miss Bassett hasn't left yet!" Mimi cried. Miss Bassett was still in her room and she listened to their plan with interest. Mimi's enthusiasm was always contagious. To hear her talking with Miss Bassett, her suggested menu of bean hole beans for the skaters tomorrow would be the most sumptuous feast mortals ever ate. Here was the plan she and Betsy had hatched up.

It was Friday morning now. The skating party was slated for midday tomorrow. Mimi and Betsy posted a notice of a surprise dinner—price fifteen cents a skater. They delegated Madge and Janice to collect. Miss Bassett advanced money for purchase of supplies. She postponed her trip to Wildwood until the girls could buy the beans and put them to soak. Then armed with hand axe, shovel, matches and a hand full of kindling to make sure, they drove out to Wildwood to dig the bean hole.

"Gee! It's grand riding. I haven't been in a car since Thanksgiving," Mimi avowed. "Hadn't ridden in one then since September. Can you imagine?"

"I'm glad you're enjoying it. But about the beans. Mimi, you know that if they are not good the whole party will be spoiled and I should hate that."

"You go ahead and talk to the man, Miss Bassett. Leave the beans to us. They'll be good, I can promise."

The way Mimi declared herself Miss Bassett knew she could depend on her. Dumping the girls and their "field artillery" as they called it, she went on her own errand.

Mimi was in her glory. She had on her boots and old breeches and three sweaters and was giving Betsy orders right and left. She was working hard herself. While Betsy gathered wood and searched for flat stones, Mimi dug the hole. She selected an open place where there would be no danger of damaging a tree or starting a fire. After a half hour of digging in the frozen ground she had finished a hole the size of a card table. It was deeper than the ten gallon kettle the beans were soaking in and it was deeper in the center. While she rested, Betsy lined the center of the hole with flat stones. On top of these Betsy built a fire.

"Stack it loosely so it can get plenty of air to burn. Light it on the windward side." Mimi had to let Betsy know how much she knew about fire lore. She hoped, however, she did not act like Jean and wear a show-off, I-have-been-to-camp-before manner.

"Why the windy side?"

"The wind will blow the fire under and it will catch all through. There. See? Now put on plenty of big wood so that we will have lots of good live coals when we get back. We'll ask the man to watch it while we are gone."

"Isn't that some fire?"

"Perfect. I just love fire." She meant this kind you could warm by and cook over; not the destructive, terrifying kind she was to know soon. Mimi stretched out her hands to it. "I never see it without repeating to myself, 'The Ode to Fire.' I was saying it as you kneeled to light this one."

"I love that too."

"There comes Miss Bassett. Let's go meet her so she won't have to get off the drive. These frozen ruts are rough."

All the way to town Mimi kept wondering if the beans were softening. She preferred to soak them all night but as Cissy so often said, circumstances alter cases. She had left them in warm, soft water. That would help. It would be better to soak them less and cook them longer rather than take a chance on cooking them in the morning and hoping they'd be done by noon. Long slow cooking was best.

Back at Sheridan and in the kitchen, Mimi took charge again.

First she drained the water off of the beans. Then she poured part of them into a crock. She sliced the salt pork in thin chunks and laid it in carefully. Then she sprinkled a layer of brown sugar, ripe tomato ketchup and salt. More beans—meat, sugar, salt, ketchup. On and on until the great kettle was half full and the crock was empty. Then she poured in hot water until the kettle was full. The beans had not softened much. Mimi was worried; she had given Miss Bassett her word.

"I'll tell you what we'll do; leave them on the stove to simmer until Miss Bassett blows for us. That way they'll be hot through and through and will get a good start."

"Do you suppose any one has caught on?"

"I hope not."

No one found out, although several wondered what Betsy and Mimi were doing, going out with Miss Bassett for the second time. What could be in that huge kettle which was so heavy one of the kitchen negroes had to lift it on the running board?

Miss Bassett drove slowly but Mimi held her breath. Mustn't "spill the beans" she cautioned. She had the window rolled down and was holding on to the handle. Once or twice on curves the pot pulled and swung out dangerously near slipping off but eventually they managed to deposit the kettle near the bean hole.

The fire had died to glowing embers. Mimi must be careful. She shoveled them out of the hole and piled them to one side. Then handing Betsy a thick pad, she took one herself and together they settled the pot on the hot stones. Making sure the lid was clamped down tight, Mimi covered the pot with a wet grass sack. Then she shoveled the hot coals on top of the sack and over them, threw the loose dirt.

"Looks like a new grave," Betsy teased.

"Why Betsy! You should be ashamed! Besides, you never saw a grave with little wisps of smoke curling out."

"Ready, girls? You know it's Friday and we dress for dinner."

Mimi paid little attention to her toilette that evening. Of course, it was always a relief to get out of her uniform but she had put on her boots to try on her skates. She volunteered to be last in the bathroom and spent her time trying to balance herself on them until the last minute. When she finally started to dress her suite mates had dressed and gone. There was no one to pull her boots off. She tugged and tugged. For the second time that day she entered the dining room just as the doors were being closed.

After dinner she went to the sing song but only her body was there. All her interest was simmering in a bean hole at Wildwood. She did do one thing that was fun. After the sing song she linked arms with Betsy and they strolled up and down the hall passing and repassing the open double doors into the parlors. They were looking in on the Friday night "dates."

"Even if I could and some boy wanted to come, I wouldn't have a date like that for anything."

"You won't have one because you don't like boys."

"Yes, I do," Mimi declared. "Better than girls in lots of ways, but if you mean I'm not boy crazy, thanks. I'm not and hope I never am."

"Well, I'd have at date, even like that, if some one would ask me," Betsy concluded as they went up to Tumble Inn.

Mimi retired early so that tomorrow would come more quickly. Morning came almost too soon, for Mimi awakened much earlier than usual and thought the rising bell would never sound. In the still hour of dawn, as in moments when she wakened in the night, she wondered about Chloe and prayed brief, but tenderly sincere prayers.

Up and dressed she paced up, down, and around from the time breakfast was over until the party was off. She made at least six trips up and down the steps. She turned in money to Miss Bassett. She lost and found her skate key. But at last, at eleven o'clock, she arrived with the party at Wildwood Park.

Even now she was afraid something would happen to interfere with the skating. She watched Miss

Bassett strap on her skates and with the man beside her glide across the ice stopping here and there and tapping with a heavy stick. Contrary to the forecast, it was not as cold as it had been yesterday and the sun had been bright all morning. Miss Bassett looked a bit worried when they returned to the bonfire and although the manager insisted the whole lake was safe, Miss Bassett drew a dead line.

"Not doubting your word at all, but I can keep up with half a lake full of girls better than a whole lakeful."

"Just as you say. I'll stretch ropes."

Mimi was the first to get her skates on, but having them on she sat helpless on a log. One by one the girls put their skates on and hobbled past. No one dreamed Mimi could not skate. She could do everything else athletic outdoors and indoors, too, it seemed.

She watched miserably. Finally Madge saw her. Frail little Madge was swooping and dipping and swirling like a brown bird. She beckoned to Mimi. "Come on."

"I don't know how."

"Come on. I'll help you."

After two bad starts Mimi hip-hopped over to the lake's edge and held out her hands to Madge. "Steady."

"I hope I don't pull you down."

"You won't."

"I can skate well on roller skates and if you hold me till I get the hang of it, I'll be all right."

"Sure you will. Now—Skim, don't push."

Under Madge's patient direction, she was gaining poise and balance. But the first venture she made alone was disastrous.

They had tried to keep to the edge of the crowd and were so absorbed in Mimi's strokes, that by the time Mimi was ready to let go Madge's steadying hands, they were within a few feet of the rope.

"Now see if you can go by yourself," Madge said giving Mimi a good shove to start her.

Mimi took four uncertain strokes, crashed into the rope and fell hard. She slipped several feet beyond where she had hit the ice so hard. Speeding behind to assist her, Madge caught her toe in the crack where Mimi had hit. At the second impact the ice gave way.

Madge did not fall all the way through. Mimi could tell that from where she was sprawled. Raising quickly, she tore off her skates and started running toward Madge. She took two steps and halted. If the ice were thin it would crack more under her added and greater weight. Madge, who was in no immediate danger, had not cried out. She was wedged in a hole, one leg through the ice, her head and body above.

"Help," Mimi screamed. "Help. Bring a plank."

Instead of getting a board, most of the skaters darted toward Madge. Quickly, Mimi ran a wide circle around her and headed them off. This accident so far was not bad but unless they were cautious it could be.

Madge was sobbing now.

"My leg is freezing."

"We'll have you out in a minute," Mimi called reassuringly. "Be as still as you can, so you won't make any more cracks. Stop, girls! Miss Bassett, please keep them back," Mimi pleaded. "Here comes Dit with a plank and we'll have her out in a jiffy."

Mimi helped Dit slip the board along the ice until Madge could clutch it with her numb little hands.

"Can you pull out or shall I ease out and help?"

"I-can-make it—I think—"

Madge was pulling hard but her heavy clothes made her clumsy. Mimi stretched out on her stomach and inched closer. She held out one hand to Madge and clung to the board with the other. Dit was holding the board. Miss Bassett had sent for her car and was watching the rescue tensely. At the slightest misstep she would interfere.

"I've got you, Madge. Steady. You pull and I'll pull."

As Madge's leg finally came up, there was a sickening rip and cracking; the ice around her had given way. Girls screamed as the dark water became visible through the rapidly widening cracks. Madge was submerged to the neck but she held desperately to the board and Mimi had her firmly by the wrist. Calling directions to Dit about the board, Mimi lifted with all her might as Dit jerked the board. Out came Madge skidding across the crackled ice toward them, leaving a trail of slush behind. Her brown suede jacket, her brown pants and boots soaked, she looked like a baby seal. She was more helpless.

Quickly Miss Bassett rolled her in a blanket and lifting this frailest of the Preps in her arms she carried her to the car. The engine was running. Mimi and Dit followed panting.

"We can take care of her, Miss Bassett. Let me drive her in. Mimi can help. You stay and see to the others."

"Thank you, Dit. Will that be all right, Madge?"

"Sure. I'm not hurt. I'm just c-c-cold and wet."

"Betsy can serve the beans," Mimi called back as an after thought. Beans seemed as far away as Germany. She was pulling off Madge's wet boots and rubbing her numb foot and leg.

"Thawing up?"

"Little bit."

"I feel like a clumsy ox! Making you fa' down and go boom!"

"I should have been watching."

"I'd have died if anything had have happened to you," Mimi shuddered.

"Don't say anything about death," Madge gasped. She was so white around the mouth, Mimi feared she might faint. It was different from the purple splotches from being cold. There was a haunted look in her eyes. She lowered her voice so Dit couldn't hear.

"I knew something awful was going to happen today," she confided.

"How did you know?"

Mimi was thinking of Cissy and her spooky premonitions. The very thoughts of them made goose bumps on Mimi.

“Ever since last night when I hear those”—her voice sank to a stricken whisper—“death bells!”

There was horror and conviction in her voice.

“What on earth are death bells?”

“Sh-sh-sh—I’ll tell you some time—maybe.”

Was Sheridan a boarding school or a lunatic asylum, Mimi wondered as they neared the winter stripped campus and stopped before Prep Hall.

## SATURDAY ESCAPE

For Mimi, the next few days rolled slowly into a week. There was constant fear that Madge would yet develop flu or pneumonia. Frail appearing people were not always delicate, Mimi concluded when a week passed and Madge had not so much as sneezed. Mimi, in her concern, had hovered near for days. Just like an old hen with one chicken, Mimi told herself. She could better understand how Mother Dear fussed and fumed over her when she had "been exposed." All week, too, she had her eyes peeled for a letter postmarked in Germany. It was too soon to hear from Daddy but she couldn't keep from watching and hoping. The second semester was well under way and the routine of a new schedule was becoming habit.

"Betsy," Mimi exclaimed the third Saturday after the skating party, "I have to do something exciting or bust!"

"I feel a fit coming on, too," Betsy agreed sprawling on the bed in a grotesque pose.

"Let's do something about it," Mimi laughed.

"Name it. 'Barkus is willing.'"

"Yes. Name it. What is there to do within these four walls that we have not tried? We have raided the kitchen at all hours, cooked after light bell, invaded College Hall, used the telephone without permission, cut assembly—all of it."

"None of that is very devilish. I want to do something wild and woolly."

"Like slip away from the campus!"

Once the words were out Mimi clapped her hand over her mouth. It was too late. She had said the very thing both of them were thinking.

"Would we dare?" Betsy breathed. Her blue eye was glittering, her brown eye clouded with fear.

"Dare? Madam! Is that a challenge? Did I ever take a dare?"

"Not since I've known you."

"This will not be an exception. Let the 'ways and means committee' meet at once."

"Uh—Oh! What's up?" Sue cried as she and Chloe came in. Sue slung her books at the table. Chloe put hers in a neat stack. "Dirty work afoot at the cross roads. I can tell by the smooth and oily waves," she made rippling motions with her arms and hands, "that a storm is brewing. Why are your heads so close together, amigas mias? Confess."

Betsy and Mimi flushed guiltily.

"We'd better tell them so that if anything happens——"

Her pert face a question mark, Mimi was looking at Betsy.

"Yes, we'd better," Betsy agreed.

"We are breaking jail," Mimi said tersely.

"When?" from Sue.

"How?" from Chloe.

"Right after lunch." from Betsy.

"Disguised and out the servant's entrance." from Mimi.

"Well blow us down!" from Sue and Chloe.

"Don't stand there paralyzed," Mimi ordered. Now that the decision was made she was eager for action. "Y'all will have to help us borrow our disguises but first, cross your hearts and promise not to tell a soul."

The promise was given. They wished they had courage to join in but they were ruled out at the first suggestion. Four people would be too conspicuous. Two might prove too many.

Mimi could hardly swallow her lunch. The fated hour of two o'clock would never come. This was the hour washwomen waited for girls to claim laundry and to pay.

As soon as the bread pudding dishes were empty and every possible taste of chocolate sauce scraped up, the four occupants of Tumble Inn hastened to their suite and closed the door.

"Shall we lock it?" Chloe asked.

"No," Betsy answered promptly. "Pile things against it so that it would take a minute or two to get in but don't lock it. If Mrs. Cole tried it and it didn't open she'd 'smell a mouse' sure enough."

Mimi laughed aloud as she had a mental picture of Mrs. Cole wrinkling up her nose and sniffing. Any kind of conspiracy intrigued her and she set about changing her appearance in high glee.

From girls larger than they, they had borrowed skirts and long coats. Even their shoes were so large and run over, Mimi's feet flapped like Charlie Chaplin's as she moved nearer the mirror.

"My own Mother wouldn't know me," she commented.

"No, but Mrs. Cole will unless you do something about that unruly mop of red hair," Sue contradicted.

Here was a problem. A beret would expose her features. The hair was not long enough to tuck under a hat with a brim and stay up. Regardless of the number of bobby pins put in, drake tails kept slipping down around Mimi's neck.

Then Chloe had an inspiration.

"Wear a veil. Lots of the colored people do."

There was a fifteen minute search for a veil. At that, a makeshift was used. Chloe draped a piece of black georgette around the crown of the hat and let it hang over where the red hair shone the brightest.

By the time Mimi was ready, Betsy was practically losing her skirt. When she moved toward the door it fell at her feet. Another five minute search. Sue dashing about borrowing safety pins. Now Betsy switched her hips rapidly like a Spanish dancer but the skirt stayed in place.

Looking more like caricatures or comic valentines than bona fide servants, the two girls ventured

forth.

Mimi trembled and held her breath while Sue opened the door and peered down the hall. Getting safely from Tumble Inn to the service entrance was the most hazardous part of the whole journey. Once they reached the entrance they could run—oh how they could run—if there was danger of being recognized.

"The coast is clear," Sue announced.

Looking squarely into each other's eyes, the two silently pledged loyalty and secrecy. Mimi understood as clearly as if Betsy had said aloud, "No matter what happens, we are in this together."

Not taking any one's word, Mimi looked both up and down the hall herself. Then grabbing Betsy's hand she jerked her over the threshold of Tumble Inn to the middle of the corridor. They walked by the second door of their suite as if they had never seen it before.

When they were halfway to the turn, they heard Chloe and Sue giggling behind them.

"Go back, meanies," Betsy hissed. "Do you want to get us caught?"

"Yes," Sue hissed back. "If you're caught before you get out we could say we were playing. Afterwards, well—it's your funeral, but don't say we didn't warn you."

Mimi wavered but Betsy walked determinedly ahead and Mimi was soon in step with her again.

If they could get downstairs without being seen, they were temporarily safe. At least Mimi could breathe deeply then. She had to hold to the rail to keep from stumbling in her floppy shoes and heavy skirts. This was harder than high heels and a junior bridesmaid's dress, only then she couldn't hold to the bannister. Betsy clutched her arm. She dared not speak. Someone was coming up stairs. They would meet on the landing. It was too late to flee.

"Don't let it be Mrs. Cole. Don't let it be Mrs. Cole."

Mimi was concentrating again.

The girls separated to single file, Mimi two or three steps ahead. She held her head down and as far to one side as she dared, but she was rolling her eyes frantically to see who was coming up. It wasn't Mrs. Cole. She was sure of that now, but it was someone she knew. It was Olivia!

Mimi's first thought was to stop her and confess and pledge her to secrecy. Her second thought was better. She would test her disguise. Slow feet stepping down, down, down. Hurried feet stepping up, up, up. They met. Olivia brushed past and did not recognize either of the girls. Mimi breathed easier. However, it wasn't a fair test, for Olivia was mumbling: "The drawbridge dropped with a surly clang, and over it a charger sprang, bearing the maiden knight, Sir Launfal."

Mimi should be studying too. She had memory work piling up again.

"Olivia didn't know us," Betsy was whispering with a sigh of relief. "You go on out and walk slowly and I'll catch up with you before you get out the drive."

Her pulse pounding, her whole body smothered with excitement and borrowed clothes, Mimi edged her way through the half dozen or more servants and opened the door. True, they eyed her queerly and one large negress snickered out, but if they knew anything was amiss, they did not tell. They had seen stranger "goin' ons" than this in the years they had worked for the school girls.

As badly as she wanted to run, Mimi shuffled along slowly until Betsy was beside her. Then quickening their gaits, they left the campus behind and turned down College Avenue toward town.

"We did it!" Mimi exclaimed.

"Don't crow yet." Betsy cautioned. "Let's get off this main street. The chemistry prof lives two blocks down."

Silently they turned down a side street; Mimi recognized it immediately. This was the way the taxi driver had brought her to Sheridan. That day seemed so far away now. It was as if all her life had been lived on a Sheridan schedule.

"Now, whew!"

Betsy relaxed.

"Omigosh! That's the longest short distance I ever traveled."

"Now that we are out, what are we going to do?"

"Go to the picture show and sit in the balcony."

When Mimi said, "O. K." she did not realize that they were going to the one place they would be most likely to be caught. When she realized it later, she shuddered.

The girl at the ticket window stared at them with open curiosity, but since neither betrayed the slightest facial emotion, the girl did not comment.

In the semi-darkness of the lobby, Mimi felt safe for the first time since leaving Tumble Inn. Groping up the steps to the balcony, they giggled and giggled. When they were seated and when their eyes were adjusted to the light, Betsy punched Mimi and pointed. Two rows in front of them were five Preps and a *faculty chaperon*!

The culprits slid down in their seats. Suppose? No, don't! Nothing to do but watch, and when the other Preps left, pull hats down and duck heads. Keeping one eye on everyone who went out was very distracting. This was one show Mimi could not tell about afterwards. They had stayed through practically all of it before the other Preps left, and the faculty member, to their immense relief, passed without seeing them.

When the great Garbo posed in the open window and let her hair fall forward half hiding her face, Mimi punched Betsy.

"This is where we came in."

"Sh-sh-sh." Betsy cautioned.

Then Mimi heard the familiar voices too. From the rear, her hat was knocked over on her nose. Sheridan girls chaperoned by Mrs. Cole were filling the row behind them. Mrs. Cole was sputtering and giving orders regardless of the fact that she was disturbing the entire balcony. Mimi and Betsy froze to their seats. No matter what happened, they could not leave now. Without speaking to each other, they agreed to stay still until these girls saw the show and left.

Mimi never knew how long a show could be until she sat through this one the second time. Betsy despaired and went to sleep! How could she? Every nerve in Mimi's body was taut. Suppose? No,

don't. Why had she ever come? Why didn't she think how heartbroken Mother and Daddy would be if she were suspended? If she did get back to Sheridan and slip in without being caught she would never, never be so foolish again. *Never!*

What time was it now? It must be late. Two o'clock plus two whole shows. Omigosh! Suppose they were absent from supper? But if Mrs. Cole and her girls were there, Mimi and Betsy would be too. Giving them only a two-minute start, the culprits flung caution to the wind and ran for the side street. It was almost dark.

"Let's phone Chloe and Sue to meet us at the back of the campus with our uniforms."

"Never," Betsy snapped. "Don't you know we couldn't talk to them without giving our life history first. Then someone would likely listen in. There is always the chance that one is phoning for a boy and making a date. No," Betsy decided, "the only way back in is the way we came out. Let's cut across."

Every minute counted. Provided they got back in, they had to change clothes before they could go to supper.

When they reached the edge of the campus, Sue and Chloe rushed up. They were all but hysterical.

"Thank heavens, you're back. We've been worried to death."

"Out of our way. We never saw you before," Betsy said without slowing up.

"Run lay our uniforms out so we can get dressed."

"You have six minutes," Chloe said as she and Sue sped to Tumble Inn. Anything to help.

"Please let me get in safely," Mimi prayed under her breath. "I'll never slip out again. I'll study the \_\_\_"

Before she finished praying she was safely through the door and running down the hall. If she met anyone, she did not remember. She was inside again. She had not been caught.

Study hall that night was a haven. Relieved and safe again, Mimi pored over her books. For several days to come, she had perfect recitations.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE HORSE SHOW

What proved to be one of the happiest weeks Mimi spent at Sheridan had a fearful beginning. When she dashed in the post office between classes to see if she had a letter from Germany, the disappointment of not finding one was enough. On top of that, there was a note asking Mimi to come to Dr. Barnes' office at one o'clock!

Mimi crushed the notice. After all, they had not slipped in Saturday unobserved. Perspiration popped out on her forehead and around her mouth. Mimi, who usually danced through life on her tiptoes expecting "sprises," had her head bowed in misery. There was no time to wail. She was late to geometry now.

After a miserably forty-five-minute class period during which she broke her recent perfect recitation record, Mimi fled to College Hall and confided in Dit.

"We didn't intend anything terrible, Dit; honest we didn't. We just wanted to slip out to see if it could be done."

"Don't look so woebegone, Mimi. Your guilty conscience is torturing you. Dr. Barnes may want something entirely different. I shouldn't mention the summons to anyone if I were you until I found out what it was. In case it is a punishment, don't worry. Don't cry. Just look out the window and watch the green grass grow."

"Watch the green grass grow." So that's what the college girls meant. Mimi had heard the expression a dozen times.

"After all Dr. Barnes won't put you in stocks or tickle your feet or cut off your ears. Let him fume until he gets tired and then he'll let you go."

Bolstered by Dit's encouragement, at one o'clock, Mimi knocked timidly on the door of Dr. Barnes' private office. He had not come back from lunch so his secretary asked Mimi to wait. Mimi wanted to ask her why she was summoned, but her tongue stuck tightly to the roof of her mouth each time she tried to speak. Mimi teetered on the edge of the chair. She couldn't be still yet. She never touched the chair back. With great effort she tore her mind from prospective punishment. She tried to think of rainbows or balloons, but there was no beauty for her now. For the first time, thinking "Hojoni" failed.

While she sat here, Chloe, with special permission to miss English and gym, was being photographed for the beauty section of the Annual. While many envied, no one questioned her place. She really was the most beautiful Prep. Already Sue had had her picture taken with both the orchestra and the glee club. Betsy's would be with the soccer, as well as the basket ball, team. Oh dear! Mimi's woes were increasing with every thought. Why had she broken her nose when she knew she could have been on the basket ball team? There was still tennis, but the tournament was three weeks off and the pictures for the Annual were being made now!

"Thank you for coming promptly, Miss Mimi," Dr. Barnes said as he entered briskly and hung his hat on the stand in the corner behind his desk. "I have three things to speak to you about and I do not want you to be late for your one-thirty class."

Three things! Mimi swallowed hard. She hadn't been that naughty!

"First," Dr. Barnes was saying, "you will be glad to know that I recently had a most interesting letter from your father. He asked me to tell you that I was sending him a copy of our complete record of Clorissa. Being a close friend of Chloe's Aunt Marcia, I was able to send him much information not on our records. All of this is strictly without precedent and must not be mentioned outside this office. Do not tell even Clorissa."

Dear Dr. Barnes. He was helping, too. Why had she been so afraid? If he were a close friend of Aunt Marcia's, then she could not possibly, by any stretch of imagination be Freida; that was out.

"There are *two* more things yet," her guilty conscience whispered, but Mimi wouldn't listen. How nice to talk to someone about Daddy, and about Chloe, the problem nearest her heart.

"What time is your last class?"

"I have gym from two-forty-five to three-thirty, sir."

"You are excused from it this afternoon. You may receive a caller in the south parlor at three o'clock."

"Dr. Barnes!"

Dr. Barnes twinkled behind his glasses and funny little wrinkles of fat made rolls above his ears and below his bald spot. He had been asked not to tell who the visitor was and Mimi could not worm the name out of him. Only the importance of the third thing he was telling now could have saved Mimi from her elephant-child's curiosity.

"I have been finding out things about you, Miss Mimi."

It was coming now—why had her feet ever strayed from Hojoni—. But Dr. Barnes looked proud and not aggrieved.

"Rumors have been coming to me of what an excellent horsewoman you are. The Bridle Club here —"

Mimi put up her hand. Stop, Dr. Barnes. Are my ears deceiving me? Wait until this much soaks in.

Dr. Barnes mistook her flushed face and raised hand as a gesture of modesty and embarrassment.

"Don't be too modest. We are glad to know Sheridan has someone who can represent us worthily in the annual Spring Show of the Bridle Club. I have arranged for you and four other Sheridan students to be entered. There are several good mounts available. Beginning tomorrow and at three-thirty every afternoon the rest of the week you will go to the Club stables and be coached for the events you are to enter. Some faculty member will chaperon you."

"Let Miss Bassett," Mimi interrupted. Why had she ever quaked in her boots when Dr. Barnes' name was mentioned? He was kindly and human as could be, not an ogre at all.

"Do you like my plans, Miss Mimi?"

"They're precious, perfectly precious!"

That was the most Mimi could say for anything. She must get out of this office quickly and whistle between her teeth, or clog or jump up and crack her heels together twice before landing or she would explode right before Dr. Barnes. She forgot about her visitor until she was seated in Spanish class. No chance to tell any of her news. She stood it as long as she could, then scrawled headlines and held up her notebook so that Sue could read three rows away:

AM RIDING FOR "S" IN HORSE SHOW  
COMPANY AT THREE. HOTCHA!

Sue grabbed a pencil.

WHO?

La profesora was looking, so Mimi shook her head. Besides, what could she say? She didn't know herself who was coming. Whoever it would be, they would find her looking her best.

When the two-forty bell rang, Mimi dashed up to Tumble Inn and put on a clean uniform. Then she cleaned her nails and put some lotion on her hands. Now for her hair. A pat here and a pat there. At three o'clock sharp, looking like a typical Sheridan girl, Mimi entered the south parlor.

A youth was standing facing the fire, his back to the door. In spite of the fact that he had grown since last summer, and regardless of what angle she glimpsed him—back, front or side—Mimi would recognize him.

"Honky!" she cried. "You're the last person I ever expected to crash this gate!"

"Mimi, hello!"

She extended both her hands to him as they met in the center of the room. It was the way she had seen Miss Jane greet Dick.

"It's great to see you and not nice to ask questions but I have to know this minute *why* you're here."

"Well, Dad had business in Nashville and I egged him on to bringing me. This morning, as I had hoped, he saw he'd have to stay overnight, so I asked him for the car and drove on over here. We were afraid I couldn't see you so Dad phoned Dr. Barnes long distance and he said I could come ahead."

"How is the gang? Gee! I missed you all Christmas! When have you seen Cissy? Von? Has King been ridden any this winter? Oh, Honky! I'm going to ride in a horse show Saturday!"

"Not so fast, lady, not so fast."

Mimi chattered away and Honky followed as best he could. She remembered to thank him politely for helping fix her Christmas box. Once again when she was on the verge of telling the great mystery about Chloe, she was saved. Sue, Chloe, and Betsy came in, arm-in-arm. Sue broke loose to shake hands with Honky and to introduce the suite mates. Then her questions began.

Before they had half finished "pumping" Honky, or before near as many girls as wanted to had passed the open doors and looked in, Mrs. Cole sailed in erect in her stiff skirt tails and suggested that Honky call again sometime.

"In other words, here's your hat; now what's your rush?" Mimi giggled when Mrs. Cole sailed on by.

"Can't you walk out to the car with me, Mimi?"

"Why, yes, I will anyway."

Was she glad she went!

She came back in with an arm load. Honky gave her a big box of candy—not chocolates in a fancy box—but a whole carton of assorted five-cent candy bars. He knew Mimi liked them better and that they would last longer. The suit box was from Cissy. Honky had been thoughtful enough to phone the day before he left and when he blew his car horn on his way out, Cissy had had the box ready.

Sue had a hunch something like this might happen so the three suite mates had waited at the door for Mimi. As Honky drove off Mimi waved from the steps and the three yelled from the door.

"Scram, Honky," Betsy called, but not loud enough for him to hear, "you are keeping me from my food!"

"*Your* food," Mimi teased. "I'm going to eat it all myself—string, box, paper, food!"

"Don't ever *say* that," the girls yelled.

"Sure 'nough, let's sneak up to Tumble Inn before we open it or there won't be a greasy spot around."

"Food!" Olivia cried, meeting them in the hall. "I, the great gourmand, detect the presence of delicately browned viands!"

"Aw boloney!" Betsy fibbed. "Don't you know clean clothes come in suit boxes."

It wasn't an outright story, but it discouraged Olivia. When they opened the box and saw what a real feast Mammy had prepared, they were gladder than ever she had not followed.

Six rolls of sandwiches—three tuna fish and three pimiento cheese—a loaf of orange bread, a date loaf, a quart jar of peach pickles, and a drained carton of mixed pickles Mimi liked better.

Mimi was so happy and grateful. She intended to write Cissy that very night but she was too excited about the Horse Show. She wished she could have her own King to ride. She could even hurdle on him. There were several points she intended to ask Honky about changing gaits in the ring, but the time was too short. At least she had sent Cissy a world of thanks by him. That eased her mind when she delayed writing. Until it was over, the Show was first and foremost.

Mimi knew that appearance counted much with the people in the grand stand and that often judges were influenced by applause. Therefore, she gave careful attention to her habit. Her best outfit was black and white. She hoped for a sunny day so that her white gaberdine pants would not seem too out-of-season. Her black patent leather boots shone. She punched another hole in the belt Betsy gave her Christmas. She brushed and brushed her derby and finally fastened a chin strap to it. She would need her hands for something besides grabbing for her hat. To break the monotony of black and white and to identify her further, she sewed a Sheridan green satin arm band on her sleeve. She fastened her white entry number to the green satin band.

She rode hard and heeded carefully every instruction the groom gave. The horses were pedigreed thoroughbreds and accustomed to the show ring. Mimi, at home in the small English saddles, gained skill and confidence each afternoon.

She was not particularly surprised when the day of the Show she, the youngest of the entrants, won the coveted Good Hands Cup class. Putting Morning Star through the customary walk, trot and canter was a cinch. Mimi felt sure that if given a chance, he could go through them by himself. When the ten contestants were thinned to five and Mimi with the four remaining in the ring was asked to change mounts, she was not disturbed. Easily she flung herself off Morning Star and one foot in the stirrup, one hand on the pommel, with one swing she was astride Blue Boy. Walk, trot, canter. What a stance Blue Boy made before the stand. Fore feet forward until he nearly bowed. Neck arched, head high.

"Steady, Blue Boy, Steady-O," Mimi fondled. She was erect in the saddle but her voice was easy and lazy.

Blue Boy walled his eyes at the judges as they walked around him but he did not flinch.

After a brief conference in which the judges compared notes, the head field judge stepped up to Mimi on Blue Boy.

With all the grace in the world Mimi accepted the cup and the blue ribbon. With the latter between her teeth, the cup held high in one hand, Mimi cantered past the grand stand and out of the ring.

The cheers of the Sheridan rooters followed her. This was the highest award a Sheridan girl had ever won in a Bridle Club show. For this, Mimi would have—not a picture smothered in a club or team or an orchestra—but a whole page picture mounted on Blue Boy in the Annual. She hoped it would be opposite Chloe's. Since they had lived together all year it would be dandy to have their pictures next each other's.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE TENNIS TOURNAMENT

When Mimi pranced into Tumble Inn and did a fan dance using her tennis racquet for a fan, Chloe jerked something off the table and stuck it in her portfolio. Betsy and Sue stepped between Chloe and Mimi, making a screen.

"Wouldn't keep anything from me, would you, pals?"

Mimi zipped her finger across her neck making a cutthroat gesture.

Chloe paled but Sue giggled. Betsy told.

"We were having a private art exhibit."

"But why can't I see it?"

"You might not appreciate it as much as we."

The elephant-child's curiosity was on a rampage now. Mimi, and the other girls too, knew that there would be no peace until Mimi saw.

Hesitantly Chloe slipped the paper from its hiding place and handed it to Mimi.

A tense pause, then Mimi laughed. She doubled up and rolled over on the bed.

"You've got me exactly, Chloe. I didn't know you were that good."

On the paper was a charcoal sketch of Mimi awkwardly sprawled out on the icy lake at Wildwood. Chloe had caught the humor amazingly well.

"Why did you hide it? That's the first time I ever posed for an artist and I'm pleased."

"We didn't intend for you to see it."

"What were you going to do with it?"

No one answered.

"What were you going to do with it?" Mimi shouted.

Still silence prevailed.

Knowing all the vulnerable points, Mimi made for roly-poly Sue and began to tickle her.

"We—were—wrapping it—to—please, Mimi, please, I'll tell—to mail to Honky."

"You're worse than traitors," Mimi cried.

"Hold her, Sue," Betsy called. Snatching up the picture, she and Chloe fled.

As soon as Mimi wrenched herself free, she hunted high and low and could not find them. They had succeeded in making a getaway. For thirty minutes Mimi stood guard in the post office. Then she gave up. She had something else to look for besides two silly girls. She had lost two of Dit's good tennis balls practicing, and if she didn't find them, it would take the rest of her week's allowance to buy new ones. Forty-five cents apiece. Two times forty-five was ninety cents! Mimi ran toward the tennis courts.

She had lost the first one on a hard serve. That was all right, but losing the second had been unnecessary. Taking Jill's advice she had sent the second ball after the first. That meant she had stood in the same place and served the second ball as nearly like the first as possible. It had gone wild, too, and disappeared before her very eyes. She'd be glad when her serve was under control, when she could serve both balls hard the way Dit did. The way Mimi served now, she batted the first one as hard as she could, but in case it did not go in the proper court, which was more than half the time, she eased up on the second. She could drop an easy serve anywhere in the court she pleased.

Her game was improving. She was hopeful of getting at least to quarter-finals in the tournament unless she drew a crack player for her first sets. There were not enough Preps interested in tennis for them to have a separate tournament. Those desiring to enter must take their chances against the college girls, too. Mimi turned over her chances in her mind as she went around behind the backstops and burrowed in the leaves for the balls. She could not find them. Goodbye ninety cents. She gave up and hurried in for her shower bath.

On the way, she poked her head in the office and asked the girl on duty to order two Wright and Ditson balls from Sweirs.

"Come in, Mimi. We've been wanting to see you. The girls have been talking so much about those grand bean-hole beans you cooked and didn't get to eat, that I want the recipe."

"I'm glad you liked them."

"Glad *I* liked them! The whole school has been raving about them. Don't tell me you didn't know? I've decided that if you will write down the recipe and the full instructions for digging the hole, etc., that I'll mimeograph it and give the girls copies."

"Keen!"

Mimi was delighted. Heedless of the fact that supper time was near, she plopped down in a swivel chair and demanded paper and pencil. No time like the present to get a job done.

After supper the girls went to Miss Basset's office and drew for their places in the tournament. Mimi was lucky. She drew a bye. The matches were still three days off and Mimi would have four days.

She was spending all her spare time on the courts. She watched the college girls play. She studied the lazy, relaxed manner Dit had when she addressed the ball; how careful she was not to "foot fault"—step inside the base line when she served. More and more she was understanding that points were won by thinking the ball out of the opponent's reach rather than by "main strength and awkwardness" as the adage goes.

She was developing an effective base line drive and Dottie would never recognize her serve. Wait 'til she got back to B.G. She'd make them sit up and take notice.

The first day of the tournament, Mimi led small groups on the side lines in cheers. The preliminaries were not very interesting as the competition was not keen. Dit mowed her opponent down without getting up a sweat. A free-for-all tournament had to get well under way before the players were fairly

matched. Mimi and her group moved from court to court where the matches were the hottest.

Not playing that first day, Mimi kept her eyes open and learned tournament etiquette. She also had time to stir in her trunk and get out her white linen shorts with the red pin stripe which she had worn for "bests" at camp. She cut the sleeves out of a shirt and faced the arm holes. When she appeared on the courts for her first match, she could hear girls complimenting her costume. Then before them all, she pulled a navy bandana from her pocket and tied her hair back. She thought of Dottie's beloved red bandana at camp and smiled. She wished Dottie and the other campers were here to root for her. However, she had a group of supporters—Madge, Olivia, Chloe, Sue and enough others to make considerable noise were huddled on the side lines of the number two court where she played and won her first match.

She won again next day and for three straight days, she moved up a bracket. This landed her in the quarter-finals. She couldn't wait any longer to tell how well she was doing so she wrote Honky and Dottie both. If she had not written before the quarter-final match, she would not have written at all, for she was defeated.

At least Mimi did not cry like Jill did when she was defeated. Nor did she accuse her opponent of cheating. She was defeated fairly and squarely and went down smiling. She was pitted against a college girl who played rings around her.

Mimi was licked before the set was called. The girl across the net from her was taller, stronger and a far more experienced player. In the face of such odds, Mimi battled spunkily. The few times she did score—oftener by her opponent's poor playing rather than her own good playing—Olivia and the other rooters whooped loud and long.

Mimi hated to lose at anything but when Sue put a sweater around her at the end of the match, she knew she had done her best.

"Nice match, girls," Miss Bassett said in passing.

That helped but something else helped more.

The day Mimi lost out, Dit moved up to semi-finals. The next day she advanced another bracket and the day she played in the finals the whole school, faculty and all, turned out. Mimi had far more than half of them marshalled in her section to cheer for Dit. Sometimes she was so enraptured watching Dit serve and volley and chop that she forgot to yell. Someday she would be able to play like Dit. Dit was no happier than Mimi when after three grueling sets she was declared winner.

Mimi rushed up with her white sweater and threw it around Dit's shoulders, shouting her congratulations. She took Dit's racquet from her perspiring hands and put it in the brace. Then she retrieved the balls and put them in the box before joining the procession which trailed Dit in to the showers.

The morning the trophies were awarded in assembly, Mimi scrambled for a front seat. She didn't want to miss a word. She knew she would be able to hear Dr. Barnes and Miss Bassett no matter where she sat, but she wanted to hear what Dit mumbled. Some day she would be winning a tournament and she wanted to know how to accept it. When Dit said, "thank you," and reached out her hand for the trophy, Mimi tingled to the tips of her toes.

She was even happier weeks later when the Annual was out to make another discovery. Instead of her picture on Blue Boy being in the beauty section by Chloe's, it was in the sports section opposite Dit's. That was even better.

## ROOF GARDEN PARTY

The roof garden party was not begun as the social affair it turned out to be. In the beginning it was strictly a business proposition. The party was an outgrowth of a "Be Beautiful" campaign Mimi herself started.

If Mimi had known the series of exciting events which hinged on the innocent purchase of a bottle of mange cure, she might never have bought it. She might have let dandruff stay in her hair and freckles continue to splotch the bridge of her nose.

What to wear at the growing-closer-every-day Commencement affairs turned Mimi's thoughts from her term themes, two highly important letters from Daddy and Mother Dear, and a reprimand from Mrs. Cole for disturbing study hall.

"I can't wear white for Commencement and look decent with freckles. I don't look nice in white."

"Who cares?" Sue teased. "To hear you rave, one would think you were going to graduate, or something."

"Well, I *am* going to improve my looks. Miss Bassett was talking to us today about our hair and nails. She said my posture had improved this year. Beginning tonight, I am going to brush my hair one hundred strokes every night before I retire."

"Yeh, I did that once myself—once was about all."

"Dog mange cure is grand for your scalp," Madge volunteered as the discussion became general.

"Is it?" Mimi asked turning to Madge. She had never given much thought to her personal appearance other than cleanliness. She was always too busy doing something. The silliest thing she ever watched was a girl standing near the highest window, mirror in one hand, tweezers in the other, plucking her eyebrows. She didn't plan to go in for that sort of beauty; something, say, which would improve her hair—Mother Dear hadn't made any suggestions about it in so long. It was getting more unruly. She'd tried changing the part from the right side to the left and that had only made it worse. She was thinking of letting it grow long enough to braid so that she could wear it like Dit's, but the thoughts of shedding hairpins and never finding a hat big enough kept her from it.

"What does it do to your hair, Madge?"

"Oh, makes it shiny and fluffy and thick and long. I saw a picture on a box of a woman whose hair fell from her shoulders to her knees. I had a cousin who put mange cure on her hair and——"

"Stop!" Sue cried. "Waste no more words. You've already sold her the idea. I can tell by the smooth and oily waves"—she made rippling motions with her hands and arms mimicking a favorite gesture of Mimi's—"that the fragrance of mange cure will soon permeate the hithertofore wholesome air of Tumble Inn. I wouldn't put that awful smelling stuff on my hair for—for——"

She gave up trying to find a word bad enough to describe it.

"But you only leave it on one night. Besides it washes off, and furthermore, I don't mind the odor. It's a good clean smell like tar."

"Rave on," Sue encouraged disdainfully. "Pretty soon you'll have it sweet scented as dew hung jasmine in the rosy dawn. Blah! You'll have Mimi believing she can pose for the pictures in the hair tonic ads after two trial bottles. Double blah!"

Two weeks passed before Mimi had an opportunity to buy the dog mange cure.

With Commencement so near, every afternoon now some teacher chaperoned a group of shoppers to town. Mimi joined the first group. In order to make her purchase before the others were ready to leave, she left a few sups in the bottom of her chocolate malted milk glass. Anyhow she never could get every drop without making that vulgar zooping, sucking sound on account of the whipped cream settling to the bottom. She didn't want to "strike bottom" before a chaperon. She had done well to juggle the cherry on two straws safely to her mouth.

The chaperon watched her closely while she was at the counter. Sometimes girls slipped notes to the soda skeets. You can save your eyesight on me, Mimi thought. Bumpy faced upstarts. She had no note or no time for them. Some girls were so silly!

Even after the bottle was stowed away on the top shelf of the bathroom, school was nearly over for the year before Mimi, Madge and several others, who had been begged into the "Beauty School," found time to put it on when they were sure they would have time to shampoo it out the following morning. In the intervening time, however, Mimi had been using freckle cream and brushing her hair religiously, a hundred strokes a night.

"If we don't put it on tonight, there's no use," Mimi urged. She had cornered several of the girls after supper before they left the dining hall. The final rush was on and rounding them up had been difficult. "This is Friday—Sunday is Baccalaureate—Monday—too late."

"Tonight suits me," Madge said. "I was planning to get up early anyhow."

"Me, too." Jill agreed.

All together there were six who came to Tumble Inn for the scalp beauty treatment. Madge was more or less in charge because she had known people who had done this. However, Mimi had read the directions carefully and had to get in a few words. She could no more stay in the background than a peacock. Center stage-front, was where she belonged and, no matter where she began, she usually wound up there.

"Why pick on Tumble Inn, Mimi, when you are the only one who is sap enough to smell like a polecat?"

"I didn't think of that, Sue. I'm sorry. Just seems like that most things that happen, take place here."

"You're right. Things do happen here. Stick 'em up, every one of you girls! Dimes and quarters or what have you! All donations kindly received and accepted. While you 'Vanities' stars sing your 'Stay Young and Beautiful' theme song I am going to prepare a feast. Everybody who wants to eat, kick in."

"Swell idea, Sue. Get plenty of dill pickles."

Mimi was the first one to pay. She dropped a quarter in Sue's beret, then settled down to business.

"Let's be careful and only rub it in the parts," she cautioned, running a comb through Jill's sleek hair.

They went about their work seriously. They parted and patted and massaged. As soon as they took the stopper out of the bottle and before they had well begun, Chloe and Sue grabbed their noses and ran out. Betsy weakened. She couldn't stay out of anything that was causing such a stir.

"Next," Mimi called, shooing Madge out and beckoning Betsy. She put her in the chair as a barber would and pinned a towel around her neck.

"Do a good job on me and then I'll really fix you up."

"O. K."

The agreement was carried out. To hear Sue and Chloe and other roommates carry on, they were all "fixed up." Sue passed judgment.

"You can't sleep in Tumble Inn, stinking like that."

"Aw, Sue. What will we do?"

"Take your mattress to the roof for all I care."

Sue wasn't serious but Mimi jumped at the idea.

"Sue, you angel!"

She hugged her and turned her around a time or two.

"You think of the grandest things! That's exactly what we will do and we'll have a midnight feast—a roof garden party!"

There! The plans had been made that quickly. Sue had no difficulty buying and preparing the food. On the promise of three sandwiches, a college freshman went to the grocery for her. The rest had been easy. The girls who would have to sleep out were the ones who had trouble. They couldn't sleep on the bare tin roof, but how could they get the mattresses out? They figured and planned. Finally, Mimi worked it out.

There were only seven to sleep out. All right, they would sleep crosswise; four on one mattress, three on the other. They would take the two mattresses out of Tumble Inn and get them out the sitting room window onto the porch roof. Sue and Chloe objected loudly until they heard the arrangements made for them. Chloe was to sleep with Madge's roommate and Sue with Jill's.

The whole plan must be kept secret. That was hard, almost as hard as tugging and rolling and pushing the mattresses out. They had to wait until dark, and from the time they were out, until she saw Mrs. Cole's light go out, Mimi worried for fear Mrs. Cole would find Tumble Inn vacant and the beds torn up. That would be too bad!

There was, also, a threat of rain. If it would just hold off until the feast was over, surely the roommates of the beauty cult could not be so cruel as to leave them shivering and wet. But long before the weather changed, and for an entirely different reason, the girls were taken from the roof, but not before they had had a feast.

Sue had done well. It was quite the swankiest spread of the year—paper napkins if you please and as a big special surprise, ice cream suckers. The man had packed them in dry ice and sealed them in a carton. They were still frozen hard when Sue proudly passed them around.

Mimi ate and ate.

"If my pajamas had a belt, I'd surely untie it," she said. "If you hear a sudden noise, you'll know what it is—Mimi exploded! There'd be nothing but giblets left."

"Oh me," groaned Sue. Even in pain she was happy.

After the food, there were stunts; things that could be done without noise. Walking like Dr. Ansley. Looking over spectacles as Dr. Barnes. Mimi and Sue "made an elephant." After convulsing the girls with laughter—none of the stunts would have seemed half so funny if they could have shrieked out—Madge succeeded in patting her stomach and rubbing her head at the same time. Jill, after several trials, got her foot behind her head.

They were getting too noisy. Betsy was afraid, that any minute now, they'd be discovered and called down. She suggested that they see who could go the longest without laughing. Faces began to puff up. A snort here. A titter there. Was there ever such fun?

After they had worn themselves out they talked and talked. All the good times of the year were reviewed. But by now, here and there a sleepy girl was crawling to an outer edge of a mattress and going to sleep.

Mimi was as wide awake as the owls she had heard at camp.

"I bet I can stay awake longer than any of you," she wagered.

As it turned out she did, but when she was speaking, she little knew the excitement she would live through before the sun rose again.

She became so drowsy she had to stretch out. She wouldn't go to sleep but it would be more comfortable lying. Just as she crossed that hazy land which lies between wakefulness and slumber, Madge reached over and clutched her arm.

"Oh, Mimi," she said tensely. "I—hear—them again!"

"Hear what?"

Mimi was too far gone to realize why Madge was frightened.

"D—d—death bells!" she sobbed, her teeth chattering with fright.

Mimi sat bolt upright.

## CHAPTER XXI

### DEATH BELLS

"Madge?" Mimi said, putting her arm around her. She was wide awake now. "You're shaking like a leaf."

"I—know—it but I can't stop. Every time I close my eyes I hear them—thump—thump—thump. Oh Mimi it's awful! You don't know unless you've heard them."

"What's up?" Betsy whispered. She scrawled over Jill and poked her head between theirs. "Am I missing something?"

"Sh—sh—" Mimi said to Betsy, but she had her arm around Madge, patting her shoulder. "Madge—er, Madge doesn't feel well."

"Sumpthin' she et?" Betsy asked with small boy impudence.

"I wouldn't make fun of you! I'd b-b—be ashamed!"

She was sobbing in earnest now.

"I'm sorry, Madge. I was just joking. If there's really something the matter I want to help."

"I wish you'd go back to sleep. I was about to tell Mimi something. I won't tell you, because you'd laugh."

There was a thin crescent moon tonight; the stars were shedding more light than it. The dim light made the figures of the tired girls look like discarded rag dolls that had been thrown helter-skelter on the junk pile. Arms and legs tangled. A patchwork of pajamas.

Mimi took it all in at one glance. The pale moon seemed to be casting a ghostly spotlight on Madge. She was pale as the young moon and her eyes were unnaturally bright. Mimi wondered why Madge had to be so different from those healthy, sound sleepers; why she was so tortured with her strange superstition? Mimi had never heard of anything like it before. She wouldn't hear now unless Madge volunteered. She wouldn't ask or beg her to tell. Death bells? The very name made goose bumps up her spine.

"Please, don't you all think I'm queer, but it runs in my family. My grandmother always heard them when someone in our family died—I heard them when *she* died!"

Suddenly Madge put her hands to her ears and buried her head in Mimi's lap.

"This doesn't make sense to me," Betsy said.

"To me either. But maybe it will."

They were whispering over Madge.

Mimi felt Madge's body grow rigid; heard her voice, hoarse and half choked.

"Seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, twenty——"

"If she thinks she hears a bell ringing, she's goofy," Betsy whispered. She tapped her forehead as she finished and made a spinning gesture with her hands.

Madge sat up as suddenly as she had flopped down. She clutched Mimi's wrist on one side and Betsy's on the other.

"They've stopped!" she announced dramatically, but in the same breath added piteously, "but they'll come back. They always do. Once they start, I always hear them—until somebody dies."

Betsy was dumbfounded. Mimi was speechless.

"What do they sound like?" Betsy asked, moving closer to Madge. She wriggled around in front of her and the disturbed look on Madge's face convinced her that whatever death bells were, Madge believed in them heart and soul.

"They don't ring. I don't know why they're called bells at all unless they started calling them that way back when people used to toll the bell on the tower of the church when someone died. They're mournful like that but more like a dull thud. When I first used to hear them, before Granny and Mama told me what they were, I thought someone was under the floor thumping with the end of a broomstick or tapping with a hammer which had a piece of cloth tied over the hammer head. They go thump, thump, thump, just as regular as that."

Neither Mimi nor Betsy could utter a word by now. Mimi felt that if she moved as much as an inch things would crack and pop or icy hands would seize her from behind. She tried to tell herself this was tommyrot, but look at Madge. She was holding her head and counting again.

"Twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three——"

Then for a terrible minute there was silence; Mimi's heart was thumping loud enough to be mistaken for death bells.

"I'll never forget the first time I heard them. We were at Granny's because Grandpa was sick. Mother and I were sleeping upstairs in the room Mother had when she was a girl. We were so tired I couldn't go to sleep. I tried counting sheep but it didn't help. Soon I heard this dull tapping, so I began to count just for something to do. After I counted seventy-nine, they ceased. Not another one sounded. Next morning Grandpa was dead and he was *seventy-nine years old!*"

"Two years ago at school, I had a headache, so I leaned my head over on my desk. I had no more than settled down when a thump-thump-thumping began. I shook my head but I could still hear it. They were the clearest I ever heard. Sounded like someone was tapping on your desk with a ruler. I counted forty-three. That afternoon we had a telegram that my uncle had been killed in an automobile wreck and he was *forty-three years old.*"

"Don't ever count fourteen!" Mimi giggled. She was so scared she was getting silly. Ridiculous, all of it, she kept telling herself, but every time she said ridiculous she believed Madge's story truer and truer.

"I'd be afraid to make fun of it," Betsy said so seriously Mimi knew she believed Madge, too.

"I used to not hear them for anyone but my family, but I get more and more of them all the time. In the last year I have counted them three different times and the next day found in the paper that a

person as old as I had counted, was dead. Gee! My head aches.”

Mimi’s common sense was returning by degrees.

“I’ll get you an aspirin and then we’ll go to sleep.”

She hoped she would. Right now she was more wide awake than ever she had been since the wild cat screamed at camp.

It took a great deal of nerve for her to tiptoe across the tin roof, climb in the window, and feel her way across the sitting room to the bathroom. She did not dare turn on a light until she reached the bathroom. Click! The light was on and, in some miraculous way, fear fled with the darkness. Mimi was almost herself when she reappeared on the roof, aspirin in one hand and a glass of water in the other.

Madge’s head was in Betsy’s lap. She was stroking her forehead with her finger tips.

“She counted to twenty-nine while you were gone.”

Betsy was weak with fright.

Mimi lifted Madge’s weary head and gave her the aspirin.

“Now we’re going to sleep. Betsy, get over there where you belong. Now Madge, honey, close your eyes and rest.”

Mimi began humming softly as Mammy Cissy would. Poor little Madge! Thank goodness Mother Dear never let her believe a lot of old wives’ tales. Madge was relaxing.

Finally all on the roof but Mimi were quiet. She could not get comfortable. She could not turn to cuddle down for fear of waking Madge who had dozed off against her. Mimi began to cramp from being so long in such an uncomfortable position. She sat up to ease Madge over. There was a queer light now.

Had the party lasted all night?

The town clock answered. It boomed out two o’clock. No, it wasn’t dawn. What could the light be?

Standing up slowly, Mimi tiptoed to the edge of the porch roof. The tin roof cracked under her bare feet but she went on toward the increasing brightness. Climbing on the rail and leaning over, she saw.

The kitchen roof was on fire!

## THE LAST OF PREP HALL

Sheridan School's main building was shaped like a "U." Beginning as a three story brick building it had grown, rather like Topsy. Wings had been added as the school grew. The original building which had been the old Seminary for young ladies was now only one long side of the "U." Mimi knew it as Prep Hall. The back end of the original first floor was the dining hall. The one story kitchen had been tagged on later.

She knew, too, that the whole ell of Prep Hall was so old it was a regular fire trap. Since this was the last year for preparatory students there had already been talk of tearing this old ell down. Plans for remodeling had been submitted to Dr. Barnes. As soon as the swimming pool was finished, modernizing Prep Hall was the next thing on the building program.

For one terrifying moment Mimi stood transfixed, holding tight to the colonial railing of the roof. She strained forward. The smoke was rolling now. She did not want to broadcast a false alarm. She must be sure. When she first glimpsed the smoke she thought the cooks might be starting breakfast fires in the old coal ranges. Any doubt she might have had, fled now. A blaze leaped skyward and Mimi acted.

As a complete picture of his past life runs through the mind of a drowning person, so in that frantic moment of hesitation a complete plan of what she must do electrified Mimi into action.

Without grabbing her terry cloth robe or without awakening the girls on the roof whom she knew were safe for the time being, she leaped through the window. Two things she must do and every second's delay could mean the loss of life and property.

First she must reach the office!

Through the window, out the door of Tumble Inn, patter, patter down the hall to the first stairs. So far so good. She knew every inch of the way. Taking two steps at a time she reached the landing safely. But here she stumbled.

Overstepping the first step of the next flight, she fell bumpety-bumpety-bump all the way to the bottom, like the garbage cans in Green Cap Week. When she was smaller she had got spankings for playing on the stairs and bumping from top to bottom very much like her present sitting down manner.

The instant she touched the first floor, she fled to the office. No time to count bruises now.

As she feared, the office was locked. There was only one thing to do and Mimi did it. She had to get to the telephone. She could not waste time fumbling in the semi-darkness for a hatchet or club. Doubling up her first as hard as she could, she swung with all her might and main and smashed the glass window. The sound of shattering glass should have awakened every sleeper but it only echoed dully through the deserted first floor.

Disregarding her smarting and stinging hand she clutched the telephone.

She did not know the number of the fire department!

She knew the fire drill formation perfectly. She could have gone out of the building from the study hall or from Tumble Inn blindfolded. She had enjoyed the fire drills all year. They broke into the dreary routine. Knowing how important they were, she had heeded and learned, every instruction; but here was something the instructor had overlooked—the fire station telephone number.

Mimi was only stumped for a second, however. She had had other and fuller instructions on what to do in case of fire. She dialed the operator, and, with great effort, kept her voice clear so there could be no misunderstanding.

"Operator, operator," Mimi said. She must keep cool and say distinctly *where* the fire was, instead of merely yelling "Fire, Fire" as most people did when the operator answered.

"Please report a fire. Sheridan School. Prep Hall."

"Fire—Sheridan School—Prep Hall—" the operator repeated tersely. The drowsiness left her voice on the first word.

"Right," Mimi affirmed; then without waiting to hang up the receiver, she flung the telephone from her and was off on her second and more important task. Any person, neighbor or someone out in the country, might see the blaze and turn in the fire alarm but she, Mimi, was the only person awake and she was the one who must arouse the whole dormitory. She had known this before she left the roof. She had not wasted a step or a second. From the broken office window she ran as fast as she could and pounded loudly on Mrs. Cole's door.

"Mrs. Cole! Mrs. Cole," she called loudly. "Fire! Fire!"

The instant Mrs. Cole answered she was on her way again. With all speed, she must reach the basement—and set off the alarm bell!

The corridors were long and dark like some of the passages in Mammoth Cave. On she ran and then down, down, down the back flight of stairs to the basement. With a steady hand she threw the alarm switch.

Not until after the fire was over did Mimi understand the risk she ran. The janitor's part of the basement where all the bells were was *under the kitchen!* But none of this now; she had still another task. She must rouse the girls. She knew how soundly some of them slept. She had seen Betsy sprawl across the bed after a soccer game and sleep through noise which Cissy would say was "loud enough to wake the dead." No one must be left asleep now. No one!

As she came up the steps out of the basement she could smell smoke. Soon the crackling and popping could be heard.

Amid all the confusion which followed Mimi coolly and systematically raced up one corridor and down the other, opening doors, shouting names, and making sure all beds were empty. She did not pass up a Prep door.

Lights were appearing. Girls were clinging to each other crying. Some grabbed armfuls of clothes as they fled; others carried dresser drawers, or weekend bags and were spilling things leaving a trail of lingerie and toiletries behind. Once Mimi stumbled in a pile of clothes which had been dropped. They tangled her feet but she shook them free. She must go on—and on!

All was chaos. Not a single instruction which had been given during fire drills was carried out by the frightened girls. Startled out of their sleep by the most dreaded cry of all—"Fire, fire!"—they were panic stricken. To get out quickly was their only thought. Some jumped. A few used the rickety old fire escapes but most of them followed blindly after the first two who had run for the stairs.

Mimi had begun her room search on the third floor and was working down. By the time she had reached the third floor from the basement her heart had been pounding wildly but she did not check her speed. The smoke was thick as fog. It burned her eyes and gagged her.

"Gretchen, are you out?"

She saw the empty bed.

"Caroline, fire!"

Mentally she checked off another empty bed.

She was tottering now but she was nearly through. Two more rooms and she would run outside herself. Could she make it?

Crash! Crack! Screams! Sirens!

Unaware that she was the object of a frantic search by the firemen who had glimpsed her pajama-clad little figure racing wildly from room to room, she finished her task. But where was the door? A great gust of smoke enveloped her. She put her hands in front of her and felt along blindly, but her hands met solid walls.

"I am trapped," she cried frantically. "Help, help!"

Her breathing was becoming more and more difficult. When panic hit her, she became tired all over. Her legs wobbled. The arms which had flung open fifty doors and the hands which had turned on the alarm bell were useless now. They could not find an exit. Her eyes were red and running and she had squinted them to keep out the smoke until she could not open them wide. She, who had never fainted in her life, felt consciousness slipping away.

There must be air at the floor. "I'll lie down till I get some oxygen in my lungs. But suppose I can't get up? I'd be trampled to death. Oh—oh—please God—I must find a way out!"

As the great blackness bore down on her to crush her to the floor, it was rent by a stream of water. Firemen were bringing their hose to play on this part of the building and a saving stream of water came in through the open door and sprayed Mimi's face.

There! There! A door— Right by it all the time and couldn't find it. "I—can—get—out!"

Wet pajamas clinging to her exhausted little body, the knuckles of her right hand bleeding, smoked and smeared almost past recognition, Mimi staggered from the crumbling building.

Somewhat revived by the hose bath—she had followed the hose stream to get out—the rush of outside air, fresh and free from smoke, cleared Mimi's mind.

The girls on the roof! How could she have forgotten them! She had turned to re-enter the toppling building when she was grabbed from behind.

"Take it easy, kiddie."

The fireman's voice was kind and soothing but Mimi pulled and jerked. Feeling her resist and believing she was out of her head from fright, he lifted her in his arms. Mimi kicked her legs and screamed. All eyes centered on the struggle. Mrs. Cole rushed over and hugged Mimi, fireman and all! She was crying.

"I'm going back, I tell you!" Mimi screamed, shoving Mrs. Cole away. "Mrs. Cole! Betsy! Madge! Jill!—the girls on the roof!"

With difficulty she sputtered out the story of the roof garden party.

"They're safe, every one of them—they jumped——" Mrs. Cole wasn't a bit ashamed of the tears that were streaming down her pasty white face. "You—you Mickey—M—Mimi—You are the only one we could not find!"

"Me?" She had to try hard to keep from laughing hysterically. "I knew about the fire first. I turned in the alarm!"

Mimi cuddled against the fireman, and relaxed. She was tired, so tired. Her support gave way with her. At a sudden crash, and cries from the rear of the building, the fireman dropped her like a hot potato. She was safe and he was needed elsewhere. Mrs. Cole took Mimi's arm and led her over to where the rest of the girls huddled in the graying dawn. Many of them hugged Mimi. Sue and Chloe cried, but Betsy said:

"I knew you were all right but I couldn't make them believe me. I tried to make Sue be a hound and ferret you out by smell. She's so keen on that mange cure she could have smelled it above smoke or ——"

"Betsy, please, I can't k-k-kid now—I'm too——"

Mimi herself was crying now.

Silently the girls and resident faculty members stood on the front lawn and watched the flames gut the old wing of the building. Their clothes, books, and their personal valuables were going up in flames and they were helpless. They were glad to escape with their lives. Only Mimi's prompt, clear-headed action had made that possible. They did not know that yet, but when they did, they were deeply grateful. Tall flames, mountains of smoke, smashing glass, trucks pumping, great streams of water battering the walls. A fearsome, awful spectacle.

Now all heads turned the way the fireman had run who had held Mimi. He was returning now at a run, shouting orders to the waiting ambulance unit. Some one was hurt.

Who could it be? the girls and townspeople who had gathered in great numbers asked each other. Every one connected with Sheridan was safe and accounted for, even the cooks and janitor.

The ambulance men were bringing some one on a stretcher. Police fought back the crowd and cleared the way.

"Get back, you idiots. Make room! Make room!" Mimi could hardly keep from screaming. Daddy had taught her long ago *never* to add to the crowd and confusion of an accident. To help, one must go away from it rather than toward it, if help had already arrived. It was selfish and cruel to rush in merely to find out what was going on, when a life was at stake.

Mimi could not see the details and she did not move closer to find out. Nor did she find out until the next morning that it was other than a fireman hurt.

Breakfast, which consisted of fruit, cereal and milk served cafeteria style, because this morning Sheridan had neither kitchen nor dining room, was in progress when Madge edged up to Mimi. The girls were standing in groups eating. It was hard to recognize them in their borrowed clothes. Things the college girls let them have swallowed most of them.

"You didn't believe me last night, did you?"

"No, and I don't now. There couldn't be such a thing as death bells."

"That fireman who got hurt last night was twenty-nine years old. The morning *Dispatch* says so!"

"But he's not dead, only hurt."

"No but he's in the hospital and he may die!"

Mimi wavered. No, she wouldn't believe that, but no use to argue. Let it go. She couldn't change Madge and she had rather not talk about death bells. The most horrible night of her life was over and she would rather forget.

## WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARED AWAY

Regardless of the fact that Mimi would rather forget the fire and all the horror that went with it, naturally the fire was the main discussion everywhere she turned. Disaster and confusion all about. The beautiful lawn ruined. Girls were buzzing. They had been ordered to stay away from the ruins. It would not be safe to search for things yet. That whole side of the building was roped off. Faculty members, grieved and busy, tried to evolve plans which would handle the situation for three more days. This was Saturday; on Monday, school would be out for the year.

Mimi herself was in a turmoil. She had not washed her teeth this morning. That was the most pressing problem.

"I believe I'll chew a sassafras twig like our great-grandmothers did," she said to Sue.

"Cut me one, too, while you're in the woods," Sue laughed.

Mimi laughed back but not about the sassafras twig. Sue was a sight on earth! She had on a sweater that hung below her hips and a skirt that touched her ankle bones and a pair of cast-off tennis shoes.

"You look as tacky as I did the day Betsy and I slipped off."

"You don't look so beautiful yourself," Sue retorted. "At least I don't smell!"

Mimi had forgotten about the mange cure. It was like eating onions or food seasoned with garlic. You didn't smell it on yourself. Those near you were the ones who were offended. The clothes? They probably did make her look comical. She hadn't thought of that; she had been too happy over the fact that they were *Dit's*. Last night, or this morning rather, for it was daylight before the fire chief permitted them to re-enter College Hall, the Preps had been housed with the college girls. To Mimi's great joy, she was assigned to Dit's room. Any other time she would have been so thrilled she would have entered turning cartwheels but not last night. That was the closest call Mimi had ever had to real tragedy. Dit had been darling to her. She had stood right by her and held one hand while Dr. Ansley bandaged the bleeding one. Then she had tucked her in bed.

"Guess I'd better ask permission right now to go for a shampoo."

"What will you wear?"

"What's the matter with this outfit, really now, Sue?"

"Nothing. Say! What's Mrs. Cole announcing?"

"We can go to town and stay for lunch!" Betsy reported coming up to them. "All we have to do is go in pairs and sign out and sign in just like the college girls. I was scared to death we'd have to make out lists of what we needed and I knew I'd never think of it all. When I see things I need I remember. Hurry, let's get ready. By the time we get back maybe they will let us claim our things which were salvaged."

"I can't bear to think I lost my diary, my tennis racket, my boots, the cards off my Christmas packages, and the Hanfstaengel print just when I was beginning to love the cherubs and enjoy living with them."

"Don't speak of losses——" Sue choked up. Mimi knew she was worrying about her violin, a mellow toned old instrument which had been in the family five generations. There was something which could not be replaced. Her own losses seemed trivial in comparison.

"I want to go to town, too," some one called as they signed up and turned to leave. "Write my name, please."

If she had not spoken they would not have known what name to write. At first glance, Chloe looked like the little brother, Worry Wart, in the cartoon, "Born Thirty Years Too Soon." Yet as she walked toward them, rapidly but not rushed, there was something regal in her step and proud carriage that funny-paper clothes did not hide.

Suppose she should turn out to be a princess!

The town was ready for the girls when they arrived. The aisles in the five-and-ten-cent stores were as jammed as they are at Christmas shopping season. The drug stores were overrun. Dresses in sizes 12-14-16 were selling like hot cakes. Two of the thriftier merchants displayed signs that the four o'clock express was bringing fresh shipments of ready-to-wear, ordered by telephone that morning.

"Good as circus day," Mimi said as they joined hands to try to "crash" Woolworth's.

"Let's only buy ten cent sizes of everything," Sue suggested. "They'll be plenty to last three days."

"Two and a half days," Betsy corrected. The thoughts of going home made them all tingle with joy.

"Here's an even better idea," said Mimi harking back to the business in hand. "Of course, we'll each have to buy a tooth brush, a comb, and a wash cloth, but outside of those, let's each put in a dime and buy one tube of tooth paste, one cake of soap, one nail file and one box of powder."

"What! The founder of a beauty cult leave powder till last?" Sue teased. "But that is a good idea. Let's."

"I don't think we should buy any clothes until we know what was salvaged."

"Don't worry. I can't without permission from Aunt Marcia."

After a grand time in the ten cent store, pushing and scrounging and getting lost from each other, the girls separated. Betsy and Mimi went to the beauty salon. Sue and Chloe beat them back to school by an hour. Sue was still ready to tease about their hair when she came out to meet them.

Mimi never could stand to see girls who had just had their hair set going about with it pasted flat to their heads. She had laughed at many a one. Here she was looking that way herself. She felt as if her ears were sticking out a mile.

"More things have happened!" Sue called from the drive.

"They must have," Mimi said to Betsy. "Sue has Chloe in a *run*."

She was dragging Chloe along at a trot.

"They saved my violin! I knew that I had left it in Miss Taylor's studio for her to set a new bridge

before Baccalaureate music tomorrow, but the studio was so water-soaked, I knew every instrument in there would be ruined. It seems Miss Taylor sent a man in through the window for her own violin. He grabbed all four of the ones in there and mine was one of them!"

"Aunt Marcia is coming!"

Chloe had news, too.

"More parents have wired and telephoned and many of them are arriving or have sent word they were leaving soon. All the rooms at the hotel are taken."

"Flash!" Betsy took her turn. "Let me give you a headline that seems to have been entirely overlooked about this fire. All the uniforms burned up. So help me, I never in all my life intend to put on another."

Betsy hated uniforms worse than Mimi. She had worn them a longer time.

"Omigosh!" Sue gasped. "I nearly forgot! They saved your trunk, Mimi—lock, stock, and barrel——"

"Why Sue! If you're kidding, I'll never speak to you again!"

Why that would be too wonderful! Of course the cherubs weren't in it, or her racket; but her diary was. She'd had plenty of "undies" and hose and a dress or two and goodness knows what else. The strangest things get in the funniest places, especially in trunks.

"Honest and truly. Don't you remember? We had to move it when we put the mattresses through the window. You rolled it together and locked it yourself. It seems the firemen and men who helped threw out things like that. Gee! You lucky girl."

Sue and Chloe had taken part of the packages and they were all walking up the driveway.

"Doesn't it seem queer to be using the College entrance?" Chloe asked.

Before any one answered, Jill shrieked from a second floor window.

"Mimi! Go to the office. You have a cablegram!"

## CHAPTER XXIV

### WHO IS CHLOE?

Cablegram!

Mimi dropped her packages and ran for the office. She almost fell over a workman who was busy replacing the glass she had shattered last night.

"You have a cablegram for me?" she asked Dr. Barnes' secretary.

"One has come for you, but Dr. Barnes has it. He is out now. He said tell you no one was ill and for you not to be frightened. That it was about a matter you and he had discussed privately. That is why he wished to deliver the message; he wants to talk to you."

"Shall I wait?"

"I wouldn't. Dr. Barnes is with the college seniors. In spite of all that has happened, we hope to carry through our Commencement as planned. He is in the chapel watching the rehearsal for Baccalaureate tomorrow. Come back by."

"How long?"

"I'd say thirty minutes, but your guess is as good as mine."

Thirty minutes was an eternity! No use to try to do anything else. Might as well sit here.

"Coming back next year?" the secretary asked Mimi. She had completed reservations for three girls since Mimi had been waiting.

"Not next year. I can't. I don't graduate. I'm just a second year Prep." Not because she wanted to be impudent but because she was on the verge of exploding she added: "If Dr. Barnes doesn't come in pretty soon I won't be in *any* school. I'll be 'dead and buried behind the old church door.'"

"Don't you have something you could be doing?"

"No ma'am."

That wasn't quite true but near enough.

"Here, then, fold these programs. That's right. Like this one on top that I folded."

Being busy helped but at every footstep in the hall she jerked upright and craned her neck. She folded feverishly and had done a pile as high as the big dictionary on the library desk when Dr. Barnes arrived.

"Well, well. How are you, Miss Mimi? I was distressed for fear you would be ill after so much excitement last night, or I should say this morning early."

"I am fine, thank you, sir."

Please, Dr. Barnes. PLEASE! Hurry!

"You were a brave girl, Miss Mimi. Now I hope that this news will not prove too much excitement for you, coming as it does right on top of the fire."

He had the message in his hand. If he didn't read it or let her have it at once, she would *have* to jerk it from him. Slower than a snail, a sloth, molasses in January—slower than all the slow things in the world put together, Dr. Barnes adjusted his glasses and cleared his throat.

"The message is from your father in Leipzig. But here—you may read it for yourself."

Her breath bated, her eyes dancing, Mimi took the paper.

PATIENT PROVED TO BE YOUR FRITZ. FULL DEATH-BED CONFESSION. I KNOW WHO CHLOE IS. FINE FAMILY NOW DECEASED. KEEP SECRET. MOTHER AND JUNIOR DOCK JUNE FIFTH. LOVE DADDY."

Chloe was somebody! As if she hadn't known! "Mother and Junior are coming home! Oh, D-d-doctor Barnes!"

"There, there, child," He rose from his desk and came around and patted her head. What a dear he was! "I was afraid it would be too much for one little girl to save her schoolmates from fire and to solve a mystery all in one short day's span."

"That smoke nearly p-p-put my eyes out—I'm all right."

"You certainly are. You are one of our finest girls. Shall we send for Chloe and let her hear the things I have to say?"

"Please, sir."

Dr. Barnes picked up his telephone and asked that Chloe be sent down.

"Dr. Barnes, Betsy and Sue know that Chloe is adopted and that she was kidnaped. They are the only other girls in school who do. They will be so happy to know who Chloe is, could we send for them, too? I'd rather they knew it all now and get it correctly than have to tell them later—because I would tell them—and maybe, get it twisted. Chloe wouldn't care."

"Perhaps you are right, Mimi."

He lifted the receiver again. As it clicked back in place, his secretary entered.

"Excuse me, Dr. Barnes. Miss Marcia Madison is here and I thought you would wish to see her at once."

"By all means. Invite her in."

He moved toward the door to welcome her. Mimi's eyes followed his every move.

Mimi had not pictured her like this. The few snapshots Chloe had showed her were very misleading. Aunt Marcia was attractive! She was tall, erect, stately. Mimi liked her tailored sheer navy blue ensemble. She wore her clothes with that air of assurance well-groomed people have. She was so much more alive and animated than Mimi had expected. Her voice, as she talked to Dr. Barnes, was low and refined. Only her face showed that she had known great sorrow and loneliness.

"George! It's lovely to see you! You look quite fit I was afraid this terrible fire would have you dreadfully upset and you'd have no time for visitors."

"You look charming yourself, Marcia. You timed your arrival perfectly. I have sent for your niece. She will be here any moment."

It's like a play Mimi thought. All the characters rushing on for the finale.

"Since I wrote asking your permission to send Dr. Hammond certain information, many things have developed. If you will read this,"—he held out the cablegram—"you will be prepared for what is coming."

She had barely skimmed it when Chloe, Sue and Betsy entered.

"You funny little tramps!"

Aunt Marcia was laughing at their borrowed clothes. She kissed her own little tramp and hugged the others in turn, Sue first because she knew her. Mimi, who had risen from her chair and stood quietly by it ever since Aunt Marcia entered, went over for her hug, too.

Gee! Aunt Marcia smelled sweet! She was sweet Mimi knew for sure before the conference ended.

"Chloe!" Mimi burst out. "Daddy did it! He has found out who you are! He found the kidnaper!"

"Who—am—I?"

Chloe's dark eyes burned with questions. Her face went white with fear, then flushed red with hope. A Mother? A Daddy like the other girls!

"Your mother and father are dead, and as far as we know you have no brothers or sisters; but Daddy says you are from a fine old family!—And girls! My very own Mother Dear and Junior *are coming home!* They'll dock June fifth."

Strange, how even grown people stood back and let Mimi do all the talking. But she put her whole heart and soul into every word she spoke and that made people like to hear her.

"My—parents—dead! Then I've waited too long to find them? Oh, Mimi—oh, Aunt Marcia——!"

"You still have me, dear!"

Aunt Marcia crushed the forlorn little girl in her arms—this beautiful girl who this morning in her ill-fitting clothes looked much more like a neglected little orphan than that day when Aunt Marcia had taken her from the Home. Aunt Marcia's white kid gloves, the white gardenias, her white purse, none of the fresh white accessories which set off her navy ensemble, mattered. She held Chloe tightly. She would never let her go. Next year she would not even let her go away to school. They would be great chums. She had never realized before that this beautiful girl was as love starved and lonely as she herself. She would make up to her for all the happy family life each had missed.

Every one in the room felt what Aunt Marcia was thinking. Betsy and Sue had their eyes fixed on their toes.

Dr. Barnes lifted his gentle eyes as if he were praying. A tear rolled from beneath his glasses and he made no move to wipe it away. Mimi had no words left. She felt the way she did at church during Communion service, small and helpless as a mere speck of a speck and yet large as the great universal spirit of love. Such moments caught and held her. From them, each time, the magic trail of beauty unfolded anew and led into a happier world.

Her own Daddy had brought about this never-to-be-forgotten moment. She took no thought of the part she had played in the solution of the crime. Her Daddy! And with the next thought the tension broke. Mother and Junior coming home when she hadn't had the faintest idea they'd be back before fall. Here came the tears! The spell was broken.

"Why do I cry—w-when I'm so happy?" she blurted out.

"We all do that, Mimi. Tears are our safety valve."

Mimi turned to him as he spoke and saw Dr. Barnes take the white handkerchief from his coat pocket and wipe under his glasses.

"Shall we sit down? We still have much to say to each other."

Sue and Betsy squeezed into one chair. Aunt Marcia sat across the desk from Dr. Barnes and, although Aunt Marcia knew "young ladies" instructed by Mrs. Cole did not sit on the arms of chairs, she pulled Chloe down on the arm of hers. After Dr. Barnes decided that Mimi intended to remain standing, he seated himself.

Sit down? Not to save her life.

"Shall I begin with my first letter to Daddy?" Mimi asked Dr. Barnes.

"No—contrary to my first idea, I think I shall begin this story. I forget that you girls, and Chloe herself, do not know many things I do."

All eyes focused on Dr. Barnes.

"More years ago than I care to count, but it was a year or two before most of you girls were born, I did the hardest thing I have had to do in my entire life. My superior officer, Captain Bill Harrison, who was my friend as well as commander, lay mortally wounded in a shell hole in no man's land—Marcia, please excuse me if this is difficult for you but I want these girls to know you as I do—I had dragged him there during a lull in the bombing. Both of us were wounded; I slightly, Bill fatally. 'I'm going on—old man,' he gasped. From the light of a rocket which flared above us I could see his agony and knew that he was telling the truth. He was trying to take something out of his pocket but he was too weak. I unbuttoned his stained uniform and drew out a picture of Marcia." Dr. Barnes reached across the desk and patted Aunt Marcia's gloved hand. She had a far away look in her eyes but she was erect and smiling faintly. "I held it up before his clouded eyes—'Darling—See her Barney—and tell—her—I love ——' But he had gone on before he finished. A year later I brought his effects and message home to a gallant lady."

Dr. Barnes had to wait for his throat to relax before he continued.

"Another year passed swiftly and that same lady, still gallant and smiling, came to me for advice. She was lonely she said. Knowing that she would never marry because all of that kind of love she had to give was buried in Flanders, she discussed with me her idea of adopting a daughter.

"I was with Marcia when she selected Clorissa from the fifty children subject to adoption. You were a lovely little thing, Chloe, and that was not your name at all. Your Aunt Marcia renamed you and gave you her own last name of Madison. You held out your tiny arms and ran out from the line of children as if you were expecting a beautiful lady to take you in her arms. When you were nearer, however, you stopped and hung your head, but you had touched Marcia's heart. She wanted none of the children so much as you. The record showed that you had been left inside of the wall of the home and, when found

by a nurse, you were leaning against a tree sobbing. There was a note tied to your wrist stating that your father had been deported and that your Aunt would come someday from the old country to claim you. This story was credited and recorded, but two years had passed and no word had come so you were placed on the list for adoption. These are the things I wrote your father, Mimi."

Not even Mimi spoke.

Dr. Barnes had woven a spell over his hearers. Chloe, although she strained forward and clenched her hand on Aunt Marcia's arm tighter, uttered no word. It was as if she were listening to a gripping story about some one else.

"Shall I begin now?"

"Yes, Mimi, but I wanted you girls to know as much as possible. There is still much to unravel."

"My story will be brief," Mimi began. "I wrote my Daddy the little Chloe had told me. Daddy answered sympathetically but figured there was nothing he could do. Then a most peculiar thing occurred. Daddy was called to see a sick man in the slums of Leipzig. At first he was merely another patient, a big fellow who was slowly dying of an incurable malady. The second time Daddy was called the man was delirious—he muttered and cursed some one called Freida. At the name Freida something inside Daddy clicked. He knew the man had lived in the United States. When he rolled up the man's ragged sleeves to give him a hypodermic to quiet his raving, he saw the man's arms were *tattooed*! That in itself was not unusual but it dovetailed perfectly with what Chloe had told me. Daddy asked the man's friends a few questions. When he got home he wrote me for more details. In the meantime Chloe described the tattooed pictures. One day Daddy dropped by to see the man and he was gone. When my letter arrived, he searched high and low for him and could not find him. The name had been fictitious.

"The next time Daddy was called the man whom we now know was Fritz must have been dying. By reading the cablegram, we know Daddy somehow managed to use the little knowledge he had, plus his hunch that the man was guilty, and by playing the great American game of bluff, pulled a confession from him."

"You told me your Daddy was the best *doctor* in the world, not the greatest *detective*," Betsy said.

"He's *both*!"

"He's made me very happy," Chloe declared softly. Her head had dropped to Aunt Marcia's shoulder.

"No happier than I," Aunt Marcia added. "Regardless of who your parents were, you are my girl and I love you. Now—no one can take you away from me."

Aunt Marcia has suffered fears, too.

## HOME AGAIN JIGGETY JIG

Sunday was a full day, but Mimi was glad when it was over. She shook hands and made curtsies off and on all day. Meeting other girls' parents and sisters and brothers was fun but it was tiring. Then, too, it made her too impatient to see her own.

Sunday afternoon she slipped away quietly to say goodbye to her favorite places. She lingered under the big maple tree where she had studied on sunny days. She inspected the partially completed swimming pool as carefully as a contractor. Not next year, but some year, she would take swimming instructions here and she wanted it just so. She hoped Miss Bassett would be teaching advanced swimming when she returned. She must take another last look at the gym.

To her delight the door was unlocked and she could enter. No doubt some faculty member had been showing it to visitors. The big empty gymnasium was not lonely to Mimi. She loved it. Here she had known sorrow; but here, too, she had been happiest. Suppose she added all the hours of free time she had spent here practicing goals? Suppose she had fastened a pedometer on her ankle to record the miles she had dribbled down the floor?

Am I queer that I miss places as much or more than people, she wondered? She remembered how it hurt to say goodbye to the friendly trees at camp, the Lodge, the river, the hills. When she thought back about camp, it was these things she longed for.

She'd be the same way about Sheridan. In the long summer days ahead she would miss the window ledge in the gym where she had perched to rest, the atmosphere of Tumble Inn; and now since it had been the scene of such violent emotions, Dr. Barnes' office was endeared to her.

Because of the fire the Baccalaureate service had been changed from morning to evening. True some of the Prep graduates were not as well dressed as they had planned to be, but, taken as a whole, the rows and rows of girls in white made an inspiring picture.

The Commencement program proper, at which sheepskins were awarded to the college girls taking degrees, and highly embossed parchment diplomas were given to the graduating Preps, was Monday morning at eleven o'clock. Since this was the last year of its long existence, the Preparatory students were given the special privilege of carrying the daisy chain. Instead of the seniors filing in a single line carrying the great rope of plaited flowers to pass down to the undergraduates as had been the custom, the order was reversed. The seventy-five girls of the Prep department carried the daisy chain and passed it to the college freshmen. This year the significance was that the fine old traditions on which Sheridan Seminary had been founded must not die. They must be the foundation of Sheridan's continued growth now that she was to be a fully accredited college.

Mimi felt very solemn marching along balancing the flower rope on her erect shoulder.

True to her word, Olivia the "near-child-prodigy" took first honors with the highest average ever made by a Prep.

Sue played in the orchestra.

Betsy and Mimi sat side by side.

Imagine Mimi's astonishment when Dr. Barnes, contrary to his time-honored policy of never singling out girls for special attention, publicly commended her for her cool-headed bravery the night of the fire. She was pleased but Betsy was ecstatic!

Things were whirling around Mimi, but not touching her deeply. She was absorbed in a mystery solved and a home-coming.

"Free night" before departure, when all restrictions were off, was fun; but Mimi was impatient. Had she been going south instead of north she could have left Monday evening.

She was all packed. Many things she had treasured were left in ruins. She could hardly wait the coming of daylight which heralded the arrival of the station wagon, the rickety old bus which would rattle up and take a load of eager girls jiggety jig to the north-bound train.

She *must* get home to help Cissy get the house aired and ready for Mother Dear and Junior and *summer visitors*. She had already asked both Chloe and Betsy and they had accepted "if." Mimi, who was never stumped by "ifs" knew that they would come and that there was a happy summer ahead.

This took the bitter out of the goodbyes.

Only once when Mimi turned away from the fluttering hands and chorus of farewells and glanced toward the ashes of Prep Hall, were there tears in her eyes. She wiped them away with her bandaged hand.

After all, Sheridan was her Sheridan now and she was coming back some day.

THE END

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK MIMI AT SHERIDAN SCHOOL \*\*\*

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge

for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE  
THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE  
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at [www.gutenberg.org/license](http://www.gutenberg.org/license).

**Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works**

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and

the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR

INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

## **Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™**

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

## **Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at [www.gutenberg.org/contact](http://www.gutenberg.org/contact)

## **Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate).

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate)

## **Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works**

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.