

**JOHN
OF DAUNT**

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John of Daunt by Ethel Turner

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"'Wrong d-d-d-dog,' he stuttered in explanation, and looked to where an innocent, if savage, brown retriever was glaring at him from a safe distance." (Chapter X.)

JOHN OF DAUNT

BY

ETHEL TURNER *Curlewis*

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CHAPTER I.

THE DESCENT.

"Oh, 'tis a parlous boy
Bold, quick, ingenious, forward, capable."

—*Richard III.*

DAISY, now down on all-fours while she rubbed linoleum cream into the hall floor, now sitting on her heels for respite and to replenish the moisture on her cloth, caught a glimpse of pink high above her head. It was very familiar pink, but the glimpse being taken in through her eye-corners only, hardly reached her brain. She tried with an arm sweep to remove the marks of feet just beneath the telephone, but the cloth was dry again and there is no time before breakfast to be prodigal with elbow-grease alone. She sat up and reached for the tin of cream once more.

And now she saw nothing in the world but pink. Pink coming down, down, down from the dizzy heights above her, slowly at first, but gaining in speed at every moment, pink turning a curve, coming down a straight slant, pink faster and still more furiously fast until, just as she clutched her heart in terror and made ready to scream piercingly, it was sitting on a heap of mats and rugs she had flung down after shaking them.

"You wicked boy you," she gasped.

The small figure in the pink pyjamas laughed, but he was more than a little pale himself now and continued to sit still while he recovered his breath and his intrepidity.

"Knew I could," he remarked at last.

"Gertrud!" called Daisy, still too fluttered to get up on her feet, and yet impelled to share the shock even though with no one better than her fellow-servant, and a German at that.

The girl, Gertrud, came into sight from the still further flight of stairs that led to the basement where she was engaged in preparing breakfast. She came with a ponderous step,