

← PART FOUR →

• WE HAVE
OUR SUSPICIONS, AND
AN ARGUMENT •



1

In Prayers on Thursday morning, after a stern notice about the value of the windows in New Wing corridor and the importance of owning up to mistakes, as an honourable Deepdean girl ought, Miss Griffin finally broke the news that we had all been waiting for.

‘As you may have noticed,’ she said from the lectern, ‘Miss Bell has not been in attendance this week. Unfortunately, I must now inform you that she has resigned her post. Until a suitable replacement can be found, the other masters and mistresses will be taking your Science lessons. I ask you all to

be mindful of the additional work that they will be doing, and I hope that this will put an end to the rather irresponsible gossip that I have been hearing lately regarding Miss Bell’s absence.’ She stared severely down at us over her little gold-rimmed reading glasses, and several girls looked away. For a moment even I felt rather guilty.

Then everyone woke up to what she had said, and up and down the rows, girls began nudging one another in excitement. The ‘irresponsible gossip’ had not been stopped at all. King Henry looked around, her face pale with fury. I wondered if her foot was still hurting. Her glare made the nudging die down for a bit, but it started up again as soon as she looked away.

‘Are you sure we ought to still be investigating?’ I asked Daisy as we filed out of Prayers.

‘Don’t be stupid, Hazel!’ she hissed back at me. ‘You *know* the Bell hasn’t really resigned. She’s still just as dead as she ever was, and we’re the only ones who know the truth. Think of her family, Hazel. If we don’t find out what really happened, no one ever will.’

It was awful of Daisy, bringing up Miss Bell's family like that – and just like her too. She knew it would make me worry, and of course it did. I imagined Miss Bell's mother. She was probably widowed, living alone in a single cold room, just as poor as Miss Bell had been.

This was very upsetting. I much preferred assuming that mistresses had no lives at all; that if I went into Deepdean during the hols I would find them all wandering about in the corridors, giving lessons in empty rooms. But once I had imagined Miss Bell's tragic mother, I could not make her vanish.

And of course, Daisy knew it.

As we marched along the marble chessboard of Library corridor in our neat grey two-by-two rows, both Daisy and I were quiet. I was thinking about Miss Bell's mother and getting more and more upset. Daisy was probably thinking about the murder, and fashionable hats, and who cheated in the Maths test, all at once, as though she is really three people instead of one.

Two rows behind us, Kitty whispered something to Beanie just as we passed Miss Parker, who was

on duty outside the mistresses' common room, and who began bellowing at them as though they had been caught spitting on the Bible.

Our row faltered to a stop, and the girls directly behind us began to bunch up and crane over each other in excitement as Miss Parker tore her hands through her hair and howled in red-faced fury. Of course, we are all used to Miss Parker's rages, but this was something quite different. Bawling about disgraces to the school, she gave Kitty and Beanie detention twice and then forgot what she had already said and gave them another one for good measure.

We all stayed very quiet and still so as not to attract her attention, the way you would with a tiger in the zoo. But all the same she caught Lavinia goggling at her and howled: 'ALL of you others, MOVE OFF! Hurry up or I'll have the lot of you, I'll—'

At this point, though, Miss Griffin came through the packed corridor and put a calming hand on Miss Parker's shoulder. Miss Griffin has an eerie way of knowing where she is needed, and being there.

Miss Parker gasped at the touch, and all the fight went out of her. Even her hair sagged.

'Come along, Miss Parker,' said Miss Griffin cheerfully, as though they were both at a garden party and late for the tea. 'Move along, girls, otherwise you'll be late for your lessons.' And that was that. If Miss Griffin tells you to do something, you had better do it. Everyone drifted away, quickly but reluctantly, and the corridor was soon back to normal again. But Daisy, walking in very proper silence next to me, turned her head and widened her eyes at me in a way that I knew meant, *Suspicious behaviour from Parker again.*



2

Miss Parker was not the only one of our prime suspects to be behaving suspiciously. Our second lesson on Thursdays is English with Miss Tennyson, who wanted the Deputy job but was beaten to it by Miss Bell. Miss Tennyson, as I have said, is a fearful drip, and terribly nervous. Her large sappy eyes well up like a squeezed sponge at everything from poetry to animals, and because we are doing the great poets this term, we had to endure a weeping fit from Miss Tennyson nearly every lesson.

That day, she had Daisy read out Gray's 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard'. From the shape her mouth

made, I knew Daisy found it utter tosh, but she read it well, as she always does, in a clear, calm voice that did not betray what she was thinking.

But as she read I noticed – as did Daisy, though she did not show it – that Miss Tennyson was being more than usually weepy.

'*Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,*' read Daisy in appropriately funereal tones. Miss Tennyson turned pale. In fact, every reference to graves or dead people (there are lots in Gray's 'Elegy', in case you have not been forced to read it yet yourself) had Miss Tennyson twitching like a science experiment. When Daisy reached the lines,

*Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?*

Miss Tennyson began shaking so hard I thought she might fall off her chair, and after the last line she sat in silence for so long that we all started looking at each other in real concern.

'Are you all right, Miss Tennyson?' asked Beanie nervously at last.

'Perfectly, Beanie dear,' said Miss Tennyson, dabbing at her cheeks with her handkerchief. 'I thought Daisy's reading was so lovely that I wanted to give us all time to contemplate it.'

I could tell it was an excuse, and a weak one. Not even Miss Tennyson cared about poetry *that* much.

That was when Daisy pounced. 'Miss Tennyson,' she said, putting up her hand, 'may I ask you something?'

'Is it about Gray's "Elegy?"' asked Miss Tennyson.

'No,' said Daisy. 'It's about Miss Bell.'

Miss Tennyson dropped the book of poems she was holding. It clattered onto the desk and the third form all stared from her to Daisy and back again.

'I need to ask Miss Bell something, but now she's resigned I don't know where to write to her. I don't suppose *you* know where she's gone to, do you?'

'Why would you think that *I* would have any idea where Miss Bell has gone?' asked Miss Tennyson, so quietly it was almost a whisper. She had turned as pale as one of Gray's poetical gravestones.

'Oh, *I* don't know,' Daisy said breezily. 'I thought she might have said where she was going. It was

only a hope.'

Miss Tennyson turned red, a specklish flush that broke out all down her neck and into her high-collared blouse. 'Daisy Wells!' she said. 'This has nothing to do with poetry. I'll thank you to keep on topic for the rest of the lesson. Otherwise – otherwise you will be doing extra composition for me in Detention.'

We all gaped at her. We had never heard Miss Tennyson make that kind of threat before. Even last term when Lavinia said *King Lear* was idiotic, Miss Tennyson had only sighed and looked wounded. This threat was quite out of character, and it had come because Daisy had mentioned Miss Bell.

Miss Tennyson did not want to talk about Miss Bell, and a poem about graves was making her upset. She had just moved to the very top of our suspect list.



3

In the afternoon we had Games, which meant I had to stand shivering on the playing field while Daisy and the rest of the sporty girls galloped around and screamed at each other. That day my ankle gave me an excuse to be in defence (although I was not allowed to skip Games altogether – that would not be the Deepdean way), so at least I could shiver in peace while the ball was hammered to and fro in front of me.

Unfortunately, being in defence meant being next to Lavinia. If it is possible, she is even worse at Games than I am, which makes her terribly sulky.

Miss Hopkins has given up on her entirely, so Lavinia just lumps about near goal, glaring at everyone.

It was a very English afternoon. The air was full of water droplets that clung to our faces and weighed down our clothes, and the grass had turned into a particularly slimy sort of mud. I wrapped my arms round myself and shivered. It was the sort of weather that Daisy loves. She rocketed about the pitch, skirt flapping, and winged the ball at goal so hard that we had to dive out of the way to save ourselves. Miss Hopkins cheered and waved her hockey stick in encouragement. She was still in an astonishingly happy mood.

I was trying to observe her when Lavinia began to speak to me. ‘Daisy’s *annoyingly* brilliant, isn’t she?’ she said as she watched Daisy tackle Clementine.

‘Daisy’s not annoying!’ I said. ‘She’s just *Daisy*.’

‘Well, you would say that,’ said Lavinia. ‘You’re practically her slave.’

‘I am not!’ I said furiously. ‘Daisy’s my best friend.’

‘Huh,’ said Lavinia. ‘Some friend. She uses you – haven’t you noticed? And she only took an interest in you because you’re an Oriental. Her uncle is a spy

– that’s why foreigners interest her.’

Now, if it is bad form to show your emotions in England, it is even more so in Hong Kong, so I know I should feel most terribly guilty about what happened next. Unfortunately, I do not feel guilty at all.

The ball was coming down the field again, with Daisy pounding along after it while Kitty whacked at her stick and tried to trip her up. I watched the ball jump and roll over tufts of muddy grass towards us. Lavinia had not noticed it. Daisy gave the ball one more whack and it arced up in the air and landed just next to Lavinia’s right foot.

That was enough for me. I launched myself at Lavinia, whirling my hockey stick, and crashed into her as hard as I could. For the second time in a week, I fell down in a tangle of legs and arms and games knickers. ‘Oh!’ I shrieked, sounding as horrified as I could manage.

Then I scrambled up, making sure that my stick dug into Lavinia’s middle and my knee squashed into her thigh. My shoe scratched down her leg, leaving it streaky with mud. Lavinia kicked back, hard, on my ankle, and I toppled over again.

‘Beast!’ panted Lavinia, and scratched me.

The game had stopped, and Miss Hopkins was running over to us. It turned out that her cheerfulness only stretched so far. ‘HAZEL, NOT AGAIN!’ she bellowed.

‘I was trying to get the ball,’ I said. ‘I tripped.’

Lavinia dragged herself to her feet and pulled me up with her. ‘We both tripped,’ she said, breathing hard. ‘It wasn’t Hazel’s fault.’ That’s the good thing about Lavinia. She can be foully mean, and she’s vicious in a fight, but at least she doesn’t hold grudges afterwards.

‘I can see perfectly well that that’s a lie,’ said Miss Hopkins, sighing. ‘Hazel, in this country we do not fight. We are *civilized*. This is the second time you have knocked over a classmate this week. Go and get changed back into your school things, and if I ever catch you doing something like this again I shall send you to Miss Griffin. Lavinia, play on. Hazel, go!’

It was not really a punishment, or at least not one as bad as Miss Hopkins would usually have given out, but it still stung. Cheeks burning, I turned and marched off towards the pavilion. I felt swollen up

with anger. I couldn't see why Lavinia wasn't being punished as well. She had fought back, after all. And she had been so horrid about Daisy! It was not true that Daisy was only friends with me because I was from Hong Kong. She was not like that at all, I told myself. But all the same, there was a bit of me that was worried. Could it really be true?

I changed back into my school things, my heart rocketing about inside my chest like a dynamo. My ankle was aching again, but I ignored it. I had hardly finished pulling my socks on, though, when the door of the changing-room banged open. I crouched down, thinking that it might be Miss Hopkins. But the person who stuck their head through a row of pinafores and grinned at me was not Miss Hopkins at all, but Daisy.

Her golden hair was stiff with mud and there was mud on one of her cheeks too. As she burrowed through the clothes and wiggled her way out onto the bench opposite me, she left quite a lot of mud behind her, but she didn't seem to mind.

'Wotcher, Watson!' said Daisy. 'I've come to join you, even though you *were* rude to Miss Hopkins. I

thought this would be a good opportunity to hold a Detective Society meeting.'

There was Daisy, adoring Miss Hopkins again. I decided to ignore it. 'What did you do to get out of Games?' I asked.

'I told Hopkins I had the curse and she let me go.' Daisy said this without a blush, as though it was the easiest thing in the world. Perhaps it was; for her.

'Daisy,' I said. 'Do you know what Lavinia said to me?'

'No,' said Daisy. 'What awful lies has she been telling this time?'

'She said ... that you were only friends with me because I come from Hong Kong.'

There was a pause. 'What utter tosh,' said Daisy. 'As you know perfectly well, I'm only friends with you because you were so persistent about it that I couldn't refuse.'

'*Daisy!*' I said.

'All right. That's nonsense. I'm friends with you because you are the cleverest person in this whole school.'

I blushed. It was one of the nicest things she had ever said to me.

‘Apart, of course, from me.’

Daisy couldn’t bear not having the last word.

‘Well, now that we’ve cleared that up, can we get on to the real business? We won’t have another opportunity like this all day. Ready, Watson?’

‘Ready,’ I said, pulling my casebook out of my bag and trying to put my mind to Detective Society business.

‘Excellent,’ said Daisy. ‘Now, we’ve already made some really important discoveries, but before we go any further we need to talk about suspects. We’re agreed that we’ve narrowed our suspect list down to four: Miss Parker, Miss Tennyson, Miss Lappet and The One. The others all have good alibis – and although in books they might have done it by constructing a dastardly long-range missile out of a trombone, three plant pots and the Gym vaulting horse, in real life that sort of thing does seem beyond the bounds of possibility.’

I nodded. Daisy was right.

‘So, the top of our list is Miss Tennyson,’ I said. ‘She wanted the Deputy job. She was down at school for Lit. Soc, but that finished at five twenty. We saw her by the Gym half an hour later, but we have no idea where she was in between those times. And what about today’s English lesson!’

‘Wasn’t that a sight?’ agreed Daisy. ‘She certainly *behaved* guiltily.’

‘And then there’s Miss Parker. We know that she lied about her alibi. She was at school when Kitty saw her just after socs finished, and so she had the perfect opportunity to commit the murder. She has a motive too – jealousy about Miss Bell and The One – and she has been raging about the school all week. That could be her guilty conscience. So that’s two who seem promising, and don’t appear to have alibis. What about the others? Let’s see – The One, and Miss Lappet.

‘The One first. We know he stayed down after school to teach Sophie Croke-Finchley piano that evening, but the lesson ended at four fifty. After that, he was free, and we saw that he was in his cubby at five fifty – again, near the Gym at the cor-

rect time. We shall just have to watch him.'

'Miss Lappet,' I said, looking up from my casebook. 'Like Miss Tennyson, she wanted the Deputy job. She went to Miss Griffin's office at four thirty, but we don't have an alibi for her after that. Although – do we know when she came out again? If she stayed there until after the time of the murder, that'd give her an excellent alibi. She'd have had Miss Griffin watching over her all evening.'

'Oh, good work, Watson,' said Daisy. 'We should look into it at the first opportunity. You know, I'd say we were doing rather well. Down to four suspects already! Our next plan of action should be more of the same – we keep hunting down alibis, or lack of them, and we watch our four like hawks while we're at it. *Constant vigilance*. Oh, and about that other thing – I've come up with a really excellent idea that will give us time to hunt round for where the murderer hid Miss Bell's body, in between killing her on Monday and moving it out of the school on Tuesday.'

She said it so casually that I thought she must be joking. 'Don't be silly,' I said. 'You can't have done. There's always someone around the school watching

us, no matter what time of day it is.'

'Exactly,' said Daisy. 'That's why my idea's such a corker. I can't tell you what it is yet, though, in case it goes wrong.'

'Daisy! Why not?'

'Don't argue, Watson! Aren't I the President of the Detective Society? That means that I'm allowed to have a plan without telling you.'

I opened my mouth to say that I couldn't see why, but then shut it again crossly. I knew there was no point. Arguing with Daisy about things like that is like arguing with an avalanche when it is already on its way down the mountain. It was no good wanting to know anything about Daisy's mysterious plan. She would tell me when she wanted to, or not at all.

I was still trying not to be furious about it when the changing-room door banged open again and Kitty, Beanie and the rest of the form rushed in. Daisy began loudly talking about Amy Johnson's daring flight to Cape Town, so I took a calming breath and joined in.



4

Considering Lavinia, and what she said, it's funny to remember what I used to think of Daisy. Last year, when I first came to Deepdean, she was exactly in the middle of our form, neither a swot nor a dunce. Her English essays were utterly dull, her French hopped tenses like anything, and she mixed up the Habsburgs and the Huns. The mistresses were fond of her, but – 'Daisy dear,' said Miss Lappet one day, peering down through her little glasses, 'you are a charming girl, but you are certainly not cut out for an academic life.'

'I don't mind,' said Daisy in reply. 'I don't want to be a Bluestocking. I shall marry a Lord.' The whole second form squealed with laughter and Miss Lappet folded her arms over her cushiony bosom but looked amused. In fact, as we all knew, Daisy had no need to marry a Lord. Her father already was one, a real one with ermine robes and a country seat in Gloucestershire.

It was this sort of thing that made Daisy so fascinating. Almost all the younger shrimps had pashes on her. (A *pash*, in case you haven't heard the word before, is school talk for something that is rather difficult to describe – I suppose it's being in love, but different somehow, and so quite all right with everyone.) I was as much taken with the Honourable Daisy Wells as anyone else, and so things might have gone on if it were not for something that happened halfway through my first term at Deepdean.

It was late on a Thursday afternoon, and Miss Lappet was struggling to give us a lesson about Charles I. 'Don't be so slow,' she snapped at Beanie, who had just given her third wrong answer in a row. 'Great heavens, I might as well be speaking Hottentot.'

Before I go quite mad – and I *shall*, mark my words – I don't suppose by some miracle Daisy will prove to know when – Lord grant me patience – the Long Parliament was first called?

Daisy was idly drawing something in her exercise book. Caught off guard, she looked up. 'Third of November 1640,' she said without even pausing to think.

Miss Lappet gaped at her. 'Why – Daisy!' she gasped, amazed, sitting down in her chair with a heavy plump. 'That's the very day! However did you remember that?'

I happened to be looking at Daisy at the time, and for the merest of seconds something rather like panic flashed across her face. Then she blinked and the look disappeared, replaced by vague wide-eyed surprise. 'Oh! Did I really?' she asked breathlessly. 'What luck! Fancy that, Miss Lappet. I must be learning something after all.'

'Wonders shall never cease,' said Miss Lappet. 'Now if you could only recreate that in your essays they might become almost respectable.'

Daisy blinked up at Miss Lappet. 'I'm afraid that's *quite* out of the question, Miss,' she said in tones of deep despair.

'Of course it is,' sighed Miss Lappet as the rest of the second form giggled supportively.

The lesson continued, but I was thinking about Daisy's answer. She had known it so very quickly – quicker than even I could manage. If it had been anyone else, I would have thought them a swot – but Daisy Wells did not swot. Everyone knew that.

Nevertheless, I could not help suspecting that she had known the answer. It had not just been a lucky guess. Over the next few weeks I watched Daisy closely in all our lessons, and as I did so I became convinced that, far from being someone who struggled just enough for the mistresses to be encouraging and the other girls to think her a card, Daisy knew everything she was ever asked.

She wanted to seem a fool, and she was pausing or flubbing her responses because she had decided that a particular fact was not something she ought to remember. The Daisy Wells we all pashed on was, in short, not real at all, but a very clever part.

I watched her running about, shrieking, turning cartwheels and looking as though she did not care about anything apart from beating St Simmonds at lacrosse on Saturday, and I began to see that all the time there was a different Daisy underneath. A Daisy who not only knew the name of every one of the men who had helped Guy Fawkes in his plot but the reason why Belinda Vance in the fifth form was staying so late at school, and what Elsie Drew-Peters said to Heather Montefiore to make her cry. She was always gathering up information on people – not to blackmail them or do anything awful like that, that's not Daisy at all – but just to know things.

Daisy always has to *know* things.



As soon as we got back up to House after Games that afternoon, Daisy began to work on her top-secret plan. Thursday afternoon tea, which is served in the House Dining Room to all girls not at Socs that day, is cream buns. I had two, which was blissful, but I could not help noticing that Daisy spent most of her tea not eating at all. She was deep in conversation with the fifth former Alice Murgatroyd. This was odd. There were lots of rumours going round about Alice – that she has a secret cigarette stash in her tuck box, for example – and it is simply not usual for girls from different forms to spend afternoon tea

together. But just as other people began to wonder at what was going on, Daisy and Alice nodded to each other and Daisy came back to sit down at the third-form table. She nudged Kitty, and whispered something, and Kitty whispered to Beanie.

‘Psst!’ hissed Beanie, leaning over to me. ‘Midnight feast tonight! Daisy says so.’

I nudged Lavinia, and passed the message on, but inside I was surprised. Surely Daisy was too busy with her plan to bother about things like midnight feasts. There is an awful lot to decide on for a midnight feast – what prank to play on which other dorm, what cakes to ask everyone to bring, and when to set the alarm clock under your pillow for. Then there is the matter of secrecy. At Deepdean I have learned that it is very important, when you are having a midnight feast, not to let anything slip about it. Otherwise the other dorms know that a prank is coming and prepare themselves – or, worse, plan a counter-prank. But that afternoon Daisy fired off order after whispered order, and soon all five of us knew exactly what we had to do.

The whole of our dorm kept exemplary silence about the upcoming feast, although at toothbrushes Beanie got quite giggly when the prefect on duty (it was King Henry that evening) told us to go to bed. Daisy had to wink sternly to quieten her down, and we were lucky that King Henry was too preoccupied to notice. Then we all lay down in our beds demurely, and King Henry clicked off the light and closed the door. The block of yellow light falling onto Lavinia's bed vanished, and the dorm went dark.

I must have fallen asleep at once.

I was woken by people shuffling about. There was a *thump* and a giggle from Beanie, then Lavinia hissed, 'Beans! Don't knock into me like that, you idiot!'

'Sorry, Lavinia,' whispered Beanie, and tripped over something else.

I sat up. Someone had pulled back the curtain at the far end of the dorm, and in the moonlight (rather dim, as the moon was mostly behind the clouds) I could see several people huddled round Daisy's bed. Beanie must have fallen over Lavinia on the way there; they were now crouched on the floor picking

up their cakes.

I climbed out of bed, put on my slippers and pulled open my tuck box. The week before I had received two parcels. One was a green and gold Fortnum and Mason's gift box with a note that said, *From your father. Don't tell your mother.* The other was wrapped in brown paper, smothered with stamps, and had come with a note in our chauffeur's painstaking print: *Your esteemed mother sends you this gift. She wishes you to not inform your esteemed father. My mother always makes the servants write for her – I don't know why, she can write perfectly well herself since my father taught her.*

The brown paper parcel was full of lotus-paste moon cakes from our kitchen. They are my favourite food, sweet and heavy on my tongue, like nothing here in England; but all the same I wish my mother would not send them. Lavinia saw one once, and for weeks after told everyone that I ate heathen pies. Luckily, the Fortnum's box had proper English walnut cake in it, and not even Lavinia could sniff at that. I took it out, stuffed the moon cakes back into my tuck box, under a pile of Angela Brazil books, and

went to join the feast.

'Welcome,' whispered Daisy, waving her torch in my face. 'What have you got?'

'Walnut cake,' I whispered back.

'Excellent,' said Daisy. 'Add it to the rest of the pile. Once Beanie and Lavinia get over here – come *on*, Beanie – we can begin.'

'Sorry,' whispered Beanie, hurrying over. 'I've got chocolate cake and tongue, if that helps.'

'It does,' said Daisy grandly. 'Now let's eat – I'm starving.'

For a while, everyone ate in silence.

'Pass the tongue,' said Daisy, with her mouth full.

(Privately, I cannot understand the way English people eat their meat – in dull sauceless lumps which all taste exactly the same – but I have learned to swallow it down as quickly as possible and say 'Delicious!' at the end of it.)

Lavinia passed over the tin. 'Tongue is nice with chocolate cake,' she said as she did so. 'You wouldn't think it would be, but it is. You should try it.'

'I like it on biscuits,' said Kitty, munching. 'Daisy, what are we doing for a prank?'

'Ah,' said Daisy, 'well. That's been taken care of already. At this very moment there's a nice cold bucket of water balanced above the washroom door. It'll give the other third-form dorm a nice surprise tomorrow morning when they go for their showers!'

We all giggled appreciatively. The other dorm had taken to leaping up as soon as the wake-up bell rang and hogging the showers just so they could be down at breakfast first and get dorm points from Matron for promptness. It was odious of them and we had all been dying to get them back for it.

'We ought to do something else, though,' said Kitty. 'Right now. Otherwise it's not a proper midnight feast.'

'If only it was last year,' said Daisy offhandedly. 'Remember all those creepy things we used to do? Of course they were quite silly really, and we couldn't do them *now*, but—'

'Oh, but why not?' cried Kitty. 'We could try levitating Beanie again – remember when we did that?'

'Oh no,' wailed Beanie. 'Why is it always me who's the one being levitated? I hate it—'

'Because you're the littlest, Beans,' said Lavinia. 'And besides, it's such fun when you squeal.'

'Well, I won't do it,' said Beanie, trying to be firm. 'I won't. You can't make me.'

'You know,' said Kitty, 'I've still got that old Ouija board in the bottom of my tuck box. We could have a go with that, if you like.'

'Oh no,' gasped Beanie, 'not a séance, please. It gives me the creeps.'

'Then you oughtn't to have said no to the levitating, Beanie,' said Lavinia. 'Kitty, get out the board.'

'Oh please,' wailed Beanie. 'Please no!'

'Shh!' said Kitty. 'You'll wake Matron!'

They both quietened down at once. Nobody wanted to have the midnight feast ruined by an angry Matron.

Daisy, I noticed, had taken no part in this. She was sitting back on her heels watching the argument. As I knew perfectly well, this meant that she was Up To Something.

Kitty went rooting through her tuck box, and after a minute or so gave a satisfied cry. Her Ouija board is from our Spiritualist Society days. It is just

a bit of red cardboard, really, with black curly letters and numbers painted on it; and a yellow eye in the very middle of the board where the sharp triangular counter rests at the beginning. I always hated that eye, which glares up from the board as though it is watching you. To be truthful, I feel quite the same as Beanie about séances, although I never let on to Daisy about it.

Anyway, Daisy balanced her torch on her knees, so that its light fell onto the board, and we all rested our fingers on the counter, as you are supposed to. For a while, nothing happened. I listened to us all breathing, and stared and stared at the counter until the painted eye beneath it seemed to glow up at me.

Then, all at once, the counter moved. Kitty gave a little squeal, and quite a few of us jumped, so the counter jiggled about and the torchlight jolted.

'I don't like it,' Beanie whispered as we all watched the counter begin to slide upwards. 'I don't like it, I don't like it, I don't—'

'Shut it, Beanie,' hissed Lavinia fiercely, and Beanie was silent. The counter gave a little jump and came to rest over the letter H.

'H!' said Daisy. 'Something at last! Quick, Hazel, write it down!'

I sat back and snatched up my casebook, very glad to look away from that eye.

H, I wrote.

Meanwhile, the counter had moved left, to E, and was now on its way right again. I barely needed to wait for it to stop – L, of course. But then, just as I was about to automatically put down a second L, the counter gave a jerk and went surging off to the left to land, clear as anything, on the P.

Beanie let out a little squeak, and Kitty shushed her. My mouth felt very dry. But the board was not finished yet. Right it went, all the way, to M, U, R, and then back again to D, E, and finally came to rest on the R.

HELP. MURDER.

We looked around at each other. We were all pale, even Daisy – although, as I know well, it is never any good trying to work out what Daisy is really thinking.

It was Kitty who finally spoke.

'Who is this?' she whispered. 'Who are you?'

The counter wobbled. Then off it went again, slower this time: *M-I-S-S-B-E-L—*

I had a single moment of utter horror – and then, of course, I realized what was going on: Daisy must be moving the counter. I felt strangely cheated – just as I did when my father took me to the circus in Kowloon and I realized that their mermaid was only a sad little hairless monkey with a fish tail attached. As much as I didn't want the shade of Miss Bell to come back and haunt me, I was annoyed when I realized that our ghost was in fact just Daisy. So *this* was her secret plan! I wished, once again, that she would tell me things beforehand.

The counter was still moving.

'Miss Bell!' said Kitty, who always liked to be the one to communicate with the other side. 'But you resigned – you're not dead.'

YES. DEAD.

Beanie squeaked.

'Shush, Beanie! You'll have Matron up here! How—'

NO TIME. HELP. MURDER.

'You were murdered?'

MURDER.

'By who?'

WHOM.

'I think she means, *by whom,*' said Daisy. She must have thought she was being very funny.

'It really *is* Miss Bell!' whispered Beanie. 'Oh ...'

Then she fainted, very quietly, onto Kitty's shoulder.

NO TIME. MURDERER UNKNOWN. CANNOT REST.

'But what can we do?' asked Kitty.

TELL ALL. GUILT WILL OUT. HELP – Q – T – B – N – 2

–

After that the counter slid off the bottom of the board and no one could get any more sense out of it. Beanie had come out of her faint and was crying quietly.

'You're all babies. I wasn't afraid at all,' said Lavinia, and then she climbed into her bed, pulled her blanket all the way up over her head and refused to say anything more.

The midnight feast seemed to be over and I crept back to my own bed. Beanie refused to sleep alone and had to be let into Kitty's bed for comfort. We could hear them whispering quietly to each other

under the bedclothes.

I had closed my eyes and was trying to go back to sleep when there was a sudden creak, the side of my mattress dipped and someone slid under the covers next to me. In spite of myself, I gasped.

'Wotcher,' hissed Daisy in my ear.

'Ow!' I whispered, wriggling over. 'You're lying on my arm.'

'Never mind that,' Daisy whispered back, as quietly as she could. 'What did you think? Wasn't I good?'

'I think you were awful. Whatever did you do it for?'

'Don't you see? It was the only way. It doesn't matter what Miss Griffin said about Miss Bell having resigned; by tomorrow the news about her murder will be all over the school. The murderer will simply be hopping with panic – they're bound to do something that'll lead us straight to them. And anyone who knows anything, or saw anything, or knows of an alibi for any of our suspects will come forward. All we need to do is watch. And the best bit is, *I* won't look like I had anything to do with it at all. If you

must know, I feel really rather clever.'





6

I didn't like the idea of the murderer panicking at all. What if they came after me because of it? I had another awful, sleepless night, and got up on Friday morning feeling sick to my stomach about the day to come.

Moments after the wake-up bell rang, while we were all sitting up in bed, we heard squeals ringing out from the washroom. It was the other third-form dorm, of course, running straight into our cold-water trap. Which reminded everyone of what had happened at the séance. We had hardly sat down to breakfast before Kitty had told five different people

the story of Miss Bell's ghostly appearance. It went round the room like wildfire, and Daisy, listening to its progress, puffed up with pride. I wanted to shake her. She was putting us both in danger – but of course, she could not see it. She only thought she was being clever, and helping to solve the murder. I was almost glad when something happened to spoil her good mood.

'Ready for the match against St Chator's this weekend?' Daisy asked Clementine as she chewed a slice of toast. I think it was Daisy's way of making peace for the bucket of water. 'I heard Hopkins was awfully helpful at the tactics session in the Pavilion on Monday evening.'

Clementine sniffed. 'If we *are* ready, it's no thanks to Hopkins,' she said. 'The session wasn't even half-way through when she dodged down to school with some silly excuse about needing to write a letter. A letter! When we haven't beaten Chator's for four years! We had to finish the discussion with only the prefect to help us.'

I gasped out loud, there at the breakfast table. I couldn't help it. Miss Hopkins's alibi, which had been

so secure all the way through our investigation, had just been smashed to pieces. She had been down at school at the time of the murder. All her suspicious behaviour suddenly began to look rather sinister.

Daisy must have been as shocked as I was, but she only blinked. 'Miss Hopkins went back down to school on Monday evening?' she asked.

'Oh yes,' said Clementine, through a half-chewed mouthful of toast. 'Honestly, we were all furious about it. Can you imagine?'

The rest of the table made sympathetic noises. I wanted to jump up and down and shriek like Beanie. *Miss Hopkins might be the murderer!* What if she had been afraid that The One might leave her for Miss Bell, just the way he had left Miss Bell for her? She was very strong too (I thought of her swinging a hockey stick in Games) – she could easily have shoved Miss Bell off that balcony. I couldn't decide if I were pleased that my suspicions about Miss Hopkins might still be proven right, or frustrated to have our case made more messy ... or even frightened; but I could tell that Daisy was simply annoyed.

'Why do you care if Miss Hopkins doesn't have an alibi?' I asked as we walked down to school. 'If she's got a motive and she's been behaving extremely oddly, why shouldn't she be a suspect?'

Daisy glared at me. 'You *know* why!' she said. 'Because she didn't do it, I know she didn't. And now we have to rule her out all over again. It's simply not tidy!'

'You only want to clear her name because you like her and you don't want her to have done it!'

'I don't see what's wrong with that!'

'Daisy, you can't be a proper detective if you don't follow the clues!' I said. 'What if she *did* do it?'

'She didn't! Anyway, I'm the President of the society. Have you forgotten?'

'What does that matter? I thought you said that I was the cleverest person you knew in the whole school?'

'Apart from me! And *I* say that I don't think Miss Hopkins did it!'

We glared at each other.

'Well, you can do what you want,' said Daisy at last. 'Follow Miss Hopkins as well as Miss Parker this

morning, if it'll make you happy. And you can do The One and Miss Lappet too, just for being so difficult. *I'm* going to follow Miss Tennyson.'

'All right, I *will* follow Miss Hopkins,' I said angrily, thinking how absolutely infuriating Daisy could be at times. 'Just you see ... I'll follow Miss Hopkins and all the others and I'll show you what a good detective I am.'

'If you *must*,' said Daisy with a sigh. 'But when I discover that Miss Tennyson did it, don't say I didn't warn you.'

We both stormed through Old Wing Entrance.



Unfortunately, it was impossible to ignore Daisy and her annoying ideas. By the time Prayers was over, her séance story was all over the school. Miss Bell, everyone was telling each other, had not been kidnapped at all. She had been *murdered*.

It was very strange hearing other people say it, and for some reason it made me even more cross. It was *our* case, and Daisy had given it away to the rest of Deepdean.

The only way to show Daisy that she was going about the investigation the wrong way, though, was to concentrate on my own detective work. So after

Prayers, when I saw Miss Lappet and Miss Parker heading to the mistresses' common room, I joined a line of second formers following Miss Hopkins. Miss Hopkins bounced along cheerfully and even patted a shrimp on the back – once again, she seemed far too happy. But was I just being prejudiced against her?

As I was wondering this, though, The One came striding round the corner in the other direction. He saw Miss Hopkins, and his face turned a deep, shameful shade of red. Miss Hopkins stopped so quickly her hair bounced, and she made a funny, shrill noise, like someone killing a mouse. The second formers stared between the two of them in fascination, and I was fascinated too. Was this behaviour evidence of some guilty secret? Just then the bell for the beginning of lessons rang, and I ran for our form room.

I bumped into Daisy just outside.

'I followed Miss Tennyson to the mistresses' lavs,' said Daisy coolly. 'She's hidden in there, and of course I can't get in, but I can hear her crying. It's extremely suspicious.'

'Miss Hopkins is being suspicious too,' I said. 'She saw The One and she went all *funny*.'

Daisy, I could see, was not interested in the slightest.

I spent the rest of the morning feeling as though I was trying to be in twenty places at once. Shadowing one person, let alone four, is an unexpectedly sweaty business. Between each lesson I went rushing about, trying to keep Miss Hopkins, The One, Miss Parker and Miss Lappet in sight at all times, and trying not to pant too heavily while I was doing it.

Miss Hopkins continued to be enormously cheerful, and to skip about the school like a bouncy ball. As she did so, I became grimly sure that she must be doing it on purpose. She did not run into The One again all morning, but to *me*, that one meeting had proved enough.

Miss Parker was far easier to follow – and, I had to admit, much more obviously disturbed by something. She stalked about scowling terribly and dragging her hands through her hair. Was she upset because of what had happened on Monday evening (I was nearly certain that she must at least have ar-

gued with Miss Bell), or was there something more to it? Was she worried by the new rumours?

Miss Lappet moved slowly, peering down at girls after she had nearly tripped over them. Her hair didn't look as though she had brushed it that morning, and once again her cardigan was mis-buttoned over her bosom. I realized that she had been showing signs of this sort of thing for days – ever since Tuesday, in fact. What was wrong with her? I knew she was doing the secretarying for Miss Griffin that Miss Bell usually did, but surely that extra work could not have been enough to tip her over the edge?

At bunbreak, Miss Hopkins and Miss Lappet went to ground again in the mistresses' common room. Miss Parker, though, swept straight past and on down Library corridor. I chased her small figure in its jumper and brown skirt as she wove between groups of girls, and then hung back, just in time to see her climb the steps to The One's cubby door, knock on it and step inside.

Here was something interesting.

I edged through a crowd of second-form shrimps, checked my wristwatch as though I was waiting for

someone, sighed deeply and plumped down onto the top step. Staring ahead of me vaguely, I let my head lean backwards until it was resting as near as possible to the door hinge. For added camouflage I pulled *Swallows and Amazons* out of my bag and opened it on my lap as though I was reading. Then I let my eyes unfocus from the text and listened with all my might to what was happening in the room behind me.

The first thing I heard was The One. If it had been anyone else, I would have said he sounded angry.

'... don't know why you think I have anything to do with this,' he was saying.

'I *know* you do!' said Miss Parker, cutting across him. She really was angry, nearly raving. 'Joan *told* me – she said that you and she—'

(For a moment I wondered what someone called Joan had to do with anything, and then I remembered that it was Miss Bell's first name.)

'I tell you you're wrong!' The One *did* shout then, and I jumped and had to pretend I had cramp.

'No,' said Miss Parker, and her voice went much quieter, so that I could barely hear her. 'I know she

went back to you, and I want you to admit it. You must give me—'

There was a heavy thump. 'I will give you *nothing!*' shouted The One. 'You have no right to ask! Get out of my office at once!'

'I shall!' Miss Parker screamed back. 'But you'll be sorry! I'll come back and— Oh!'

Trying to look as interested in *Swallows and Amazons* as I could, I hurriedly bumped down the stairs. When Miss Parker shoved the door open a few seconds later I was sitting innocently on the bottom step, engrossed in my book.

I needn't have bothered. She pushed past without noticing me and stormed off down the corridor, nearly crashing into Miss Hopkins, who happened to be coming the other way, her hair bouncing more than ever. Was she coming to see The One? I hung back to see where she would go – and sure enough, she began to climb the steps to The One's cubby.

Just then, though, the bell to end bunbreak rang. Cursing school bells, I stuffed *Swallows and Amazons* back into my bag and walked away. What did what I had just heard mean? Were Miss Hopkins and The

One working together? Had Miss Parker discovered something awful about them? Was she even planning to *blackmail* them now that she had heard the new rumours? Off I went to History, thinking that at last I had something really important to tell Daisy, something so good that even she could not ignore it.



8

I should have known that Daisy would find a way to foil me. She rushed into History when we were already standing up for Miss Lappet to come in.

‘Good of you to grace us with your presence, Daisy,’ said Miss Lappet, who was looking just as flustered and mis-buttoned as she had earlier. Also, I could tell from close to, she had a sickly after-dinner smell wafting about her. Next to me, Kitty mouthed to Beanie, *Tippling again*.

‘Sorry, Miss Lappet,’ said Daisy, pretending to be contrite. ‘It won’t happen again, Miss Lappet. Miss Lappet?’

‘What, Daisy?’ asked Miss Lappet, and steadied herself with both hands on her desk.

‘Miss Lappet, I was wondering if you were the one who went round collecting lost property on Monday evening. You see, I’ve lost my very special pen, and—’

Miss Lappet sighed windily. ‘Enough, Daisy,’ she said. ‘You do speak loudly sometimes. As it happens, that evening Miss Bell was in charge of confiscations and lost property.’ (The whole form stiffened at the mention of Miss Bell’s name.) ‘Not that she ever handed any in before she resigned. I was in Miss Griffin’s office, discussing important matters, for the entire evening.’

‘Oh,’ said Daisy, flashing a private, triumphant look at me. ‘So – you were there the entire evening?’

‘Good grief, Daisy!’ snapped Miss Lappet, clutching her forehead. ‘You never listen, do you? Yes, I was there the whole evening. And what does this have to do with your pen?’

So, I thought to myself, *that did for Miss Lappet*. I had to admit that it was neat of Daisy to get her alibi like that. But afterwards, it was no good me even attempting to send a note. Miss Lappet kept her

eyes focused (with a slight effort) on Daisy through the entire lesson. I had no chance to let Daisy know about the argument I had overheard between Miss Parker and The One, and so when we went on to Music I was the only member of the Detective Society who knew that we had a new reason to watch him.

It was a good thing I did. Wrinkling his handsome brow, The One barely managed to hold a tune on the piano, confused Kitty with Lavinia, forgot to set us prep, fell over a tambourine and then wished us a good evening – at one o'clock in the afternoon. Even Beanie noticed that something was wrong.

'P'raps he's in mourning for Miss Bell,' she said to us on the way out of Old Wing Entrance at lunch time.

Unfortunately, Miss Lappet happened to be passing by, and she was still cross.

'Beanie!' she snapped. Beanie froze in horror. 'Enough! If I hear you repeating any more foolish and baseless gossip it'll be the whole third form in detention for all of next week. Am I clear?'

'Yes, Miss Lappet.' Beanie gulped. 'Sorry, Miss Lappet.'

We walked up to House very quietly, in case we spread any more rumours by mistake, and Beanie stayed with us all the way ... Yet again, I had no chance to talk to Daisy.

In a way, though, this was a good thing. I was free to think about The One without any interruptions or contradictions. He had shown exactly the sort of behaviour that you might expect of someone who had just been blackmailed. The more I thought about it, the more I decided that there was no other explanation for the row I had overheard. The One knew something about Miss Bell's murder – from what I had witnessed, it seemed likely that he and Miss Hopkins *both* knew something about it – and Miss Parker knew that they knew. But could The One really be a murderer? Perhaps he was just covering for Miss Hopkins's crime. Was that why she had gone hurrying down to school on Monday night? So much for Daisy being sure Miss Hopkins was innocent!

I felt quite triumphant about my deductions. At last it was *me* who had come up with the important

clue, and Daisy who would have to follow along behind.

But it was Daisy who cornered me.

'Come with me,' she ordered, as soon as we had finished lunch. 'I've got the plan ready at last.'

'Daisy, I have to tell you what I heard at bunbreak. I think Miss Parker is blackmailing The One. Honestly! I think he and Miss Hopkins—'

'Shh,' said Daisy. 'Dorm.'

The dorm room was empty when we arrived. We made straight for my bed and sat down facing one another.

'Daisy,' I said again, as soon as the door closed on us. 'You've got to listen. I think Miss Hopkins and The One are in it together. We know that he was down at school, and that she came back halfway through hockey practice. One of them could have done it, or maybe it was both of them, and then Miss Parker found out somehow and now she's blackmailing them! Miss Parker went into The One's study at bunbreak and I heard them arguing.'

'Oh, Hazel,' said Daisy. I could hardly believe it. She was dismissing me. 'How do you know she was

blackmailing him? Did you hear her actually ask him for money?'

'No,' I said. 'But—'

'Exactly. She's furious about his past with Miss Bell – we know that already. She must have just gone to confront him about it again. Anyway, it hardly matters. I've got something much more important to show you!'

She dug about in the depths of her book bag and then pulled out a little glass bottle. She waved it at me, beaming as though I ought to be particularly impressed. I wasn't. I wanted to shout at her. She *had* to listen to me.

'What is it this time?' I asked crossly.

'Ipecac,' said Daisy. 'I got it from Alice Murgatroyd.' Then, seeing my look, she said, 'Oh, honestly, where did you come from? Every nursery has it. Nanny used to make us take it whenever we'd eaten something we oughtn't. It makes you awfully sick. It's exactly what we need.'

I did not understand, and I was not in the mood to try. I was still cross. Why was Daisy's idiotic idea more important than my perfectly good clue?

'Don't you see?' asked Daisy, still chugging along on her own triumphant train of thought. 'If we're going to go hunting for clues about Miss Bell, we need to get into the school when we can snoop about without any of the mistresses or masters wondering what we're up to – and more importantly, without the murderer noticing us. That means at night, and the easiest way to do that is to get admitted to San. If we take this we won't need to pretend at all – we'll be sick everywhere and Minny will have to keep us in San overnight. Then all we need to do is wait until she falls asleep and we can go wherever we like.'

'But won't everywhere be locked?' I objected.

'Not if I steal Jones's spare keys, you chump,' said Daisy.

'All right,' I said. 'All right, I'll do it. But only if you explain why Miss Hopkins and The One aren't guilty of the murder.'

'Because Miss Tennyson did it, of course,' said Daisy. 'Oh, I haven't told you my findings from today yet, have I?'

'No,' I said furiously. 'No, you haven't.'

'Well, she's an absolute wreck. She might as well be wandering the corridors muttering, *Out, damned spot!* I think our séance rumour has spooked her. While I was following her one of the Big Girls tapped her on the shoulder and she *shrieked*. But here's the important bit: there I was, minding my own business in an opportune listening place on Library corridor, when Miss Griffin came up to Miss Tennyson. "Miss Tennyson," she said, "I need to talk to you. You haven't quite finished helping me with that little project of ours. You were so late to my office on Monday evening that we barely got a thing done."

"Yes, but I made up for it on Tuesday and Wednesday," said Miss Tennyson nervously.

"Ah, but not quite," replied Miss Griffin. "There's still a bit of work that needs to be finished." Honestly, Hazel, Miss Tennyson went as white as a sheet. She was *shaking*. "Can we perhaps schedule another session?" asked Miss Griffin. "There's just a little more work I'd like you to do – perhaps this evening?"

'So what?' I asked. 'Miss Tennyson and Miss Griffin are going to mark books together after school today. That doesn't have anything to do with the murder.'

'Hazel,' said Daisy, rolling her eyes, 'sometimes you are a bit stupid. Miss Griffin had an appointment with Miss Tennyson on *Monday* night, but Miss Tennyson was *late*. Miss Tennyson takes English Soc until five twenty, so the appointment must have been for after that – for *exactly the time when Miss Bell was being murdered*. And I'm sure the way Miss Tennyson behaved when Miss Griffin mentioned Monday was a sign. Hazel, it's her guilty conscience! She must have done it!'

'If you say so,' I said. I was still annoyed. Here was Daisy again, sure that *her* idea was the important one.

'Oh, Hazel, don't be like that,' said Daisy, butting her head against my shoulder and staring at me wide-eyed. 'Hazel, Hazel, Hazel, Hazel, *Hazel—*'

'Ow!' I said, scowling. 'I'm not smiling.'

'Yes you *are*,' said Daisy, leaping up off the bed and grabbing hold of my arm. 'Come on, come on, let's go downstairs before Matron wonders where we've got to. Oh, and meet me in the cloakroom before French and we'll take this disgusting stuff.' She brandished the bottle of ipecac at me, stuffed it into her book bag

and galloped out of the dorm.



Daisy can be really insufferable sometimes, but I suppose, given what happened on my first night at Deepdean, I shouldn't be surprised.

After our first meeting on the games fields I came back to House, shivering and pink with cold, to the tall and chilly walls of the second-form dorm room. I sat on my strict grey bed and stared about me at the rows of identical bedsteads and the dismally scratchy and grey bedspreads. I was quite upset by the sight of it, and I remember wondering whether Deepdean might not be doing so well for itself after all. (I had not yet discovered that in England, the

way of showing that you are very rich is to pretend that you are very poor and cannot afford things like heating or new shoes.)

One of the maids had unpacked my trunk, and all my things were folded up in the chipped chest of drawers next to my bed. The trunk itself was standing open and empty on the carpet, still with customs stamps all over it, and I looked at it and felt just as empty and out of place. The other girls in the dorm were ignoring me, huddled into a group at the other end of the room. Then one of them, the girl with the long gold hair who had run into me earlier, turned abruptly and made her way over to me. The others all followed in a gaggle and grouped themselves behind her, like a pack of crows or a monster with four heads and eight hard, staring eyes.

'Hallo, foreign girl,' said Daisy – for, of course, that golden-haired girl was Daisy.

'Hallo,' I said shyly.

All the girls giggled. 'She can speak English!' someone I later learned was Kitty whispered. 'Lavinia, you owe me five bob.'

'Foreign girl,' said Daisy, 'we're going to play a game. We've decided to let you join in – and that's unusual for us.' My heart jumped. 'It's a test, really – we want to see who can stick it out longest in that trunk. Kitty thinks no one could do it for more than ten minutes, but *I* think it'd be easy. And we want *you* to go first. It is your trunk, after all. What do you say?'

Today, I can't think how I could ever have fallen for it. But at the time I was simply excited to think that I might be making friends already – and that someone so beautiful should want *me* to be friends with her. So I nodded.

'All right, then,' said Daisy, 'get in.' And while the rest of the dorm watched breathlessly, I stepped into my trunk and crouched down with my arms about my knees.

'Now,' said Daisy, 'we're going to shut the lid. Otherwise it wouldn't be a proper test, would it? Lavinia, you time her. Remember, foreign girl, you've got to stick it out for as long as you can. All right?'

I nodded again, squeezing my hands together. I hate the dark, and I hated it even more then, but

I didn't want to say so to someone so obviously faultless.

Daisy bent down over me, so close I could feel her breath warm against my forehead. 'Enjoy, foreign girl,' she hissed, and then the lid of the trunk slammed shut and I was left in the dark. I heard giggles, a clicking noise, then squeals of laughter and the thump of running feet, which faded away and became part of a larger clatter of feet going down the stairs. A gong boomed somewhere below me, the feet sped up in a rush, and then at last they died away.

House was very quiet. Crouching in my trunk, I began to suspect that something was not right. I had been told that the gong meant a meal, and I knew I must never be late to a meal. And I was hungry. But, I thought, I had also been told to stick it out, and so that was what I would do. I was in England, and in England, I knew, you kept quiet and endured things.

So that is what I did. It took Matron three hours to find me, and when she finally did, she was almost frying with rage. She asked me who had been responsible – but, of course, I knew I could not tell her without being a rat. For a week I had to spend my

lunch breaks sitting beside her and sewing up holes in socks – but it was worth it when Daisy clapped me on the back and said, with admiration in her voice, ‘Not bad, foreign girl.’

I suppose, in a way, I have been getting into trunks for Daisy ever since, without stopping to ask why. This is the first time I have wondered if it is really all worth it.