

Non-Chalet School miscellaneous EBD titles

Titles in **BOLD** have a synopsis below. Be aware that there are spoilers.

FARDINGALES (1950)

THE 'SUSANNAH' ADVENTURE (1953)

LORNA AT WYNYARDS (1947)

STEPSISTERS FOR LORNA (1948)

THE FEUD IN THE FIFTH REMOVE (1931)

A THRILLING TERM AT JANEWAYS (1927)

CAROLINE THE SECOND (1937)

SCHOOL AT SKELTON HALL (1962)

TROUBLE AT SKELTON HALL (1963)

THE NEW HOUSE MISTRESS (1928)

JUDY THE GUIDE (1928)

SCHOOL BY THE RIVER (1930)

THE LITTLE MARIE-JOSÉ (1932)

CARNATION OF THE UPPER FOURTH (1934) (unabridged edition)

CARNATION OF THE UPPER FOURTH (1954) (abridged edition)

ELIZABETH THE GALLANT (1935)

CHUDLEIGH HOLD (1954)

THE CONDOR CRAGS ADVENTURE (1954)

TOP SECRET (1955)

THEY BOTH LIKED DOGS (1958)

LITTLE MISSUS (1942)

KENNELMAID NAN (1954)

NESTA STEPS OUT (1954)

BEECHY OF THE HARBOUR SCHOOL (1955)

LEADER IN SPIKE OF HERSELF (1956)

Four Geography Readers (all published 1951)

VERENA VISITS NEW ZEALAND

SHARLIE'S KENYA DIARY

BESS ON HER OWN IN CANADA

A QUINTETTE IN QUEENSLAND

Elinor Brent-Dyer's only known adult story

JEAN OF STORMS, Bettany Press, (1995)

originally serialised weekly in the "Sheilds Gazette" in 1930

Short stories in other annuals

Carlotta of the Circus in Stories of the Circus Book 4 (also in The Circus Book)

Cavalier Maid in 2nd Coronet Annual for Girls

House of Secrets in Sceptre Girls' Story Annual

Jack's Revenge in Sunday Reading for the Young (1914)

Lady in Yellow Gown in Big Book for Girls (1925)

Rescue in the Snows in My Favourite Story

Robins make Good in Girls Own vol 57



The Susannah Adventure

Synopsis

Contributed by Jane Harris, England — working from a hardback edition

Anstace Roseveare and Humphrey Anthony are cousins and live near Applesendie in South Devon in a house named Fardingales. Anstace and Humphrey are sailing their boat "Susannah" to Looe (Cornwall) to meet up with Anstace's father and their friend Tom Vinton. They spend the day in Trevendick and Anstace is intrigued by a girl they meet in the bead shop as she does not seem to fit in there.

Overnight the girl and her brother (Kennie and Kevin Mackenzie) try to sneak onto the "Susannah" but Kevin cannot make it and goes under the water. Anstace and Humphrey help them onto the boat and look after them both.

Whilst Kevin is recovering, his sister Kennie tells them that they are running away from their only relative, Jago Halcrow. Kennie says that Jago Halcrow and his associates have tried to make Kevin burgle a house to steal important documents from there. Anstace and Humphrey agree to hide the Mackenzies on the "Susannah".

When they get to Looe they find that Anstace's father has succumbed to an attack of mumps and only Tom Vinton is there to meet them. They discover that Jago Halcrow is in Looe looking for the Mackenzies and decide to sail around to different places to throw Jago and his friends off the scent, since the cousins can't take the Mackenzies back to Fardingales as both Anstace and Humphrey's fathers are in quarantine.

After being chased over most of the south coast (including the Channel Islands) the "Susannah" ends up in Yarmouth where the lives of all of them are in peril.

Spoilers

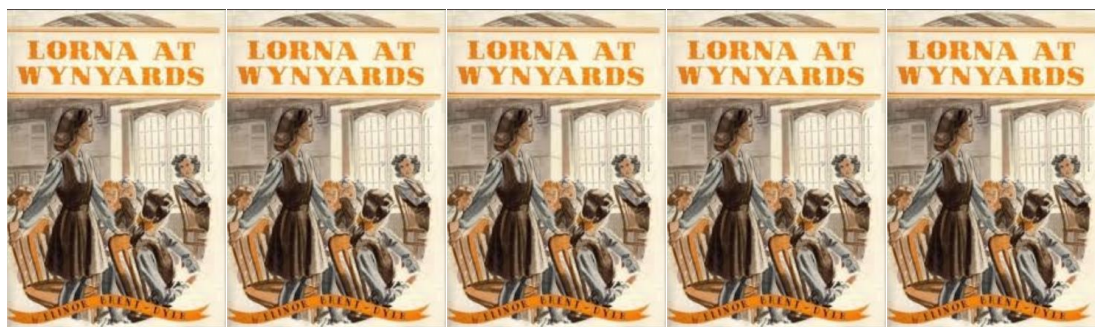
Tom Vinton recognises the description of the house that Jago Halcrow wanted Kevin to burgle and realises that Jago and his friends are after an invention of Commander Roger Treatt's (Tom's older brother Jabez is in the Navy and works for the Commander).

Tom manages to get word to Jabez, and the Mackenzies are taken to a safe area leaving Anstace, Humphrey and Tom on the boat. Tom goes off to buy bread and is recognised by some of Jago Halcrow's gang.

He leads them a merry dance over the countryside and finds refuge with a bargeman. The bargeman agrees to help and goes to find the "Rosannah" (Anstace had changed the boat's name for safety reasons). He walks into a fight between the Navy and Jago Halcrow's men.

The Navy win, but then realise that Humphrey and Anstace are missing. They are found cast adrift in a dinghy and are rescued.

The Mackenzies go to live at Fardingales with Anstace and Humphrey. Kennie is to go to school and Kevin will be apprenticed to a boat builder. When Kennie leaves school they will go to New Zealand to join their friends there. Tom will finish his course and join a ship; Humphrey will go to college and train for land-agency work whilst Anstace will end up safely married to Commander Treatt.



Lorna At Wynyards

Synopsis

Contributed by Christina Erskine, England — working from a hardback edition

Horrified by Lorna's end of term report which says that the family baby is bumptious and self-satisfied, her mother Bess Carey decides she must leave small Bury House and go to Wynyards, the big day school where her cousin Kit Arnold is a prefect. This means that 13-year-old Lorna must also live with Kit and her aunt, Kath Arnold, during term time.

The contrast between her the large, careworn Carey family and the close-knit Arnolds, who are more like friends than mother and daughter, couldn't be more marked. Lorna is inclined to rebel at first at the expectation that she will help around the house, and her jaw drops more than once at her Auntie Kath's youth and informality. But this is nothing compared to the shock she gets at school. Used to making it to the top of the class in every subject with room to spare, Lorna finds herself having to work hard for every single mark if she is to keep up in the Upper Third at Wynyards.

Her self-assurance leads to a bitter quarrel with one of her form-mates and a punishment for fighting which will make it very difficult to keep her position in the form. What is more, Auntie Kath will have to tell Lorna's mother that Lorna has been in trouble at school, and Bess is quite likely to inflict her own punishment as well.

Lorna also falls foul of Ardath Penney, the second prefect who steps up to take head girl Mary Anson's place when Mary is injured in a fall. But this time Lorna isn't acting for herself, but to stand up for someone who has become very dear to her.

Lorna finally sheds the last of her babyish ways when death comes to her family and she must go home. The Lorna who returns to the Arnolds is beginning to grow up and will make her home with them from now on.

Spoilers

Bess Carey loves her youngest daughter dearly but finds it difficult to show her feelings. Her son John is missing, lost at sea and his widow Lizette is very frail after an attack of typhoid. Then her eldest daughter Angel has suffered a nervous breakdown, the true cause of which Angel has confided only to Kath Arnold. As a

result Lorna has been left much to her own devices and feels that no-one cares for her very much.

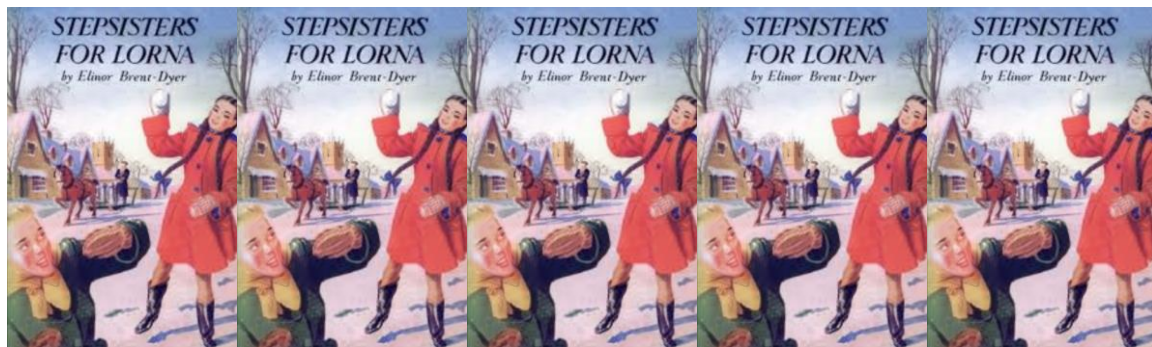
When Lorna quarrels with Meg Thompson and gets a bad report, her mother feels it is her duty to refuse Lorna leave to come home for half-term. Kath Arnold finds it very difficult to explain to Lorna that this is not because her mother doesn't love her, but her way of being a good parent.

Although Ardath carries out her head girl duties rather too seriously at times, she is also prone to forgetting some of the responsibilities associated with the post. When she misses a game practice - with Lorna's Upper Third crew, of course - Ardath is particularly irritated by Kit's rather tactless reminder. Thereafter Ardath tries to pile extra duties on to Kit and her friends, which is quickly noticed by Lorna and the rest of Upper Third. After a run-in with Upper Third in which Ardath tries to inflict far too harsh a punishment, her stand-in headship is brought to an abrupt end.

The death of Lorna's father leaves her family in straitened circumstances. With her sister-in-law Lizette still very ill, Lorna's mother agrees to take Lizette to Madeira for the warm climate - the Arnolds will have Lorna for as long as the Careys are away. Lorna's growing maturity is rewarded with an all-round good report at the end of term - and Kit earns an unexpected academic reward as well.

Links to the Chalet School series

Lorna is very envious of Kit's collection of books by Josephine M Bettany - especially *Gipsy Jocelyn*, in which Jo has written a personal inscription to Kit. The Arnolds met Jo on a holiday in Brittany and Jo has been sending Kit a copy of one of her books each Christmas since. At the time when Lorna goes to live with the Arnolds, Kit tells her that she knows that Jo Bettany is now Mrs Maynard and has four children: the triplets and baby Stephen.



Stepsisters for Lorna

Synopsis

Contributed by Christina Erskine, England — working from a hardback edition

Kath Arnold is troubled by the news from her sister Bess Carey in Madeira. Not only is Bess going to marry again, but her new husband has two daughters, Rosemary and Marigold Corbett, who are in desperate need of schooling after a series of ineffectual governesses. Bess believes that much the best thing for the two girls will be for them to be enrolled at Wynyards, the well-known day school where Bess's own daughter Lorna goes. In turn that means that Rosemary and Marigold will live at the Arnolds' house, just as Lorna does.

Even easy-going Kath feels that Bess is imposing upon her here, but the alternative is that Rosemary and Marigold would have to board all year round among complete strangers.

But even as Kath is pondering how best to break the news to Lorna, the job is taken out of her hands. Rosemary, the elder girl, takes it upon herself to write to Lorna to welcome her into their family.

Lorna is deeply upset. It is less than a year since her father died and she does not like the idea of acquiring two stepsisters who will live with her at all. But a year with the Arnolds has taught Lorna unselfishness and she prepares to make the best of things.

Things might have gone smoothly, for Rosemary turns out to be friendly, and eager-to-please. But Marigold is a little wildcat. She cares little for her lessons, she is jealous of her sister's affection and she greatly resents Lorna's place at the heart of the household. Soon Marigold is at daggers drawn with everyone: her schoolmates, Lorna, Kath Arnold, even her beloved sister. But in one foolhardy act of disobedience Marigold brings upon herself a worse punishment than any of her elders could have devised for her, and eventually, she finds it within herself to control her temper and think of others.

Spoilers

Although Lorna accepts that she must make the Corbett girls welcome in Wynyards, there is just one thing she cannot face: her mother's suggestion that the two girls refer to Mrs Arnold as 'Auntie Kath'. Lorna feels that it is her right alone to call her aunt by the family name. Kath, in deference to Lorna's feelings, asks the Corbetts to call her Mrs Arnold. Marigold rebels against this, especially when she discovers how much it riles Lorna.

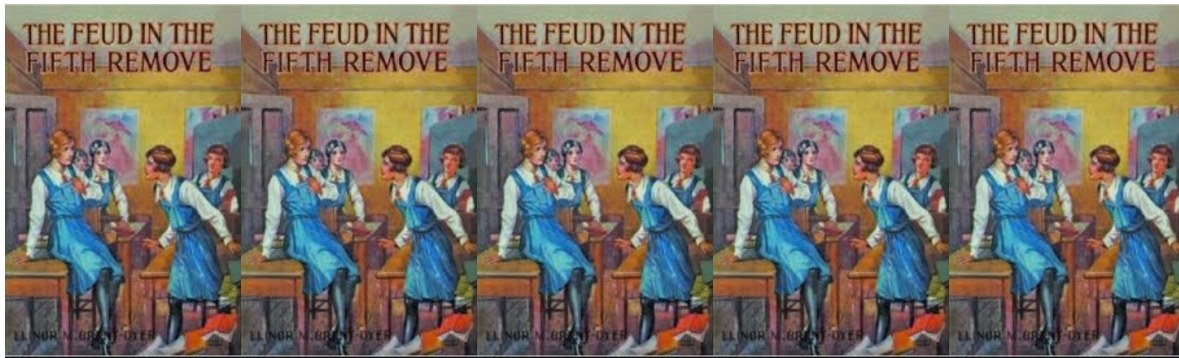
As their education has previously been so patchy, neither of the Corbett girls can come close to Lorna in school, but while Rosemary determines to work hard and catch up, Marigold is simply affronted at being placed in a form with girls three years younger than herself. She makes little effort to make friends and resents the extra maths coaching which Miss Grace submits her to.

While learning to ride her bicycle, Marigold disregards Kath Arnold's instructions not to attempt to cycle down the hill on Sheepcote Lane. Frightened at the speed at which is travelling, she brakes hard and is pitched over the handlebars, landing hard on her back on the road. Dr Russell diagnoses a sprained back muscle - reminding Lorna of Katy Carr in "What Katy Did" (and much like Eustacia Benson in the Chalet School series as well). Marigold must spend a few months lying flat on her back. At first she is kept in the cottage hospital where Matron exerts firm discipline over her, but then a train crash means all the beds are needed and Marigold must be nursed back at the Arnolds' home.

At first the long days and nights tell on Marigold and the household endures many temper tantrums, before she finally begins to turn the corner. The experience teaches self-control to Rosemary as well, and she learns that it is sometimes right to be firm and not to give in to her wilful sister. Luckily Marigold is strong physically and by Christmas, she has improved enough both physically and emotionally, to be able to contribute to a truly happy Christmas for everyone.

Links to Chalet School

None, except for the fact that Lorna's Christmas present from cousin Kit is the new Josephine M Bettany book.



The Feud in the Fifth Remove

Synopsis

Contributed by Jennifer Parr, England — working from a hardback edition

Philathea Marriott returns to the Abbey High School for the Christmas Term to discover that she and two of her friends, Dorcas Boyd and Dorinda Chesney have been moved up, but Agatha Finlayson is left in Upper Fourth. Two new girls, Beatrice and Brenda Lowe (no relation) are also members of the Fifth Remove.

It soon becomes clear that Brenda, who is from a wealthy family, looks down on the girls who are not well off, and opposes the school atmosphere that is 'utterly unsnobbish'. She is particularly contemptuous of Philathea, whose father owns a bookshop, and of Beatrice, who won a scholarship to the school.

A feud erupts between Brenda and her friends, including Lotty and Adeline, the most badly behaved girls in the school, and the rest of the form. Several conflicts occur within the form, including Philathea's selection of the netball team, and outside it, as Brenda and her friends defy the prefects, including Vida, Philathea's sister.

Matters come to a head when a quarrel between Brenda and Philathea leads to a terrible accident, but the term ends happily when the feud is ended.

Spoilers

Philathea is justly proud of the famous Marriott bookshop, which is an extensive business that began in the reign of William III. She and her sisters, Vida and Salathiel, have old family names.

The Headmistress, Miss Heriot, firmly believes in treating people according to their merits, not their wealth and status. Brenda resents being mistaken for Beatrice Lowe by the caretaker, who knew Beatrice as a baby. In the future, she is always unpleasant to Beatrice.

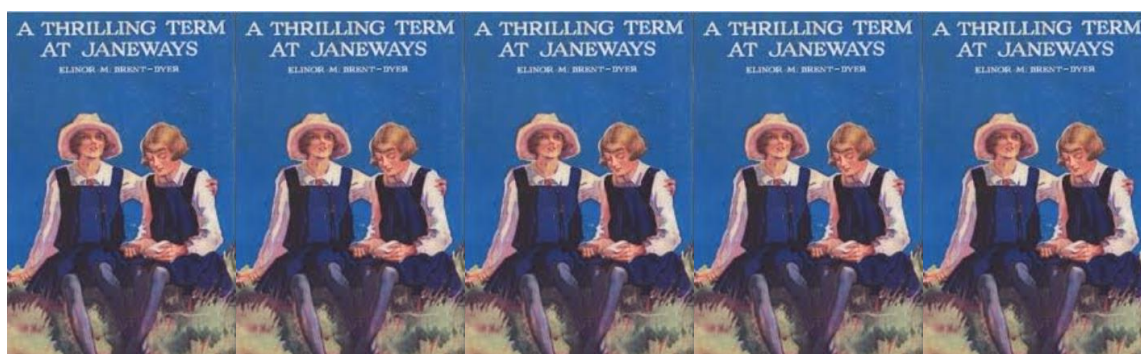
Brenda has five friends (Lotty, Adeline, Linda, Lorna and Jessie) who follow her lead in forming a society for girls whose fathers are of high professional class, which they invite Dorcas to join - but not her friends. This insult to her friends leads to a fight between Dorcas and Brenda. At the subsequent prefects' meeting, Dorcas loses her

position as team-captain of the hockey, but is reinstated after Philathea tells the prefects the truth behind the fight.

Philathea, as captain of the netball, chooses Brenda to play in the inter-form match. However, Brenda purposely pulls out on the morning of the match. Beatrice takes her place and helps Fifth Remove win the game, while Brenda is dropped from the team.

Brenda's parents are displeased with her rude behaviour at home. Brenda and her friends decide on a campaign to strike against the prefects, which widens the feud within the form. A prefects' meeting deprives the six of games for the rest of the term, and severe warnings are issued to Lotty and Adeline.

A fight between Brenda and Philathea culminates in an accident whereupon Philathea is nearly killed. As a result, Lotty is expelled and the rest suspended. Brenda is excluded despite her improved behaviour until Philathea returns and forgives her, and the feud is ended as the term finishes.



A Thrilling Term At Janeways

Synopsis

Contributed by Angela Woodgates, England — working from a hardback edition

Janeways' School in Yorkshire is an old foundation, begun in 1825 by Samuel Janeways who devoted most of his fortune to the school in order to provide an education for girls, irrespective of their ability to pay. Pupils are known as Janewegians. Old Girls who have distinguished themselves in the arts or whose husbands are painters, musicians and so forth may claim places for their daughters.

Phoebe Mervyn, senior prefect, has to enter all new girls' names in the great roll book, and so is the first to encounter the twins, Melody and Harmony Tresillian, aged thirteen, daughters of an organist; Jessie Macpherson, child of an artist; and five sisters, Philippa, Phyllida, Philomela and Philomena (twins) and Philadelphia Valentine, also an artist's daughters.

The Head Girl and the prefects are responsible for a good deal of the supervision and games coaching. They are also in charge of "Keys", where all new girls have to give some kind of performance - music, dancing or recitation. "Keys" always ends with a demonstration of the Dances: Janeways' teaches its pupils "pavanes, allemandes, and minuets, and so on" which they perform every year in Big Hall. The Valentine sisters' offerings of eurhythmic and an original composition impress the prefects.

Various happenings during the term warrant the label "Thrilling", including a runaway pupil, an unexpected ringing of the firebell at one in the morning, the discovery of a secret underground passage, and a burglary in which the school trophies and a priceless painting are stolen. Interwoven with the school events is the story of the Nethecote Great House and the Nethecote family history, and a three-hundred-year-old mystery that is solved by Philomela, the Rector and a cat. Needless to say, all is resolved satisfactorily.

Among the traditions of Janeways' are two that are shared with the Chalet School: an end-of-term entertainment given by the staff to all pupils from Kindergarten to Special Sixth, and Spot Supper. On the last night of term, the Spot Supper Song, to the tune of "A Life On The Ocean Wave", (and carrying a footnote crediting Miss M. Rowland Brown with the words) is sung in procession before the school sits down to

sausage and mash, assorted "afters", lemonade and coffee; and after the meal, all new pupils (and new mistresses, if any) have to make a speech. On this occasion, Philippa Valentine speaks in Danish, and Philomela's speech is modelled on a well-known poem. Speeches over, there is more singing, prayers, the School hymn, and bed. As the rest disperse to the dormitories, the prefects reflect that it has been "a good term, in spite of upsets".

Spoilers

Philomela Valentine, at first apparently nervy and little able to cope at school without her twin's support and given to wailing lamentation when things go wrong, shows considerable talent at music. She also displays an interest in the legend of the Great House that - with the help of the Rector - eventually leads to the solving of the Nethecote family mystery and the discovery of a long-lost treasure.

Philippa, the eldest Valentine sister, longs to train as an artist, but their father, himself a painter, refuses to countenance this unless she can prove outstanding talent. Something of an autocrat, Mr. Valentine insists that his daughters wear "artistic" frocks and loosely-flowing long hair, forbids abbreviations of their names and abhors modern slang, including "ripping" and "I say" (although he says "Look here"). He has a low opinion of women painters, but when Philippa wins the Art prize, and her copy of a Fra Angelico painting is stolen by mistake for the genuine article, he relents and promises her four years' study abroad.

Melody Tresillian, the mischievous twin who runs away from school, is accused of ringing the fire bell for a joke and stoutly denies it throughout. It is she who accidentally finds not only the stolen school trophies and supposed Old Master but also the thieves, while breaking bounds in search of a missing cat. Finally, she is absolved of untruthfulness when the fire bell rings unexpectedly, and a cow is discovered pulling at the bell-rope.

Chalet links/similarities

Whilst there are no actual links with the Chalet School stories in the way of shared characters or locations, there are several similarities in events and arrangements, notably Spot Supper (including the parodying of Longfellow's "Hiawatha" for one of the speeches).

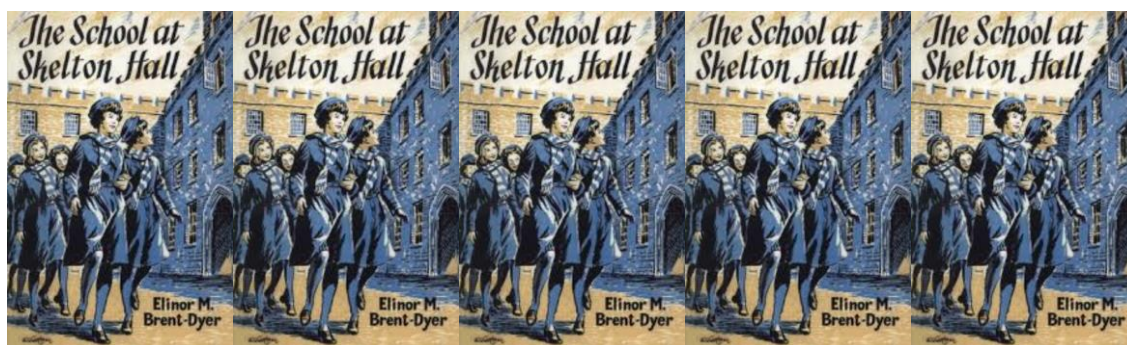
Janeways' has Senior, Middle and Lower School divisions (and a Special Sixth), and there is reference to "Middles" as being responsible for most of the School's mischief.

Melody is threatened with a fine if she continues to use words such as "beast" and "piggish".

The school uniform includes tunics with silk blouses, brown hats with gold bands, and brown velvet frocks for evening wear.

Some of the Middle School decide to start a society to reform Melody and Philomela, and call themselves the Seven Secret Reformers, or S.S.R..

Harmony Tresillian, a Junior, gets into trouble for using the Senior library because she says the Junior section has only "toshy" books



The School at Skelton Hall

Synopsis

Contributed by Claire Smerdon, Canada — working from a 1963 (2nd impression) hardback edition

Sally Martindale, age 14, is unhappy at the large High School and longs to go to a small boarding school where she'd have a chance to really get to know people and the mistresses would have more time to help students. She accepts that, due to family circumstances, this dream is unlikely to come true. Then a letter arrives from Sally's godmother, offering to send Sally to a new boarding school which her other god-daughter, Ailsa Skelton, is opening in Sussex. Miss Skelton's great-uncle died and left her a suitable large house. Sally is thrilled and phones her great chum, Myfanwy ('Van'), only to find that the mothers have been talking and Van is going to Skelton Hall, too.

On the train the girls meet their new schoolmates, including Harrie, Hilary and Lal, their roommates in the Blue Dormitory, soon to be known as The Quintet. Miss Skelton tells the girls that, as the first pupils, they will be the ones who will decide what kind of school Skelton Hall will become and urges them "to see that our traditions are the right kind". The school consists of thirty-three girls in four forms, although they will also work in 'sets' for subjects such as maths. Sally and Co. are assigned to youngest form, Lower IV, and are horrified to learn that on one day only French is to be spoken and on another, German.

Bespectacled Harrie, an avid reader of thrillers, senses there is something suspicious about the attics, which are out of bounds, and the east wing which Miss Skelton's uncle let to an old friend before his death. The Quintet, caught up in schoolwork and expeditions, pay little attention to Harrie's mystery until Sally wakes in the middle of the night and hears strange noises and sees lights in the east wing. The girls think that they may be able to find a way through the attics to the east wing and find an opportunity to have a duplicate key made to the attic door. Having discovered the secret, the girls make frequent visits to the attic. One night Matron catches Sally returning from the attics and demands an explanation of the duplicate key. Sally refuses to tell what she has been doing. Reluctantly Miss Skelton places her in solitary confinement in the San.

Eventually the secret is explained, Sally is forgiven and the girls look forward to the next term at Skelton Hall.

Spoilers

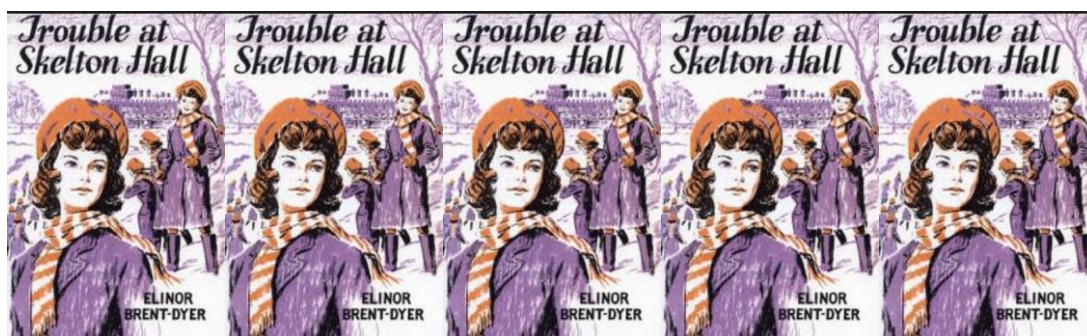
Late one night the Quintet make their way into the attics, determined to solve the mystery in the east wing. A skylight provides easy access on to the roof and they make their way to above an open window next to the one where they'd seen the lights. Harrie produces a mountaineering rope and Sally, as she is the smallest, is selected to be lowered first over the parapet.

The girls manage to get in through the window and follow the sounds of sobbing to a bedroom where they find Della Grey, a girl about their age. Della, an orphan, met with a riding accident and injured her spine. Now she is convinced that she will never walk again and refuses to see anyone but her Grandfather and Nurse.

The girls secretly cross the roof and visit Della as often as possible. Her guardians are surprised at the improvement in her health and spirits, but Della refuses to meet the girls openly and makes them promise not to tell anyone else about her.

When Sally is caught, she refuses to explain the situation and break her promise to Della, so is confined to the San. The Quintet cannot let Della know what has happened and Della thinks the girls do not like her any more and falls ill. In her delirium she calls for 'Sally from next door'. Della's grandfather asks Miss Skelton if Sally can come to Della, to sit by her sick bed. Miss Skelton sends Sally immediately, then calls the rest of the Quintet to her office for a full explanation, which leads to a severe, but fair, punishment.

Della rapidly recovers to the point where she can sit up and there is hope that she will walk again. She invites Lower IV to an end-of-term party and looks forward to joining them at Skelton Hall next term.



Trouble at Skelton Hall

Synopsis

Contributed by Jenni Ambridge, Melbourne

The second term for Skelton Hall starts with 50 girls, 17 of which are new. We are introduced to the Quintet, 5 girls in Lower IV, Sally, Van, Harrie, Hilary and Lal. A new girl, Caeros, takes a shine to Sally, who helps her out, but is later jealous when Sally shows friendliness to other girls. New juniors from another school make life miserable for another Third Former, Lesley Selwyn. There is mention of a row which the Quintet were part of last term and talk of "Della" who is unable to walk.

Lesley disappears – she tried to run away as she was so unhappy. The Third form would not let her forget an instance when she sneaked last term and the girls were caught smoking. Lesley is found in the priest's hole. A Mr Grey lives in the East Wing of the Hall, his grand-daughter Della was crippled in a riding accident three years ago. The quintet met her last term in mysterious circumstances.

The School decides to have a School magazine. The Prefects and Upper V entertain the school at an evening with games and supper. Caeros sees that Sally is very friendly with Della at this evening and tells the latter that she hates her. Sally overhears and tells Caeros that she will be friends with both of them.

Della catches German measles and Sally has to go into quarantine as she had had contact with her. Caeros believes one of the girls who says that you can go blind with German measles. In the middle of the night she goes to apologise to Sally for being such a pig. A fire starts in the East Wing, Sally and Caeros race over to warn the Greys and bump into them coming out the front door, Della walking. The fire is put out and Della explains to the girls that she suddenly started walking again recently. As she improves, she joins the school. Mr Grey offers to build a swimming bath as a thank you for the help given to Della by the school.



The New House-mistress

Synopsis

Contributed by Angela Woodgates, England — working from a hardback edition

Miss Lessing, the mistress in charge of Middle House at St. Helen's School, leaves at a fortnight's notice to be married when her fiancé has unexpected leave from New Zealand. The Middles are very upset, and determine to give her successor a difficult time. Unknown to them (and to be kept secret at her own request), the new Housemistress is an Old Girl of the School. She arrives over the half term weekend, to be greeted with indifference and even rudeness by several of her charges.

The Middles take their cue from "The Octave", chief among whom is Barbara Allen. However, their campaign is shaken on the very first evening when one of their number, Mollie Robson, climbs an unsafe tree for a dare: the despised newcomer performs a nick-of-time rescue which compels the unwilling admiration of the watching girls. Despite this, Barbara and her fellow Middles pursue their efforts to make Miss Oswald realise that she is not wanted.

In an attempt to enliven their free time and flout Miss Oswald's authority, the Middles decide to put on a play in one of the dormitories after lights out - complete with curtains, programmes, stage lighting - of sorts - and invitations to the audience. They write a stage version of the ballad "Barbara Allen", with their own Barbara as the heroine, and sundry additional characters thought up to provide enough parts for all those involved.

The performance takes place without being discovered by anyone in authority, but shortly after the actresses are back in bed, fire sweeps through Middle House. The building is evacuated, but Barbara is the last to use the fire escape and is overcome by smoke before she can descend. Miss Oswald once again comes to the rescue, although she is quite seriously injured in the process. It is discovered that the fire was caused by a discarded candle from the Middles' "stage lighting".

When Barbara is well enough for visitors, she hears how, and by whom, she was rescued from the burning dormitory. Unwilling to believe it, she asks to speak to Miss Blake, the Headmistress, and learns that other members of her family also owe their lives to Miss Oswald. The Head assures Barbara that "next term everything will be all right."

Spoilers

Not long after Miss Oswald's arrival at the Middle House, Barbara receives a letter from India (her parents and the youngest children live out there, as Major Allen is stationed at Agra). Mrs. Allan writes that five-year-old Roger and little Beth have had a narrow escape from attack by a mugger (crocodile) when they played truant from their Ayah. The children were saved by an unknown girl who then vanished from the scene, leaving a scribbled note on which the name was illegible and only the initials - A. O. - could be deciphered.

Barbara tells the Headmistress the news from India and finds out that Miss Blake has already heard it from Major Allen. When Barbara expresses a hope that she may some day meet her brother's and sister's rescuer, Miss Blake says that she thinks it "very possible".

After the fire in Middle House, Barbara learns that the Headmistress has known Miss Oswald for sixteen years, and has kept the secret of Beth and Roger Allen's rescue from the crocodile at her own request. Aware that Barbara's treatment of the new housemistress was prompted by a feeling of loyalty to the former head of Middle house, Miss Blake reveals that Miss Lessing and Miss Oswald, both Old Girls of St. Helen's, were great friends in their schooldays.

Chalet Similarities

Girls are given order-marks for using forbidden words or expressions ("Beast" and "Shut up"). Anyone incurring five order-marks in a week has to miss the Saturday evening party.

Sentimentality among the girls is quietly discouraged at St. Helen's; "Linking" (walking arm-in-arm) is forbidden. The Middles' reaction to Miss Lessing's departure is tearful and emotional, and the senior mistress voices the hope that the change will "put a stop to that sort of thing".

The account of the play in the dormitory, although quite different in most particulars from the episode in THE NEW CHALET SCHOOL (h/b) / A UNITED CHALET SCHOOL (p/b) certainly has echoes of the production given in the roof garden at St. Clare's House by Betty Wynne-Davies, Elizabeth Arnett and company, even to the detail of Barbara Allen having to act her final scenes holding up her petticoat with one hand.



Judy the Guide

Synopsis

Contributed by Nicky Wade, England — working from a hardback edition

Judy Carey's first term at St Ronan's is nothing if not eventful. Pitchforked straight from her isolated life on a Canadian prairie farm into the hustle and bustle of the Fourth Form, she is befriended by the other girls in her dormitory - the Bird Room - and soon forgets her homesickness in the joy and colour of one of the school's favourite hobbies, country dancing.

Even that excitement, however, fades into the background when Nancy, Marjorie and Nanciebel introduce her to the school Guide company. Inspection, marching, drill, patrol corners, badge work - to Judy even the most mundane Guide task is a thrill and she longs for the day when she can be enrolled.

But those first days are not all happy ones. An accident on the very first afternoon makes an enemy of an older girl, with far reaching consequences. At first Judy dismisses the unpleasantness but when Muriel insults her brother on Parents Day, and later her heritage, the new girl shows her formmates that she has a temper to be reckoned with.

In the classroom the young Canadian finds that she must slog to keep up but once classes are over she throws all of her energy into the Guides. Finally comes the great day when Marjorie leads her into the horseshoe to make the promise of that great sisterhood.

The Guide feeling in the school is not always in evidence, however, and fate seems to be against Judy when a series of small incidents, including a broken vase and an unfortunate exam paper conspire to discredit her and isolate her from her schoolfellows.

By the close of term it looks as though Judy's difficulties have finished, but then the fourth form arithmetic exam papers go missing and all evidence points to her. It takes evidence from an unlikely quarter and the catching of a totally unexpected culprit to finally clear her and the term ends happily.

"You're dears! I love you all! And I *am* so glad I am a Guide!" cried Judy of the Guides.

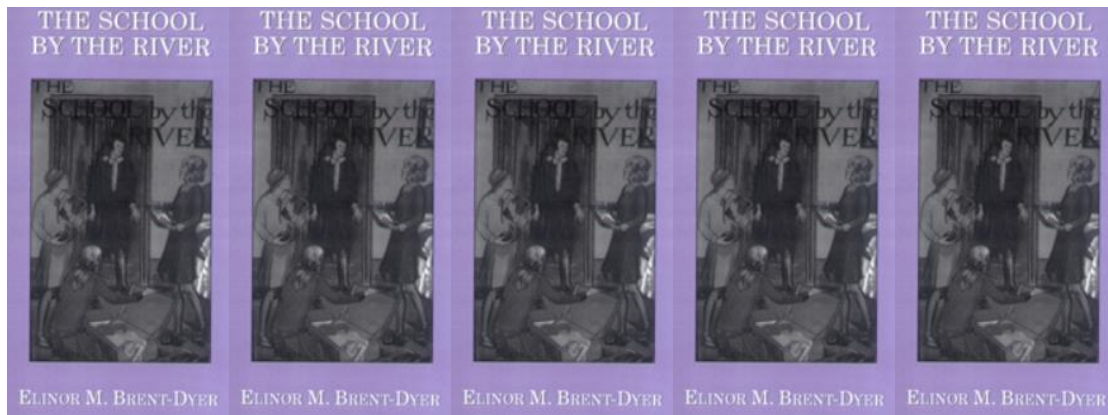
Spoilers

It is the breaking of one of Muriel's favourite vases that sparks the enmity between Judy and the fifth former; when the second vase is broken Muriel immediately blames Judy and is not above spreading unkind words about the younger girl.

Left at school for the half term with only Muriel, her friend Phillis, and some juniors for company, Judy's life is only made bearable by a day out with her brother. But when Phillis accuses her of being a coward and a liar Judy gives credence to Muriel's comments about colonials by slapping her face.

She is finally brought before a Court of Honour to answer the charges against her but she fails to convince everyone of her innocence. The wrecking of the stationery cupboard provides a clue to the real culprit, however, and an accident at the big hockey match of the season, while unfortunate for Nancy, brings the feud between Judy and Muriel to an end.

All term the hockey team have looked forward to their match with Heyworth College, the big game of the season. But it almost ends in tragedy when a ball, carelessly hit by Muriel, flies into the crown and brings Nancy to the ground. It is Judy who comforts a distraught Muriel, thus ending the term-long feud.



The School by the River

Synopsis:

Contributed by Sindhu Menon, India — working from the 1999 Bettany Press paperback edition

The School of the title is the College des Musiciens in the Ruritanian kingdom of Mirania, situated in the capital Valnich. It is a special school in the sense that it caters specifically to girls who are highly talented in music.

Jennifer Craddock, an English girl who is highly gifted on the piano is off to join the school as a new pupil. Jennifer's father who was in the navy had died recently as a result of trying to save one of his men who had fallen overboard and Jennifer's only surviving relative is the rather frivolous Aunt Eveleen who wants to send her niece to a fashionable boarding school. But Jennifer is a determined young lady and insists on pursuing her musical bent.

On the train journey to Valnich, Jennifer makes the acquaintance of two girls, Tamara Helston and Daisy Travilla. Tamara is already a pupil at the school and she and Jennifer strike an instant friendship. Daisy is a more empty headed and spoilt girl, who is on a family visit to Mirania, but she proves to have a wonderful singing voice and Tamara suggests that she also join the school. Daisy's mother agrees and she is also accepted as a pupil.

At School, Jennifer quickly finds her feet and makes up a trio with another English girl, Mollie and Tamara who surprisingly turns out to be the daughter of the dead Crown Prince of Mirania, though she or her brother cannot inherit the throne as their other had not been royal.

Daisy takes a longer time to settle down and is at first badly bullied by one of the school's problem pupils, Emily Surtees. Emily has a reputation of bullying and worse of flirting with the young men from the nearby musical Academia.

Meanwhile, as the school concentrates on music, there are exciting events taking place outside in Mirania. A flood and a worker's strike occur simultaneously and the girls are confined to quarters for a while as there is fear of a revolution.



The Little Marie-José

Synopsis:

The Little Marie-José was published by Burns, Oates & Washbourne in 1932. It is one of EBD's very rarest books, so this synopsis will contain much that is new to many readers.

Ch 1 — Petite Mademoiselle is Slapped

Marie José and her family are poor and live on the estate of Comte de Velarney who has a very spoilt daughter Gabrielle who had taken M-J's kitten some time ago and then tired of it so when G admired M-J's baby brother she is frightened and runs away with him; Gabrielle comes to tell her off and Marie-Jose shows her anger; Gabrielle hits the baby by mistake and M-J hits her and G runs off to complain to her father. It is all written in a cod-historical 'thee and thou' form of language. It is obviously set before the Revolution in the days of Louis XIV.

Ch 2 — The Flight from the Hut

Father comes home from work to find their belongings wrapped ready for flight; mother tells him what happened and suggests the best idea is to make for the nearest port in an attempt to join the King's call for volunteers to go to found New France. A friend from the chateau calls to advise them to hurry and suggests M-J be disguised as a boy. They set off and at the end of the day settle down under a tree to sleep.

Ch 3 — The Abbé de Velarney

As they are about to fall asleep the Abbé speaks to them (typically EBD, he is old, gentle frail and kindly); they tell him they are going to try the journey to New France and ask for his blessings; he invites them to share his supper but they demur, however he persuades them to come. When they are about to sit down to food they find out that he is related to the Comte de Velarney and look uncomfortable. When he asks what is wrong M-J comes out with the story of the kitten and Gabrielle and why they are running away. To their surprise the Abbé is sympathetic and urges them to stay. He also realises M-J is a girl; his housekeeper, Louise, is also sympathetic and suggests a way the family can get to Tours and on to Nantes; she also offers better clothes for the family as disguise; the Abbé also finds a little money for them.

Ch 4 — The Road to Tours

On the way to Tours the family are stopped by men looking for them but in their new clothes they are not suspected. They stay overnight in an inn and then make their way to see Louise's brother Guillaume who will help them.

Ch 5 — The Little House in Tours

They tell their story to Guillaume who is sympathetic and has good advice; he doesn't know when the next ship to the New World will sail and suggests they stay with him and he will ask a friend to find out about sailings from Nantes. He also suggests M-J's father learns to read and write and that they pretend to be his relations. There are a lot of references to the RC religion in the book (I imagine this was written not long after EBD's conversion)

Ch 6 — Weeks of Peace

Not much happens other than they learn that the next ship to New France won't be until next spring; finally they learn that a ship to NF will be sailing in seven weeks so they arrange to leave Tours by a river ship to Nantes. Before they leave the Abbé visits and warns them that the Comte and his daughter are still set on revenge and one evening the M-J's father sees them in their coach in Tours, on the way to Paris. Guillaume and his brother Simon decide to accompany them to Nantes and all is well.

Ch 7 — Embarked for New France

The family spend some days in Nantes and are advised to retain Guillaume's surname of Breton for safety's sake. They are accepted as emigrants to New France and finally set sail after a tearful farewell to Guillaume and Simon

Ch 8 — Across the Blue Seas

At first they are sea sick, apart from the baby Jeannot but soon recover. A gentleman takes an interest in the children for a while. Jean-Marie continues his studies in reading and writing in preparation for the new life and he and Francoise hope to get a little farm of their own. After some weeks the ship runs into a hurricane and the family spend a lot of time praying. Eventually the hurricane dies away

Ch 9 — Cast Away!

There is storm damage to the ship, especially the steering gear and masts and the crew are worried they might end up in the English colonies, which are described as heretic, Puritan and witch finders. There are references to the torture of RCs. The captain talks to some priests on board and the Jesuit then seeks out Jean-Marie (not clear why him in particular) and tells him the situation. Everyone gathers their most important possessions and gets ready to get on the boats - the gentleman who had been interested in M-J comes up to the family and gives them some money, there is a hint he may be related to the Comte's family. The boat with Marie-Jose and family sets off – there are some other people on it too, including the Jesuit priest. Eventually they sight land and manage to get there safely - they see a village, a church, fire and sounds of life and a boy sees them and goes off, presumably to report their arrival.

Ch 10 — New Fowey

This chapter starts with the people of New Fowey going about their business when a lad, Jan Tredegar, tells them what he has seen. The Squire is sympathetic and says we must go and help the poor people. Most of the villagers are kind to the French though the schoolmaster is depicted as severe, steely, frowning and with thin lips and not too pleased to see the little group. He soon sets out for the nearest town to lay information about the arrival of the party of French settlers. When the village leaders realise what he has done it is clear they don't approve and in any case don't like him as he is harsh with his pupils. The Squire tries to arrange for a local sailor to take them to safety in his ship but before they can make their escape the schoolmaster and the local Commissioners, soldiers and witch finders arrive and there is an altercation - the Jesuit is taken prisoner - they take his rosary and crucifix and break them so M-J attacks them and is struck across the face. Her father defends her and is captured. All the French are taken away as prisoners.

Ch 11 — In Prison

The journey to prison is depicted in some detail and is not pretty; the Puritans are almost unanimously depicted as brutal and violent while the Jesuit is shown as saintly. EBD depicts of Puritan prayers as 'droning forth, in the horribly nasal accents affected by the Puritans, a long whining prayer'. Marie-José had been tied less firmly than the others and the priest calls her to get a knife he happened to have concealed in his boot and then free the prisoners so as to make their escape - he shows her the pole star and says to follow it northwards. He also says that if there is not time to free him, to leave him behind. However they are soon tied up more firmly and the chance of escape disappears and they are taken to Newtown. One of the puritan commissioners, Master Bovill, is shown as more merciful than the others. When the party arrives in Newtown children throw stones at the priest and Master Bovill tells them not to interfere with the prisoners. The prisoners spend time in gaol with little to eat and then hear that the Jesuit is being burned at the stake and Marie-José faints when she hears it. Jeannot is already poorly and M-J becomes feverish and very ill. A doctor is called and wants to take the family to his home but only succeeds in having them moved to a better room in the prison. The doctor is very attentive to M-J and slowly she gets better; Jeannot's problems were in teething and soon improved. After nearly a month they are taken to court for trial.

Ch 12 — Will Ye Renounce?

The prisoners are taken to court; the others are questioned before Marie-José's family and sentenced to various punishments; M-J and family are taken to a cell to be questioned by Master Marvell the judge who hopes to make them recant their religion. The doctor who had helped M-J is the translator and we see the family from his point of view - he recognises that they are pious and unlikely to recant and as he is privately not a Puritan by conviction but just for convenience he wonders what will happen. The family are taken back to a cell but on the way Francoise, M-J's mother sees Master Bompas from the village where they had landed - he puts a finger to his lips so she is hoping that he will help them. They discuss this and M-J mentions she still has the knife the Jesuit gave her. The doctor comes to talk to them; he says that if they recant they will be separated and the parents put to work, Francoise in Marvell's kitchen and Jean-Marie on a farm; the little boy will stay with his mother while M-J will be taken in by the mother of the young Commissioner who had shown some mercy to the family earlier. The parents refuse to consider this and are told that if they do not recant their religion they will instead be sent as slaves to

plantations in the south. They still refuse and the doctor leaves. Suddenly Master Bompas twists the iron bars of the cell and jumps in.

Ch 13 — Escape!

Bompas indicates that they must be very quiet; he and Bovill had conspired to save them. They are going to steal horses from Master Marvell's stable and take the family to Gaynor where Bovill's uncle, a boat builder lives, and ask him to take them to Quebec; they will themselves stay on for a while to avoid suspicion. The climb out of the cell and go to Bovill's home where his mother has a change of clothes ready, so that they look like Puritans. The doctor saw them go by chance but said nothing.

Ch 14 — The Fight with the Bears

The trip to Gaynor went through virgin forest mostly used by Indians who, luckily, were friendly to the settlers. After settling down for the night the horses become unsettled and they are on the look-out to see what has spooked them. Three hungry bears appear, attracted by the smell of the horses. There is a terrible fight which ends with bears killed but Bompas in particular is badly hurt. The horses hurt themselves in their fright so the journey to Gaynor will take longer than estimated. Bompas points out that this might not be a bad thing as the soldiers looking for the escapees might go to the uncle in Gaynor and he will say in all honesty that he has not seen them.

Ch 15 — Strangers come to Gaynor

It is September and we meet Joel Bovill of Gaynor; four strangers come to see him and ask if his nephew and some others have come to see him. He answers truthfully in the negative and when the party ask him to put them up for the night refuses, saying he has no room for them. Marvell and party spend the night at the inn and then go off in the wrong direction. Meanwhile Joel prepares for the arrival of his nephew and party who arrive discreetly 4 days later. Joel asks them in and looks at Bompas' arm and treats it. Bompas continues to be feverish and ill and Francoise makes a herbal concoction for him and nurses him and we are told that eventually he makes a full recovery. Joel starts looking for someone to take the four French to Quebec and eventually persuades Daniel Milsom to take them to Cape Breton Island, where there were some French colonies so that was acceptable. The locals proved clothes for the family and eventually they leave Gaynor, wondering what had happened to the other passengers on the great ship.

Ch 16 — New France at Last!

The journey to Cape Breton starts well but two days later a storm brews up; the family are frightened because of their previous experiences but eventually they come to shore and by good luck it is a French speaking colony where they end up. They learn that their original ship had arrived with most of the passengers. They go on to Quebec with the Milsoms and were met by a messenger from the Governor - who, surprise, surprise, turns out to be the young man who befriended Marie-José on the ship. The Milsoms were invited to land and refresh themselves but decided to go back home in view of the weather.

Ch 17 — After Strife, Peace

The young man took them to meet Frontenac, the Governor and they told their story and what had befallen the others in their party. They find their belonging from the

ship intact; it is winter now so they have to wait for spring for a farm. Jean-Marie becomes a messenger in the meantime and M-J goes to an Ursuline convent. In the spring they are given a small manor called Le Foret and settled down. A new daughter is born to them next year who they name Mercie. One evening Marie-José and her mother are sitting talking about what had happened since M-J smacked Gabrielle and M-J says she would like to see all the people who had helped them to escape. Later the young nobleman who had befriended Marie-José visits and says he has to go back to France to collect his cousin and daughter who have been banished to New France and asks M-J to help the daughter when they arrive (we can all see where this is leading).

Ch 18 — The coming of the Strangers

At Christmas twins arrive, Noel and Natalie so Marie-José now stays at home to help her mother. A letter arrives from Simon Breton with news of their original home. The reading of the letter is interrupted by a knocking on the door; it is the young gentleman with his cousin and his daughter and he would like them to stay one night with the family - guess who!!

Ch 19 — Gabrielle

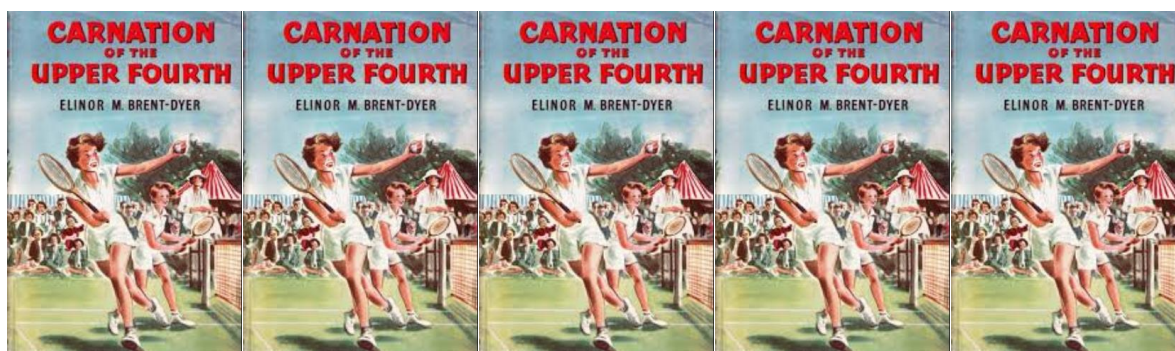
M-J and family recognise them at once and are horrified, especially as Gabrielle is her usual haughty self. Her uncle reminds her of her new position and she becomes less proud. However when it is clear that she will have to share a bed with M-J she makes another great fuss but has to agree in the end and they all settle down for the night.

Ch 20 — 'Where have I seen You before?'

The story of how the Comte came to be banished is related and how they arrived so early in Canada; caught in a blizzard they made for the Breton's manor for safety. In the morning the chores are being carried out. Gabrielle wakens eventually and demands help to dress; Francoise forbids M-J to help her and when Gabrielle protests at this in a very rude way M-J tells her what she thinks of her. Later, Gabrielle appears in a very thin dress and is offered one of M-J's which she initially refuses but is told by her father not to behave so badly. She goes upstairs to change and suddenly says to Marie-José that she knows her and where did they meet before

Ch 21 — Faithful Forgiveness

Marie-José hedges and answers some of Gabrielle's questions but does not proffer any more. She tells a bit of the journey to New France and also talks of her faith. Time passes and Gabrielle becomes accustomed to life with the Breton family until such time as the weather will permit going to her new home. Finally they are able to go there. Some time later Uncle Simon, Guillaume and Tante Louise arrive which is a delightful surprise for them all. Gabrielle, now much improved, entertains the Breton family and M-J says something which makes her realise who she is. Gabrielle apologises for her past behaviour and all is forgiven. Gabrielle marries a young nobleman and Marie-José is asked in marriage by John Bovill but refuses him because of his religion; finally he converts and they are married.



Carnation of the Upper Fourth

(abridged version 1954)

Synopsis

Contributed by Susan Vass, Scotland — working from an abridged hardback edition

A new girl, Carnation de Lisle, arrives at Shapcott High School after a life spent travelling with her father. Carnation finds it difficult to settle in, as she is unused to the company of other girls. She gains the enmity of another girl, Birdie Woolcot when she proves to be hardworking and to challenge Birdie for her place at the top of her form. However she makes friends with Madge Harley and enjoys the company of her large family.

When Carnation's father is taken ill he is sent to recuperate in Madeira, and Carnation goes to live with the Harleys.

When the summer term comes, Carnation is selected for trials for the school tennis pairs, which brings her into conflict with Birdie again.

Carnation and the other Guides are taken for a trip to the country. Birdie cooks mischief for her and her friend Joan, which goes badly wrong. As a result of this Birdie and Joan split and Birdie's dislike of Carnation increases due to her involvement.

The day of Carnation's tennis match arrives but she almost doesn't take part due to a trick of Birdie's.

As a result of Birdie's actions the Guide Court of Honour suspends her from Guides for the rest of the term, and she is suspended from school for a week. However she persuades her father to send her to another school and is never seen again.

Carnation stays with the Harleys for 2 years and thoroughly settles in at Shapcott High.

Possible Spoilers

The beginning of the Summer term brings the surprising announcement from the prefects that they have decided to choose the cricket team and tennis pairs from the

lower forms to allow them to study for their exams. At first the girls are against this idea but they are talked round. Carnation proves to be excellent at tennis and when her form are asked to choose pairs for tennis trials she is selected along with Madge.

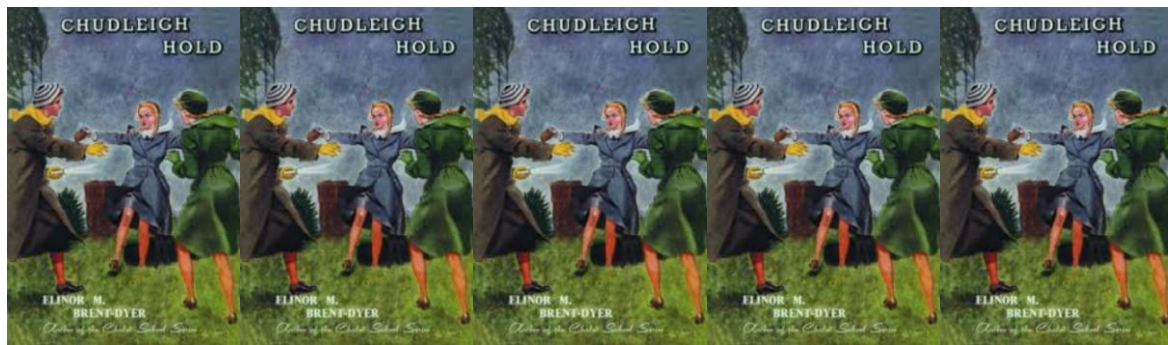
Birdie is also selected but is worried she won't succeed at the trials. This leads her to start a petition to have the pairs selected from the sixth form as before. She is called before the prefects who suspect she has an ulterior motive. As a result of this Birdie refuses to practise before the trials and performs badly. She is therefore not selected.

Carnation and the other Guides are taken for a tracking practise in the country. Strictly against the rules Birdie has arranged that she and her friend Joan visit a nearby lake with her brother. Although Birdie is not present, Joan feels she has to go and falls in the lake and she is rescued by Carnation. Birdie blames Joan for the trouble she is in and attacks her. A prefect witnesses this and it is decided that she is to be summoned to a Guide Court of Honour.

The day of Carnation's tennis match arrives but she is tricked into going to the Art Room by Birdie who locks her in. Fortunately she is released in time to take part in her match, as all three reserves are unable to play for one reason or another. Carnation plays well and gets her tennis colours but the afternoon is spoilt by Birdie's behaviour.

Following the Guide Court of Honour there is happier news when Carnation is awarded a silver medal for saving Joan's life at the risk of her own.

Carnation and Madge become like sisters and Carnation is delighted to become officially related to the Harleys when her aunt marries Madge's elder brother.



Chudleigh Hold

Synopsis

Contributed by Nicky Wade, England — working from a hardback edition

Steeped in history, standing high on the cliffs at Chudleigh Point, Chudleigh Hold could tell many a tale of days gone by when smugglers walked its passages; nowadays its towers ring with the merry sounds of the present Sir Godfrey Chudleigh and his brothers and sisters.

Merle's twenty first birthday brings the first hint of a new mystery when a picnic in the sheltered cove between Chudleigh Point and Corpses Bluff is disturbed by two small incidents. Charles, lame from the accident which killed their father two years before, has an encounter on the beach with a foreigner, to whom Tim, the family dog, takes an unaccountable dislike, and Godfrey, Hawk and Ven, swimming into the Cavern, a vast cave into which the water rushes with a fierceness that, during a storm, can be heard in the Hold itself, make an odd discovery.

The birthday also brings a surprise for the family, a letter from a hitherto unheard of cousin. The children's uncle was thrown out of the family home following a great scandal some twenty years previously and now his only daughter wants to come from Switzerland for a visit. The second Tuesday in August sees the advent of this visit although the welcome is almost marred by the youngest of the family, who tired of being teased about his angelic looks, takes matters into his own hands.

There is something new for the family to think about soon, however, when Godfrey announces that he must go to the Argentine on estate business. Merle is anxious about taking over the household and insists that her brother take the remaining jewels and some of the other valuables to the bank before he leaves. Bad news for Merrill at the same time means that Merle reluctantly agrees to her stay being extended.

Godfrey is barely gone when a letter arrives from eccentric Auntie M - another Merrill Chudleigh - announcing that she will be moving to the Hold for a little while and requesting certain rooms to be made ready for her. Merrill, meanwhile, has her own reasons for being dismayed that she will have to move rooms to accommodate her aunt. Auntie M - arriving in a van with the furniture - has her reservations about the new Merrill Chudleigh.

Crumpet, meanwhile, has worries of her own. Why is the new cousin prowling the house at night? And who is signalling in Morse Code from the cliffs? The little girl dismisses each of her family then present as a possible confidante, being afraid of laughter and disbelief or over-reaction, but considers telling her great aunt if anything more should happen. Crumpet's dilemma is solved due to the unexpected return of Hawk from school - she confides in him and is relieved to be believed. Crumpet refuses to be left out of his plans, however, and the two of them and Auntie M have a hair raising adventure that thankfully, ends happily for the family. Godfrey returns from South America in the middle of the night to find his family gathered in the drawing room with Hawk and his great aunt in an unusual position.

Spoilers

The Chudleigh Family

Merrill Chudleigh - (Auntie M)

Sir Godfrey Chudleigh and his brothers and sisters

Merrill (Merle) - aged 21

twins Charlotte (Cherry) and Charles - aged 19

Peregrine (Hawk) - aged 17

Venancy (Ven) - aged 16

Arminel (Crumpet) - aged 12

Benny - aged unspecified

Miss Hilton - governess to Ven and Crumpet

Tim - family dog

In the Cavern the swimmers find oil on the water, clear evidence in their eyes that a boat has been there since their last visit. Godfrey suggests that a submarine may be using the cavern as a base for smugglers, no longer lace and brandy but drugs, spirits and nylons. Merle, however, has a more matter of fact solution - that a can of oil from a motorboat has floated in and been punctured on the rocks.

Merrill's interest in the family treasures seems to concentrate around their value; she surprises the younger members of the party by admiring ugly works by a famous artist while dismissing more attractive ones by lesser known painters. Her disappointment is intense when she asks to see the family jewels, to be told that since the start of the last war they have been kept safely at the bank.

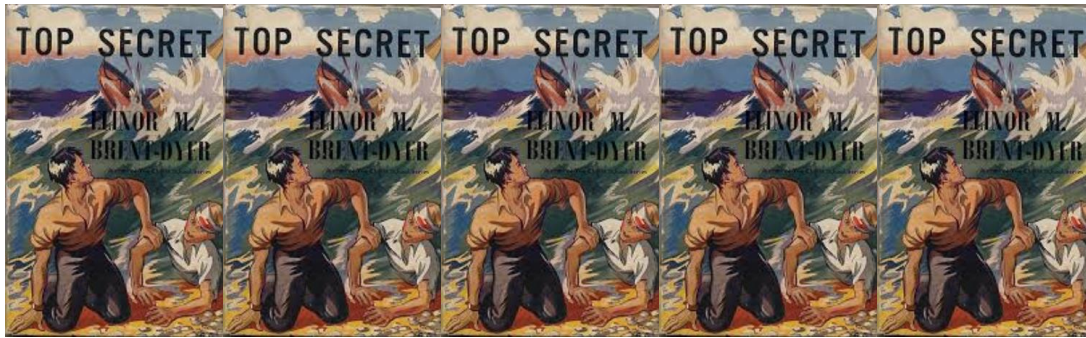
Merrill knows the whereabouts of one of the old smugglers' passages, in the room in which she has been sleeping until now, and is angry and upset that she must give it up, trying to persuade her cousins that she will not be in the way if she stays there. It is in vain, however.

Crumpet watches Merrill stealing out of the house and then, from her favourite hidie-hole above an old stable, hears Merrill meeting with a mysterious stranger and talking about the family jewels.

Up by Highwayman's Chains, scene of the hanging of Green Tom, Crumpet finds a leather pouch with what appears to be 'a child's sketch of a leafless tree with various branches forking from the main trunk in different directions'. Only later does she

realise that this is a map of the old passages, for now she is distracted by falling into an old moor pit, followed by Miss Hilton, while a distraught Ven runs to the Hold for help.

Crumpet overhears a conversation between Merrill and the mysterious stranger that shows her that something is about to happen. She and Hawk set out to follow Merrill that night but disturb Auntie M, who arms herself and Hawk with revolvers and insists on leading the expedition. There might have been a tragedy for the family but for a foolhardy action on the part of Merrill. As it is the 'cousin' is exposed for what she is.



Top Secret

Synopsis

Contributed by Moira Lovegrove, London — working from a hardback edition

Hawk Chudleigh is on a cargo ship bound for Queensland to take up a job as a civil engineer on a dam. One night, unable to sleep, he goes up to the deck and sleeps in a lifeboat with fellow passenger Walter Urquart. The ship strikes a mine and for several days they are adrift. Walter has been knocked out cold by the explosion so Hawk has plenty of time to muse about the Top Secret he is carrying, and his fears that there are enemies trying to obtain it.

They eventually meet land and finds what appears to be a holiday house on a small island. After about three days the elderly owners, Freda Penrose and her brother Phil, return. They prove to be very understanding and Hawk even entrusts Phil with some information about his Top Secret. Various members of the Penrose family arrive on the island, including Rex, who literally pays a flying visit.

Archie Penrose has overheard a conversation through which he has learnt that the enemy are planning to attack the island to get at the Top Secret. The next day, following a hurricane, they assist a struggling boat to land on the island and for a few days tend the injuries of those on the boat.

Suddenly they are ambushed by the men who they had helped. The men are armed and thus able to tie up the Hawk, Walter and the Penroses. Hawk is tortured, and Miss Penrose threatened with being blinded, as the men try to get the Top Secret from Hawk.

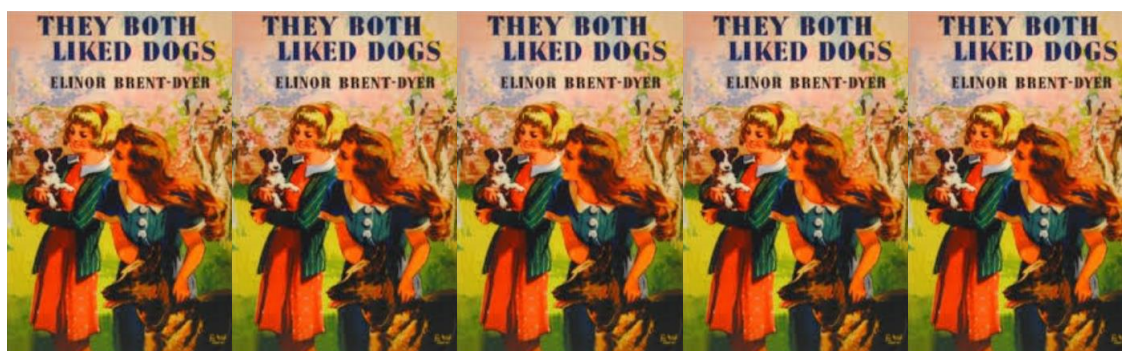
Spoilers

Hawk is feeling uneasy on the cargo ship and is convinced that an attempt was made on his life earlier on the night of the explosion. He has been entrusted with carrying a plan which will revolutionise war. He carries the documents in a special belt and can destroy them at the touch of a button.

Phil and Freda Penrose are convinced that Walter is related to someone they know who lost all memory of his family. They share looks and mannerisms.

The arrival of other members of the Penrose family aboard their own boat means that they learn of attempts to find the cargo ship. Two more Penroses, Rex and Archie, fly out to the island. Because of the plot that Archie has overheard, other members of the family are taken into the secret and it is decided that Rex should take the papers with him when he leaves the island. Hawk writes a coded message so that the plans can be sent through the post tucked in between the pages of a catalogue. Rex leaves the island immediately because of the threat of bad weather.

When they are tending the injured from the boat, Hawk recognises one of the men as someone he knew a few years before and so he assumes that he is not the enemy, although Hawk himself, Walter and the Penroses are all suspicious of the new arrivals on the island. As they are discussing what course of action to take, the men ambush them. But unknown to the attackers, Archie was able to sneak away when they struck, and he is making his way down to the family boat in the harbour to get the boat's crew to attempt a rescue.



They Both Liked Dogs

Synopsis

Contributed by Sarah Allatt, England — working from a hardback edition

Mollie Thurstan is a concert pianist living in a small village in England. One morning her quiet life is interrupted by a letter from her brother Jim who lives in Burma. He asks if Mollie could possibly look after his daughter Erica, as she has lived too long in the unhealthy climate of Burma and he wishes her to spend some time in England. Shortly after this, Mollie hears from her brother Bill, asking her to have Freda to stay for a while. Freda lives in Tasmania at the moment, but her family is going to move to Brazil, which would not be healthy. Mollie agrees to have both of them.

Both girls come over on the same boat, together with Captain Pemberly, who is a friend of Freda's parents. The girls settle down in Mollie's house. Erica is slightly older, but has been spoilt, and is not as able to look after herself as Freda is. Freda soon assumes a role of mothering her, and helps her with her chores. Both girls make the acquaintance of Mollie's alsatian, Tal. Freda adores him but Erica is very frightened of him.

One day Mollie is asked at short notice to play at a concert some distance away. There is a large race meeting going on in the village, so she forbids the children to leave the grounds, as there will be a great many strangers about. At first the girls are happy exploring the attics where they find many old clothes. After a time they begin to get bored, though, and Erica tentatively suggests they should go to the races anyway, and not tell Mollie. Freda is very shocked at her lack of honour, and Erica hastily agrees to stay.

Mollie announces her intention to get Freda an alsatian. Before this can be done, however, Erica succumbs to a bout of malaria. Freda nurses her and is very good to her, but Erica shows little gratitude. When Erica had malaria in Burma her ayah would bow to her every wish and she regards this as her right when she is ill. Eventually Mollie takes a hand when she sees how selfish Erica is. Erica then apologises to her cousin. Freda is then taken to choose her alsatian from the same breeder that reared Tal.

At the beginning of the new term the girls start school. Freda settles in easily and soon makes friends. Erica finds things much more difficult and is very jealous of

Freda, telling her she should be satisfied with herself alone. Freda is sorry for her cousin but refuses to give up her friends. One day at school a General Knowledge Prize is announced.

The girls sit down to do the papers, and discuss them afterwards. There is a long discussion about where the quotation "All is lost save honour" comes from, Freda declaring strongly that she knows she is right. A muddle with the names causes problems when the result is announced.

The book ends with a very Happy Christmas for the family.

Spoilers

Havoc is caused at the school one day when Tal has followed the girls to school and disrupts several lessons.

Mollie explained to a friend staying with her when Jim wrote to her that her two brothers each have a daughter called Frederica, although one is shortened to Erica and the other to Freda. They are both called after Mollie's father, who was very disappointed that none of his children were called after him, and left a sum of money in his will to any grandchildren called after him.

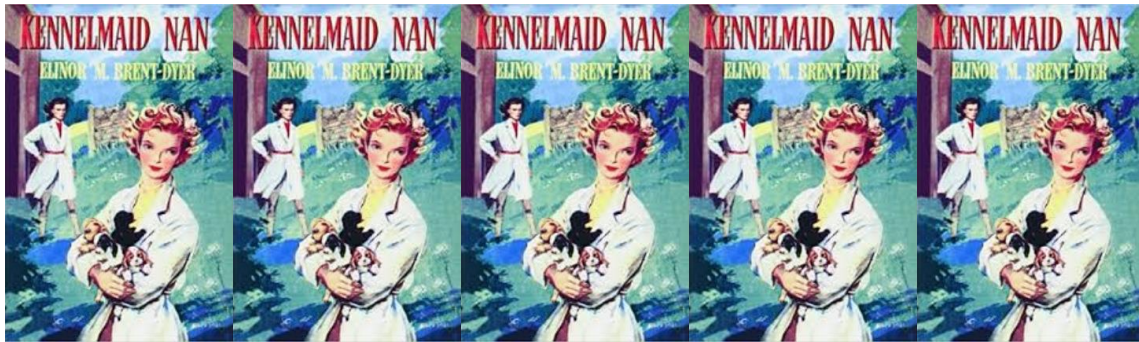
On the day of the race meeting the girls go in to the garden, and see two men on the wall. The men, thinking they are alone and unprotected, jeer at them and tell them they are going to come in and steal anything valuable the house has. However, they have reckoned without Tal, who flies at the men when they leap down from the wall. Helped by Mollie's servant Elizabeth they pin the men down and call the police.

Mollie is horrified when she returns home and finds out what had happened. Partly as a reward, she takes the girls to visit a Mr. Lovell, who breeds wire terriers, to buy one for Erica. Mr. Lovell has 2 daughters who make friends with the girls.

Captain Pemberly comes to visit and tells them that he has inherited a large estate nearby and will be living there henceforth.

When the result of the General Knowledge Prize is announced, it has hinged on the quotation "All is lost save honour", to which only one girl, Freda, has given the right answer. The winner is announced 'Frederica Thurstan' to which the headmistress then adds 'come along Erica'. Erica, too shy to explain the mistake, collects the prize. Freda is furious and tells her cousin so. Erica cannot face all the explanations. Eventually Mollie finds out and talks to each girl, and the affair is sorted out. Friendship is restored aided by Freda helping Erica all she can when Erica's dog falls ill.

The book ends with a romance for Mollie.



Kennelmaid Nan

Synopsis

Contributed by Jenni Ambridge, Melbourne

17 year old Annabel “Nan” Peters, had always longed to be a vet but she failed her General Certificate. The Head of her School contacted a friend of hers, Miss Frome, who ran the Assisi Kennels, and was in need of an assistant. Miss Frome agreed to take Nan on a six month trial. Nan was collected from the station by Averil Pearson, a tall dark girl, who was the senior assistant.

The Kennels were about 10 miles from the station at a rambling old house. Miss Frome was tall, with a square-chinned face, cropped iron-grey hair and blue eyes. The other staff were ‘Nanny’ the cook/housekeeper, and Jakes, the ‘right hand man’. Miss Frome explained the daily routine. Nan was to turn the adult dogs into the paddock or the covered run, then help with feeding until breakfast. Grooming, cleaning pens and exercise follows then dinner. Every other afternoon she was to help with exercise or training. After tea, the pups and nursing bitches are fed. She would have one afternoon off each week, and one weekend off every month. Miss Frome gave her one warning: always tell her the truth.

Miss Frome showed Nan how to feed the puppies then the adult dogs. She helped Averil change the bedding. Nan overheard Miss Frome telling Averil that she would not permit “that man” on the premises. Nan helped with grooming and takes some dogs for a walk.

After 6 weeks learning feeding, grooming and exercising, Nan goes to a Show as a helper. Averil meets “that man” Ralph Johnson, who runs True Blue Kennels. Miss Frome warned Nan about talking about Assisi kennels to Ralph as she didn’t trust him. Averil gets many bills in the mail. Nan bumps into Ralph Johnson who is waiting for Averil. Nan goes to Leomerton and buys some items from the chemist for miss Frome. She asks for a jar of face cream for Averil, who had told her to put it on her account. The chemist is unhappy as Averil has not paid her account for four months and asks her to tell Averil to pay her account by the end of next week or he’d inform miss frome. Nan passes the chemist’s message to averil who is furious, especially as Nan gives her opinion on not paying bills on time and owing money. Nan believes you should only buy things if you have the money and realizes she has made an enemy. Nan makes her debut at the County Agricultural show – handling the

bitches Rowan and Ripple, winning second prize for Rowan in the Novice class. Ralph Johnson speaks to her and Miss Frome warns her about this again.

Nan meets Fleda Stanton, Miss Frome's niece. Nan takes four dogs out for a walk, and overhears Ralph Johnson telling Averil to get rid of Nan, Averil says it is difficult as Miss Frome has taken a fancy to her. Nan realizes how much Averil dislikes her, assuming it is because of the chemist bill, but cannot understand Ralph's statement. Fleda comes to stay and Nan tells her the story of Averil and Ralph. Fleda thinks that Ralph wants to damage the Kennels in some way in order to improve his chances with his own, that averil may have borrowed money from Ralph thus has a hold over her and that they may mean to harm one of the dogs.

Fleda and Nan have a day out at Thorsby, the county town. At supper they see Ralph having a meal with Moira, a young girl who works in the chemist. Fleda thinks Ralph will use moira to obtain something to upset the dogs. The girls decide to tell Jakes however find he has been called away to his sick mother. Miss frome asks Averil to cancel her trip to Thorsby on the day of the next Show, averil says it is a dental appointment and she can't cancel. Miss frome asks Nan to show Robin at the Show instead.

The next evening Averil was feeding the dogs and Nan saw in the mirror Averil about to pour something on the feed from a bottle. Nan grabbed it, their fighting brought in Nanny and Miss Frome. Averil accused Nan of putting something in the food. Nan was stricken dumb. A message came over the radio about a lady who bought an emetic for a dog from the chemist, the emetic was mixed wrong and could have be fatal. Fleda came in and accused Averil of trying to poison Robin. Miss frome questions the three girls, Averil breaks down and Miss frome takes her away. Miss frome later explains that Ralph had helped Averil with her debts. He was in trouble himself as he couldn't keep staff and was also in debt. To gain Averill's help, he made a serious offer – to marry her and take her with him when he left the country. Moira had helped averil by providing the emetic. Averil still wanted to marry Ralph, Miss Frome had got him to agree to it, by stating that she wouldn't make public the affair. Ralph had sold his kennels and they would be leaving the country.



Nesta Steps Out

Synopsis

Contributed by Susan Vass, Scotland— working from a hardback edition

Nesta Davies and her friend, Sally Burnett, have been pupils at Hill House in Wales for six years. Recently, however, Nesta has come into conflict with Miss Walton, the English teacher who has taken the place of the girls' beloved Miss Enid and her hot temper tends to inflame the situation.

Nesta is given continual encouragement by Sally, and by a letter she receives from Miss Enid. There are other confrontations with Miss Walton but Nesta is proud when she keeps her temper.

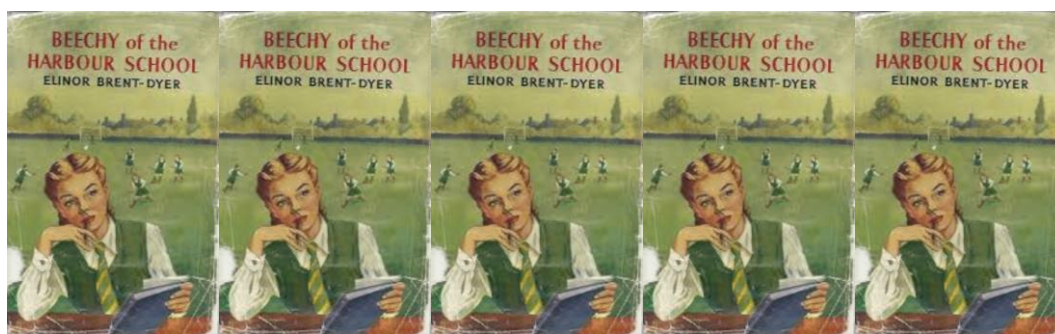
The next Sunday the girls attend church as usual and Nesta is given food for thought when the sermon seems to be preached for her. She becomes convinced that she must learn to control herself and Sally offers to help her and reminds her that she can pray for help. She has a setback but Sally persuades her that she cannot conquer a fault so easily.

Shortly afterwards Nesta has a bad day and she is eventually baited by another girl into losing her temper. She is discouraged and it takes Sally some time to convince Nesta that she can't conquer her temper so quickly.

During a visit to Hereford Miss Walton falls in the river. Nesta jumps in to save her and is hailed a heroine by the school, until the Head reminds her that her actions were foolhardy. When Miss Walton is released from the San she finds it difficult to thank Nesta, due to her shyness and her awareness of Nesta's dislike, and the girls decide that she is ungrateful.

Miss Walton is constantly in a bad mood leading to trouble with the Upper Fourth. She and Nesta have another encounter in the rose garden but Sally smooths things over and Nesta is delighted that she has kept her temper.

Miss Enid pays a surprise visit to the school and tells Nesta and Sally of the reason for Miss Walton's temper, making the girls much more sympathetic towards her. Miss Enid also reminds Nesta to pray for help in keeping her temper. At Speech Day Nesta gets a surprise and Miss Walton receives some good news.



Beechy of the Harbour School

Synopsis

Contributed by Jenni Ambridge, Melbourne

Beechy Garland is brought to the Harbour School by her aunt, Eileen Garland whom the Head knows well. Beechy is put into the Green dormitory where her aunt and mother also stayed. Her mother, Beatrix Celli, a singer, had died recently after being ill for 3 years, they had been living in Switzerland. Beechy had become a Christian a few weeks before her mother died but wonders how much difference it will make in her new school.

Beechy joins the Fourth Form with Deborah, Mary and Rosalind who are in her dormitory. Another girl in the form called Olive takes an instant dislike to her. Deborah and Olive both want to win the essay prize at the end of the Christmas term. One topic is "The Making of a book" which Beechy came top in, as she had led a life among grown-ups of culture so was able to go deeper than the average schoolgirl.

The School comes down with flu, Beechy catches it and is very unwell. Olive has a bad tooth, as a result both are left in the Sickroom with the Head Girl, Eunice Graham, after the others have recovered. Over half term there is a bad storm, upsetting Beechy as her mother had died during an equally bad storm. Olive teases her about her cowardliness until Beechy retorts that her Mother had died at Christmas. Up to this point, Beechy had only told the girls that her mother had been very ill. Beechy suffers a relapse and has to stay in bed for another fortnight.

The School goes for a walk to the old Dutch House. Mary tells them the story of the house which is supposed to be haunted. Beechy gets a letter from her grandparents who have settled in the same town in Hampshire as Deborah and Rosalind's families. At the end of term, Beechy has topped the lists in the language subjects, comes third in maths and is second in the essay prize, which Deborah has won.

The girls go for a walk to the old Dutch House again and Mary elaborates on the haunting story. Olive, who has a vivid imagination, is affected by this and that night sleepwalks through the school, waking everyone with her loud moaning. On waking, she tells the Head that the ghost from the Dutch House came to haunt her as a punishment for being beastly to Beechy. Olive apologises to Beechy, who confesses

to her that she is a Christian and that things would have been better for both of them if she had have told the girls this. The term ends with a Christmas party and carols.



Leader in spite of Herself

Synopsis

Contributed by Sally Phillips, England

Setting: Martha Rideout Foundation The founder of the school, 70 years before, had strong views on the training of girls and when she was left a house and money by a wealthy uncle she decided to start a school. "I aim at training my girls to become sensible, thinking women. I aim at teaching them to realise that they came into this world first, foremost and forever to do the will of God – and to have an eye to the needs of other folk at the same time."

Chapter 1. Introducing Rosemary

Anthea and Yvonne are tidying the art room and Anthea is bemoaning the fact that her cousin Iris has been sent to the school as her snobbish ideas have been causing a lot of trouble. Rosemary, a member of the Lower VI who is beginning to get the reputation of being a leader, overhears. She remonstrates with Anthea reminding her that that morning she had offered to God all her deeds and thoughts and words for His greater glory and did she really want to offer Him what she had been saying about Iris. She offers to take them for a walk on Sunday to give them advice.

Chapter 2. The Head Asks For Help

The Head is reading a letter from Iris's mother who is concerned about her daughter's upbringing. She has to travel a lot and thought the best way of looking after her daughter was to engage a highly trained governess to travel with them. Lettice had asked to borrow a book from Iris who refused saying she was particular who she lent her books to. Anthea lost her temper and shook her violently. Iris burst into tears and the group were interrupted by the head. Anthea was sent to bed and Iris lectured on her attitude. The head asks Rosemary to become the Fifth form prefect (although she is not a prefect) to relieve the existing prefect who is studying for exams.

Chapter 3. The Result of A Game

Anthea determines to apologise to Iris for shaking her but Iris refuses to accept it. In the evening the girls played subject and object and Iris and Anne were sent out together and chose Nelson and one of his lions. Lettice guessed it after a hint from Anne to which Iris made an unpleasant remark and was corrected by Dorothea, one of the prefects.

Chapter 4. Rosemary Starts In

Rosemary goes for a walk with Anthea and Yvonne and asked what was the trouble was with Iris. Yvonne explained that she was an outright snob and Anthea adds that she probably got it from her governess. She regards scholars as not fit to associate with her and calls them “girls of that class”. Rosemary says that they should be sorry for her having been taught such a wrong view of life and suggests that they pray for her.

Chapter 5. Iris Creates a Sensation

In a reverse of EBD’s normal plot, it is Cook herself who puts too much bicarb in the buns making them uneatable but only Iris makes a scene about it. She disappears and is finally brought back to school shortly after midnight. [We never discover what happens to her in the meantime.]

Chapter 6. Nemesis!

The next morning Iris wakes up with flu and Matron’s treatment sounds fairly barbaric. For fear of infection she is left alone and after four days she breaks down, afraid she will be expelled. The head explained to her that her mother would be very badly off if she did not travel to give lectures and chose to give her a governess to avoid being parted from her. Unfortunately, though she was an excellent teacher, she also taught you a lot of wrong things. She asked her if she really thought she had any right to despise another of God’s creatures.

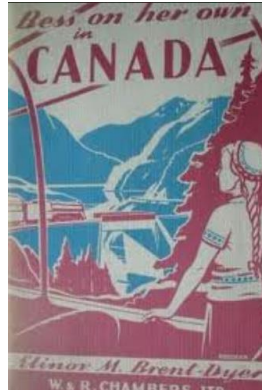
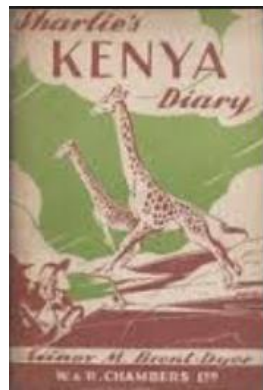
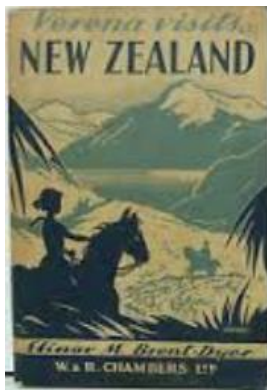
Chapter 7. Rosemary Gives A Helping Hand

Iris soon found that though she was honestly trying to make a fresh beginning, no one was going to take her at her own valuation and while her form were not actually unkind they did not go out of their way to seek her company. Rosemary noticed this and asked Iris to be her partner on the walk to church. On the way home Irish starts chatting to some of the girls about natural history while a group of others try to persuade Rosemary to leave Iris alone. She refuses, pointing out that in church they had listened to a sermon on the way Christ was a Friend and they were deliberately proposing to treat another girl in the most unfriendly way possible.

Chapter 8. Acknowledged Leader

Packing – an intriguingly detailed account of the way in which the light wicker trays are used and how controlled the whole operation was. Dorothea is inspanned to help

Anthea and expresses pleasure that Anthea has a present for Rosemary because of how much she and Iris owe to her. Dorothea told her how much Rosemary hated taking the lead and would much rather stay in the background. Anthea admitted that things Rosemary had said would help her all her life. At the final assembly the head announced a new prize for the girl who “tries hardest to help others; who lives up to her beliefs and tries to live as a Christian . . . in short the girl who has shown herself to be a real leader in the best sense of the word”. Of course this was won by Rosemary and with one voice the whole school joined in a mighty ‘Hurrah’ for Rosemary, an acknowledged leader in spite of herself.”



Geography Readers - a Summary

Contributed by Rosemary Auchmuty - adapted from an article in New Chalet Club Journal 4, Autumn/September 1996

Chambers' brief to Elinor Brent-Dyer for the Geography Readers was patriotic focus on four British colonies and former colonies reflected the bias in school curricula at the time, and it is perhaps not insignificant that Brent-Dyer's fiction was distributed in these countries and she had fans there. That said, the books are more geography than story and were probably read more in school than out of it.

Verena Visits New Zealand tells of an English girl sent to recuperate after an illness to relatives who live on a sheep farm in the South Island. During her stay she visits some of the country's tourist attractions, learns the merits of the New World and, in the end, persuades the rest of her family to emigrate to join her.

Sharlie's Kenya Diary is a travel diary told in the first person by the daughter of an English businessman who comes home one evening (p.9) and tells his wife, "Well, they're sending me to Kenya on the inspection tour, Car. What's more, I'm taking you and Sharlie along. We sail in six weeks' time. All right?"

Again, Sharlie gets to see some of the sights of the country and learns something of the white Kenyans' way of life.

Bess on Her Own in Canada has more plot than the others. Bess lives in the prairies of Saskatchewan. Her father has had an accident and needs help on the farm and Bess is despatched to find a cousin somewhere in British Columbia. She travels by train and boat, meeting only kindly well-wishers along the route. One of them happens to know her cousin's whereabouts, so she finds him and brings him back. On her way she sees quite a bit of western Canada and learns about fruit farming.

A Quintette in Queensland is, by contrast, almost completely devoid of plot and possibly the weakest of the four. Brent-Dyer's account of a sugar-cane plantation must surely be one of the duller tales ever told. Moreover, the author made her

characters locals, instead of describing everything through the eyes of an English person as with *Sharlie* and *Verena*.

Today the whole enterprise seems preposterous. Why couldn't Chambers have commissioned native writers to do the readers? Or at least English writers who had been to the places they were describing? Perhaps, in a sense, authenticity was precisely what was not required. Geography in the 1950s still upheld an imperial ideal; Sharlie could write in her Kenya Diary (p. 59):

Since the First World War we have had charge of Tanganyika which was a German Colony before that, and it all comes into British East Africa, along with Kenya, Uganda, and Nyasaland ...

The indigenous populations of the African states are described with kindly but patronizing interest - "some people have an awful time with dishonest boys", Sharlie notes (p. 19) - though the Maoris of New Zealand fare better; the Queensland Aborigines are conspicuous by their absence, accurately reflecting white attitudes of the time.

Brent-Dyer's value system is no better and no worse than that of other educators of her era.

In Africa, wild animals exist to be shot: Sharlie's father "hopes to bag a lion" (p. 19). Gender roles are what you would expect: mothers don't work outside the home and, since domestic help is hard to find in three of the four countries in question, our girl heroines spend a lot of time making beds and cooking for the boys.

All families have mothers and fathers and no man takes advantage of 15-year-old Bess travelling alone across Canada.

Such a book could not be written today.

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