

It's fun to read  
about being  
scared,  
but ...

# Help! I'm a Prisoner in the Library!



Eth Clifford



SCHOLASTIC

## Last-Minute Harry

The whole thing was really Mr. Onetree's fault. At least that's what Mary Rose thought.

It began because her father didn't stop for gas in time. The needle pointed to empty. Mary Rose called Mr. Onetree's attention to that fact, each time they passed a gas station.

"I've told you a hundred times," Mr. Onetree said. "I can still go another ten or fifteen miles easily."

There was no use trying to talk to her father, Mary Rose knew. Mr. Onetree never took care of anything until the very last minute. When it came time to pay his taxes, he stood in line at the post office to get his letter mailed just before the midnight deadline. When he had to get new



license plates, he always wound up on the last day of the month at the end of the line that went around the block.

Mrs. Onetree called him "Last-Minute Harry."

Mr. Onetree had waited till the last minute to take Mary Rose and her sister Jo-Beth, who was asleep on the back seat of the car, to stay with Aunt Madge.

"It's beginning to snow," Mrs. Onetree had warned her husband. "I'd like to see Mary Rose and Jo-Beth settled in with Madge before I go to the hospital." Before Mr. Onetree could answer, she went on, "I'm the one who's having the baby, Harry. So don't tell me there's lots of time."

"I don't see why we need another baby around here," Jo-Beth had said. "I think two girls in the family are plenty." Jo-Beth had liked the idea of going to visit Aunt Madge, who had just moved to Indianapolis, but she didn't think she should be pushed out of her own house because a new baby was coming. It would probably be a boy, anyway, because that's what her father kept hoping it would be, and then there would be a lot of fuss over it. "Wait and see," she told Mary Rose darkly.

"You'll probably have a *boy*," Jo-Beth had said, getting what her mother called "that gloomy Gus" look on her face.

"And we'll probably all be standing here till doomsday," Mrs. Onetree had answered impatiently, trying to push her family out the door.

"I'll drop them off and come right back," Mr. Onetree had promised. "As soon as I can, anyway. I figure a good two hours there and another two hours back."

"You're not to speed. Mary Rose, make sure your father doesn't speed. And you watch that gas gauge, too. When it's down to a quarter of a tank, you remind your father to stop at a gas station. Don't let him wait till the last minute. I know I can depend on you, Mary Rose," her mother had said.

So Mary Rose had watched the gauge, and she had reminded her father when the needle moved way down below the quarter-tank mark. But it hadn't helped. And now here they were, pulled over to the curb, on some strange corner in Indianapolis. Mary Rose was surprised the car hadn't stopped dead right in the middle of the street.

Jo-Beth woke up. "Are we there yet?" She rubbed the car window. "I can't see out. Why are we just sitting here?"

"We're out of gas," Mary Rose said in her best I-told-you-so voice. "And it's snowing harder."

"You girls sit tight." Mr. Onetree started to





## **You wouldn't want to spend the night!**

**Mary Rose's father always waits until the last minute to do everything. Now they're in the middle of a blizzard and the car runs out of gas. Mary Rose and her younger sister Jo-Beth are supposed to wait in the car until he comes back. But Jo-Beth is just like their father. She has to go to the bathroom. Immediately!**

**Where—at 5:00 p.m. on a Saturday night—in a blizzard can Jo-Beth find a restroom? Mary Rose discovers a library and they dash inside just before it closes. But the two girls are so fascinated with all the different displays that the librarian locks up, turns out the lights and leaves without even seeing them. Mary Rose and Jo-Beth are trapped! No one knows where they are. Suddenly, with the lights out, the library is no longer fascinating. It's strange and creepy and now they are prisoners!**

**Then they hear noises. Who is locked in there with them? Is this place haunted? What kind of library IS this anyway?**