

*(MISS PEAKE laughs heartily and exits by the French windows. JEREMY joins in her laughter, but stops abruptly when she has gone. PIPPA enters from the hall, munching a bun.)*

PIPPA. Smashing bun.

*(She closes the hall door.)*

JEREMY. Hullo, there. How was school today?

PIPPA. Pretty foul. World affairs. Miss Wilkinson loves world affairs. She's terribly wet, can't keep order.

*(She puts her bun on the table and takes a book from her satchel.)*

JEREMY. What's your favourite subject?

PIPPA. Biology. It's heaven. Yesterday we dissected a frog's leg.

*(She pushes the book in JEREMY's face.)*

Look what I got in the second-hand bookstall. It's awfully rare, I'm sure. Over a hundred years old.

JEREMY. What is it, exactly?

PIPPA. It's a kind of recipe book. It's thrilling, absolutely thrilling.

*(She opens the book, becoming immediately enthralled.)*

JEREMY. What's it all about?

PIPPA. What?

JEREMY. It seems very absorbing.

PIPPA. What?

*(To herself.)* Gosh!

JEREMY. Evidently a good tuppenny-worth.

*(He picks up a newspaper and begins to read.)*

PIPPA. What's the difference between a wax candle and a tallow candle?

JEREMY. I should imagine that a tallow candle is markedly inferior. But surely you can't eat it?

PIPPA. *(Amused.)* "Can you eat it?" Sounds like "Twenty Questions."

*(She laughs, throws the book onto the chair, then takes a pack of cards from the bottom of the bookshelves.)*

Do you know Demon Patience?

*(JEREMY is engrossed in his paper.)*

JEREMY. Um.

PIPPA. I suppose you wouldn't like to play Beggar-My-Neighbour?

JEREMY. No.

PIPPA. I thought you wouldn't. I wish we could have a fine day for a change. Such a waste being in the country, when it's wet.

*(She kneels on the floor, lays out her cards and plays Demon Patience.)*

JEREMY. Do you like living in the country?

PIPPA. Rather. I like it much better than living in London. This is a wizard house with a tennis court and everything. We've even got a priest's hole.

JEREMY. A priest's hole, in this house?

PIPPA. Yes.

JEREMY. Don't believe it. Wrong period.

PIPPA. Well, I call it a priest's hole. Look, I'll show you.

*(She rises and moves to the bookshelves. She takes out a book and pulls down a small lever in the wall. The concealed door between the bookshelves swings open, revealing a good-sized recess, with a concealed door in its back wall, leading to the library.)*

It isn't really a priest's hole, of course. Actually that door goes through into the library.

JEREMY. Oh, does it?

*(JEREMY goes into the recess, opens the door in the back, glances into the library and returns.)*

So it does.

PIPPA. But it's all rather secret and you'd never guess it was there unless you knew.

*(She lifts the lever. The panel closes.)*

I'm using it all the time. It's the sort of place that would be very convenient for putting a dead body, don't you think?

JEREMY. Absolutely made for it.