

Miss Olivia June Davies-Bowen

& her Candy Pirate Companion, Captain Tatty



In the autumn of 1940, there is an empty bed in a second-floor bedroom in a quiet Georgian house in the village of Highgate in the suburbs of London. Until recently, Olivia June Davies-Bowen, aged eight years and one quarter, slept and played in this bedroom. She used to live in the house with her mother and father and a one-eyed Welsh terrier named Captain Tatty.

The tall windows in Olivia's room overlook the garden at the back of the house where she and Captain Tatty used to play in the afternoons when the weather was nice. When the weather turned for the worse, they amused themselves in her room. Olivia especially loves playing make-believe with her toys, and invented adventures populated by cowboys, zeppelins and elephants - sometimes all at the same time. Her parents brought her a Western-style lamp when they visited New York last year, for Olivia firmly believes that the Wild West is alive and well across the Atlantic. Listening to the radio was another frequent pastime; in fact, that is how Olivia knows that cowboys and Indians roam all of the United States, including downtown Manhattan. She even named her dog after one of the characters in her another of her favorite radio shows, *The Cinnamon Bear*.

Olivia and Captain Tatty left London with her mother a few weeks ago, after the first bombs fell in Islington. Olivia thought that terribly far away and even a little exciting. However, it made her parents exceedingly nervous, particularly her mother. Mrs. Davies-Bowen met Olivia's father after emigrating from Belgium during the Great War, in which her older brother and only living family died. Haunted by the prospect of having her family once again menaced by war, she decided to take Olivia, their only child, to stay with her father's family in Wales. Mr. Davies-Bowen, a civil engineer, continues to live in the house while he works in London, but he avoids the lonely silence of the upper stories. Olivia's room now lies empty, save for her waiting toys and memories of a safer time.

