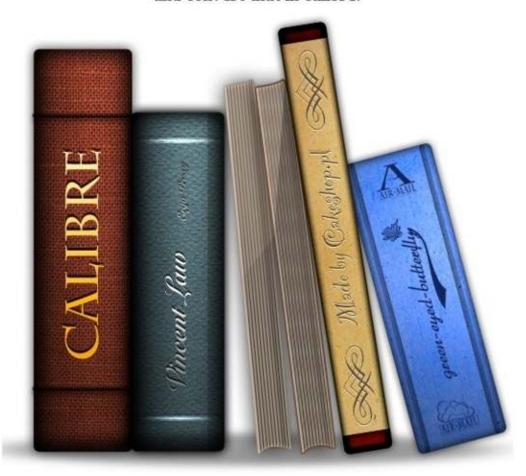
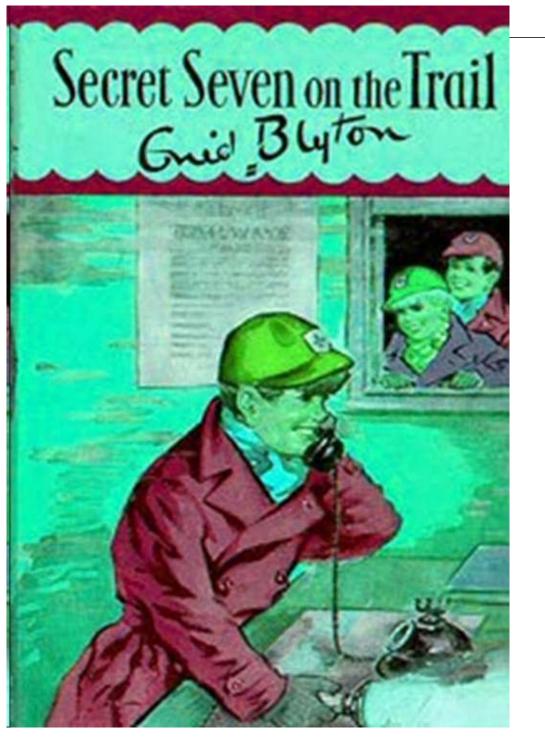


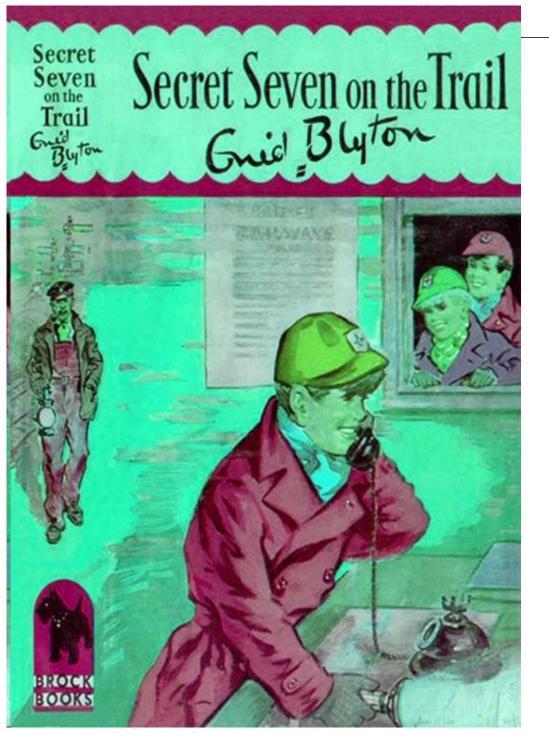
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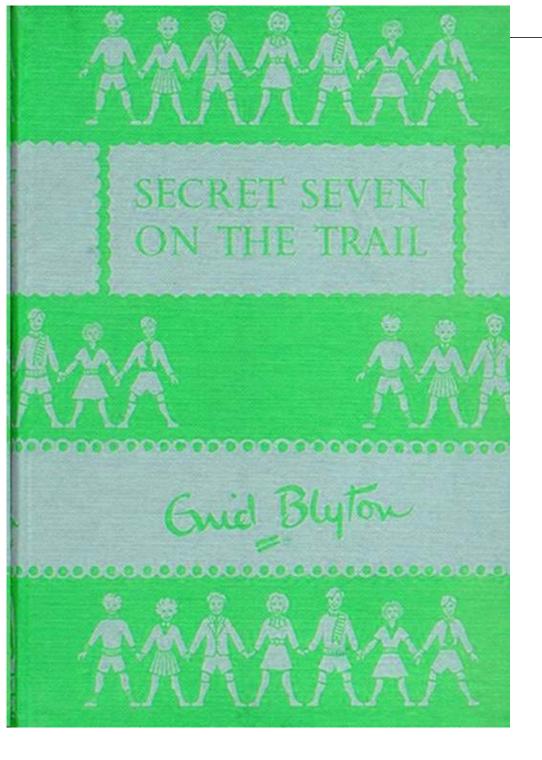
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SECRET SEVEN ON THE TRAIL

by Enid Blyton

Illustrated by George Brook



BROCKHAMPTON PRESS

SECRET SEVEN ON THE TRAIL



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CHAPTER ONE

The Secret Seven Meet

" MUMMY, have you got anything we could have to drink?" asked Janet. " And to eat too?"

- "But you've only *just* finished your breakfast! "said Mummy in surprise." And you each hat two sausages—you can't possibly want anything more yet."
- 'Well, we're having the very last meeting of the Secret Seven this morning," said Janet. "Dow in the shed. We don't think it's worth while meeting when we all go back to school—nothing excitir ever happens then."
- ' We're going to meet again when the Christmas holidays come," said Peter. "Aren't w Scamper, old boy?"

The golden spaniel wagged his tail hard, and gave a small bark.

"He says, he hopes he can come to the last meeting too," said Janet. " Of course you can Scamper."

" He didn't say that," said Peter, grinning. " He

said that if there were going to be snacks of any kind at this meeting, he'd like to join in! "

"Woof," agreed Scamper, and put his paw up on Peter's knee.

"I'll give you some lemons, and some sugar, and you can make your own lemonade," sa Mummy. "You like doing that, don't you? And you can go and see if there are any rock-buns left it the tin in the larder—they'll be stale, but I know you don't mind that! "

" Oh, thanks, Mummy," said Janet. " Come on, Peter—we'd better get the things now, because the others will be here soon! "

They ran off to the larder, Scamper panting behind. Rock-buns! Stale or not, Scamper like those as much as the children did.

Janet took some lemons, and went to get the sugar from her mother. Peter emptied the starock-buns on to a plate, and the two of them, followed by Scamper, went down to the shed. Janet has the lemon-squeezer and a big jug of water. It was fun to make lemonade.

They pushed open the shed door. On it were the letters S.S. in green—S.S. for the Secret Seven

"Our Secret Society has been going for some time now," said Janet, beginning to squeeze lemon. "I'm not a bit tired of it, are you, Peter?"

"Good gracious, no! "said Peter." Why, think of all the adventures we've had, and the exciting things we've done! But I do think it's sensible not to bother about the Secret Seven meetings till thols. For one thing, in this Christmas term the days get dark very quickly, and we have to be indoors.

"Yes—and nothing much happens then," said Janet. "Oh, Scamper—you won't like th squeezed-out lemon-skin, you silly dog! Drop it!"

Scamper dropped it. He certainly didn't like it! He sat with his tongue hanging out, looking modisgusted. Peter glanced at his watch.

" Nearly time for the others to come," he said. " I hope they'll agree to this being the la meeting till Christmas. We'd better collect all the badges from them, and put them in a safe place. we don't, someone is bound to lose one."

- " Or that silly sister of Jack's will take it and wear it herself," said Janet. " What's her name-Susie ? Aren't you glad I'm not annoying to you, like Susie is to Jack, Peter ? "
- "Well—you're pretty annoying sometimes," said Peter, and immediately got a squirt of lemoniquice in his eye from an angry Janet! "Oh—don't do that—don't you know that lemon-juice smallike anything? Stop it, Janet! "

Janet stopped it. "I'd better not waste the juice," she said. " Ah—here comes someone."

Scamper barked as somebody walked up the path and rapped on the door.

" Password! " called Peter, who never opened the door to anyone until the correct password w called.

" Pickled Onions! " said a voice, and giggled.

That was the latest password of the Secret Seven, suggested by Colin, whose mother had be pickling onions on the day of the last meeting they had had. It was such a silly password that everyon had laughed, and Peter had said they would have it till they thought of a better one.

"Got your badge?" said Peter, opening the door.

Outside stood Barbara. She displayed her badge proudly. "It's a new one," she said. " My old or got so dirty, so I made this."

"Very good," said Peter. "Come in. Look, here come three others."

He shut the door again, and Barbara sat down on a box beside Janet, and watched her stirring the lemonade. Rat-a-tat! Scamper barked as knocking came at the door again.

" Password!" called out Peter, Janet and Barbara together.



Pickled Onions!" yelled back everyone. Peter flung open the door and scowled.

- "How many times am I to tell you not to yell out the password! "he said." Now everyone in hearing distance has heard it."
- "Well, you all yelled out password at the tops of your voices," said Jack. "Anyway, we caesily choose a new one." He looked slyly at George, who had come in with him. "George thought was Pickled Cabbage, and we had to tell him it wasn't."
 - "Well, of all the----" began Peter, but just then another knock came on the door and Scamper growled.
 - " Password! " called Peter.
- " Pickled Onions!" came his mother's voice, and she laughed. " If that *i s* a password! I's brought you some home-made peppermints, just to help the last meeting along."
- " Oh. Thanks, Mummy," said Janet, and opened the door. She took the peppermints and gave them to Peter. Peter frowned round, when his mother had gone.
- "There you are, you see," he said. "It just happened to be my mother who heard the passwor but it might have been anybody. Now who's still missing?"
- "There's me here, and you, George, Jack, Barbara and Pam," said Janet. "Colin's missing. Ohhere he comes."

Rat-tat! Scamper gave a little welcoming bark. He knew every S.S. member quite well. Col

gave the password and was admitted. Now the Secret Seven were complete.

"Good," said Peter. "Sit down, Colin. We'll get down to business as soon as Janet pours out the lemonade. Buck up, Janet! "

CHAPTER TWO

No More Meetings till Christmas!

JANET poured out mugs of the lemonade, and Peter handed round the rock-buns.

" A bit stale," he said, " but nice and curranty. Two each and one for old Scamper. Sorry Scamper; but, after all, you're not a *real* member of the Secret Seven, or you could have two."

"He couldn't," said Jack. "There are only fifteen buns. And anyway, I *always* count him in as real member."

"You can't. We're the Secret *Seven*, and Scamper makes eight," said Peter. " But he can alway come with us. Now listen—this is to be the last meeting, and-----"

There were surprised cries at once.

"The *last* meeting! Why, what's happening?"

"The *last* one! Surely you're not going to stop the Secret Seven?"

" Oh but, Peter—surely you're not meaning---"

" Just let me *speak*," said Peter. " It's to be the last meeting till the holidays come agai Tomorrow all of us boys go back to school, and the



girls go to their school the day after. Nothing ever happens in term-time—and anyway we're to busy to look for adventure, so-----

"But something *might* happen," said Colin. "You just never know. I think it's a silly idea to sto the Secret Seven for the term-time. I do really."

" So do I," said Pam. " I like belonging to it, and wearing my badge, and remembering to password."

"Well—you can still wear your badges if you like," said Peter, "though I *had* thought collecting them today, as we're all wearing them, and keeping them till our meeting next hols."



"I'm not giving *mine* up," said Jack, firmly. " And you needn't be afraid I'll let my sister Sus get it, either, because I've got a perfectly good hiding-place for it."

"And suppose, just *suppose*, something turned up in term-time," said Colin, earnestly. " Suppo one of us happened on something queer, something that ought to be looked into. What would we do the Secret Seven was disbanded till Christmas?"

" Nothing ever turns up in term-time," repeated Peter, who liked getting his own way. "Ar anyway I've got to work jolly hard this term. My father wasn't at all keen on my last report."

"All right. You work hard, and keep out of the Society till Christmas," said Jack. "I'll run it wir Janet. It can be the Secret Six till then. S.S. will stand for that as much as for Secret Seven."

That didn't please Peter at all. He frowned. "No," he said. "I'm the head. But seeing that you a seem to disagree with me, I'll say this—we won't have any *regular* meetings—like we have be having—but only call one if anything *does* happen to turn up. And you'll see I'm right—nothing with happen!"

"We keep our badges, then, and have a password?" said Colin. "We're still a very live Society even if nothing happens? And we call a meeting at once if something does?"

"Yes," said everyone, looking at Peter. They loved being the Secret Seven. It made them fe important, even if, as Colin said, nothing happened for them to look into.

"All right," said Peter. "What about a new password?"

Everyone thought hard. Jack looked at Scamper, who seemed to be thinking too. "What abo Scamper's name?" he said. "Scamper' would be a good password."

" It wouldn't," said Janet. " Every time anyone



gave the password Scamper would think he was being called!"

" Let's have *my* dog's name, then—Rover," said Pam.

"No—have my aunt's dog's name," said Jack. " Cheeky Charlie. That's a good password."

"Yes! Cheeky Charlie! We'll have that," said Peter. "Nobody would ever think of that for password. Right—Cheeky Charlie it is! "

The rock-buns were passed round for the second time. Scamper eyed them longingly. He had has his. Pam took pity on him and gave him half hers, and Barbara did the same.

Scamper then fixed his eyes mournfully on Jack, who immediately gave him a large piece of hun too.

"Well! "said Peter, "Scamper's had more than any real member of the Secret Seven! He'll thinking he can run the whole Society soon!"

"Wuff," said Scamper, thumping his tail on the ground, and looking at Peter's bun.

The lemonade was finished. The last crumb of cake had been licked up by Scamper. The su came out and shone down through the window of the shed.

"Come on—let's go out and play," said Peter, getting up. "School tomorrow! Well, these have been jolly good hols. Now, Secret Seven, you all know the password, don't you? You probably wor have to use it till the Christmas holidays, so just make up your minds to remember it. Our ne meeting can be on the day after we break up this term!"

" I bet it will be before then," said George.

"Well—we'll see who's right," said Peter. "Let's go and collect pine-cones and make a bonfir Come on, Scamper—you can pick up pine-cones too!"

CHAPTER THREE

The Famous Five

SCHOOL began for the boys next day, and they all trooped off with their satchels and bags. The girls went off the day after. All the Secret Seven wore their little badges with S.S. embroidered on the button. It was fun to see the other children looking enviously at them, wishing they could have on too.

"No, you can't," said Janet, when the other girls asked her if they could join. " It's a *Secr* Society. I'm not supposed even to talk about it."

"Well, I don't see why you can't make it a bit bigger and let *us* come in," said the others.

"You can't have more than seven in our Society," said Janet. "And we've got seven. You go an make Secret Societies of your own! "

That was an unfortunate thing to say! Kate and Susie, who was Jack's tiresome sisted immediately went off to make a Society of their own! How very annoying!

They got Harry, Jeff and Sam as well as themselves. Five of them. And then, to the intense



annoyance of the Secret Seven, these five appeared at school with badges of their own!

On the buttons they wore were embroidered two letters—not S.S., of course, but F.F. Everyone crowded round to ask what F.F. meant.

"It means 'Famous Five'," said Susie. "We've named ourselves after the Famous Five in the 'Five' books! *Much* better idea than 'Secret Seven'."

Susie was very irritating to poor Jack. "You haven't got nearly such a good Society as *we* have," she said. "Our badges are bigger—we've got a splendid password, which I wouldn't *dream* of telling you-and we have a secret sign, too. *You* haven't got that ? "

- "What's your secret sign?" said Jack, crossly. "I've never seen you make it."
- " Of course not. I tell you it's a *secret* one!" said Susie. " And we're meeting every single Saturday morning. And, what's more, we've got an adventure going already! "
- "I don't believe you," said Jack. "Anyway, you're just a copy-cat. It was *our* idea! You're mean."
- "Well, you wouldn't let me belong to your silly Secret Seven," said Susie, annoyingly. "Now I belong to the Famous Five—and I tell you, we've got an adventure already! "
- Jack didn't know whether to believe her or not. He thought Susie must be the most tiresome sister in the world. He wished he had one like Janet. He went gloomily to Peter and told him all that Susie had said.
- "Don't take any notice of her," said Peter. "Famous Five indeed! They'll soon get tired of meeting an playing about."
- The Famous Five Society was very annoying to the Secret Seven that term. The members wore their big badges every single day. Kate and Susie huddled together in corners at Break each morning and talked in excited whispers, as if something really *was* happening.

Harry, Jeff and Sam did the same at their school, which annoyed Peter, Colin, Jack and George very

much. They met in the summer-house in Jack's garden, and Susie actually ordered Jack to keep out o the garden when the "Famous Five "held their meetings in the summer-house!

"As if I shall keep out of my own garden!" said Jack, indignantly, to Peter. "But I say, Peter—I believe they really *have* got hold of something, you know. I think something *is* up. Wouldn't it be awful if *they* had an adventure and we didn't? Susie would crow like anything."

Peter thought about this. "It's up to you to find out about it," he said, at last. " After all, they've stoler our idea, and they're doing it to annoy us. You try and find out what's up, Jack. We'll soon put a stop it!"

So Jack went to hide in a bush at the back of the summer-house when he heard that Susie had planned another meeting there for that Saturday morning. But unfortunately Susie was looking out of the bedroom window just then, and saw him squeezing into the laurel bush!

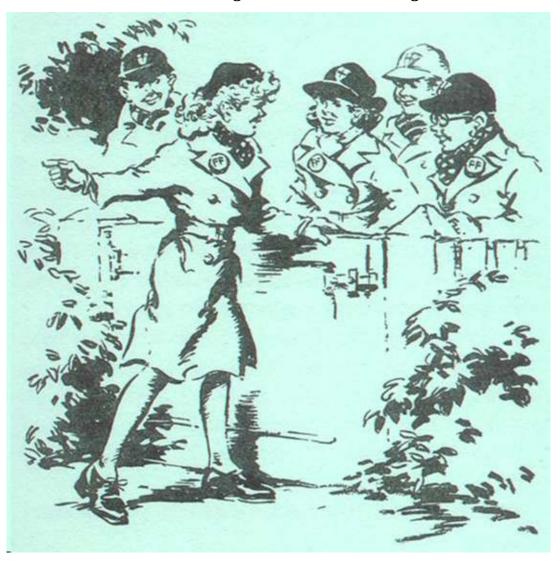
She gazed down in rage—and then suddenly she smiled. She sped downstairs to meet the other four a the front gate, instead of waiting for them to go down to the summer-house.

They all came together, and Susie began to whisper excitedly.

"Jack's going to try and find out what we're doing! He's hidden himself in the laurel bush at the back of the summer-house to listen to all we say!"

" I'll go and pull him out," said Harry at once.

"No, don't," said Susie. "I've got a better idea. Let's go down to the summer-house,



whisper the password so that he can't hear it, and then begin to talk as if we really *had* found adventure!"

"But why? "said Kate.

"You're silly! Don't you see that Jack will believe it all—and if we mention places, such as the old house up on the hill, Tigger's Barn, he'll tell the Secret Seven, and-----"

"And they'll all go and investigate it and find there's nothing there!" said Kate, giggling. "Wh fun!"

"Yes. And we can mention names too—we'll talk about Stumpy Dick, and—and Twisty Ton and make Jack think we're right in the very middle of something," said Susie.

"And we could go to Tigger's Barn ourselves and wait till the Secret Seven come, and have good laugh at them! " said Jeff, grinning. " Come on—let's go down to the summer-house now, Susi Jack will be wondering why we are so late."

"No giggling, anybody!" Susie warned them, "and just back me up in all I say. And be as solem as you can. I'll go down first, and you can all come one by one, and don't forget to *whisper* the password, because he mustn't hear *that*"

She sped down the garden and into the

summer-house. Out of the corner of her eye she saw the laurel bush where poor Jack had hidden himself very uncomfortably. Susie grinned to herself. Aha! She was going to have a fine revenge of Jack for keeping her out of *his* Secret Society!

One by one the others came to the summer-house. They whispered the password, much to Jack annoyance. He would dearly have loved to pass it on to the Secret Seven! But he couldn't hear a word

However, he heard plenty when the meeting really began. He couldn't help it, of course, becau the Famous Five talked so loudly. Jack didn't guess that it was done on purpose, so that he might he every word.

He was simply amazed at what the Famous Five said. Why—they seemed to be in the ve middle of a Most Exciting Adventure!

Susie Tells a Tale

SUSIE led the talking. She was a good talker, and was determined to puzzle Jack as much as sl could.

"I've found out where those rogues are meeting," she said. " It's an important piece of news, please listen. I've tracked them down at last! "

Jack could hardly believe his ears. He listened hard.

"Tell us, Susie," said Harry, playing up well.

"It's at Tigger's Barn," said Susie, enjoying herself. "That old, deserted house up on the hill. tumbledown old place, just right for rogues to meet in. Far away from anywhere."

" Oh yes. I know it," said Jeff.

"Well, Stumpy Dick and Twisty Tom will both be there," said Susie.

There were "oooohs" and "ahs" from her listeners, and Jack very nearly said "Ooooh " to Stumpy Dick and Twisty Tom—good gracious! What *had* the Famous Five got on to?

"They're planning something we must find out

about," said Susie, raising her voice a little, to make sure that Jack could hear. "And we's simply *got* to do something. So one or two of us must go to Tigger's Barn at the right time and his ourselves."

" I'll go with you, Susie," said Jeff at once.

Jack felt surprised when he heard that. Jeff was a very timid boy, and not at all likely to go as hide in a deserted place like Tigger's Barn. He listened hard.

- " All right. You and I will go together," said Susie. "It will be dangerous, but what do we care f that ? We are the Famous Five! "
 - " Hurrah! " said Kate and Sam.
 - " When do we go? " said Jeff.
- "Well," said Susie, "I *think* they will meet there on Tuesday night. Can you come with me the Jeff?"
- "Certainly," said Jeff, who would never have *dreamed* of going to Tigger's Barn at night Susie's tale had been true.

Jack, out in the bush, felt more and more surprised. He also felt a great respect for the Famo Five. My word! They were as good as the Secret Seven! Fancy their getting on to an adventure little! What a good thing he had managed to hide and hear about it!



He longed to go to Peter and tell him all he had heard. He wondered how his sister Susie knew anything about this affair. Blow Susie! It was just like her to make a Secret Society and then find a adventure for it.

- " Suppose Stumpy Dick discovers you?" said Kate.
- " I shall fell him to the ground," said Jeff in a very valiant voice.

This was going a bit too far. Not even the Famous Five could imagine Jeff facing up to anyon Kate gave a sudden giggle.

That set Sam off, and he gave one of his extraordinary snorts. Susie frowned. If the meeting

began to giggle and snort like this, Jack would certainly know it wasn't serious. That wou never do.

She frowned heavily at the others. "Shut up!" she whispered. "If we begin to giggle Jack worbelieve a word."

- " I c-c-can't help it," said Kate, who never could stop giggling once she began. " Oh, Samplease don't snort again!"
- "Sh! "said Susie, angrily." Don't spoil it all." Then she raised her voice again so that Jack couhear. "Well, Famous Five, that's all for today. Meet again when you get your orders—and rememberdon't say a word to ANYONE about Tigger's Barn. This is OUR adventure!"

"I bet the Secret Seven wish they could hear about this," said Jeff, in a loud voice. "It makes n laugh to think they don't know anything."

He laughed, and that was the signal for everyone to let themselves go. Kate giggled again, Sa snorted, Susie roared, and so did Harry. They all thought of Jack out in the laurel bush, drinking every word of their ridiculous story, and then they laughed all the more. Jack listened crossly. Ho dare they laugh at the Secret Seven like that?

"Come on," said Susie, at last. "This meeting is over. Let's go and get a ball and have a game.

I wonder where Jack is—he might like to play too."

As they all knew quite well where Jack was, this made them laugh again, and they went up to garden path in a very good temper. What a joke to play on a member of the Secret Seven! Would be rush off at once and call a meeting? Would the Secret Seven go to Tigger's Barn on Tuesday night in the dark?

- "Susie—you don't *really* mean to go up to Tigger's Barn on Tuesday night, do you?" said Jefas they went up the path.
- "Well—I did think of it at first," said Susie. "But it would be silly to. It's a long way, and it dark at night now—and anyway, the Secret Seven might not go, and it would be awfully silly for an of us to go and hide there for nothing! "
- "Yes, it would," said Jeff, much relieved. "But you'll be able to see if Jack goes, won't yo Susie? If he slips off somewhere on Tuesday night, won't we have a laugh! "
- "We certainly will!" said Susie. "Oh, I *do* hope he does! I'll tell him it was all a trick, when I comes back—and won't he be FURIOUS!"

CHAPTER FIVE

Jack Tells the News

JACK crept carefully out of the laurel bush as soon as he felt sure that the others were safely o of the way. He dusted himself down and looked round. Nobody was in sight.

He debated with himself what to do. Was it important enough to call a meeting of the Secr Seven ? No—he would go and find Peter and tell him first. Peter could decide whether to have meeting or not.

On the way to Peter's house Jack met George. " Hallo !" said George, " you look very solem What's up? Have you had a row at home or something?"

- "No," said Jack. "But I've just found out that the Famous Five are in the middle of something heard Susie telling them, down in our summer-house. I was in the laurel bush outside."
- " Is it important?" asked George. "I mean—your sister Susie's a bit of a nuisance, isn't sh You don't want to pay too much attention to her. She's conceited enough already."

"Yes, I know," said Jack. "But she's clever, you know. And after all, we managed to get into a good many adventures, did we ?—and there's really no reason why the Famous Five shouldn't, too, if they keep their eyes and ears open. Listen, and I'll tell y what I heard."

He told George, and George was most impressed. "Tigger's Barn! "he said." Well, that *would* be a good meeting-place rogues who wanted to meet without being seen. But how did Susie get hold of the names of the men? I say, Jack, it would absolutely *maddening* if the Famous Five hit on something important before we did!"

" That's what *I* think," said Jack. " Especially as Susie's the ring-leader. She's always trying to boss me, and she would worse than ever if her silly Society discovered some gang or plot. Let's find Peter, shall we? I was on the way to him when I n you."

"I'll go with you, then," said George. "I'm sure Peter will think it's important. Come on!"

So two solemn boys walked up the path to Peter's house, and went round the back to find him. He was chopping up firewoone of his Saturday morning jobs. He was very pleased to see Jack and George.

"Oh, hallo," he said, putting down his chopper.

"Now I can knock off for a bit. Chopping wood is fine for about five minutes, but an awful bore after that. My mother does like me to do it, because she thinks I'll chop my fingers off, but Dad's hard-hearted and makes me do it each Saturday."

" Peter," said Jack, " I've got some news."

"Oh, what?" asked Peter, interested. "Tell me."

So Jack told him about how he had hidden in the laurel bush and overheard a meeting of the Famous Five. "They've go password, of course," he said, " but I couldn't hear it. However, they forgot to whisper once they had said the password, and I heavery word."

He told Peter what he had heard, but Peter didn't take it seriously at all. He was most annoying about it.

He listened to the end, and then he threw back his head and laughed. "Oh Jack! Surely you didn't fall for all that nonsense Susie must have been pretending. I expect that's what they do at their silly meetings—pretend they are in the middle of an adventuand kid themselves they are brave and clever!"

"But it all sounded absolutely serious," said Jack, beginning to feel annoyed. "I mean—they

had no idea I was listening—they all seemed quite serious. And Jeff was ready to go an investigate on Tuesday evening!"

"What, *Jeff! Can* you imagine that little coward of a Jeff going to look for a *mouse*, let alone Stumpy Dick and the other fellow, whatever his name is! "said Peter, laughing again." He'd run mile before he'd go to Tigger's Barn at night. That sister of yours was just putting up a bit of mak believe, Jack, silly kid's stuff—like pretending to play at Red Indians or something, that's all."

"Then you don't think it's worth while calling a meeting of the Secret Seven and asking some us

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