



SCHOOLGIRLS

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AN OTTER COMES TO SCHOOL



*What a commotion!
What a frolic—
When Olly arrives at Castlemere!*

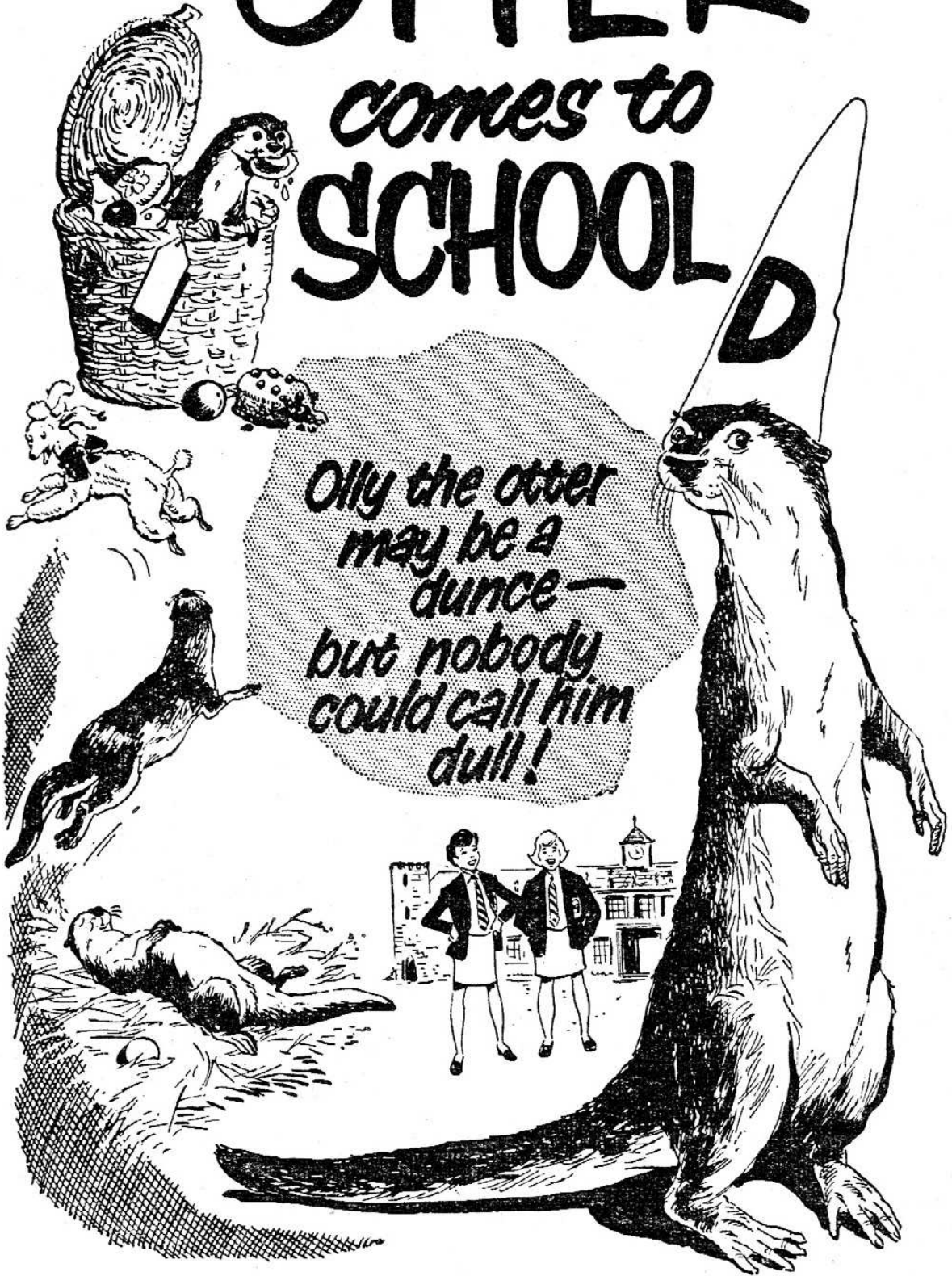
**FUN
FASCINATION
FASHION**



IN
June
EVERY TUESDAY FIVEPENCE

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An OTTER comes to SCHOOL





OUR STORY OPENS IN A QUIET SPOT NEAR THE CORNISH COAST. MARY MOORE AND HER PET OTTER, OLLY, WERE FROLICKING IN A DEEP POOL. SOME EIGHTEEN MONTHS BEFORE, MARY HAD FOUND OLLY MEWING PITEOUSLY OUTSIDE HIS HOLT--OR LAIR--AMONG THE ALDERS UPSTREAM. SOME HOOLIGANS FROM A NEARBY VILLAGE HAD DESTROYED THE HOLT AND KILLED HIS MOTHER, LEAVING THE TINY CUB AN ORPHAN.

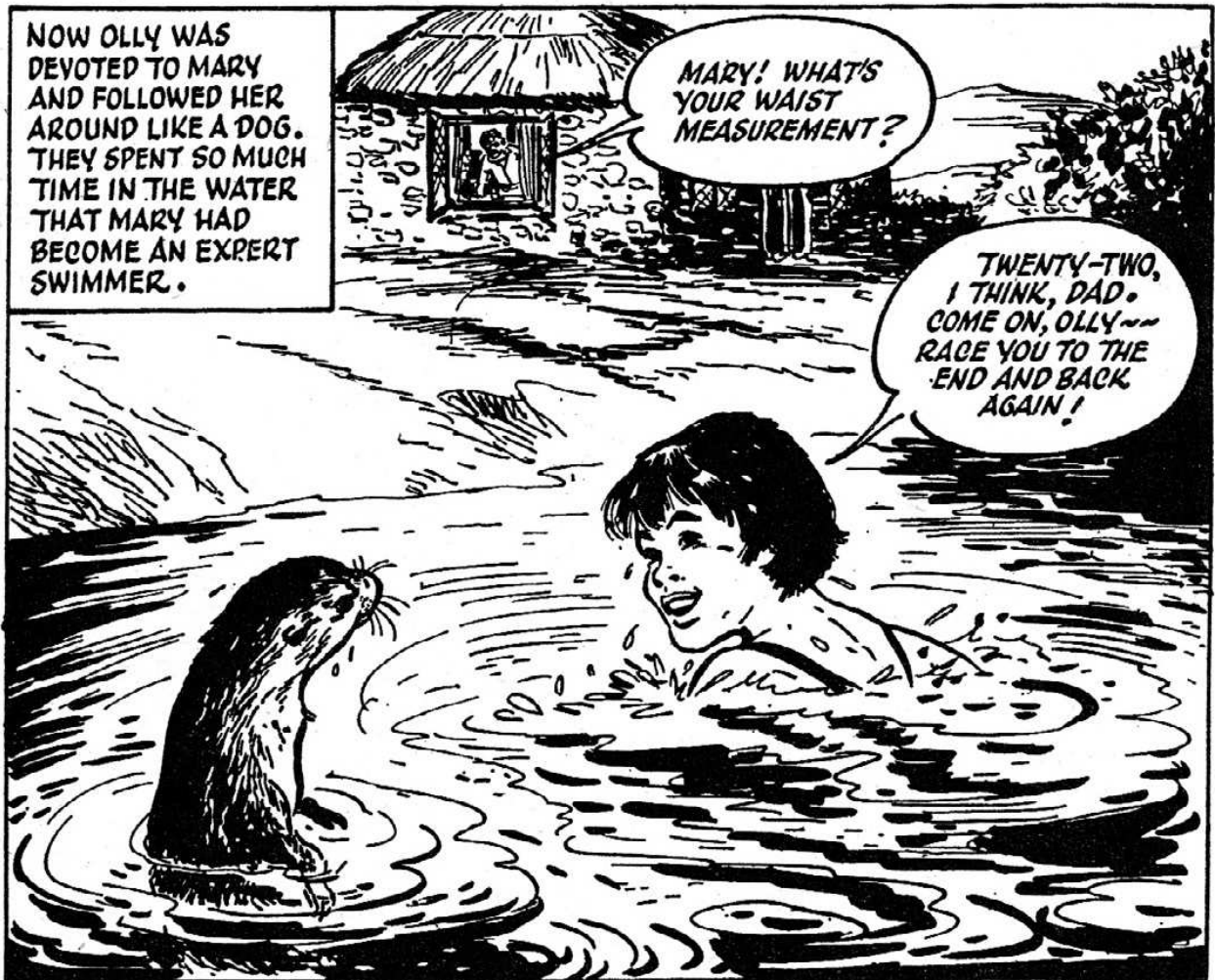
MARY HAD TAKEN THE CUB HOME AND NURSED HIM, FEEDING HIM WITH A BABY'S BOTTLE UNTIL HE WAS OLD ENOUGH TO BE WEANED.



NOW OLLY WAS DEVOTED TO MARY AND FOLLOWED HER AROUND LIKE A DOG. THEY SPENT SO MUCH TIME IN THE WATER THAT MARY HAD BECOME AN EXPERT SWIMMER.

MARY! WHAT'S YOUR WAIST MEASUREMENT?

TWENTY-TWO, I THINK, DAD. COME ON, OLLY RACE YOU TO THE END AND BACK AGAIN!



WHEN THEY ARRIVED BACK~~ WITH MARY
THE BREATHLESS LOSER...



MARY'S FATHER WAS AN
ARCHAEOLOGIST WHO WROTE
LONG AND~~ TO HER~~ TEDIOUS
BOOKS ON ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS.
HE HAD LEASED ALDERBROOK
COTTAGE NEARLY TWO YEARS
BEFORE, SO THAT HE COULD
WRITE HIS LATEST BOOK
IN QUIET SURROUNDINGS,
AND MARY HAD BEEN LEFT
PRETTY MUCH TO HER OWN
DEVICES.
APART FROM A WOMAN WHO
CAME UP FROM THE VILLAGE
A COUPLE OF TIMES A WEEK
TO "DO" FOR THEM, AS
SHE SAID, THE COTTAGE
SAW FEW VISITORS.
BUT SINCE FINDING
OLLY, MARY HADN'T
BEEN AT ALL LONELY.

NOW, AS SHE SCRAMBLED UP THE BANK, HER
FATHER CALLED FROM THE COTTAGE YET
AGAIN!



PROFESSOR MOORE
SCRATCHED HIS HEAD.



OLLY LOOKED AT MARY
QUESTIONINGLY.





IN THE SITTING ROOM...



KEEP STILL NOW.
AH, YES.
HAT SIZE SEVEN

BUT, DAD, YOU KNOW I NEVER WEAR A HAT!



SIZE SEVEN. THERE, THAT'S DONE! YOU'LL HAVE TO, MARY. PART OF THE SCHOOL UNIFORM, YOU KNOW.

SCHOOL? BUT YOU SAID I NEEDN'T GO BACK TO THE VILLAGE SCHOOL FOR THE SUMMER TERM.



NO, NOT THE VILLAGE SCHOOL. CASTLEMERE IN SOMERSET. I'VE ENTERED YOU THERE AS A BOARDER. DIDN'T I TELL YOU ?

YOU CERTAINLY DIDN'T! BUT I DON'T WANT TO GO AWAY AND LEAVE YOU ALL ALONE HERE, DAD!



OH, DEAR~~ I THOUGHT I'D TOLD YOU. I'M OFF TO THE MIDDLE EAST IN A WEEK OR SO TO DO SOME RESEARCH ON ANCIENT BABYLON, SO I THOUGHT I'D BETTER GET YOU INTO A GOOD SCHOOL .



MARY LAUGHED.

DEAR OLD DAD! I DON'T MIND GOING TO SCHOOL WHILE YOU'RE AWAY, BUT WHAT ABOUT OLLY ?

HE CAN GO ALONG, TOO. THEY SAY IN THE PROSPECTUS THAT THE GIRLS ARE ENCOURAGED TO HAVE PETS .



WHOOPEE!
WE'RE GOING
TO SCHOOL, OLLY!
WON'T WE HAVE
FUN?

SOMEHOW I'VE
GOT A SUSPICION
CASTLEMERE DOESN'T
KNOW WHAT IT'S
IN FOR!



AND SO, ONE SUNLIT
MORNING A WEEK
LATER...

WISH I'D
REMEMBERED
TO SEND OFF YOUR
MEASUREMENTS EARLIER,
MY DEAR. YOU COULD
HAVE GOT YOUR
UNIFORM IN TIME
TO TRAVEL IN IT.

THAT'S
ALL RIGHT, DAD!
I DIDN'T WANT TO
SWANK, ANYWAY.
BUT I DO WISH
OLLY DIDN'T HAVE
TO GO IN THE GUARD'S
VAN. HE HATES BEING
LEFT ALONE.

IT'S WASH YOUR
CLOTHES IN WASH
MACHINE - DRY
ON FLAT



RAILWAY REGULATIONS, MARY. AH, AS A MATTER OF FACT I COULDN'T FIND ANYTHING ABOUT OTTERS AT ALL, SO I ENTERED OLLY AS A DOG!

HE'D BE TERRIBLY INSULTED IF HE HEARD THAT!



A PORTER PUT THE BASKET CONTAINING MARY'S PET ON TO A TROLLEY.

I'LL PUT YOUR BASKET IN THE GUARD'S VAN, MISS. IT'S A THROUGH CARRIAGE TO CASTLEMERE, SO YOU WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT CHANGING.

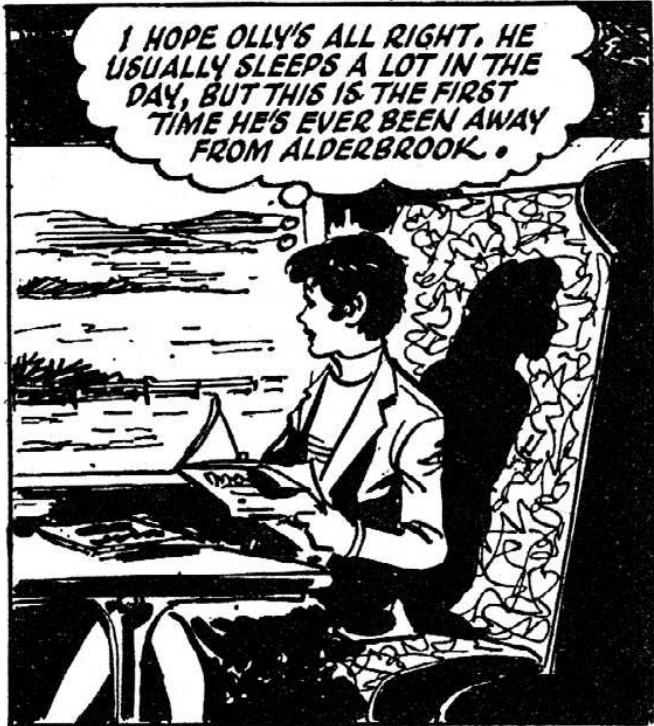
THANK YOU!

A FEW MINUTES LATER, THE TRAIN STEAMED OUT.



'BYE, DAD!
HAVE FUN IN
BABYLON!
WRITE~~
IF YOU CAN
REMEMBER.

I'LL REMEMBER,
MY DEAR!
DON'T LET OLLY
GET UP TO
TOO MUCH
MISCHIEF!



I HOPE OLLY'S ALL RIGHT. HE
USUALLY SLEEPS A LOT IN THE
DAY, BUT THIS IS THE FIRST
TIME HE'S EVER BEEN AWAY
FROM ALDERBROOK.

SOME STATIONS
LATER...



YOUR CASE WILL BE
SAFE ENOUGH HERE,
SUSAN. YOU'VE GOT
ENOUGH TO EAT?

YOU BET, DAD!
ENOUGH TO LAST
TO CASTLEMERE,
ANYWAY!



SO SHE'S A CASTLEMERE GIRL, TOO! SHE LOOKED NICE AND JOLLY. BUT SHE MIGHT THINK IT A CHEEK IF I TRIED TO TAG ON TO HER.



MEANWHILE, IN THE GUARD'S VAN...

MISS MARY MOORE
CASTLEMERE SCHOOL
FOR GIRLS
SOMERSET

THE JOLTING OF THE TRAIN LOOSENED THE FASTENING ON OLLY'S BASKET.



HAH?

OLLY TOOK A DIM VIEW OF THIS STRANGE NEW WORLD INTO WHICH HE HAD AWAKENED. HIS ONE DESIRE WAS TO FIND HIS BELOVED MARY.



FARTHER ALONG THE TRAIN
MARY WAS STARTLED BY
A WET MUZZLE BEING
THRUST INTO HER
HAND.

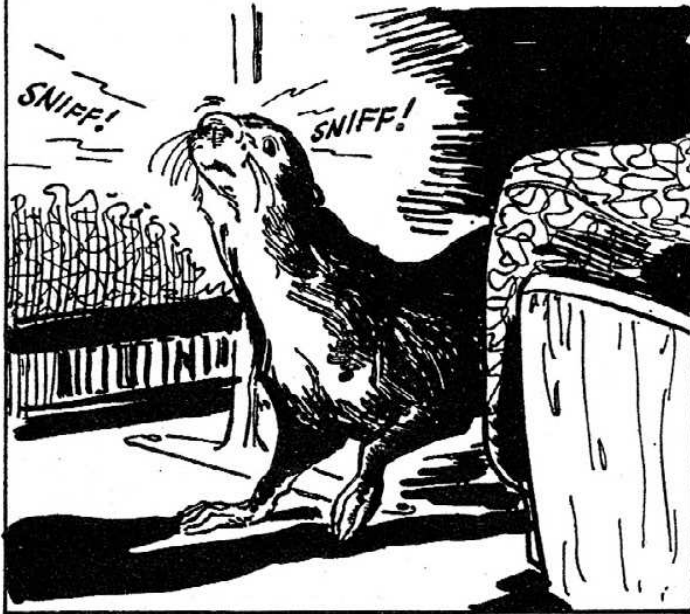
OLLY, YOU
NAUGHTY BOY!
HOW DID YOU
GET OUT?

WHEEE~
WHEEE!

MARY KNEW SHE
OUGHT TO TAKE
OLLY STRAIGHT BACK
TO THE GUARD'S VAN
~ BUT WHAT CAN
YOU DO WHEN AN
OTTER LOOKS AT YOU
SO APPEALINGLY
WITH HIS BRIGHT
BLACK EYES!

ALL RIGHT, THEN~ YOU
CAN STAY! BUT YOU MUST
BE VERY, VERY QUIET, OLLY,
AND SIT UNDER THE SEAT
WHERE THE GUARD WON'T
SEE YOU.

BUT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR A YOUNG OTTER TO KEEP STILL FOR LONG. AND SOON OLLY CAUGHT THE SCENT OF SOMETHING HE LIKED.



A MOMENT LATER...

HEY,
WHO'S SWIPED
MY ÉCLAIR?



MARY HEARD THE
PLUMP GIRL
SEARCHING
FRANTICALLY.





SUSAN EAGERLY ACCEPTED AN INVITATION TO JOIN MARY. AND WHEN SHE LEARNED THAT MARY WAS GOING TO BE IN THE FOURTH FORM AT CASTLEMERE SCHOOL WITH HERSELF...

YOU'RE TAKING OLLY TO SCHOOL? OH, WHAT FUN! BUT IF HE'S GOT SUCH A SWEET TOOTH I HOPE YOU'LL KEEP HIM AWAY FROM THE TUCK-SHOP, MARY!

I'LL TRY! BUT OLLY'S FULL OF TRICKS. JUST LOOK AT HIM JUGGLING THAT PING-PONG BALL I GAVE HIM!

MORE GIRLS DRESSED IN THE GREEN AND GOLD CASTLEMERE UNIFORM BOARDED THE TRAIN FARTHER DOWN THE LINE. SUSAN POINTED OUT ONE OF THEM.

THAT'S VALERIE WINTERS -- THE GIRL WITH THE FRENCH POODLE UNDER HER ARM. SHE'S AN AWFUL SNOB. HER PEOPLE SIMPLY OOZE MONEY!

THE TRAIN WAS MORE CROWDED NOW AND MARY DECIDED TO PUT OLLY BACK IN HIS HAMPER. SHE HAD JUST GONE INTO THE GUARD'S VAN WHEN...



OH, LUMMY!
HERE COMES
THE TICKET
INSPECTOR!

IN A FLASH SHE THRUST OLLY INSIDE AND FASTENED THE LID SECURELY.



HALLO, YOUNG LADY!
MAKING SURE THE
TUCK'S ALL RIGHT?

NOT~NOT
EXACTLY...

PHEW!
JUST IN
TIME!

THE JOURNEY PASSED QUICKLY IN SUSAN'S COMPANY. IT WAS LATE AFTERNOON WHEN AT LAST THEY REACHED THEIR DESTINATION.

HERE WE ARE, MARY ~ CASTLEMERE. LOOK, THERE'S VALERIE WINTERS AND HER CRONY, BELLA WILSON. TRUST HER TO WANGLE HER PRECIOUS POODLE INTO THE COMPARTMENT WITH HER.!



IT'S A FRIGHTFUL BORE TRAVELLING BY TRAIN, BELLA, BUT BOTH DADDY'S CARS ARE IN DOCK FOR REPAIRS. OH, PORTER! I HIRED A TAXI IN ADVANCE. TAKE MY THINGS TO IT, WILL YOU?

YES, MISS!





THAT'S JUST LIKE VALERIE, BAGGING THE ONLY TAXI! BUT MOST OF US PREFER TO WALK TO THE SCHOOL WHEN IT'S FINE. IT'S NOT FAR~~ AND IT GIVES YOU AN APPETITE!

YOUR APPETITE DOESN'T SEEM TO NEED ANY ENCOURAGEMENT, SUSAN! BUT I MUST FETCH OLLY NOW.

HE'LL BE ALL RIGHT. SEE, THE LUGGAGE IS BEING LOADED ON THE SCHOOL VAN. OLLY WILL BE THERE BEFORE US!

AS MARY AND SUSAN LEFT THE STATION YARD, THE TAXI SWEEP PAST.

HOBNOBBING WITH GYPSIES NOW, SUSAN? WHAT WILL YOU PICK UP NEXT?

DON'T TAKE ANY NOTICE OF THAT PAIR, MARY. THE OTHER GIRLS IN THE FOURTH AREN'T BEASTLY LIKE THEM!

MY WORD!
WHAT A FRUMP!

THEY DON'T WORRY ME, SUSAN. I DIDN'T HAVE MUCH USE FOR SMART CLOTHES AT ALDERBROOK, BUT MY UNIFORM SHOULD BE READY SOON.

TOPPING A RISE, MARY GOT HER FIRST SIGHT OF HER NEW SCHOOL.

GOODNESS, ISN'T IT HUGE!
A BIT DIFFERENT FROM THE VILLAGE SCHOOL I'VE BEEN GOING TO!

THERE WERE QUITE A FEW GIRLS IN THE QUAD WHEN THEY WENT THROUGH THE IMPOSING OLD GATEWAY.



THE ORIGINAL BUILDING WAS ACTUALLY A MOATED CASTLE. THERE'S A RUMOUR IT'S HAUNTED. IT'S REALLY ONE OF THOSE RUINS OLLY CROMWELL KNOCKED ABOUT A BIT!

I HOPE MY OLLY WON'T KNOCK THINGS ABOUT!

MARY SPOTTED OLLY'S HAMPER AS SOON AS SHE ENTERED THE HALL.



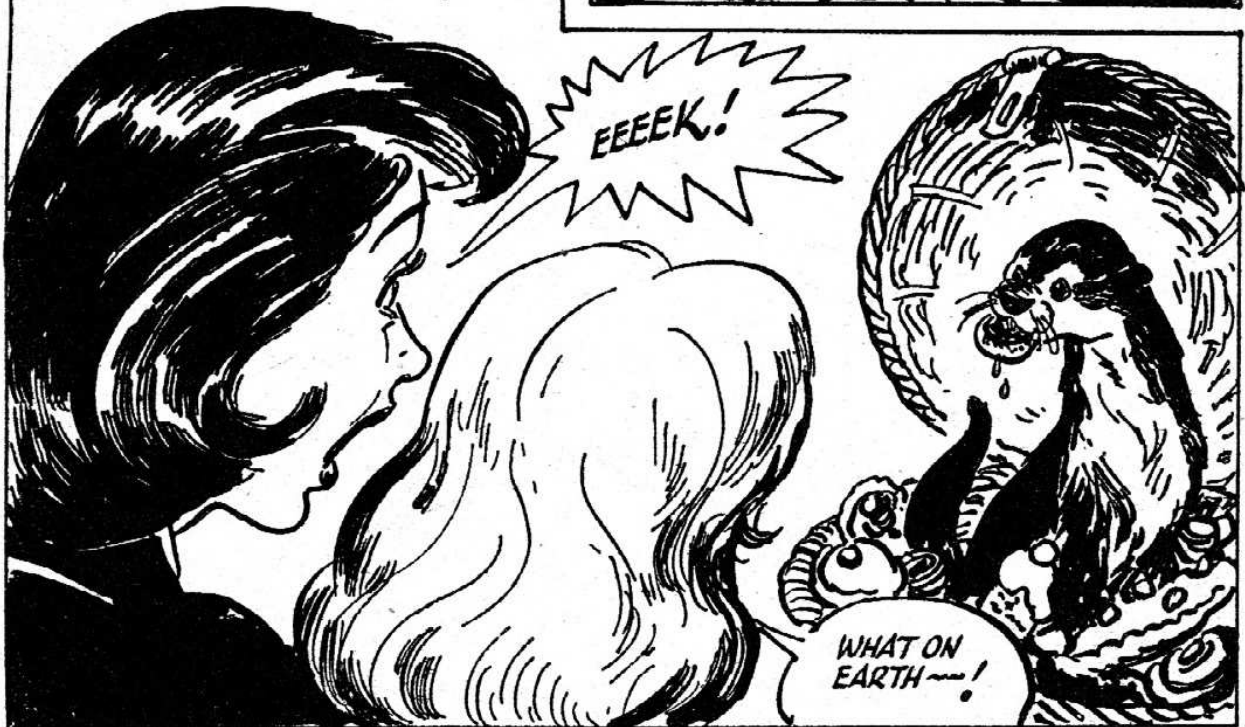
LOOK WHAT THE WIND'S BLOWN IN, GIRLS!

HALLO, THERE'S A NEW GIRL WITH SUSAN.

I MUST SEE IF OLLY'S ALL RIGHT. ALL THE LAUGHING AND TALKING WILL GET HIM WORRIED. AH, THERE'S MY HAMPER!



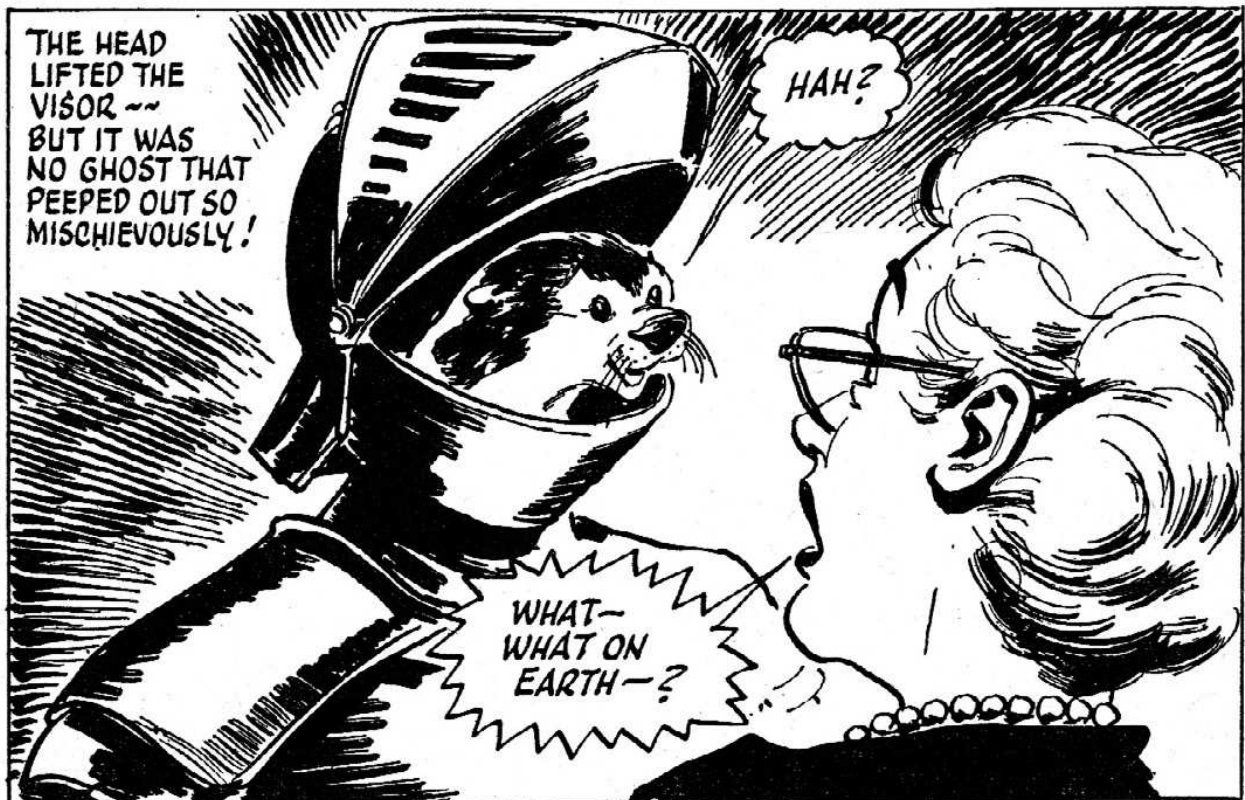
VALERIE'S CROWD GATHERED ROUND EAGERLY AS SHE BENT DOWN AND UNFASTENED HER HAMPER -- TO LEAP BACK WITH A SCREECH!













AS THE TWO GIRLS LEFT THE BUILDING, VALERIE SCOWLED ACROSS AT THEM.

I'M SO GLAD I'M TO BE YOUR ROOM-MATE, SUSAN.

THAT MAKES TWO OF US, MARY.

I'LL GET EVEN WITH THAT LITTLE WRETCH FOR MAKING US LOOK FOOLS, FIFI.

PETS' CORNER WAS IN A SECLUDED PART OF THE EXTENSIVE GROUNDS. OLD GEORGE, WHO LOOKED AFTER IT, SCRATCHED HIS BALD HEAD.

WELL, I AIN'T HAD NO DOINGS WITH OTTERS BEFORE, MISS, BUT I'LL DO MY BEST TO MAKE HIM COMFORTABLE.

YOU CAN RELY ON GEORGE. HE LOVES ANIMALS, MARY.

WHATEVER YOU PUT HIM IN MUST BE STRONG. OTTERS ARE VERY POWERFUL. THEY CAN BITE AND CLAW THEIR WAY OUT OF A BOX AND GNAW THROUGH WIRE MESH!



DOWN IN PETS' CORNER, AS DARKNESS FELL, OLLY KNEW NOTHING ABOUT RULES OR REGULATIONS...

HE ONLY KNEW IT WAS NIGHT AND HIS MISTRESS WASN'T WITH HIM, AND EVEN THICK STRAW WAS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR A SOFT SPRING MATTRESS!



PRESENTLY HE GOT UP AND EXAMINED THE BARS OF HIS CAGE, HAVING DECIDED THAT EVEN HIS STRONG TEETH COULDN'T GNAW THROUGH THE TOUGH STEEL, HE TURNED HIS ATTENTION TO THE DOOR.



BOLTS WERE A CHALLENGE TO
OLLY'S RESOURCEFULNESS
AND IT DIDN'T TAKE HIM
LONG TO CONQUER
THIS ONE!



HE STARTED TO PROWL ALONG THE
BATTLEMENTS. SUDDENLY HE PAUSED...

OLLY KNEW A BED WHEN HE
SAW ONE-- AND HERE WERE
MORE THAN HE HAD EVER
SEEN IN HIS WHOLE LIFE!



THERE WERE TWO SEPARATE FEASTS IN THE DORMITORY THAT NIGHT AFTER LIGHTS OUT. AT ONE END MARY AND SUSAN WERE INVITED TO SHARE HAMPERS WITH A DOZEN OTHER GIRLS.

TO ABSENT FRIENDS—
PARTICULARLY
OLLY THE OTTER, WHO'S
GIVEN US THE BIGGEST
LAUGH OF THE YEAR!



VALERIE AND HER HANGERS-ON COLLECTED AT THE FAR END.

THIS IS JOLLY GOOD GRUB, VALERIE, EVEN IF IT IS THAT FAT BEAST SUSAN'S.

NOT BAD AT ALL! BUT YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THE STUFF MY AUNT AGATHA GAVE ME. WOULDN'T I LIKE TO GET MY HANDS ON THAT OTTER!

MOONLIGHT WAS STREAMING INTO THE DORMITORY WHEN AT LAST MARY SETTLED DOWN TO SLEEP.

I SUPPOSE DADDY'S ON HIS WAY TO BABYLON NOW. I'LL WRITE TO HIM SOON. I THINK I'M GOING TO LIKE IT HERE -- AND SUSAN'S A DEAR!



THEN - THE SILENCE OF THE NIGHT WAS SUDDENLY SHATTERED!

YA-HOO!
HELP!
HELP!



VALERIE'S YELLS BROUGHT MISS TINKLER ON THE SCENE.

WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS NOISE, VALERIE? YOU'LL WAKE THE WHOLE SCHOOL!

IT'S THAT WRETCHED OTTER, MISS TINKLER! THAT NEW GIRL MUST HAVE PUT IT IN MY BED DELIBERATELY!

WHAT NONSENSE, VALERIE!



MISS TINKLER TURNED A FROSTY GAZE ON MARY.

OLLY
MUST HAVE
ESCAPED FROM
HIS CAGE.
I'M SORRY.



TAKE HIM
BACK AT ONCE!
AND IN FUTURE
MAKE QUITE SURE
THAT HE CAN'T GET
OUT. NOTHING LIKE
THIS MUST HAPPEN
AGAIN!

SO OLLY WAS RETURNED TO HIS CAGE AND A STOUT PADLOCK WAS PUT ON THE DOOR. DURING THE NEXT FEW DAYS, EVERYTHING WENT SMOOTHLY. OLLY DIDN'T EXACTLY SETTLE DOWN, BECAUSE HE DIDN'T LIKE BEING IN A CAGE. BUT AT LEAST HE KEPT OUT OF MISCHIEF. MARY TOOK HER PLACE IN THE FOURTH FORM UNDER MISS NORMAN AND, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF VALERIE WINTERS AND BELLA WILSON, SHE GOT ON WELL WITH THE OTHER GIRLS.

THEN CAME THE DAY WHEN MARY WAS TO COLLECT HER UNIFORM.



MORNING, OLLY!
NO LESSONS THIS
MORNING, SO WE'RE TAKING
YOU INTO TOWN TO SEE IF
YOUR MISTRESS' UNIFORM
IS READY.

BUT
YOU'RE GOING
ON A LEAD,
MY LAD!





MODOM LOOKS SO ELEGANT!
I SHOULD KEEP IT ON-- WE
CAN TAKE YOUR OTHER CLOTHES
BACK IN A PARCEL. BUT,
I SAY, WHERE'S THE
HAT?

MM?
OH--
OLLY!



THEY WENT BACK TO
SCHOOL BY BUS.



WELL, I'VE
CARRIED SOME
RUM-LOOKIN'
PASSENGERS
IN MY TIME,
BUT THIS BEATS
THE LOT!







BUT IF YOU'RE THINKING OF ASKING HIS PERMISSION TO USE THE RIVER, I WOULDN'T HOLD OUT MUCH HOPE. HE'S A PEPPERY OLD BOY AND HIS NEW GARDENER IS ALWAYS ON THE LOOK-OUT FOR TRESPASSERS.

COME ON, YOU TWO, YOU HAVEN'T GOT MUCH TIME LEFT FOR LUNCH.



THE HEAD WANTS US BACK IN CLASS AS SOON AS WE'VE EATEN. EXPECT IT'S SOMETHING TO DO WITH COLONEL GUNTER'S VISIT.

WE'D BETTER START TUCKING IN, MARY.



A LITTLE LATER...

YOU ALL KNOW THAT COLONEL GUNTER IS COMING ROUND THE FORM ROOMS THIS AFTERNOON. I EXPECT YOU ALL TO BE ON YOUR BEST BEHAVIOUR!



MISS NORMAN WON'T BE HERE FOR THE FIRST LESSON, SO PERHAPS YOU'D TAKE OVER, VALERIE.

YES, MISS TINKLER!



ALL RIGHT, QUIET, EVERYBODY! YOU -- NEW GIRL! STOP CHATTERING!

I WAS ONLY SAYING --

I'M NOT INTERESTED IN WHAT YOU WERE SAYING, BUT SINCE YOU CAN'T SEEM TO STOP TALKING YOU'D BETTER COME OUT FRONT AND TALK TO THE WHOLE CLASS!

BE QUIET, MARGARET. I'M IN CHARGE HERE, AND I'M TELLING YOU TO COME OUT AND GIVE US A LECTURE, MARY MOORE.

THIS'LL BE FUN. BET VAL MAKES A PROPER FOOL OF HER.

PACK IT UP, VALERIE.

YOU'RE WORSE THAN MISS NORMAN ON ONE OF HER BAD DAYS!



AS VALERIE MOVED AWAY FROM THE TABLE, A MOVEMENT OUTSIDE CAUGHT HER EYE.



THAT WRETCHED OTTER'S FREE AGAIN! WHAT A LARK IF HE CAME IN HERE, SPECIALLY WITH THE GOVERNOR COMING ROUND ANY MOMENT!

ER--IT'S RATHER WARM IN HERE. I'LL JUST OPEN THIS WINDOW.



OLLY SPOTTED THE OPEN WINDOW, HEARD HIS BELOVED MISTRESS' VOICE--AND DID JUST WHAT VALERIE HOPED HE WOULD.



WHAT SHALL I LECTURE ABOUT?

JIMINY, LOOK! WE'VE GOT A VISITOR!

THAT'S UP TO YOU!

THE HEADMISTRESS, APPROACHING THE FOURTH FORM ROOM WITH MISS NORMAN AND COLONEL GUNTER, FROWNED AT A SUDDEN BURST OF LAUGHTER.



HMPH! SOME OF YOUR GIRLS SEEM TO BE ENJOYING THEIR LESSONS, MISS TINKLER.

I THINK I'D BETTER LOOK INTO THIS, COLONEL!



IT'S DING-DONG! GOSH, THAT'S TORN IT!

WHAT IS GOING ON HERE ~~~ OH, I SEE!



MARY KNEW THAT OLLY'S STAY AT CASTLEMERE WAS IN THE BALANCE AT THAT MOMENT AND SHE THOUGHT QUICKLY.

I'VE BEEN ASKED TO GIVE A LECTURE, MISS TINKLER!

WELL?

WELL, I'M--ER--USING A LIVE SPECIMEN, AS YOU SEE!

MISS TINKLER HESITATED,
THEN...



PROCEED!



YOU'LL NOTICE, GIRLS, THAT THE OTTER HAS WEBBED FEET LIKE A DUCK, THAT IS WHY HE IS SUCH A GOOD SWIMMER. BUT BABY OTTERS DON'T TAKE NATURALLY TO THE WATER LIKE DUCKLINGS, THEY HAVE TO BE TAUGHT TO SWIM BY THEIR MOTHER.



THE OTTER RESTS MOST OF THE DAY AND AT SUNSET HE EMERGES FROM HIS HOLT, OR LAIR, GIVES HIS FLUTE-LIKE WHISTLE AND MAKES FOR HIS FAVOURITE POOL, WHERE HE HUNTS FISH.



WHEN THE GOVERNOR AND MISTRESSES HAD GONE,
MARY TURNED TO VALERIE WITH AN IMPISH GRIN.

AND THANK
YOU, VALERIE!
IF YOU HADN'T
LET OLLY IN,
I SHOULDN'T
HAVE GOT
PERMISSION!

ARE YOU
SUGGESTING
I LET YOUR
WRETCHED OTTER
IN ON PURPOSE?

I'M ONLY SAYING
THAT IF YOU HAD, YOU
COULDN'T HAVE DONE ME
A BETTER TURN!

GOOD FOR YOU,
MARY.

SEEMS TO
ME SOMEONE'S
COME OFF SECOND
BEST!

AFTER THAT MARY TOOK
OLLY TO THE RIVER EVERY
EVENING .

TIME TO
GO NOW, OLLY .
COME ON !

WHEE!
WHEE!

SOMETIMES
MARY SWAM, TOO,
AND IT WAS JUST
LIKE BEING BACK
AT ALDERBROOK .

PHEEE!

THERE'S
NO NEED TO
WHISTLE AT ME
-- I'M COMING!

ONE DAY, MARY MET THE COLONEL'S GARDENER, JANSEN. HE GAVE HER A SURLY NOD.

GETS COOL THIS TIME O' DAY. YOU OUGHT TER COME IN THE MORNING, MISSIE.

OH, OLLY PREFERS THE EVENINGS~~ AND ANYWAY I HAVEN'T TIME IN THE MORNING. WE SHAN'T BE ANY TROUBLE, REALLY.



NO TROUBLE, EH! IF SHE COMES EACH EVENING IT'S GOIN' TO RUIN EVERYTHING! GOT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT PERISHIN' OTTER~~ FAST!



THE NEXT DAY WHEN MARY AND SUSAN WENT ALONG TO SEE OLLY DURING MORNING BREAK...

IT'S NOT TIME FOR YOUR SWIM YET, OLLY.



OH, LOOK, HE WANTS TO COME OUT. TELL YOU WHAT, MARY. I'LL TREAT HIM TO AN ÉCLAIR IN THE TUCKSHOP!

THE TUCKSHOP WAS CROWDED. VALERIE WAS THERE, TRYING TO GET FIFI TO SHOW OFF SOME OF HER TRICKS.

HEY, TAKE THAT STUPID-LOOKING ANIMAL OUT OF HERE!

HE'S GOT AS MUCH RIGHT TO BE HERE AS YOUR DOG, VALERIE.



VALERIE, STILL SMARTING FROM THE CLASSROOM SCENE, LOST HER TEMPER.

YOU DARE SPEAK TO ME LIKE THAT, YOU~~ YOU BUMPKIN! YOU AND YOUR SILLY OTTER SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO COME TO A DECENT SCHOOL~~



OLLY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS ALL ABOUT, BUT HE TOOK EXCEPTION TO FIFI YAPPING AT HIS MISTRESS.







I MIGHT HAVE KNOWN IT! YOUNG LADY, YOU WILL ACCOMPANY ME TO YOUR HEADMISTRESS.

I'LL TAKE CARE OF OLLY, MARY!



AS THE DOOR CLOSED BEHIND MARY AND THE COLONEL ...

THAT'S ROTTEN OF YOU, VALERIE! YOU WERE TO BLAME-- IF YOU HADN'T SHOUTED AND LOST YOUR TEMPER FIFI WOULDN'T HAVE BARKED AND OLLY WOULDN'T HAVE GOT EXCITED.

AND IF OLLY HADN'T CHASED FIFI THE CROCKERY WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN BROKEN--SO IT'S HIS FAULT!



OLLY WASN'T USED TO ALL THIS BOTHER-- HE WAS GLAD WHEN SUSAN TOOK HIM BACK TO PETS' CORNER.

DON'T YOU WORRY, OLLY. I EXPECT MARY WILL GET A WIGGING, BUT THAT'S ALL.

BUT WHEN MARY RETURNED TO THE STUDY LATER, SUSAN KNEW THAT IT WAS SOMETHING FAR MORE SERIOUS.



WHAT HAPPENED?
DID HE REALLY
BLAME OLLY?

YES, BUT
IT'S NOT JUST
THAT, SUSAN.
OLLY HAS GOT
TO GO!

GO! WHAT~~~
JUST BECAUSE
HE CHASED
FIFI?



THAT'S ONLY PART OF IT.
COLONEL GUNTER CAME HERE
TO COMPLAIN THAT OLLY HAD
RAIDED HIS POND OF RARE FISH!
I'VE GOT TO PUT OLLY IN A PET
SHOP TO BE LOOKED AFTER,
TILL END OF TERM!

BUT YOU'D HAVE KNOWN IF HE RAIDED
THE POND! YOU'VE BEEN WITH HIM
EVERY TIME HE'S GONE TO THE
RIVER~~~



I'M SURE HE
DIDN'T DO IT~~~
I KNOW IT!
BUT WHO ELSE
WOULD HAVE DONE IT?
I CAN'T REALLY BLAME
THEM FOR THINKING
IT WAS OLLY~~~



~~~ BUT I WON'T SEND HIM TO A  
PET SHOP! BEING SHUT UP ALL THE  
TIME WOULD BE BAD ENOUGH, BUT  
WITHOUT ME HE'D PINE AWAY!  
I'D RATHER SET HIM FREE!



I'LL TAKE HIM BACK TO ALDERBROOK-- YES, THAT'S IT! I'LL TAKE HIM THIS AFTERNOON -- IT'S A HALF-HOLIDAY!

AND I'LL COME WITH YOU, MARY.



OLLY WAS DELIGHTED TO BE LET OUT SO EARLY. HE WHISTLED AND SNUFFLED ABOUT HAPPILY AS HE FOLLOWED THE TWO GIRLS ACROSS THE FIELDS.

POOR OLLY. HE DOESN'T KNOW THIS IS THE LAST WALK WE SHALL HAVE TOGETHER.

BUT HE'LL BE ALL RIGHT AT ALDERBROOK, WON'T HE, MARY?



OH, I DO HOPE SO, SUSAN! THE TROUBLE IS HE'S NOT BEEN BROUGHT UP TO BE WARY OF HUMANS, AND SOME PEOPLE TRAP OTTERS. BUT AT LEAST THERE'S A CHANCE HE'LL BE ALL RIGHT, WHEREAS IF HE WENT TO A PET SHOP, I KNOW HE'D PINE.



I THINK YOU'RE DOING THE RIGHT THING. WE'LL FOLLOW THE TRACK PAST THE OLD MILL TO THE STATION-- THERE'S PLENTY OF TIME BEFORE THE TRAIN GOES.





IF IT WEREN'T FOR OLLY'S INQUISITIVENESS, MARY MIGHT HAVE PASSED THE MILL WITHOUT A SECOND GLANCE AND OUR STORY WOULD HAVE HAD A VERY DIFFERENT ENDING. BUT...

OLLY, WHAT ARE YOU UP TO NOW? WHAT HAVE YOU SEEN IN THERE?

HAH?



INSIDE THE DERELICT MILL...

...GOT RID OF THE GIRL JUST IN TIME-- MADE IT LOOK LIKE HER OTTER'D RAIDED THE OLD BOY'S PRECIOUS FISH POND.

YOU QUITE SURE EVERYTHING'S ALL SET FOR TONIGHT? YOU SAY THE OLD FELLER'LL BE OUT -- GOIN' TO THE SCHOOL, EH?



THE GIRLS DARTED BEHIND A BUSH AS THE TWO MEN EMERGED.

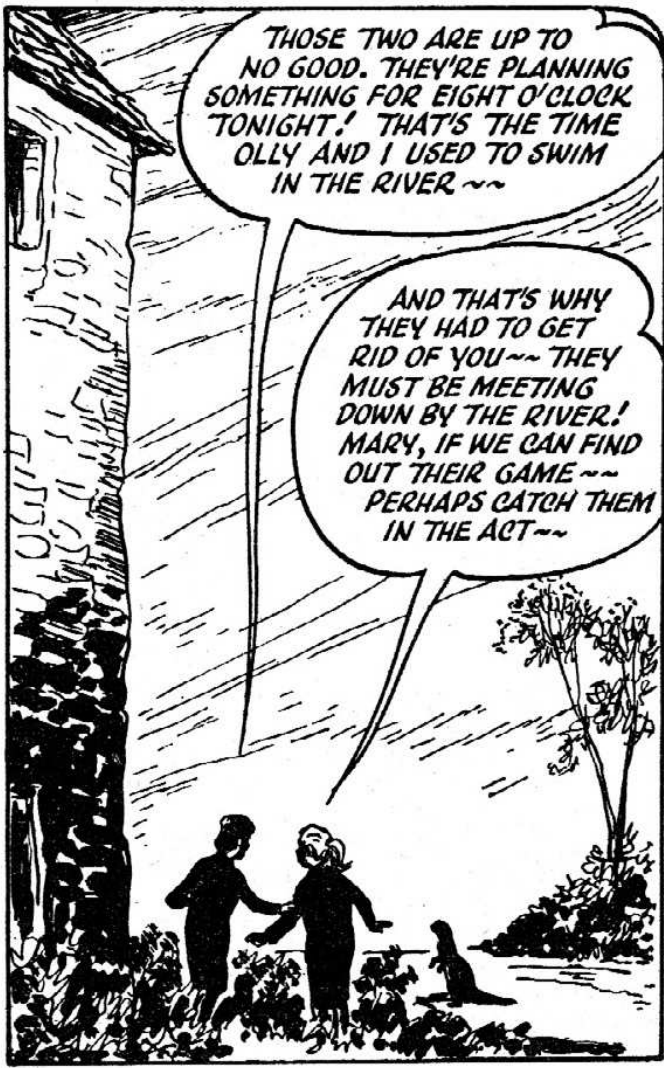
YES. NOTHING CAN GO WRONG, I TELL YOU. YOU JUST BE SURE YOU'RE THERE AT EIGHT O'CLOCK SHARP!

ALL RIGHT, BUT WATCH YOUR STEP, AND DON'T FORGET -- WAIT FOR MY SIGNAL!



MY GOODNESS, ONE OF THOSE MEN WAS JANSEN, COLONEL GUNTER'S NEW GARDENER.

D'YOU HEAR WHAT HE SAID ABOUT THE FISH POND? HE DELIBERATELY FRAMED OLLY!

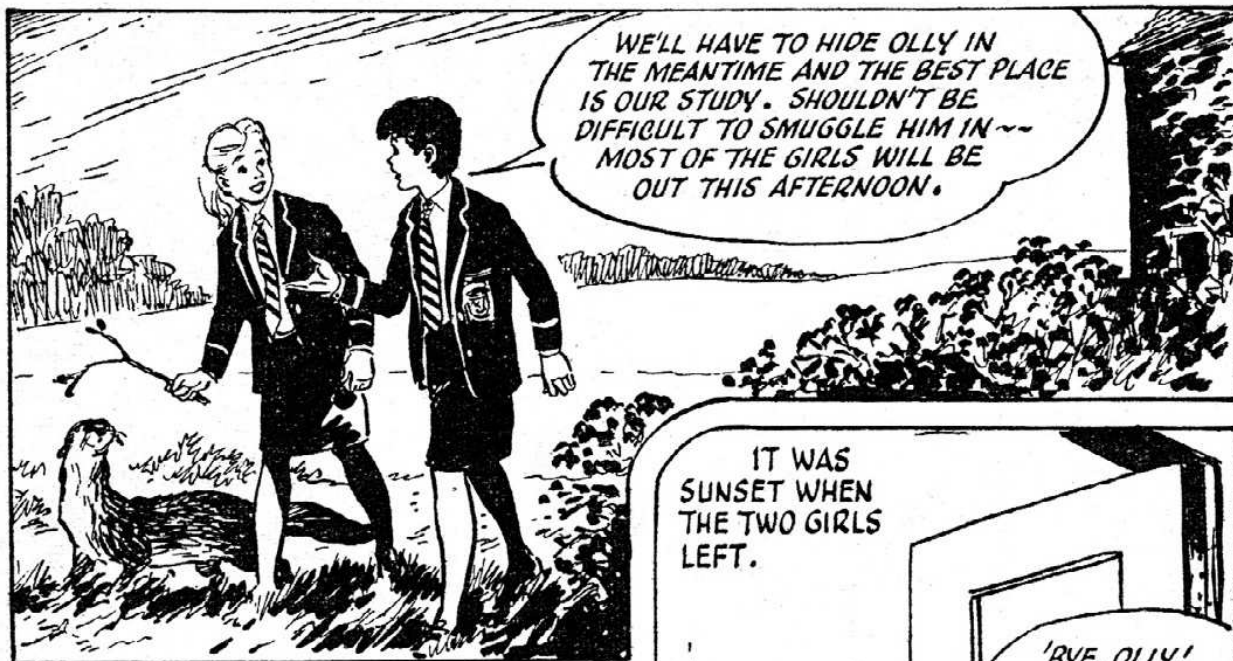


THOSE TWO ARE UP TO NO GOOD. THEY'RE PLANNING SOMETHING FOR EIGHT O'CLOCK TONIGHT! THAT'S THE TIME OLLY AND I USED TO SWIM IN THE RIVER ~~

AND THAT'S WHY THEY HAD TO GET RID OF YOU ~~ THEY MUST BE MEETING DOWN BY THE RIVER! MARY, IF WE CAN FIND OUT THEIR GAME ~~ PERHAPS CATCH THEM IN THE ACT ~~



WE'VE GOT TO, SUSAN! IF WE DO THAT WE CAN PROVE OLLY DIDN'T RAID THE POND ~~ AND HE WON'T HAVE TO GO AWAY!



WE'LL HAVE TO HIDE OLLY IN THE MEANTIME AND THE BEST PLACE IS OUR STUDY. SHOULDN'T BE DIFFICULT TO SMUGGLE HIM IN-- MOST OF THE GIRLS WILL BE OUT THIS AFTERNOON.



IT WAS SUNSET WHEN THE TWO GIRLS LEFT.

'BYE, OLLY! AFTER TONIGHT, MAYBE WE SHAN'T HAVE TO LOSE EACH OTHER.

ALL CLEAR! COME ON!



HALF-AN-HOUR LATER...

LUCKILY THIS KNOB'S TOO JOLLY STIFF FOR OLLY TO BE ABLE TO OPEN THE DOOR-- WE'LL JUST HAVE TO CHANCE THAT NOBODY COMES IN!

SOON AS WE'VE HAD TEA WE'LL GO. I'LL TAKE MY BIKE, THEN IF SOMETHING DOES HAPPEN I CAN REACH A 'PHONE AND GET THE POLICE QUICKLY. CRIKEY, ISN'T IT EXCITING!





TEN MINUTES LATER ...

SUSAN, WHAT ABOUT A GAME OF TABLE TENNIS ~ OH! OLLY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?



OLLY DIDN'T STOP TO EXPLAIN. HE HAD ONLY ONE THOUGHT IN HIS MIND ~ IT WAS TIME FOR HIS SWIM.

OLLY! COME BACK! OH, DEAR, THIS IS GOING TO MEAN TROUBLE!

IT DID!  
COLONEL GUNTER SPOTTED OLLY FROM THE WINDOW OF THE HEAD'S STUDY.



THAT OTTER WHO'S SUPPOSED TO HAVE GONE TO THE PET SHOP ~ HE'S DOWN THERE! MAKING FOR THE RIVER! BY GAD, HE'LL BE AFTER MY FISH AGAIN!



IT HAPPENED SUDDENLY. A CROWD OF GIRLS, LED BY COLONEL GUNTER, CAME CHARGING OVER THE BRIDGE.



HE CAME THIS WAY, I THINK...

LOOK! THERE'S SUSAN AND MARY!

YOU TWO GIRLS! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

OH, CRUMBS. WE'RE CAUGHT!



...SO YOU SEE; WE'RE SURE THE TWO MEN ARE UP TO SOMETHING... WHY ELSE SHOULD HE HAVE STOPPED THE BOAT HERE?

THE ENGINE'S CONKED OUT, THAT'S WHY. AS FOR THIS OTHER MAN CALLED JANSEN... I'VE NEVER HEARD OF HIM!



THERE WAS NOTHING FOR IT BUT TO TRY TO EXPLAIN...

GOOD THING WE ARRANGED THAT SIGNAL. JANSEN WILL GUESS SOMETHING'S WRONG WHEN HE DOESN'T HEAR IT.



OLLY, WHO HAD MADE STRAIGHT FOR THE WATER, SUDDENLY SPOTTED MARY ON THE BANK. HE GAVE AN EXCITED WHISTLE.



THE WHISTLE WAS HEARD BY JANSEN WHO HAD JUST EMERGED FROM THE COLONEL'S HOUSE.



JANSEN HAD THE SHOCK OF HIS LIFE WHEN HE REACHED THE RIVER BANK!







SO OLLY PLAYED A PART IN BRINGING THESE ROGUES TO BOOK, EH! SEEMS TO ME I'VE DONE HIM A GRAVE INJUSTICE.

YES, IT WAS JANSEN WHO MADE IT LOOK LIKE OLLY HAD RAIDED THE POND. I KNEW HE'D NEVER DO SUCH A THING.



SUSAN WENT OFF ON HER BIKE AND FETCHED THE POLICE AND THE TWO MEN WERE TAKEN INTO CUSTODY. NEXT DAY...

OLLY MAY USE THE RIVER WHENEVER HE LIKES AND, WHAT'S MORE, I'M GOING TO HAVE A SWIMMING POOL BUILT FOR THE GIRLS!

WHACKO!  
I--I MEAN, THANK YOU, SIR.  
OLLY'S GOING TO LOVE CASTLEMERE AS MUCH AS I DO.



WHEN THE OTHER GIRLS HEARD THE NEWS OLLY WAS A GREAT FAVOURITE. EVEN FIFI DECIDED TO BE FRIENDLY.

OH, YOU DEAR, GOON-FACED OTTER! WE ALL LOVE YOU!

HUH, I WOULDN'T SAY THAT. BUT HE'S NOT SO BAD -- HE GROWS ON YOU, AND I'VE -- ER, I'VE BOUGHT HIM A CHOCOLATE ECLAIR.



VALERIE HAD BEEN WON OVER. IT WAS A TRIUMPH INDEED FOR OLLY!

NOW PLEASE TURN OVER FOR PATTI'S PAGE

# A LETTER FROM PATTI, the youngest girl in the office



Hello girls !

This month's stories were fun, weren't they ? Specially " An Otter Comes To School." But between you and me I like the next four stories, due out on 6th August, even better. There's a new story about that gay gang, the Peewits ; the adventures of a family who cross the Sahara in a shaky old taxi ; a mystery story about some boys and girls who think they've seen a visitor from outer space, and a story called " The Invisible Schoolgirl." That's a real wow !

Well, now, you're sure to be wondering what I'm doing hooking a boot in the picture. Thereby hangs a tale. On fine weekends in the summer I often go picnicking with my family by the river. Usually I just stretch out in the sun, but last time my young brother Stevie tried to teach me to fish. At first I thought it was great fun, sitting there watching the float bob on the water. But I just sat . . . and sat . . . and sat ! Then, just as I was nodding off with boredom, my float went right down. Oh, the excitement ! I'd got something ! It felt so heavy . . . it must be a whopper ! It was—a whopping great boot ! Next Saturday I'm going back to my sunbathing.

Lots of love,



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*Patti*

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# Topsy's Mystery Uncle



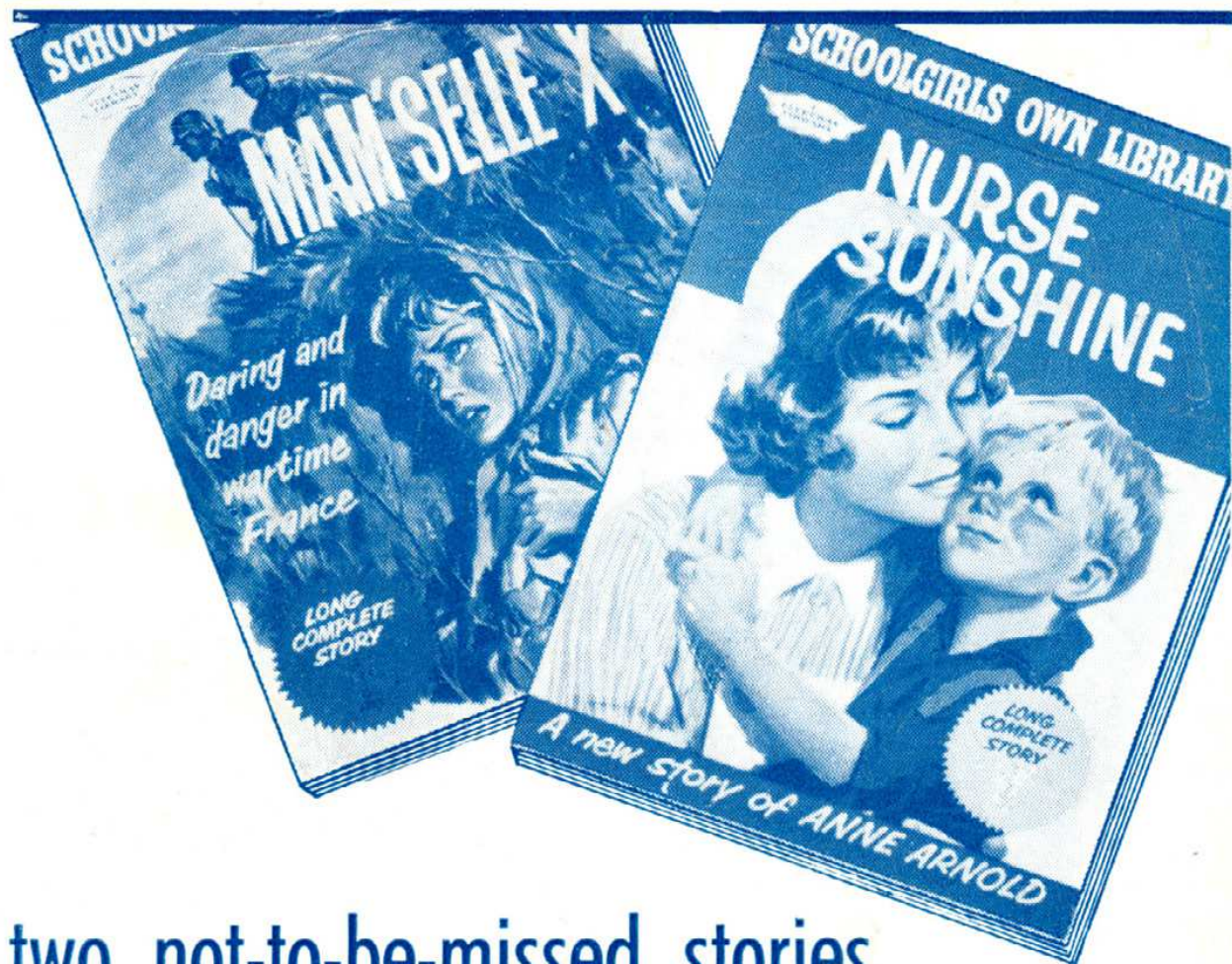
A new story about the Robinson family. This time there's fun and suspense when Topsy's rolling stone of an uncle comes to stay.

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