

Chase Josephine

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CHAPTER I

ACROSS THE CAMPUS

“To go, or not to go? – that is the question,” paraphrased Marjorie Dean glancing up from the open letter in her hand. She fixed her eyes on Jerry Macy, her room-mate as though trying to read what was in her chum’s mind.

“Whether ’tis nobler to eat Baretto’s turk,
And circulate upon the campus drear;
Or to take luggage and be off for home
To roost four days upon the family tree.”

Jerry aptly supplied.

“Fine, Jeremiah. I certainly would love to roost on the Deans’ family tree for four blessed days.” Marjorie’s voice rang with wistfulness. “I’ve tried to persuade myself into believing that it won’t make much difference to the dormitory girls if we decide we’d best go home for Thanksgiving. But I’m not sure.” Marjorie knitted troubled brows. “This is the tenth,” she reflected aloud. “Whether we go home, or whether we stay on the campus over Thanksgiving, we’ve enough to do beforehand to keep us hustling.” She sprang up from her chair as though animated anew by the mere recollection of work yet to be done.

“Why remind me, beautiful Bean? I’m sadly aware of the fact. What we must do is organize the new Travelers’ sorority and let them see the dormitory girls through Thanksgiving. If they do nicely,” Jerry continued in patronizing tones, “their reward’ll be more work, and lots of it. If they flivver – but they won’t. We old Travelers knew how to pick out our successors. We’re safe to go home and leave our Thanksgiving stunts to our little Traveler sisters to carry out. Ha; great intellect!” Jerry admiringly patted one of her own plump shoulders. “You always do suggest such brilliant ideas, Jeremiah,” she gushed.

“How conceited you are! Still, there’s a grain of wisdom in your vain remarks.” Marjorie patted Jerry’s other shoulder. “I hereby confer upon you the high and noble order of the pat,” she declared in a deep pompous voice. She accompanied her words with several pats, each one more forceful than the last.

“The hard and croo-il order of the whack, I’ll say.” Jerry caught the conferring hand in time to save herself one last thump. “Now that I’ve been initiated into this wonderful order what happens to me next?”

“I’ll tell you in a minute. Let me think.” Marjorie fixed absent eyes on Jerry as she considered the situation. “You’re to go downstairs and telephone Kathie and Lillian to come over to dinner at the Hall this evening. If they can’t come to dinner, then they must come afterward. Tell them the time has come to open the box. That will bring them.”

“You bet it will,” Jerry made slangy concurrence.

“Then I’ll depend on you to hunt Leila, Vera, Ronny, Lucy and Muriel. They’re not to dare think of another engagement.”

“Yessum.” Jerry made a respectful, bobbing bow to Marjorie. “Please, mum, may I ask what you’ll be doing, mum, about the same time I’m rushing upstairs and down?”

“I’m going over to Silverton Hall,” Marjorie returned as she crossed the room to her dress closet and reached for coat and fur cap. “I’ll see Robin, Phil and Barbara; bring them back to dinner, if I can. Thank fortune Barbara is at Silverton Hall this year instead of Acasia House. I’ll be back by five o’clock. It’s ten minutes to four now.”

“Then you’ll have to go some,” Jerry said skeptically. “If you are back here with those three girls by six o’clock I’ll give you a prize. Remember, you can’t stay to dinner at Silverton Hall. We’ve Kathie and Lillian to consider.”

“The prize is as good as won. What are you going to give me?” Marjorie’s inquiry was slyly coaxing. She sidled confidently up to Jerry.

“Never mind now.” Jerry waved her away. “Come back at five o’clock and ask me.”

“I will. I’m going z-i-p-p across the campus. Just like that!” Marjorie made a lightning forward pass with one arm. “I’m going to have a wind sail. There’s a dandy stiff wind blowing today. Mary Raymond and I used to take our school umbrellas when we were little girls and go out on a windy day with them. It was a regular game. We named it ‘wind sails.’ We’d let the wind blow us along. Sometimes the umbrellas would turn inside out, or the wind would whisk them away from us and we’d have to chase them a long way. Once mine blew into the river, and once a big boy caught Mary’s umbrella and ran off with it. We never saw either of those bumbershoots again.”

Marjorie paused at the door to laugh at the recollection of childhood adventures. “Oh, Jerry,” she changed the subject with sudden abruptness, “we’ll have to dig up some eats for a spread. Whoever dreamed of gathering in the Travelers without feeding them?”

“I’ll ask Leila to run us into town for eats as soon as you come back. That’s an incentive to hurry,” bribed Jerry.

“There are times when I can’t help appreciating you, Jeremiah. Good-bye. I’m in *such* a hurry.” Marjorie breezily closed the door and made a speedy descent of the stairs.

She opened the massive front door of the Hall with the same gusty energy, and went down the front steps at a frisky jump. The brisk November wind caught her none too gently, blew a fluff of curls about her sparkling face and a brighter color into her rosy cheeks. She paused for an instant on the drive to inhale deeply the crisp, invigorating November air, then she set off across the campus at her best hiking stride.

With the wind at her back, noisily urging her along, she laughed enjoyingly, spread her arms wide in lieu of sails and ran with it. Passing a little delegation of lingering robins, strung along a tree limb, their feathers fluffed out, their red breasts making a bit of autumn color against the brown limb, she whistled cheerily to them.

“Naughty little fellows,” she playfully chided. “You should have started for the land of flowers long before now. You’ll have to hurry if you expect to get there in time to eat Thanksgiving dinner with your folks. I ought to take that advice to myself.”

Bump! Her eyes still lingering on the flock of birds, she collided forcefully with a girl who had deliberately courted collision. Muriel Harding, emerging from the library, had spied Marjorie from the library steps. Her mischievous love of teasing always uppermost, she had approached Marjorie unseen, bent on surprising her.

“Uh-h-h!” Muriel pretended to stagger back. “Why don’t you look where you’re going, lady?” she demanded gruffly.

“Why don’t you?” The two girls faced each other, flushed and laughing.

“I did. I decided to let you know I was near you,” confessed Muriel. “If you had been moderately observing you might have averted the crash.”

“I doubt it.” Marjorie looked her skepticism.

“So do I,” Muriel agreed so amiably that the pair again broke into laughter.

“You’d best come with me,” Marjorie invited. “Jerry’s hunting for you, but that’ll be all right. I’ve found you.” She went on to explain her errand to Silverton Hall. “Forward, march,” she concluded,

taking hold of Muriel's right arm. "Step lively. I've lost at least three precious minutes exchanging mostly impolite remarks with you."

"I'll hit up a pace," Muriel slangily assured. "I'm nothing if not obliging. It's fortunate for you that you met me. I am always *so* helpful." Her brown eyes danced roguishly. "You must *know* that."

"I've heard you say so." Marjorie was purposely vague. "If I had been even moderately observing I might have noticed that you were. That is, if you really –"

"Why dwell on the subject? This is the way the wild wind goes." She began whisking Marjorie over the half frozen ground at a mad run. Marjorie sturdily kept up with her. The two girls tore across the campus toward their goal, shrieking with laughter, bubbling over with high spirits.

They were nearing Craig Hall, one of the campus houses which they had to pass on their diagonal route to Silverton Hall, when the front door of the house opened and two young women came out on the veranda, then descended the steps. Evidently their ears caught the sounds of mirth emanating from the pair of exuberant P. G.'s. Two pairs of eyes, one pair coldly green, the other small, black and shrewd, immediately fastened on Marjorie and Muriel.

"Look who's here. Keep right on going," Muriel muttered in Marjorie's ear. She nodded to one of the two girls who had come from Craig Hall and were now within a few feet of her and Marjorie. Her nod was courteous rather than friendly. The response she received was a stiff inclination from Doris Monroe's golden head.

Marjorie had obeyed Muriel's muttered direction. For the barest instant her clear, truthful gaze met, impersonally, the narrowing, hostile eyes of Leslie Cairns. She then glanced serenely away from Leslie. She had long since ceased to regard Leslie Cairns with personal displeasure. This in spite of the ex-student's treacherous attempt to frustrate her and Robin Page's plans in the matter of the buying of the dormitory site.

As for Doris Monroe, Marjorie had been rebuffed by chilling looks on three different occasions when she had encountered and spoken to the haughty sophomore. She now claimed the privilege of one repeatedly ignored, to ignore in return. She had not given up the idea of carrying out a certain gracious little plan she had in mind to further the popularity of her beautiful "fairy-tale princess." Marjorie was too great of spirit to harbor resentment against Doris Monroe, simply because Doris did not like her. Instead she found herself experiencing the anxiety of one who had suddenly encountered a friend in a dangerous position.

CHAPTER II

A DISQUIETING REMINDER

“Br-r-r!” Muriel made a pretense of shivering. “Did you notice how the Ice Queen scorned us? And what a noted person she had with her?” She waited until they had put a few yards between themselves and the other pair of girls before sarcastically launching the inquiries.

“Yes, I saw,” Marjorie returned composedly. “I’m sorry. I knew Leslie Cairns was living in the town of Hamilton. This is the first time I have seen her since last summer.”

“It’s the first time I’ve seen her since before she left college,” Muriel replied. “She’s homelier than ever, but that cheviot sports suit and hat she has on are dreams. What a splendid combination – the Hob-goblin and the Ice Queen!” Muriel’s private pet name for Leslie Cairns had always been the “Hob-goblin.” “Sounds like the title of a fairy tale, doesn’t it?”

“Exactly.” Marjorie nodded abstractedly. She had forgotten Muriel’s uncomplimentary name for Leslie. With the return of it to memory came her own imaginative fancy regarding Doris Monroe. Yes, Doris was truly like an enchanted princess. Now Leslie Cairns had suddenly appeared, bearing fanciful resemblance to a wicked wizard. Marjorie smiled to herself at her own absurdity of thought. Still it made a certain impression on her which time did not obliterate.

“What are you thinking about, Marvelous Manager?” Muriel gave her chum’s arm an emphatic tug. The two had kept up their swinging stride and were now nearing Silverton Hall. “Come down out of the clouds.”

“Wasn’t up in them,” Marjorie smilingly denied. “I was thinking about Miss Monroe, and – ”

“And the fatal results of cultivating Leslie Cairns,” interrupted Muriel mockingly. “Don’t worry, Marjorie. Trust the icy Ice Queen to look out for her own interests. Greek has met Greek. I’ve roomed long enough with the Ice Queen to know that she always pleases herself first. This being Leslie Cairns’ motto, we may presently expect to find them on the outs.”

“I hope so.” Marjorie was not sanguine. “I’ve learned by experience, Muriel, not to under-rate Leslie Cairns’ capacity for making trouble.”

“Oh, I know she’s a star trouble maker, even if she has never succeeded in anything she tried to do to injure us,” Muriel readily admitted. “But you stood so staunchly for the right, Marjorie Dean, in all the fusses we had with her and the rest of the Sans, things simply had to turn out O. K. at the last.”

“I didn’t stand out more strongly for the right than any of the other Travelers,” Marjorie hastily corrected, her reply bordering on vexation.

“Certainly, you did, Modest Manager,” Muriel cheerfully contradicted. “I have all the proofs of the case at my tongue’s end.”

“Keep them there,” Marjorie told her with feigned displeasure.

“Oh, very well.” Muriel was all amiability. “I may think of some other sweet little thing about you later.”

Readers of the “Marjorie Dean High School Series,” which comprises four volumes, and the “Marjorie Dean College Series,” also in four volumes, are thoroughly at home with Marjorie Dean and her many friends. “Marjorie Dean, College Post Graduate,” forms the initial volume in the “Marjorie Dean Post Graduate Series.” Returned to Hamilton College as a post graduate Marjorie took up the work she had set her heart upon doing. Surrounded by a devoted circle of girls who had kept pace with her in college, Marjorie felt that her most momentous year of enterprise and accomplishment had come.

Lack of unity at Wayland Hall had distressed her not a little since her return to the campus. She had dreamed rosy dreams of a unified Hamilton which she had fondly hoped might come true that very year. Instead, Wayland Hall, the house she loved best of all the campus houses, and her own

roof tree, was brimming with dissent. She was now reflecting rather dispiritedly concerning this very thing. The encounter with Leslie Cairns and Doris Monroe had brought it foremost to her mind.

“I wonder how long Miss Monroe has known Miss Cairns?” she now mused aloud.

“Long enough to know better. There you go again, worrying over that selfish iceberg,” Muriel cried impatiently. “I might beneficently warn her against the snares of the Hob-goblin, but would she be grateful? Far from it. No, no, Muriel. Never contemplate such folly.” Muriel answered her own question in a prim, horrified tone.

“I quite agree with Muriel,” Marjorie smiled faintly.

“Some of the upper class girls may tell her a few things about Leslie Cairns. They’d not forget her and the Sans in a hurry. If you had to room with her you’d lose your crush on her. She’s exasperating.”

“I can’t help admiring her. She is so beautiful,” Marjorie made frank avowal. “I always have to stop and remember that she isn’t amiable. There was one thing in particular that I noticed on the night last summer when we invited her downstairs to Miss Remson’s spread. She was truthful. She didn’t say she was too tired, or make any other excuses. She said flatly that she *didn’t care to come downstairs*. Again, afterward, when we were in Vera’s car and met her out walking one Sunday afternoon, we asked her to ride with us. She refused our invitation in the same scornful way. Still it was the *real* way she felt. A girl who wouldn’t bother to deceive others must have principle,” Marjorie earnestly advanced.

“Hum-m. That remains to be seen.” Muriel was not thus easily convinced. “But will I be the one to see? At present the Ice Queen and I are as intimate as the North and South Poles. We don’t even study at the same table.”

“Poor old Muriel. Was it lonesome?” Marjorie flung an arm across Muriel’s shoulders. They were now turning in at the flagstone walk in front of Silverton Hall.

“Yes, it was,” grumbled Muriel. “But it’s my own fault. I took that half a room to please myself. You girls ought to appreciate me and make a fuss over me because I refused to be separated from the Sanfordites.”

“I’ll call a special meeting after the Travelers go tonight and remind the Sanfordites of their duty,” Marjorie teasingly promised as they went up the steps of the Hall.

The blended harmony of violin and piano outside Robin Page’s room halted the visitors before the closed door. They had no more than willingly paused to listen when the music stopped.

“My last A string,” mourned a voice. “I’ll have to go clear to town for another. How provoking!”

Marjorie knocked three times in quick succession on the door, hers and Robin’s particular rap. There was a scurry of light feet across the floor then Robin joyfully opened the door.

“What luck!” she exulted as she did a pleased little prance around the callers. “I was coming over to Wayland Hall directly after dinner. I’ve such a lot of things to get off my chest.” She sighed. “I’m fairly stuffed with responsibility. Hello, Muriel Harding. I haven’t seen you for as much as two days. Where have you been keeping yourself? I want you for a singing number I’m going to have in our first show. We’re going to open with a revue, you know.”

“My A string just snapped,” Phyllis Moore was ruefully informing Marjorie. “So aggravating. I was going to put in two hours of practice this evening. The only store in Hamilton where I can get another string closes at five o’clock. Goodness knows when I’ll be imbued again with such a laudable desire to practice.”

“You couldn’t practice tonight if you had fifty A strings,” Marjorie told her. “The time has come to open the box, Phil.”

“Oh, lovely!” Phyllis’ charming face lighted with pleasure. “Away with practice.” She waved both arms outward with a buoyant releasing gesture.

“You’re to come over to Wayland Hall now; you and Robin. Where’s Barbara?”

“In her room, stuck with a theme. Hope she’s struggled through it by this time. If she hasn’t, I’ll make her leave it; just as though it was a finished literary triumph. I’ll go for her now.” Phil dashed out the door and down the hall to Barbara Severn’s room.

She returned in an incredibly short space of time with Barbara, the latter in outdoor attire.

“Hello, Red Bird,” greeted Muriel. “Who so gay as you?” She shook Barbara by both hands, then turned her around so as to inspect her coat and cap of a wonderful shade of deep crimson, the gorgeous hue accentuated by wide collar, cuffs and bandings of bear’s fur. “What a love of a coat and cap!”

“Isn’t it, though? I am always planning to waylay Barbara on the campus some fine dark evening and strip her of that de luxe red coat and cap.” Phil made threatening eyes at Barbara.

“I’m safe. She doesn’t quite dare risk her dignity as president of the senior class,” laughed Barbara.

Robin had already donned her wraps. It took energetic Phil not more than a minute to snatch her own smart coat of gray tweed from its accustomed hanger. She pulled a black soft Tam-o’-shanter with its huge fluffy black pom-pom down upon her crinkling yellow-brown hair at a truly artistic angle.

“Phil looks more like a wandering musician than ever in that Tam,” was Marjorie’s admiring opinion. The individuality of Phyllis’ clothes and the careless, artistic grace with which the tall, supple girl wore them were a joy to Marjorie.

Down the stairs and out of the house trooped the five friends, bent on making as good time to Wayland Hall as they could. Robin, Phil and Marjorie were anxious to have a talk before dinner about the program for the coming revue and their entertainment plans for Thanksgiving. Muriel had decided to go to town with Jerry and Leila in the car to help buy the eats for the spread. Barbara was eager to see Lucy Warner and glean from her certain biological pointers of which she stood in need. The group sped across the campus, reaching the Hall at just five o’clock.

“No mail for Muriel. What’s the matter with the population of Sanford that I don’t get any letters?” Muriel demanded severely as she turned away disappointedly from the Hall bulletin board.

“I had no idea of your vast importance in Sanford,” giggled Barbara. “You talk as though you were the mayor of the town.”

“Not yet,” grinned Muriel. “I may be the mayoress of Sanford some day – say in about a hundred years from now.” She duplicated Barbara’s giggle. “Marjorie’s the scintillating social star of Sanford.”

Marjorie said not a word as she picked several letters from the bulletin board. Her eyes were glowing like stars at the harvest of mail. There was a letter from General; another from Captain; a third in Mary Raymond’s neat vertical script, had come from far-off Colorado. There was a fourth from Constance Armitage. Fifth and last was a letter in the sprawling childish writing of Charlie Stevens. She and Charlie, the latter now grown into a tall sturdy youngster of thirteen, were regular and enthusiastic correspondents.

In the rack above her own mail she caught sight of two letters for Jerry. One of them was in Helen Trent’s familiar hand. The other – A swift blush overspread Marjorie’s cheeks as she took the two letters from the board and placed them with her own. She knew only too well whose hand had dashed the address across the envelope.

Immersed as she had been in college matters she had given her old pal, Hal Macy, scant thought since her return to Hamilton campus. Sight of his letter to Jerry gave her pause; reminded her of something which intruded itself upon her not quite agreeably. Hal had not answered the latest letter she had written him. It had really been a long while since she had heard from him.

CHAPTER III

LOYAL TO NO ONE

In the dining-room at Wayland Hall that evening plenty of curious and speculative glances were cast at the round dozen of Hamilton's staunchest children as they made merry at a special table which Miss Remson had provided for them.

From the next table to theirs the five Bertram girls exchanged occasional laughing signals and remarks with the distinguished little group of post graduates, seniors and one member of the faculty, the youngest though she happened to be. Aside from the warm friendliness of Gussie Forbes and her four chums there emanated from the other table of girls a peculiarly chilling atmosphere. It hinted of displeasure; a displeasure which stopped just this side of hostility.

"The sophs and freshies in the house can't see us for a minute," Jerry said to Leila in an undertone as they were awaiting the serving of the dessert. "Feel the chill. Get me?"

"Tell me nothing." Leila cast a grim glance about the dining-room. Suddenly her grimness vanished into a characteristic flash of white teeth which always signified her utter amusement. "It is the Battle of Wayland Hall we shall be fighting before spring with a number of distinguished P. G. generals in the thick of the fray. It is the sophs who are ready now to roar at us. The freshies here will but echo the sophs' roars."

"Wayland Hall has been a regular hot-bed of trouble since the soph president was elected." Jerry used the same guarded tones. "With Gus and the disappointed Ice Queen under the same roof can you wonder?"

"I cannot." Leila's shrug was eloquent. "I have not been so completely disgusted with a set of girls since the bad days of the Sans."

"Bad days of the Sans?" Vera, seated at Leila's left, had caught the Irish girl's words. She now repeated them inquiringly. "What tales of ancient history am I hearing?"

"Ancient history that is trying to repeat itself," Leila returned with dry sarcasm. "I have been muttering in Jeremiah's ear that we are not favorites at the Hall."

"It's a case of top-lofty sophs and freshie-fresh freshmen." Vera gave a wise nod. "The traditional meek and lowly freshie is rapidly becoming an almost extinct species."

"So it would appear this year," Jerry agreed with an appraising survey of the long dining-room. Her glance rested for a moment on Doris Monroe, then traveled on to the students who sat at table with her.

"There are the members of the trouble bureau," she told Leila. "Look in the direction I'm looking and you'll know who I mean."

"I heard something about a trouble bureau." Marjorie, next to Jerry on Jerry's right, bent a laughing face forward to her room-mate. "What?"

"First time I ever head you commit a Cairns-ism. For further information about the trouble bureau, find the Ice Queen," Jerry directed not without humor.

"Oh; I understand. But I won't look down at her. If she happened to see us looking at her she would probably be offended, just as Gussie Forbes was when she noticed us eyeing her the first time we saw her at Baretto's. I learned a lesson then. I don't intend to make the same mistake again." Marjorie spoke with the utmost good humor. She was not preaching to her chums, and they knew it.

"Merely because you're such an old friend of mine, Bean, to confide in you doesn't mean that I'm gossiping, I'll say a word or two about the trouble bureau. That tall soph with the straight black hair, black moon eyes and pasty-white face is the chief disturber. She seems to be directing the Ice Queen's campaign. Muriel says she comes to see Miss Monroe about every half hour until the ten-thirty bell puts the kibosh on her visits."

Unlike Marjorie, Jerry could not refrain from voicing her disapproval of Doris Monroe and her group of sophomore satellites living at Wayland Hall. “The next agitator to Moon Eyes is the pudgy, red-haired soph with the mechanical voice. Their real names happen to be Miss Peyton and Miss Carter, but Muriel and I have made a few changes,” Jerry declared with a whole-hearted grin. “Ahem! We call the pair the Prime Minister and the Phonograph. So true to life! What?”

Marjorie, Leila and Vera could not help laughing at the names Jerry and Muriel had waggishly applied to the two sophs. Miss Carter’s speech had a habit of clicking itself from her lips with the mechanical precision of a phonograph. She had a wooden manner of carriage and walk which further added to the impression she gave of something mechanical. As for the name Muriel had picked for moon-eyed Miss Peyton, Muriel herself probably best understood thus far its fitness as applied to the tall, austere looking young woman.

“The traditions of Hamilton say nothing about the naming habit.” Leila shot a playful glance at Jerry.

“Er-r – well, it’s remembering the stranger within our gate in a kind of way,” Jerry defended. “Now that Muriel and I have named ’em specially we can remember ’em so much the better.”

“Such ignoble sentiments from a Hamilton P. G.! I am shocked!” Vera’s small hands went up in simulated displeasure.

“You’ll get over the shock if you don’t stop to think about it,” Jerry assured her. “You may even learn to admire the Harding-Macy classification.”

“It’s certainly time the Travelers got together,” Leila said, now more than half serious in her observation. “We must protect the Hall.”

“I am with you in that, Leila,” Marjorie observed, the light of sudden, unalterable purpose flaring strongly in her eyes. “We have Miss Remson as well as the girls here to think of. We’ve been through a siege of a house divided against itself once here. We must somehow not let that calamity overtake the Hall again.”

“How are we going to stop it, Marvelous Manager, with Gentleman Gus and the Ice Queen all ready to challenge each other to a duel?” quizzed Jerry. “I don’t say it can’t be done. I have great faith in you and your works, Bean.” She beamed patronizingly. “I merely ask you: How is it going to be done?”

“I wish I knew,” Marjorie laughingly confessed. “The Travelers will have to find a way to teach our freshies and sophs here to live up to the Hymn of Hamilton. That means we’ll have to teach them without letting them know they are being taught.”

Jerry looked impishly impressed. “What a simple pleasant task!” she exclaimed with pretended enthusiasm. “I should say we’d better cut out dessert, go right upstairs and plan for it. What’s dessert? Nothing but fresh cocoanut layer-cake and coffee gelatine slathered with whipped cream. Who cares for any such trifles?” Jerry waved an airy hand. She made no move to leave her chair, however.

“Only you. The rest of us have no longing for sweet stuff. But we are so kind as to keep you company while you eat,” Leila made bland assurance.

When the dessert was served the Irish girl deftly abstracted Jerry’s portion of cake and gelatine from under Jerry’s eyes and before the waitress had more than placed the dishes on the table. Up the line went the cake and gelatine until they reached Phil, who sat at the head of the table. Phil welcomed them with effusion and grew tantalizing. She gave a dozen flimsy reasons supposed to justify her claim to it. The table rang with laughter so spontaneous and good-natured more than one of the freshmen at the Hall felt a secret sympathy spring up within for the girls whom they had heard characterized by Doris Monroe’s most ardent supporters as “meddlers and hypocrites” and of having shown marked favoritism.

“If we were to make half the noise they are making Miss Remson would call us to account for it,” sourly observed Julia Peyton to Clara Carter. “I’ve spoken to her several times about the racket

that goes on every evening in Miss Forbes' room and in that Miss Dean's room, too. It's been worse since Miss Harding came to the Hall."

"I know it," Miss Carter nodded an eager red head. "Doris says she simply won't allow Miss Harding to carry on in her room the way she does when she's with her own crowd. She's generally to be found on the campus with some of them, screaming and laughing. Doris met her and Miss Dean when she was with that awfully rich Miss Cairns this very afternoon. She said she felt so mortified at being obliged to speak to Miss Harding. She doesn't speak to Miss Dean at all. She told me she had good reasons for ignoring *her*, but she preferred not to give them."

"Humph." Julia cast a jealous glance at her companion as the two sophomores rose to leave the table. Each girl was jealous of the condescending friendship which Doris Monroe had chosen to give her companion. She felt that she stood a trifle closer to Doris than the other.

Doris was fully aware of this state of affairs. When she had recovered from the sweetness of her first triumph at being "rushed" she made up her mind not to allow her soph and freshie admirers to fail in allegiance to her banner. She soon learned that her selfish air of indifference was one of her greatest assets. It added individuality to her beauty. It impressed her worshippers with a high idea of the value of her acquaintance.

She had inherited this trait of indifference from her mother, whose counterpart she was. She had, as Marjorie suspected, a strong inclination to honesty, one of her father's finest traits. Thus she could not have pretended an indifference she did not feel. Since it was in her soul to be this she accepted the benefits she received from it with secret satisfaction. She was privately glad that she had no desire to be impulsive and readily responsive.

"I heard that the Miss Cairns you mentioned was expelled from Hamilton College," Julia said disagreeably. She was desirous of over-topping Clara's boastful reference to "Doris" and the intimacy it implied.

"Who told you?" Clara's tone was challenging.

"I'll not say who. I heard it, and it came to me directly from someone who knew," Julia made mysterious response.

"I – I – haven't heard any such story as that. I don't believe it's true. I'll ask Doris. *She'll* tell me," Clara ended, tossing her flame-colored head.

"You're very foolish to think of asking Doris," disapproved Julia, her shaggy black brows drawing together. "She'll set you down as impertinent. Even if she should know she wouldn't tell *you*." She gave a short, sarcastic laugh.

"I'm not afraid to ask her," Clara doggedly persisted. "*You* may be, but *I'm* not."

This was the beginning of an angry discussion between the two sophomores which lasted all the way upstairs and for several minutes after the door of their room was slammed behind them by Clara. So vigorously did she slam it that the sharp sound reached the bevy of Travelers as they came trooping gaily upstairs. Robin was singing softly for them an old plantation song: "Get you ready there's a meetin' here tonight," and Phil was patting her hands in time to it.

"Bing, bang; who fired the first shot?" exclaimed Muriel.

"It did sound almost like a shot, didn't it? I haven't heard such a splendid imitation of banging a door since the Sans used to vent their outraged feelings on the doors," chuckled Vera.

"That may have been the first shot fired in the Battle of Wayland Hall," Jerry gigglingly surmised to Leila.

"Then it was wasted on us," laughed Leila. "It will take more than the banging of a few doors to rouse our ire to the point of battle. Though make no mistake: 'The air is full of knives,' as we say in Ireland."

In the room occupied by Clara Carter and Julia Peyton the air was indeed full of verbal knives. Both had voted for Doris Monroe for president of the sophomore class. Both had pledged themselves, with certain other girls at the Hall, to "boost" Doris and "down" Augusta Forbes. Now they were

squabbling fiercely over the lovely, indifferent object of their girl devotion. In their jealous anger with each other they had blindly overlooked the old saying: “In union there is strength.”

CHAPTER IV

TESTING TWO TRAVELERS

“Remember, friends and fellow Travelers, this is a serious occasion.” Ronny, as president of the original Five Travelers, stood facing her companions who had disposed themselves four in a row on Jerry’s couch-bed and on chairs in alignment with the couch.

“It’s not very serious any of us are looking, nor our worthy president, either,” Leila declared, throwing Ronny a twinkling glance.

“Never judge by appearances – so very reckless, don’t you know,” Ronny rebuked, her charming face full of mischief.

“On with the meeting. No stops allowed for repartee. We’ve a lot to do, and a spread to eat up afterward,” Jerry announced in her most judicial tones.

“Thank you for your delicate reminder that time is flying, Jeremiah.” Ronny made Jerry a deep bow, meant to convey her humble gratitude. “As I was about to say when I was interrupted” – Ronny stared hard at Leila – “we are to pass upon the names written on slips in this box.” She held up a small square box of ornamental brass.

During their initial railway journey to Hamilton College more than four years previous the quintette of Sanford chums had helped while away the long hours on the train by banding themselves into a private, informal club which they named the Five Travelers’ Club. They had found interest in looking upon themselves as five travelers about to explore the unknown country of College.

The little association had flourished and been a comfort to them during their freshman year. Every now and then, as the journey through the country of college continued they had added a member to the group. When Commencement and the end of their proscribed course came the still informal club had become the Nineteen Travelers.

It had become the earnest desire of the Nineteen Travelers to perpetuate the club as a sorority. After much discussion it had been decided to leave it as a parting gift to nineteen seniors. Due to the multiplicity of duties which the original Nineteen Travelers had pledged themselves to perform, the organization of the new sorority was left, unfortunately, until the last minute. By that time several new-fledged seniors, eligible to membership, had departed for their homes.

It was Ronny who had then proposed that each Traveler should write on a slip of paper her choice of senior to succeed her. The slips were to be placed in a box, without having been examined, and the box placed in Miss Remson’s care until the return the next fall of the post graduate Travelers to Hamilton College. To them would be intrusted the forming of the new sorority.

“I feel confident,” Ronny continued, “that the seniors whose names are in this box are the very girls we most wish to carry on our club. Still, in the event that any one of you may have an objection to a name as read out by me, I will count ten slowly after the reading of each name. Anyone who may make objection must say ‘no’ within the count, and afterward frankly state her reason for so doing.”

With this preamble Ronny put a hand in the box, drew from it a slip and solemnly read out: “Phyllis Moore.” The laughing gleam in her gray eyes did not accord with her solemn face. “One, two –” she began.

A chorus of laughter drowned her voice, mingled with cries of: “No; no, indeed! I object.”

“Mercy on us!” Up went Ronny’s hands. “Such strenuous objections! Sh-h-h. Be calm and state our objections, one at a time.”

“We can’t decide as to her qualifications for membership until she has been put to the test,” boldly demanded Lillian Wenderblatt.

“Very well,” Ronny agreed with the utmost amiability.

“Poor me.” Phil groaned audibly.

“I would suggest that action be suspended on the candidate to be tested until the other names have been passed upon. In the event that there may be other candidates for the test they may then be put to the ordeal together.” Marjorie made this sly proviso, and with apparent innocence.

“Other candidates!” exclaimed Barbara Severn. “I know only one other besides Phil. Poor me!”

“Barbara Severn.” Ronny promptly read out her name. Another burst of vigorous, laughing “Noes” ascended. Barbara was also condemned to the test.

During the Nineteen Travelers’ senior year at Hamilton they had more than once invited Phil and Barbara to become members of the club. Both had refused the invitation, preferring to receive their election as a parting gift from their elder sisters. They had been as invaluable to the Travelers, however, as though they had been members. Now their comrades proposed to show appreciation in their own peculiar fashion. None of the seventeen other names which Ronny read out for the august consideration of the Travelers were challenged.

“I am sure you will be pleased to hear that Miss Mason and Jer – Miss Macy will conduct the test,” Ronny purred to the hapless candidates.

“That’s right, half call me Jeremiah. Everyone’s only about half respectful to me,” grumbled Jerry.

“Oh, we’re de-lighted,” Barbara and Phil together satirically responded.

“So glad. As all appear to be pleased let the test begin,” Ronny smiled encouragingly on the candidates.

“Ahem-m! Candidates rise and come forward. Stand there; exactly in line,” Jerry dictated grandly. “You will now listen to Miss Mason while she explains to you the nature of the first test.”

Vera came smilingly toward the two girls. “Here is a penny for each of you,” she said generously. “You are not to spend it for candy. No, no.” She shook a forbidding finger at them. “You are to get down on the floor and each shove your penny to the door and” – she beamed beneficently on her victims – “with your nose.”

“Woof-f!” Phil made a despairing gesture.

“I can never do it,” giggled Barbara, “but I’ll try.”

“We are waiting.” Vera sweetly indicated the place on the rug on which the unlucky candidates were to prostrate themselves.

Phil was first to obey. Barbara paused to watch her and learn the way such a feat was to be performed. It took Phil not more than a minute to discover that creeping as a means of locomotion would not aid her penny’s progress to the door. She was obliged to lie flat to the floor, face downward, and wriggle very slowly toward the goal, aiming constant dabs at the penny with her nose.

Her gallant progress in spite of odds so entertained Barbara she had to be reminded of her part in the test. She proved not nearly as skillful as Phil in the art of penny-shoving. Meanwhile the room rang with laughter.

“The candidates will now be allowed a breathing spell while I consult with my valued assistant and prepare the next degree,” was Jerry’s gracious announcement after Phil had triumphantly pushed her penny the required distance and Barbara had shoved hers over half way to the door.

The next degree appeared in the form of two rows of potatoes, placed at short distances apart. At one end of each row was a basket. Jerry handed Phil and Barbara each a teaspoon and assigned them to a potato row. “Start at this end. Pick up the potatoes on your teaspoon and carry them to the basket,” was her next bland instruction.

“That sounds easy,” sighed Barbara. “Oh, my nose,” she tenderly rubbed it.

To balance a good-sized potato on a teaspoon and carry it across a room is a feat which requires practice. Phyllis and Barbara were novices at it. They toiled patiently at the ridiculous task while the Travelers had a hilarious time at their expense. Before either had succeeded in placing more than two or three potatoes in their baskets Vera called them off the job.

“We’ll have to take your will for the deed,” she told them. “Your sense of balance seems to be sadly lacking. Don’t be discouraged. Both of you have splendid useful noses even if your potato carrying was wobbly. You’ve done nobly. Now we are going to give you a feed. I hope you won’t mind being blindfolded for a little while. It’s quite necessary.

“Nothing could please us more,” Phil assured extravagantly.

“Whoever heard of an initiation without the candidates were blindfolded? Go as far as you like.” Barbara was equally gracious.

Jerry proceeded to blindfold the two in her business-like way. Next she motioned to Vera, who brought forward two bungalow aprons. She and Vera politely assisted Phil and Barbara into the aprons. The pair were then led to chairs and ordered to be seated.

From the top shelf of her dress closet Jerry took a square pasteboard box. Opened, two immense, shining cream puffs were revealed. Laughter greeted the sight of them. The other Travelers recognized the puffs as having come from a certain bakery in the town of Hamilton where the size of the dainty and its extra-generous cream filling had popularized it among the Hamilton College girls.

“Here, Phyllis Marie Moore; you can’t say I never treated you. In the absence of plates, hold out both hands.” Jerry lifted one of the huge puffs from the box and carefully set it in Phil’s obediently outstretched hands. She then went through the same performance with Barbara as the recipient. “Eat them nicely,” she admonished with wicked significance.

“Eat them nicely,” mimicked Barbara. “I can’t eat a cream puff nicely when I can see every bite I take of it. Blindfolded – good night!”

“They’re awfully good anyway,” consoled Phil. She held the puff in one hand and went cautiously over the humps and bumps of the big pastry shell. She boldly attacked a corner which promised not to let out too copiously the fairly thin cream filling. She did very well until she had eaten away enough of the shell to court disaster. It would have been hard enough to eat the puff daintily had she been able to see it. Minus sight and a plate or paper napkin on which to place it she soon managed to smear her face, hands and apron liberally with cream. She ate away desperately but there appeared to be twice as much filling as should have been.

Barbara did far worse at puff eating than Phyllis. Her frantic efforts to keep the cream within the bounds of its crisp brown shell sent her companions into shrieks of laughter. Worse still for them, Jerry had decreed that they could not wipe either hands or faces until she gave the word.

In the midst of the fun Marjorie obeyed a sudden impulse to leave the room and stand in the hall outside the door for a moment. She slipped away unnoticed, anxious to ascertain how plainly the laughter and talk of her companies sounded from outside. She and Jerry had hung three heavy portieres which Miss Remson had given them before the door leading into the hall and before the doors of the two dress closets. The manager had assured her that the portieres would serve to a great extent to deaden sounds from within the room.

She smiled her relieved satisfaction after she had listened intently for three or four minutes. She could hear only faintly the sounds of conversation mingled with laughter. She was of the opinion that such sounds would not be disturbing to any student on the same floor.

“Watchman, tell us of the night,” hailed Jerry as Marjorie again stepped into the room. “I know what you’ve been doing. You’ve been listening to how noisy we are.”

“Right-o, Jeremiah. And we haven’t been disgracefully noisy, after all,” Marjorie gaily assured. “While the girls were laughing loudest at Barbara and Phil I stole out of here into the hall. I wanted to find out, if I could, just how noisy we were. That heavy curtain we hung over the door shuts the sound in beautifully. You can only hear it faintly from the hall.”

“Good work, Bean; good work.” Jerry patted Marjorie on the back. “We’ve two more stunts to put Phil and Barbara through yet and the crowd is getting hilariouiser and hilariouiser. Listen to them now.”

A fresh gale of mirth testified to the truth of Jerry's remarks. It assaulted Marjorie's critical ears with almost dismaying force. Reminded of what she had just proven to her own satisfaction she grew reassured. Since that day, early in the fall, when Doris Monroe had reported the joyful little welcome party in Gussie Forbes' room to Miss Remson as disturbing to her peace Marjorie and Jerry had been expecting the same dire fate would overtake them. Their room was the Travelers' headquarters as well as a favorite haunt of the five Bertram girls. "It's our positive good fortune that we escaped thus far," Marjorie had more than once told Jerry.

In itself to have been reported to Miss Remson as disturbers would not have troubled Marjorie and Jerry. Understanding between them and the brisk little manager of the Hall was complete. It was their standing as post graduates, their college honor which they prided themselves upon. As post graduates they would be first to be weighed in the balance. They ardently desired not to be found wanting even in small things.

What Marjorie had not known when she returned to Room 15 after her brief moment of listening in the hall was that she had been observed. Across the hall from Room 15 two interested sophomores had kept diligent watch since the Travelers had come upstairs from dinner. With their own door a few stealthy inches ajar they had heard, or imagined they heard, what they had been longing to hear – noise enough from "those tiresome, interfering P.G.'s" to warrant prompt action on their part.

CHAPTER V

A LEADING QUESTION

Action came while Phil and Barbara were engaged in removing at least a third of the creamy contents of the puffs from faces, hands, necks and even hair. They “cleaned up” amidst the laughter and gay raillery of their friends.

“How much more must we endure?” demanded Barbara as she dried her cleansed features with a Turkish towel and began lightly powdering them at the mirror.

“Oh, not so much,” tantalized Jerry. “There are a few more little stunts that –” Two imperative raps on the door sent Jerry hurrying to it. She pushed the portiere to one side; swung open the door to confront the tall, squarely-built sophomore whom she had nicknamed the Prime Minister.

“Good evening,” she said in level tones. Her keen eyes were missing nothing. Her mind leaped at once to the nature of the other girl’s intrusion, for such it was.

“Good evening.” Her salutation was returned with haughty aggression. In fact every line of the sophomore’s broad face and stiff, unyielding figure spelled aggression. Her peculiarly round black eyes, blacker in contrast to the unhealthy white of her skin, resentfully searched Jerry up and down.

“I wish to speak to Miss Dean at once,” she demanded. “I know she is here.” She eyed Jerry belligerently, as though to forestall a denial on her part.

“Of course she is here. We are entertaining our friends.” Jerry’s matter-of-fact reply brought a dull flush to Miss Peyton’s pale cheeks. “Will you come in?” The concise invitation had a certain restraining effect upon the frowning caller.

“No, I will not,” she refused, her own inflexion rude. “Ask Miss Dean to come to the door. I wish to speak to her, and to you.”

“Very well.” Jerry appeared non-committal. “Just a moment.” She turned away from the door and beckoned to Marjorie.

Marjorie left Barbara and Phil, whom she had been assisting in the removal of the sticky traces of the puff test, and walked quickly to the door. In that brief second on the way to it a flash of dismay visited her. It drove from her eyes the light of laughter occasioned by Phil’s and Barbara’s complaining nonsense as they scrubbed faces and hands.

“What is it, Jerry?” she asked as she reached her room-mate.

Jerry opened the door wider and made room for Marjorie in the doorway beside her. “Miss Peyton has something she wishes to say to us.” Jerry’s round face was enigmatic. Marjorie had but to glance at it to read there what others might not.

Within the room the buzz of conversation had lessened to a mere murmur. Muriel had been entertaining her chums with a flow of her funny nonsense. Even she had run down suddenly, seized by the same surmise which had occurred to her companions. Too courteous to stare boldly toward the door, canny conjecture as to the caller’s errand temporarily halted the will to talk.

“Good evening, Miss Peyton.” Marjorie’s straight glance into the soph’s smouldering eyes was courteously inquiring. Ordinarily she might have followed the greeting with a pleasantry. What she read in Julia Peyton’s face held her silent; waiting.

“I have come to speak to you and Miss Macy about the noise you have been making this evening,” blurted the sophomore, dropping all pretense of courtesy. “It is not only tonight I speak of. Almost every other night we have been annoyed by the noise in your room. It makes study impossible. We have endured it without complaining, but we have had every reason for reporting it. Tonight you and your friends have been more annoying than usual. I decided the time had come to let you know it.”

Before she could say more Marjorie broke in evenly with: “It is true that there is a larger party of girls than usual in our room tonight. We have been conducting an informal meeting of a club

of which we are members. We spoke to Miss Remson beforehand, asking permission to hold the meeting in our room. We – ”

“Oh, *Miss Remson!*” was the contemptuous exclamation. “She cannot be depended upon for fairness. We understand where her sympathies lie. We have spoken to her – ” The sophomore stopped abruptly, caught in a contradiction of her own previous statement of not having complained.

“Pardon me. I understood you to say that you had not complained.” Jerry could not resist a lightning opportunity to discomfit the other girl.

“I should have said that we had not – that we – that we had not reported you to President Matthews,” amended Miss Peyton, glancing angrily at Jerry. Aggressive from the start she was fast losing her temper.

“I cannot allow you to accuse Miss Remson of unfairness without offering my strongest defense in her behalf.” Righteous indignation lent sternness to Marjorie’s clear tones. “She is never unfair. She is always dependable. Since you have said that you reported us to her, I must believe you. She has not mentioned the matter to us. That means she does not consider us at fault.”

“Oh, certainly she doesn’t,” was the sarcastic retort accompanied by a significant shrug of the square shoulders. “*That is precisely the trouble.*”

“Please allow me to finish what I had begun to say to you.” Marjorie made a dignified little gesture. “On the day when Miss Monroe reported Miss Forbes and a few of us who were in her room welcoming her back to college, we talked things over with Miss Remson. Since then we have been more careful not to give offense to other students at the Hall than at any time during our past four years at Hamilton. Miss Remson gave us heavy portieres to hang before the doors when we expected to entertain a number of girls. These deaden the sound. You can see for yourself how heavy and closely-woven this one is.” Marjorie took hold of a fold of the portiere. “I purposely went into the hall tonight and closed the door after me to find out if we were too noisy. I was surprised at the small amount of noise that came from our room.”

“I am surprised to hear such statements from a post graduate.” Julia Peyton gave a discomfited sarcastic laugh. “Frankly, Miss Dean, I have been so disappointed in you. When first I came to Hamilton I had the greatest respect for you. I regret that I should have been obliged to change that opinion.” Julia believed she had said something extremely telling. “Yes; and I do not approve of the way your post graduate friends have tried to run Wayland Hall. It surely does not add to Miss Langly’s credit as a member of the faculty,” she ended in malicious triumph. She was inwardly furious at Marjorie’s and Jerry’s quiet but determined defense of their own conduct.

“Your harsh opinion of our friends is not justified.” Marjorie’s curt proud tones contained censure. “Let me advise you to be careful and not repeat such opinions on the campus. Our friends would not suffer as a result. They are known to be true to the traditions of Hamilton. You would merely succeed in creating unpleasantness for yourself.”

“I don’t care for your advice.” Miss Peyton blazed into sudden wrath. “You are only trying to frighten me into not reporting you and your friends. You meant yourself, too, but you were clever enough not to include yourself in your remarks. I shall report the whole affair to President Matthews; not later than tomorrow morning.” She whirled angrily; started across the hall.

“Wait a minute.” Something in Jerry’s tone arrested the miffed soph’s progress. “I’d like to ask you a question.”

“Well?” Miss Peyton put untold frost into the interrogation.

“Why” – Jerry paused – “if you and your room-mate were so greatly disturbed by our noise, did you not close your door? That would have at least helped considerably to shut out the noise.”

“Our door was – ” began the soph furiously.

“Partly open,” supplied Jerry. “I am quite sure it was,” she continued sweetly, “because I happened to go into the hall and saw for myself.”

CHAPTER VI

LITTLE HOPE FOR P. G.'S

“Stung, and by the truth!” Jerry gave an exultant skip into their room behind Marjorie and hastily closed the door. Miss Peyton, confronted by unassailable truth, had no defense ready. She glared wrathfully at Jerry and Marjorie and hurriedly disappeared into her room.

“We can guess what it’s all about,” greeted Muriel Harding. “We ought to be shocked and amazed, Marvelous Manager, at *you* for fussing. We might expect it of Jeremiah.”

“You might; you bet you might. I’d have done all the fussing this time if Marjorie hadn’t begun answering that trouble hunter first. Believe me Leila, the first attack in the Battle of Wayland Hall was made right at our door. I’m happy to announce that the enemy was sent fleeing across the hall with one good hot shot fired by the Travelers’ friend, J. J. G. Macy. *I’m the one.*” Jerry proudly thumped her chest.

“Could you hear what we were saying?” Marjorie glanced interestedly about the half circle of girls, eagerly formed around her. “I know you would try *not* to listen.”

“We could hear only a word now and then,” Vera made haste to answer. “Of course it was a complaint about us. What is the matter with these sophs? They weren’t so obstreperous last year as freshies?”

“I took Miss Peyton to the freshman hop last year,” said Lillian Wenderblatt. “As a Traveler in the midst of Travelers I may say she was very ungracious to me. I accepted her rudeness as not having been intentional; laid it to her natural manner. Since I’ve heard her rated as the rudest student on the campus.”

“Gussie Forbes says that the freshies who made life hard for her and her pals last year are the sophs who are trying to do it again this year,” said Phyllis Moore.

“Gussie is a wise child. And with Muriel’s celebrated Ice Queen to add to the snarl what hope is there for a few poor old P. G. ladies who had hoped to live out their days in peace on the campus? Oh, wurra, wurra!” Leila crossed her hands over her breast, clutched her shoulders with her fingers, thrust out her chin and rocked herself to and fro with the appearance of a mourning old woman.

“What a dandy old woman you make, Leila. I’m going to cast you for an old hag part in a melodrama, if I can find a good one. The campus is howling for a truly lurid one with outlaws, an abducted child, a lost heiress, an old hag and various other nice pleasant little characters.” Robin was always on the lookout for features. “We can ask three dollars a seat for a zipping old ‘dramer’ and crowd the gym.”

“It’s a good deal more pleasant to talk of shows than fusses,” Marjorie declared, smiling at Robin’s latest ambition. Glancing up at the wall clock she gave a quick exclamation. “Jerry,” she cried, “we’ll have to trot out the spread instanter!”

“Don’t I know it. I’ve already begun.” Jerry made a dive toward her closet.

“What about those two stunts for the candidates?” Lucy Warner caught Jerry by an arm.

“Why, Luciferous, how you do like to see people get into trouble, don’t you?” grinned Jerry.

Lucy’s grave, studious face relaxed into the wide, utterly pleased smile which Muriel and Jerry both enjoyed calling to it. She broke into the funny little half giggle, half gurgle which was always productive of laughter in others.

“The *idea*, *Luciferous*, of your calling attention to poor Barbara and me after all we’ve suffered!” Phil turned reproachful blue eyes on Lucy.

“Oh, I’m not so mean as you think me,” Lucy’s odd greenish eyes flashed warm lights of fun. “It was a case of either stunts or eats. It’s going to be eats, so good night stunts.”

“Good night stunts,” repeated Muriel. “You never learned them words from Prexy Matthews, Luciferous.”

“I should hope not,” chuckled Lucy. “All the slang I know I learned from you and Jeremiah. Kindly remember that.”

“I wish to forget it immediately,” Muriel looked askance at the accusation.

With the hands of the clock pointing to ten minutes to ten Marjorie and Jerry, with Leila’s and Vera’s help rushed the eatables for the spread to the center table. Leila had furnished a box of Irish sweet crackers and a case of imported ginger ale. The ginger ale had arrived only the day before from across the ocean. Sweet pickles, stuffed olives, stuffed dates, salted almonds and small fancy cakes comprised the lay-out. There had been no time to make sandwiches.

Supplied with paper napkins and paper plates the guests helped themselves to the spread. They formed in an irregular group on each side of Jerry’s couch which held its usual four of their number. Marjorie and Jerry seated themselves on the floor in front of the couch bed. Unintentionally they formed the center of the group.

“At last you can tell us what was said at the door,” sighed Robin. “It isn’t curious to want to know, since we are concerned in it, too.”

“I wish you to know,” Marjorie reflectively bit into a macaroon. “I’ll try to repeat as exactly as I can what was said. Then you’ll understand the situation better.” She recounted the conversation which had taken place at the door between herself and Miss Peyton.

“Report us to Prexy; the idea!” scoffed Lillian Wenderblatt. “She is an ambitious trouble hunter. She’ll find plenty of troubles if she carries any such tale to him.”

“I should say as much!” was Vera’s indignant cry. “Imagine a soph reporting P. G.’s and double P. G.’s and faculty and the P. G. daughter of Professor Wenderblatt! Not to mention Prexy’s own indispensable private secretary! And for what? No vestige of a reason.”

“If she does report us, Prexy’s own indispensable private secretary will take action,” threatened Lucy. “I’d be the first person the president would ask about it. If Miss Peyton went to see him in person I’d hear of it from him afterward; I’m sure. If she wrote him, I’d see the letter and take the answer he dictated. I’d ask him if I might tell you girls about it, too.” The light of devotion shone strongly in Lucy’s face.

“Who’s Prexy? We’re not in awe of him with our Luciferous on the job,” was Ronny’s confident declaration. “Long may she flourish.” She held up her glass of ginger ale. The others followed her example, careful, however, to “Drink her down” with repressed enthusiasm.

“I ought to be ashamed to face my classes tomorrow with the sword of Miss Peyton’s disapproval hanging over my head,” Kathie remarked in the pleasant lull that followed the drinking of the toast to Lucy.

“But are you?” quizzed Muriel. “I’m afraid from your tone that you aren’t.”

“Your fears are well grounded,” laughed Kathie. “The sophs and freshies at the Hall, judging from accounts, seem to be positively childish,” she continued in a more serious way. “They’re not snobs as the Sans were. There’s some hope for them. I’ll venture to say that before next June Marvelous Manager will have managed them.” Her prediction was one of confident affection.

“Such a foolish name; and you will say it,” scolded Marjorie and not quite in jest. “A fine manager I am. I can’t even manage my own affairs. I can’t decide whether to go home for Thanksgiving, or stay here,” she added in self-derision.

“One thing we *must* decide before we separate,” Ronny said with energy. “Where shall we meet tomorrow night? Remember we shall be twenty-nine strong. We can’t hold the meeting in one of our rooms. We must have plenty of space for our new Travelers. The living room down stairs isn’t private enough. Has anyone a really brilliant suggestion. No other kind is desired. Save your breath.”

“I have. Hold the meeting in our library,” proposed Lillian Wenderblatt. “I’ll put a sign on the library door before dinner tomorrow night: ‘Professor Wenderblatt: Keep Out,’ and lead Father to

the door to look at it. Then he won't bolt into the room with maybe two or three other professors in the middle of our meeting."

Lillian's proposal was received with approbation and accepted with alacrity. Leila, Vera, Robin and Lillian were chosen to notify the fortunate seniors of the honor in store for them. The rest of the details of the meeting were quickly arranged. Ten-thirty was not far off.

"Don't imagine for a minute that you have seen the last of your initiation," Jerry informed Phil and Barbara, a threatening gleam in her eye. "There are still those two degrees, you know."

"Oh, forget them. We shall," Phil made untroubled return.

"You may forget, but I – nevv-vur." Jerry struck an attitude.

"Nor I." Muriel dramatically tapped her chest and glared at Phil. "Sdeath to all quitters," she hissed.

"Oh, glorious for my melodrama!" admired Robin. "You and Jeremiah shall be the villains."

"I choose to be the principal, double-dyed scoundrel of the show," stipulated Muriel, "or else I'll refuse to see your play. I spurn anything and everything but complete villainy."

"Give me a better part than Muriel or I won't act," balked Jerry.

"I'm going to fly before any more actors go on a strike," Robin raised a protesting hand. "I must look out for Page and Dean's melodramer."

"Only birds, insects, aviators and 'sich' fly," criticized Phil. "I simply must get back at you for not giving me a cousinly warning of what was in store for me tonight."

"Seniors, P. G.'s and faculty will add to the flying classification or lose what shreds of reputation for integrity they have left," laughed Kathie.

"An added word of warning: – Hotfoot it lightly." Jerry's forceful if inelegant injunction sent the initiation party down the hall dutifully smothering their easily summoned mirth. Jerry accompanied the party to the head of the stairs. She returned to the room, keeping an alert watch as she walked on a certain door across the hall. This time she noted with satisfaction that it was tightly closed.

CHAPTER VII

JERRY SPEAKS HER MIND

“The ten-thirty rule will have to chase itself merrily around the campus,” Jerry made airy disposition of that time-honored regulation as she entered the room which Marjorie was already beginning to set to rights. With her usual energy the stout girl gathered up the glasses, tucking them one inside another and setting them in a compact row at one end of the study table.

“I agree with you, Jeremiah. I have letters to read that must be read, ten-thirty rule or no.” Marjorie whisked an armful of crumpled paper napkins and empty paper plates into the waste basket. “There;” she cleared the table of crumbs; “that’ll do for tonight. Thank goodness, all the eats were eaten.”

“I can count on my fingers the times we’ve defied old ten-thirty,” Jerry declared as she reached in the table drawer for her two letters.

“Ten times in four years,” Marjorie commented. “That’s a good record.”

“True, Bean, true. When we stop to consider the past – how wonderful we are!” Jerry simpered self-appreciatively at Marjorie as she sat down under the drop light with her letters.

“How can I help but believe it when you say it like that?” rallied Marjorie. “Anyway, you’re a gem, Jeremiah. I was never more agreeably surprised than when you turned the tables on Miss Peyton tonight. I hadn’t noticed that their door stood open. But you had, smart child. I had no idea you’d been out in the hall on a tour of discovery.”

“I went directly after you were out there. I had a hunch that the Ice Queen would start something. So she did – through those two geese. They had that room last year and didn’t appear to mind our occasional soirees. But there’s still another and a chief disturber – Leslie Cairns. She’s back of the Ice Queen.”

“I think so, too,” Marjorie admitted with reluctance. “I have seen them together several times. Leslie Cairns has other friends on the campus, too. Muriel and I saw her and Miss Monroe coming out of Craig Hall this afternoon.”

“You did?” Jerry showed surprise. “I’ll investigate that. I may find out something interesting. Miss Morris, that nice senior you’ve heard me speak of, who came to the campus last fall from Vassar, says there are only seniors and juniors at Craig Hall this year. Perhaps it was the Ice Queen’s friends she and Leslie Cairns were calling upon.”

“That may be,” Marjorie agreed. “I wonder if Miss Monroe likes Leslie Cairns? Perhaps she cares more about cars and expensive clothes and spending money than anything else. We don’t know her, so we can’t even guess what sort of girl she is at heart.”

“I know what will happen to her if she puts any dependence in Leslie Cairns,” Jerry said grimly. “Don’t waste your sympathy on her, Marjorie. She isn’t worthy of it.”

“I don’t know why I feel so sorry about her, but I do,” Marjorie confessed. “Whenever I see that beautiful face of hers I forget she’s been so ungracious to us. She’s not a namby-pamby kind of pretty girl. She has a high, royal kind of beauty. I’ve not given her up yet, Jeremiah. I’m going to try popularity for her against Leslie Cairns’ money. I’m going to put her in the first show we have. I’ll have Robin ask her. I’ll stay in the background for awhile.”

“Nil desperandum,” Jerry encouraged with an indulgent grin. “Mignon La Salle reformed just to please Marvelous Manager. Why not others? Besides there’s always the pleasant possibility that the Hob-goblin and the Ice Queen may squabble and part.”

“So Muriel says. I mean about those two girls disagreeing. You may make fun of me all you please, Jerry. Just the same if we could win Miss Monroe over to our side it would gradually put everything straight here at the Hall. If Miss Monroe became our friend, she would probably become

friends with the Bertram five. She's friends already with the other sophs and freshies here. Things which are equal to the same thing are equal to each other, you know. Leslie Cairns' friendship cannot be beneficial to her. I am sure of that. Yet to warn her against Miss Cairns would be contemptible. Excuse me, Jeremiah, for keeping you from your letters!" Marjorie exclaimed in sudden contrition. "It'll be midnight before I've read all these." She flourished the handful of letters before Jerry's eyes.

"Go to it, or it may be morning. Why waste precious time flaunting your letters in my face? Why should your five to my two make you vainglorious?"

"Who's vainglorious?" Marjorie made a half threatening move up from her chair. She dropped back again, laughing, as Jerry nimbly put the length of the table between them.

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