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THE SCHOOLGIRL

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INCORPORATING "SCHOOLDAYS."

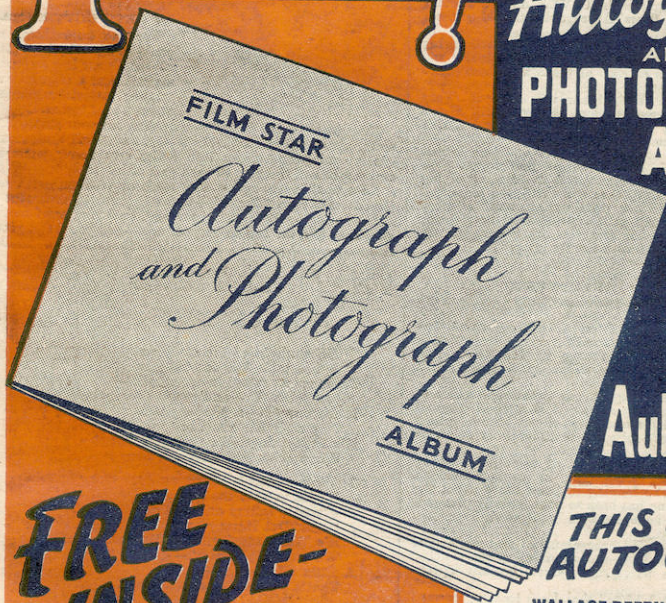
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NEW SERIES of Long, Complete Cliff House School Stories, Starring Diana Royston-Clarke and Barbara Redfern & Co.



The Return of the Firebrand

"HURRAH! Here come Babs & Co!"

"Babs, old thing—"

"Babs have you heard the news?"

"Diana Royston-Clarke—"
"Oh, my goodness!" Barbara Redfern, the leader of the Fourth Form at Cliff House School, laughed protestingly. "Let us get out of this bone-shaking old taxi!" And, suiting action to words, she jumped lightly into the sunny quadrangle. "Well, here we are!" she exclaimed, her blue eyes sparkling, her pretty cheeks dimpling. "Everybody have a good holiday!"

"Yes, rather! But, Babs—"
The plaintive bleat of plump Bessie Bunter's voice came from inside the taxi.

"Look here, you know, Clara! I think it's a bit thick sitting on my toffee!"

"Eh?" Tomboy Clara Trevlyn was heard to cry "What?"

"Well, it's sticking to your coat, you know," Bessie aggrievedly complained. "That was jolly ripping toffee, really. The cook at Sutherland House specially made it up for me. And it was my last piece. I think it's jolly inconsiderate of you to use it for a cushion, you know. Ow-wow! Now you've dud-dropped it down my neck!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a yell of laughter from the girls in the quadrangle. There were many of them there—in fact, almost the whole of the Fourth Form at Cliff House School was gathered there.

Obviously, they had all been eagerly

awaiting Babs & Co., and the taxi which had conveyed the chums from Friardale Station to the school was boisterously besieged.

Very bright, very happy, and very gay those girls looked, on this their first day of the new term. Very glad, in fact, to be with each other again.

Holidays were always ripping to look forward to, and to plan. They were

HILDA RICHARDS

is the author of this fine story, which re-introduces one of her most compelling characters—Diana Royston-Clarke, the Firebrand of the Fourth. But now it seems that Diana's friend, Margot Lantham, is to steal all the limelight in which Diana herself hoped to shine when she came back to Cliff House

lovely when they materialised. But somehow there was no thrill like the thrill of seeing the dear old school again, of renewing friendships temporarily broken.

And there was no thrill like this first day of term, when nearly all rules were relaxed, and girls, within reason, could do pretty much as they pleased.

Much laughter, and hand-shaking,

and greetings there were, as Bessie, glowing wrathfully, alighted, to be followed by the boisterous Clara Trevlyn, the golden-haired Mabel Lyn, and the smiling and immaculate Jimima Carstairs, complete, as usual, with her monocle.

From the cab which had drawn up behind the first Leila Carroll, elegantly American, alighted, followed by Marcelle Biquet, Janet Jordan, and the smiling, gentle-faced Marjorie Hazeldene.

Joy then! Everybody pressing around the Co. But for once it wasn't Babs & Co. who were besieged for news. It was Babs & Co. who received the news. And what news it was!

"Oh, my hat! Let me tell her!" June Merrett gasped. "I know I shall burst if I don't. Babs, listen! Just do listen! What would you say if you knew Diana Royston-Clarke was coming back to school?"

Babs looked incredulous.

"Well, I might say a good many things. But she's not!"

"She is!"

"What?"

"She is!" June repeated in triumph.

"It's on the notice-board. Yes, yes! We all know she was expelled, but you remember, when she saved Bessie from the burning shed Primmy said she'd give her another chance. She didn't take it then, but she has now. And she's coming back!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Babs' blue eyes widened. This was news indeed! Did she tingle as her mind, flying back into the past, remembered those clashes with the dazzling Diana—that cold, haughty, imperious, often-malicious girl?

Daring, audacious Diana, who had so

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often crossed swords with her, to whom, sometimes, she had been forced to bow the knee; over whom, at others, she had so crushingly triumphed! Diana—the old Firebrand—coming back here!

"No!" she cried.

"But it's true!" June Merritt almost shrieked. "But wait a minute—that's not all! Somebody else is coming with Diana, too! A new girl—Margot Lantham."

"You mean the daughter of Lord and Lady Lantham?" Babs asked, breathing two names which were household words in this part of Kent.

"Yes, she's coming with Diana. She's a friend of Diana's, or something. Trust Diana," June grinned, "to have a posh friend like that. Well, what about that? And there's a bit of news for you, too, Clara, as captain of junior games," she added, with relish. "A new hockey cup has been put up for competition in the district. The donors of the cup are this very same Lord and Lady Lantham, Margot Lantham's parents. We play the first round next Saturday."

"Oh, whoops!" Clara cried.

"Wait a minute! June's forgotten something!" Lucy Morgan shrieked.

"More news, Clara, yes. Flap Derwent—"

Clara looked alarmed.

"Here, don't tell me there's anything wrong with Flap Derwent! She's our best inside-left!"

"She was," corrected Lucy. "But she won't be in future. Flap's stopping in Australia!"

"Oh, great cricket-bats! Is that on the notice-board, too?"

"Yes."

Clara's face fell. Exciting as the news of Diana's return was, the fact that Flap Derwent had said good-bye to the old school impressed her more.

Clara, as juniors sports captain, took her duties seriously—almost jealously, in fact.

Painstakingly and carefully she had built up her team, until she honestly believed that she had, in the Lower School Hockey Eleven, a combination that was unbeatable.

But that Flap, of all people should go—

Wasn't that just the beastliest luck? With this new Lantham cup competition in the offing, at that! Inwardly Clara groaned.

"Well, anyway, we know that Diana can play hockey," Babs comforted.

"She was pretty good when she was here before. Even if," she added, remembering one previous occasion, "she was liable to let her temper run away with her at times. And there's the new girl, too—Margot Lantham. Perhaps she can play!"

Clara grunted. Not Clara to snatch at a hopeful straw like that.

Diana, certainly, had been a keen hockey player, but that was in the past. It was ten years since Diana had left, and unless she had kept in training—well, she might be just as hopeless as any kid in the Second Form.

But Clara's ruminations and Babs' comments were both broken into at that moment. For suddenly, from the fringe of the group, came a cry.

"My hat! That a car!"

"Look!"

Everyone turned, blinking in admiring envy at the long, low-bodied, glittering vehicle which had turned in at the gates.

What a car, indeed! Every line of it expressed speed, grace, beauty. It throbbled with a suggestion of unleashed power.

Hardly a sound it made as it swept up the quadrangle and came to a halt, while the neatly uniformed chauffeur,

stepping out, smartly held open the door. From that door a girl emerged.

"Diana!" breathed everyone.

"Diana! It was! She was here! There was no shout, no cry of welcome or surprise. Cliff House was staring, dazzled, as so many times in the past it had stared at Diana, whose very presence seemed to have the power to silence them.

Regally as a queen she stood for a moment on the footboard, knowing very well from that dominating height that she looked her best.

An expensive velvet toque sporting an upright feather sat upon her glistening mass of billowy blonde curls. Her slim hands were clasped in a rich mink muff.

From her slender shoulders hung a coat of the same fur, the exquisiteness of whose cut simply breathed Paris. Silken stockings which gleamed with a silver lustre in the sunlight encased her shapely legs.

The whole ensemble was finished off with a pair of smart, shiny black shoes, possessing the highest heels Cliff House had ever seen.

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Clara.

A murmur arose. It was a murmur which broke into a shout.

"Diana! Diana!"

And as the magnetism of that personality swept through them, girls surged towards the car.

Diana smiled—that dazzling smile of hers which, nevertheless, never lost its hint of superiority—and delicately waved one gloved hand. Then she laughed.

"Cheer-ho, Cliff House! Here we are again!"

She stepped down, turning back to the car. Very pleased was Diana in that moment. Diana liked to make an impression. Nothing pleased her more than adulation, and it warmed her to find it so expressed among the girls from whose midst once she had been banished in disgrace.

In a moment all those old memories were forgotten. In a moment it was as if everything which at one time had made her so unpopular had never been. Here once again was the old radiant personality, the old magnetic Diana they had known and admired.

"Margot!" she said now.

The girl who stepped from the interior of that car was as different from Diana as one could expect. Neatly dressed in a well-fitting tweed costume, Margot Lantham's refined and aristocratic face blushed shyly and rosy as she found Cliff House's attention turned upon her.

Perhaps she felt in that instant that the girls were taking stock of her, appraising her, as most certainly they were. They had all heard of Margot Lantham, of course. This was the first time, however, that they had come in contact with her.

Diana took her arm.

"Margot," she said quietly, "here we are. This is Margot Lantham," she announced, with impressive hauteur, "the daughter of Lord and Lady Lantham, you know, of Lantham Hall, in Lantham. She is my friend."

"Good old Diana! Still the same old snob," Clara chuckled. "Well, well—and she pushed forward—'how are you!'"

Margot laughed. It was a rippling, pleasant laugh. She extended her hand.

"Thank you! What is your name?"

"Oh, she?" Diana turned haughtily—"she's Clara Trevlyn. I've told you about her, Margot."

"Oh, captain of games!" Margot asked eagerly.

"I guess that's hit it!" Leila Carroll put in.

"You run the Lockey team?" Margot asked.

"What ho!" chuckled Jemima. "And how, as Leila here would say!"

"Oh, I say!" Margot's eyes sparkled. "Then, in that case, I'm going to invite you to tea," she said, with a delicious laugh, "because, you know, I'm terribly keen on hockey myself. I played inside-left for my last school, Thistdown. But I've left now, you know, because the school was in Scotland, and daddy said it was too far to travel."

"Margot!" Diana said, plucking at her arm.

"No, wait a minute, Diana; I'm talking to Clara!"

"But look here—"

"Just a minute!"

A frown flitted across the proud face of Diana.

Diana did not like being crossed, even in the smallest things. Diana was proud of her friendship with the daughter of the local aristocracy.

Diana, jealous of that friendship—not for its chumminess, but because she felt it gave her a special prestige—had intended to keep Margot Lantham under her own personal, protective wing.

She liked to talk airily of her friend Margot Lantham—you know, the daughter of Lord and Lady Lantham! It impressed audiences. She had found that it commanded respect.

So nice, so impressive to talk about one's high-positioned friends like that! But this! Here was Margot, in no time, talking chummily to Clara Trevlyn, of all people—that blundering Tomboy. And there was Clara, who was neither a respecter of persons or personages, just chatting genially as though she had known Margot all her life.

And there was Barbara Redfern barging in! And Mabel Lynn! Yes, and even that fat duffer, Bessie Bunter! For the moment, indeed, all eyes had

wheeled from her to the figure of this girl she called friend.

"Margot!" Diana cried.

"Yes, old thing? Won't be a minute, I say, this is a simply ripping school, you know! I'm going to love it! I'm getting on famously, Di, thanks! Barbara Redfern, did you say your name was? Oh, I say, I've been longing to meet you! You're captain of the Form, aren't you?"

"Oh, yooks!" Diana breathed exasperatedly. "Margot!"

"Just a minute, old thing!"

"But I won't wait a minute!" Diana cried furiously. "I've told you, Margot, I'll introduce you to everyone!"

"But I'm doing it myself, and loving it!" Margot laughed.

"But what about the luggage?"

"Oh, Perkins will see to that. Won't you, Perkins?"

"Yes, miss—certainly, miss!" And the smart chauffeur touched his cap. Diana fumed.

What hopes for her high plans now? Really, Margot exasperated her, taking the law out of her hands like this! Introducing herself, indeed! Making herself cheap—when she, Diana, had intended to show her off so! Galling!

Still, the best face had to be put upon it. In any case, Margot was getting too great a share of the attention. What about her?

"May," she asked sarcastically, "a poor little girl from the country put in a word, everybody? Margot, anyone to hear you chattering would think you'd lived here a thousand lifetimes. What's this about hockey?"

"I was just telling Margot—" Clara Trevlyn began.

"Margot? Really!" Diana's delicate brow lifted in arched surprise. "Are we such pals—so soon? You know, of course, who she is?"

"I know," Clara sniffed. "I'm not forgetting it, Diana, any more than I'm

forgetting that your name is Royston-Clarke, spelled with a hyphen—and a final 'e,'" she added, to the titter of merriment which went up from the crowd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Diana bit her lip.

"Still as funny as ever!" she sneered. "What a reputation we have for cheap wit, haven't we? Still, go on, have your joke!" she added. "I don't mind. But will you, instead of shouting cheap wisecracks, have the goodness to answer my question? I said—what's all this about hockey?"

"Oh, Di, Clara's going to give me a trial!" Margot enthusiastically put in. "You know, don't you, that Cliff House is playing in the first round of daddy's cup on Saturday? It seems I've just dropped in in time. Clara, here, is telling me she's lost her regular inside-left—"

"Who? Not Flap Derwent?" Diana asked.

"Yes. And—well," Margot gasped breathlessly, "Di, I was inside-left in Thistdown's team!"

"Were you? You never told me."

"Didn't I?" Margot laughed merrily.

"Well, it's a matter that's never been raised between us, isn't it? But, Clara, you do mean that, don't you? When shall we have the trial?"

"To-morrow, at half-past three."

"But half a tick!" Diana put in.

"If there's a vacancy in the hockey team, surely I'm entitled to it? After all, you do know that I can play?"

"But have you played since you left Cliff House?" Clara asked.

"Well, no!"

"Then," Clara bluntly decided,

"you're rusty. Still, you shall have your chance. There'll be the usual practice game to-morrow, and I'll put Margot on one side and you on the other. Did I hear you say, Margot,



"DIANA, put out that cigarette!" Miss Charmant ordered quietly. Diana looked scornful. "Why should I?" she retorted cheekily, hoping that her defiance of a mistress would impress her guests.

that you were going to stand treat at the tuckshop?"

"I didn't, but I will!" Margot laughed. "Is that the custom?"

"Hurrah!"

"But look here!" Diana breathed.

"I—"

But Margot did not look there. Margot was happy! Margot had made an impression. It was not the impression that Diana had intended, however—that of the superior, don't-touch-me aristocratic friend, whom only Diana was allowed to meet on terms of familiarity!

Sickening! Diana began to wish now that she had never brought Margot to Cliff House.

But Margot, for the moment, had completely forgotten about Diana. In the midst of a cheering crowd, she was heading tuckshop-wards. Diana heard her happy laugh, bit her lip, and then savagely followed.

Margot she had meant to be the means of reflecting the limelight upon herself.

Instead, Margot had collared all the limelight—quite unintentionally and unconsciously—herself.

Diana felt the virus of fury begin to creep through her veins. She had not bargained for this. Margot had been intended only as a foil to her own scintillating brilliance. It looked to Diana very much as if she had become the foil. But not she to be left out of the limelight—the fear!

She hurried after the crowd.

"No, my treat!" she cried in the tuckshop.

"Margot, no! I insist—absolutely!" And withdrawing a neat wallet from the folds of her muff, she carelessly tossed a note on to the counter. "There you are, Aunt Jones! When that's gone, let me know. Drink up and eat up, girls! To the reunion."

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Di!"

Diana smiled. It was lordly Diana's most dazzling smile. Once again she had the crowd with her. Not, indeed, that Margot, who was talking to Babs and Mabs, seemed to mind. Margot sipped lemonade and dug her white teeth into cream puffs with every evidence of the greatest enjoyment.

To be occupying the centre of the stage was as it should be. But it certainly was not as if it should be for her aristocratic friend to be hobnobbing with these others. Leaving her lemonade, Diana started forward.

"Margot," she asked gently, "don't you think we should go and see the headmistress? It's usual, you know."

"I know," Margot smiled. "But Babs says it doesn't matter immediately."

"Babs!" Diana's eyes glinted.

"And besides, it's Babs' duty, as captain of the Form, to take us both to her. That's right, isn't it, Babs?"

"That's right!" Babs smilingly assented.

Diana bit her lip. She tried desperately not to show the jealous little pang that she felt at that, but it was apparent to her from that moment that Margot was more attracted to Babs than to herself.

Babs—Babs again! A spasm of bitterness crossed her face. Always in the past Barbara Redfern had been the obstacle and the barricade to her ambitions. Was history going to repeat itself?

But finally the feed in the tuckshop was over. Accompanied by Babs, the two girls saw Miss Primrose, who delivered the usual mild lecture re-

ferred for new girls, adding a few serious riders for Diana's benefit.

They were introduced to Miss Charming, the Fourth's pretty, youthful Form mistress. They were introduced to Stella Stone, captain of the school, and others.

Finally, they found themselves in Study No. 10—Diana's own old study, and the one which, in future, she was to share with Margot Lantham. Glowingly, Margot looked round.

"Rather nice, isn't it? I had no idea they furnished junior studies so well as this, you know!"

Diana's eyes roved disdainfully.

"You think so?" she asked scornfully. "I don't think much of it. Later on we'll refurbish it throughout. I've got a lovely idea for a black-and-white colour scheme, in modern chromium and natural oak."

"I know. You were telling me about it at home," Margot assented. But she frowned. "I hadn't quite thought, though, that the place would be so charming as this," she added. "And don't you think, Diana, that chromium plating and all that stuff would be out of place here? I was telling Babs about it—"

"Babs!" Diana stiffened. "You mean Barbara Redfern?"

Margot's eyes opened in surprise.

"Well, Barbara! Everybody calls her Babs," she said. "I asked if she minded, and she said no. I like her," she added simply. "She's such a ripping girl, somehow! You know, the sort you instinctively like on sight!"

"Do I?" Diana said, between her teeth.

"And she said—well, what I was saying. That that sort of furniture is all they want in its place, but its place isn't Cliff House. After all, Di, Cliff House is old, and all that, and it's got a terrific tradition. This old furniture looks topping to me. I love that Queen Anne bureau!"

"I see!" Diana showed her teeth.

"How nice! Babs doesn't like it, doesn't she? Babs advises you against it! Babs said it didn't matter about meeting the headmistress! Oh, no! Babs this, Babs the other! Rather thick with her all at once, aren't you, Margot?"

Margot's pretty face flushed.

"Why, what's the matter?"

"The matter—" Diana began, and then bit off the hot words she intended to utter. "Oh, never mind!" she said pettishly. But her dark eyes burned and her red lips compressed.

For Diana, if she was vain, was no fool. She saw from that moment that attraction to Barbara Redfern had got a grip upon Margot Lantham. She sensed instinctively that her own slight hold had loosened.

In that stormy heart hate and bitterness welled up. Diana had a feeling, before long, that it would be war once again between her and Babs & Co.!



The Shadow of Things To Come

THAT was the first ripple upon the surface of the friendship between Diana Royston-Clarke and Margot Lantham, which, so far, had remained serenely undisturbed. It was a ripple that widened as the hours grew.

Before bed-time that night Diana saw

that she was not going to have her own way with Margot Lantham. Margot, unlike her, was not a snob. It did not please Margot to be looked up to with awe. Her famous father and mother, to Margot, were just simply mummy and daddy. Margot, at least, had no false ideas about herself.

She had come to Cliff House, she said firmly, to do the same as other girls. She expected no favouritism, no preferential treatment.

Cliff House was her school now. She wanted it to be proud of her, just as already she was proud of it.

Diana heard all that. In silence she scowled. How, all in an instant, her dreams had vanished. Margot was still her friend, but Margot, in her own words, refused to be used like a china doll.

In her own queer way Diana was fond of Margot, but that fondness would not allow Margot to outshine her. Where Diana was concerned, only one girl ever was entitled to the limelight. That was Diana herself!

"Dash Babs! Dash them all!" she muttered violently.

Dash Babs! Yet what was Margot doing now? Margot was with them, happy with them. Margot, not liking her mood, had deserted her.

The whole school was talking about Margot, but that fondness would not readily and even eager, it seemed, to forget completely her social exaltation. Before long it became plain to Diana that the whole School—and especially Babs & Co.—really admired her.

But Diana was taking no back seat. Not she. Diana had been used to the limelight. She meant to have it. In a very short while, she told herself, Margot would settle down in her place among the nonentities of the school, and then her own brilliant, dazzling presence would once again superimpose itself.

She had played hockey at her last school, had she? Diana smiled contemptuously. Well, wait till to-morrow's practice match. She'd show her what real hockey was like!

It was an unusual crowd which turned out for the trial match on the following afternoon. Quite a big crowd, in fact. Third and Fourth were on the sidelines in force. There were a goodish number of Fifth Formers, too, and even a sprinkling of the lordly Sixth.

Everybody, remembering Diana's prowess, was keen to see her in action again. But perhaps even greater was the curiosity aroused by the inclusion of Margot Lantham. They were all anxious to see how she would shape.

There was a murmur when the team came out of the pavilion.

Clara's side, which included Diana, came out first. But Diana, anxious as always to create a sensation, strolled out at the tag end of the eleven, walking serenely by herself.

"Get ready!" Dulcia Fairbrother, the Cliff House games captain, who was umpiring the match, cried, and put her whistle to her lips.

Phew!

Bully off!

Now! Here was Diana's chance. Out came the ball to her. She pounced upon it. Oh, easy—easy! She had it on the end of her stick. As if the ball was glued to it, was running up the field.

Then—what happened? She lost it, turned, and bit back an exclamation of annoyance as she saw that Barbara Redfern had robbed her, that Babs had snicked the ball to Margot.

And look at Margot!

Anxious, keen, was Margot. She was



WITH brilliant skill Margot sailed through the defence and scored a splendid goal. And the cheers that greeted her made Diana furious. She had wanted to shine in this match—and here was the new girl getting all the glory!

watchful, quiveringly alert. She knew the eyes of the whole school were upon her; she wanted to show the school that Thistdown, at least, knew all about this game.

She rushed forward. In a moment the ball was at the end of her stick. Jenima Carstairs came out to tackle. Margot simply walked round her, carrying on with a breathless laugh.

Now—a roar started in the throats of the watchers. She was near the striking circle. She was pausing. The stick came up. Snick!

"Goal!" yelled Cliff House.

"Oh, well done, Margot!"

Goal it was—a goal in the first minute! A splendid piece of work—a flash of brilliance had earned it.

Barbara Redfern, rushing delightedly across the field, shook her hand. Diana's lips curled. Just a flash in the pan, she contemptuously told herself.

She'd do better than that.

But she didn't! The old urge was there, but long absence from the game had deprived Diana of her skill. She was too anxious to oust Margot, too anxious to be a sensation and show-off. She muffed shots. Twice, confronted with an open goal, she missed.

Meantime, Margot—

Margot left Cliff House breathless. What hockey! What a player!

Before a quarter of an hour was up Cliff House was standing on tiptoe. Margot's name was upon everybody's lip.

Twenty minutes, and—snick! There was another goal. Not Margot's the stick which hit it this time, but certainly Margot's play which had led up to it.

Half an hour and the Lower School was hugging itself with delight. Margot was better even than the absent Flap. Margot! Margot! How her name went from lip to lip: "Oh, well played, Margot!" "Splendid, Margot!" "Oh, what a shot, Margot!" "Lovely pass, Margot!"

Bitter as gall was the applause to Diana.

Fury boiled up within her. Why couldn't she do things right? She was a fool to have neglected her hockey.

The irritation with which she played did not improve it. Now and again Cliff House were treated to the old flashes, but only now and again.

It was obvious to all that Diana was out of practice. She might—and probably would—be a force to be reckoned with later on—but not yet!

Phoop! And the end of the match came. Diana watched with sullen features as the crowd, breaking loose, stormed upon the field and acclaimed its new heroine.

"Lovely!" Clara enthused. "Oh, my hat! If the Thistdown team's all as good as you are, Margot, I'm jolly glad we haven't got to meet them! Wonderful, old top! Ripping!"

Margot laughed breathlessly.

"I'll do?"

"Do? Do?" Clara was almost beside herself with delight. "You'll more than do!" she said enthusiastically. "You'll more than do! Play like that on Saturday and we'll just run away with your pater's cup!"

"You mean," Margot gulped, her eyes alight, "you—you're going to put me in the team?"

"You bet!"

"And what," Diana asked, haughtily looking up, "about me?"

Clara grinned. "Sorry, old top! You're not up to it yet. I told you you'd be rusty, didn't I? You were. Later on, perhaps, when you've had a bit more practice."

Diana quivered. She—being told off like this! Convulsively her hand clenched upon her stick. The old wild, tempestuous look shot into her face. She could have struck Clara in that moment. She felt a sudden, a most frightful and terrifying rage rising within her. She turned away.

Bitter!

Back to the pavilion she went, everybody still clamouring around Margot. Nobody looked at her. She, the darling, the dazzling, was of no more account in that moment than a Second Form fag!

An uncontrollable jealousy welled up against this girl she called friend—this girl who was to have played second fiddle to her, who, in so short a time

at Cliff House, had captured the hearts and admiration of the whole school.

Diana dressed in silence. In silence she went out. Nobody seemed to notice. That hurt! She was quivering when she reached Study No. 10 again.

Almost savagely she snatched a cigarette out of her case and lit it, flinging herself into the armchair in an access of bad-tempered abandon.

Margot Lantham! Margot had got her place in the hockey team! Her place! The cigarette burned down. With an irritable gesture she flung it into the grate.

It was dark now, but Diana did not get up to turn on the light.

Then suddenly there were footsteps in the passage. Margot Lantham came in. "Why, Di!" she cried. "Sitting alone here—all in the dark? What's the matter?"

"Nothing!" Diana replied shortly.

Margot switched on the light.

"There, that's better, isn't it?" she asked brightly. "Oh, Di, I'm so happy! I've got such glorious news for you. Di, I'm in the team! I'm going to play for Cliff House on Saturday!"

Diana was silent.

"And Di—you're reserve! Clara put you down as first reserve. Which means, of course," Margot babbled on gaily, "that if anything happens to anybody else in the team, we shall be playing on the same side. Isn't that lovely, Di?"

Lovely! If only she could have seen Diana's face! But she didn't. Diana kept it steadily averted.

"And—and, Di," Margot happily babbled on. "Oh, I say, Di, do get out of that chair! You've got to dress, you know, because Babs & Co. have invited us both to tea in Study No. 4. Babs specially asked me to bring you along. But—" She stopped, faltering, as Diana did not move. Gently she approached her. "Di," she added on a different note, "what's the matter?"

Diana rose. She could stand no more of it. Passion blazed suddenly from her lovely eyes.

"The matter?" she asked, and laughed shortly. "You should ask that! You should! You never told me, did you, that you played hockey. You never let on to me that you were such a dark horse! Well, go on, play for the team! I don't mind. But I'm bothered"—violently—"if I'm going to hob-nob to Babs & Co. I brought you here as my friend—and what have you done? You've just flung me over!"

Margot's eyes widened in reproach. "Oh, Diana, how can you say—"
"Oh, shut up!" Diana cried viciously. "Go and have your tea with your toadies! I don't care! I'm not coming! I don't want to come! I wouldn't come if that crowd went down on their hands and knees to me! But you go—go on!" she flamed out.

Margot's lips compressed.
"Don't you think you're being unreasonable?"

"No!" snapped Diana.
"Then—then—"
"Oh, get out!" Diana cried.
And Margot, with a strange, wide-eyed look, that was both wondering and hurt, went. But she went very quietly, all the happiness, all the joy fled from her features.

She, like everyone else, admired Diana. This was the first time, however, that she had seen the real Diana. Did she feel, in that moment, the foreboding of the heavy trouble which was to come?



Going Too Far

BUT when Margot's footsteps had retreated down the passage, Diana rose. She paced the room restlessly. She was a cat—a cat! She didn't mean to hurt Margot like that. Either it, she'd go to her. But no, she wouldn't! She wouldn't! All right to make it up with Margot, but not she to kow-tow to Babs & Co.

It was Babs & Co.'s doing, all this! They had put that little idiot on this pedestal. They meant Margot to outshine her! This was just another of those little wiles of Babs & Co. to keep her out of the school's limelight!

Her better judgment told her that was just malicious rubbish. Her knowledge of Babs & Co. told her that she was wrong.

But Diana, at this moment, wanted to believe that, and when Diana was in one of those moods, she could believe what she chose. The impulsive step she took towards the door became arrested. She paused.

They had turned her down from the hockey team! Margot was in her place!

"Well, let them!" Diana vowed defiantly. "Let them!"

There were more ways than one of asserting herself. Later on, when she had found her old form, she'd show them hockey that would make Margot Lanthier's efforts look like some novice kid's in a kindergarten!

Meanwhile, she was going to assert herself!

Now how—
Diana, her face alight, thought. Then a smile irradiated her features. That was it, of course! A study spread! But what a study spread! Not one of your old tuckshop feeds for her! Something that would be remembered in the Form.

She chuckled suddenly, her good humour quickly restored.

Yes, that was the very thing! She'd show them that she was still the same old Diana!

Diana didn't go to Study No. 4. Instead, she went to the prefects' room there, without troubling to ask permission—After all, why should I?—she picked up the telephone.

And while she waited for the call to be put through, Diana smiled.
Yes, she'd make the school take notice of her!

THE SCHOOL, next day, did.
Babs and Mabs, going into Study No. 4, found upon the table three invitation-cards waiting for them.
They were expensive ivory cards with gilt edges and beautifully engraved. They said:

"The pleasure of your company is requested at an informal study warming to be held by Miss Diana Royston-Clarke in Study No. 10, Fourth Form Passage, Cliff House School, at 5 p.m. prompt."

"Informal!" gasped Mabs. "My hat, if this is Diana's idea of informality! We're going, Babs?"

Babs laughed.

"Why not?" Bessie Bunter, reading her invitation, echoed. "Mum-my hat! We shall be silly to miss this, you know! Hallo, Clara!"

Clara Trevlyn, Marjorie Hazeldene, and Janet Jordan from Study No. 7 had come along, to intimate that they had received similar invitations.

They were followed by Leila Carroll, Gemina Carstairs, and Marcelle Biquet, and Jean Cartwright.

But Nancy Bell and Brenda Fallace and Amy Jones and others were left out. Obvious, then, it became that Diana had only invited the celebrities of the Form.

At five o'clock an eager, curious crowd tripped up to Study No. 10, a crowd which included several Third Formers, some Fifth Formers, but no Sixth Formers. Then—how they gazed at the sight which met their eyes!

Flowers were everywhere. Flowers in vases, in baskets, in bowls. They seemed to smile their welcome. But the table—how Bessie Bunter's mouth watered at that, and what a gasp went up from everyone!

For there in the centre was a perfectly mouth-watering cake, all iced in three tiers, with a most entrancing and elf-like Eros perched saucily on top of it, and surrounded by jellies and blanc-manges and tarts and pastries and sandwiches.

"Oh-kik-crums!" stuttered Bessie. "Mum-my hat, you know! Are we going to eat all that?"

"Looks like it!" Babs laughed. "But this must have cost Diana a fortune!"

It must! For apart from the flowers and the good things there was a brand-new set of china.

Eyes glistened. A buzz of talk broke out.

Diana was not there. Margot, looking rather dumbfounded among all these luxuries, shook her head. It was five minutes past five then, and really Diana should have known better. But hardly had Babs asked the question than there was a step in the passage outside.

The door opened. Regally, grandly Diana floated in.

Everyone gasped. Eyes goggled!

For what a changed Diana! A Diana dressed in a frock the like of which could seldom have been seen in Cliff House.

With languid ease she sauntered into the study, bestowing upon her guests a dazzling smile.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Clara faintly. "Hold me up, someone! Am I in the presence of the Queen of Sheba?"

There were no titlers, however. Everybody was staring at Diana. The darning of it, and yet the exquisiteness of it! Diana wanted to make an impression. She made it! Even the feed became forgotten. For a few moments nobody could take their eyes

off the Firebrand of the Fourth. She had certainly caused a sensation.

Diana laughed.
"Well, here we are!" she cried gaily. "Thanks for turning up, all of you. I'm afraid we haven't much seating accommodation, but you don't mind that, do you? Wait a minute, I've borrowed two of the maids to look after you. Come in, Sally and Tilly!" she cried.

Sally and Tilly came in. Sally and Tilly were Diana's crowning surprise. The audacity of the girl! Fancy—pressing the school maids into service! Nobody ever would have dreamt of this.

Study feeds in the Fourth Form passage there had been in plenty, but never at any time anything quite so extravagant or lavish as this.

Diana laughed. Margot, looking at her, smiled.

"Diana, why did you do all this?"

"Oh, just fun!" Diana answered off-handedly.

"It must have cost you pounds."

"It has, but who cares?" Diana asked recklessly. "Tuck in, girls!"

The girls did so! Rather!

Diana laughed pleasantly, happily as she watched, eating nothing herself but mingling with queenly solicitude among her guests, acting the perfect hostess, seeing that they had everything they wanted. Clara grunted.

"Well, I must say this is ripping!" she conceded. "I take back anything I might have said or thought about you, Di!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Thank you!" Diana smiled.

She withdrew a silver box from the drawer of the table and held it open.

"Anyone like a cigarette?"

Cigarettes! The chums stared. But cigarettes there were in that box, a hundred or more of them. Turkish cigarettes they were.

Babs frowned.

"Diana, you know that's not allowed," she said. "I don't want to say anything, but as captain of the Form—"

Diana stared.

"You going to start lecturing?" she asked unpleasantly.

"No; but—"

Diana lit up. Very deliberately she took a puff. Bessie Bunter, next to her, coughed.

"Ugh! Oh, kik-crums, that went up my nose, you know, and—"

She stopped. There was a tap at the door. Diana, without moving the cigarette, languidly called:

"Come in!"

The door opened. Everybody stood still, tense, immovable then. The newcomer was pretty Miss Charmant, the mistress of the Fourth.

"I thought I smelt smoke as I was passing," she said; and then became aware of Diana. Diana standing there, calmly and deliberately surveying her as though she had not the slightest interest in what was afoot. "Diana!" she cried.

"Well?" Diana asked coolly. "I'm here!"

Miss Charmant was new to Diana, having joined the school during Diana's absence. Diana had no conception yet of the almost fierce regard in which the young mistress was held by the Form.

"What are you doing with that cigarette?" Miss Charmant demanded.

"Smoking it!" Diana answered contemptuously.

A little murmur went through the group. Margot, from the other side of the room, threw a beseeching look at

her Firebrand chum. Miss Charmant coloured.

"Diana, that is not the way to speak to a mistress," she said quietly.

"No?" Diana asked loftily. She grinned. Diana liked taking rises out of authority, even if she suffered for it as a consequence. No one else dared do that. It increased her prestige in the eyes of the others—or so she thought. But she was faintly disconcerted to see the glares, almost hostile, which fastened upon her now.

"Diana, I do not wish to bandy words with you," the Charmer said quietly. "I understand that your previous record at this school was not a good one. We are all very willing to forget that, but I must remind you that any new outbreak upon your part will

be regarded with the utmost seriousness. I do not wish to make trouble, but please do not force me into reporting you. Be a sensible girl, now, and put that cigarette away."

"Yes, please, Di," Margot pleaded. But Diana didn't. A little gleam shot into her eyes. That she should be ordered in front of her guests by this mistress, who looked as if she might have just stepped out of the Sixth Form herself, was too much.

"If I want a cigarette, I'm going to have it!" she retorted cheekily. "Bother it, why shouldn't I? I smoke at home!"

"Home is not here, Diana," Miss Charmant reminded her. "Please put it away!"

"Yes, go on, Diana!" Babs urged.

There are some things you
must do, and some things you
mustn't

IF YOU WOULD BE POPULAR

DON'T be a "copy-cat." However well Beryl Groves' hair suits her, parted in the middle, her style may not look nearly so effective on you!

DO be original. That doesn't mean to be daring, but to have ideas of your very own which will establish you as a "type."

DON'T try to be different from everyone else, just for the sake of it. You might be considered adorably quaint; on the other hand, you might be thought "snooty." And you wouldn't like that!

DO remember those little courtesies ALL the time. To pick up a dropped hankie; to open a door, even if you're not going through; to say "You first," even when you're in a hurry. Very small things, but how they matter!

DON'T make promises rashly. However much you may like to please, it's wiser to think first than to have to back out of an arrangement because you spoke too hurriedly. How nice to have said of you then: "We can always rely on Mary!"

DO pay attention to your appearance. No one likes a really conceited person, but everyone is proud of a friend who always looks sweet and neat.

DON'T forget kindnesses or favours that you have received, however small. People love to think you remember the nice things about them.

DO forget past quarrels. You may have forgiven some little thing that hurt you, but forgiving is not completely one way; also put it completely out of your mind, never to bring it up again.

DON'T let there be "two of you"—one at home and one at school. All your little courtesies that you practise at school should also find a place at home. A regular "Good-morning!" to all the family is as fine a



way of starting a home day as it is a school lesson.

DO keep your old friends—they're so precious. If they have moved out of your district, and you really value the friendship, you must consider it a duty to write and keep in touch with them. And how nice to receive letters in return!

DON'T write letters just for the sake of receiving an answer, though. There's nothing as tedious for the writer as having to sound friendly on paper to someone she has completely forgotten.

DO remember as many birthdays as you can. It doesn't matter if you don't give many presents on such occasions, but everyone loves to know their birthday is remembered. And a card or just a "Many-happy-returns" wish will endear you to them.

DON'T give away secrets that have been confided in you with instructions not to tell. If you do this often, you will soon find that you will lose your reputation as a sympathetic listener—which is one of the first steps towards popularity.

DO be frank, though, about yourself. To be slightly reserved is very different from creating all sorts of mysteries around yourself. They may sound romantic for the moment, but facts have a way of leaking out, and a popular girl is never one who could possibly be accused of "spoofing."

DON'T exaggerate just for the sake of telling a good story, particularly when your story concerns another person. It is so easy to make a mistake, but not nearly so easy to put it right again!

DO be your own sweet self all the time. There is nothing so charming as a schoolgirl who is delightfully natural.

"Oh, be quiet, you!" Diana snapped. She defiantly puffed again, feeling furious now that she saw every eye fixed upon her in disgust. "Why should I put it away?" she stormed. "Why should I? Simply because you ask me to—and who are you, pray?"

"Diana!" A growl went up from Clara Trevlyn.

"Here, this is too thick!" Miss Charmant's eyes glistened. She said no word further, but, calmly reaching up, plucked the cigarette from Diana's fingers and tossed it into the fire.

"Since," she said, "you will not obey of your own accord, Diana, you shall now—"

Suddenly Diana's violent temper broke bounds. This upstart was humiliating her! In front of her own guests! In her own study! The unbearable temper which had so often been her undoing in the past, broke out.

"You—you—" she choked. Her arm swept round. The open palm shot forward. Only in the nick of time did Babs, jumping forward, prevent it from striking Miss Charmant's cheek.

"Diana, you idiot!"

"Let me go!" "You idiot! Oh, my hat!" Babs panted. "Miss Charmant, please," she gasped, "she—she didn't mean it! What on earth are you doing, you idiot, trying to strike a mistress? You do you know you'll be expelled!"

Diana was gasping. She stiffened. "I don't care! Let me go! Barbara Redfern, let me go!" And suddenly she struggled loose, standing in a tearing passion before the mistress. "Miss Charmant—"

Miss Charmant's look was withering. "Thank you, Diana, that is enough!" she said. "If I did my duty I should report this." She picked up the box of cigarettes. "These will be confiscated," she went on. "As I have no wish to see you expelled I shall not report the incident. But you will write me five hundred lines!"

"I won't!" "I shall expect them," Miss Charmant announced, as she calmly strode towards the door, "at two o'clock to-morrow."

She went out. Diana, panting, found contemptuous eyes upon her.

"Well!" Babs breathed. "A nice sort of idiot you've made of yourself!" "Think so?" sneered Diana. "A real credit to Cliff House you're going to be!" Clara Trevlyn put in disgustedly.

Diana's eyes gleamed. "Look here—"

"Oh, shucks!" Clara said contemptuously. "I hoped at least you'd come back with some glimmering of decency. Apparently you haven't. If this is the way you're going on, then the sooner you think of getting out of Cliff House the better. Anyway, I'm fed-up! I'm going!"

"Then go!" Diana said bitterly. Clara shrugged. She strode towards the door. Lena Carroll, with a look at Diana, followed her. Mabs went out with her. Babs paused. She, too, went out. Jemima followed suit. Marjorie Hazeldene shook her head. Reluctantly she trailed doorwards.

Diana blinked. "Look here—"

But nobody looked; nobody even turned a head. One by one, in frigid

silence, they swept out of the room, until at last only Margot was left.

She looked sadly, reproachfully at her chum.

"Diana, why did you spoil everything?"

Diana's eyes blazed. "You take their part?" she demanded.

Margot bit her lip. "Diana, it's not that; but—you know that smoking is against the rules! And as for going for a miss—"

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Diana. And Margot, with a shake of the head, went out, too.

While Diana, gazing at the remains of that gorgeous spread which was to have done so much to elevate her in the eyes of the school—laughed savagely.

What an end to all her schemes! And Margot—Margot sided with the rest of them!

Bitter was Diana's mood for the rest of that evening. Cold and hostile the rest of the school. The news of the fracas had got around. Everybody was up in arms at the way Diana had insulted Miss Charmant.

When she went into the Common-room, she was met by icy stares and averted shoulders. When she went into the library the Terraine twins, who were there, walked out. At night in the dormitory, nobody spoke to her, except Margot. Even she seemed constrained as she said, when lights were out:

"Good-night, Diana!"

Diana did not reply. But she wasn't worried; hardly even discouraged. She meant to be some day. Oh, rather! Bitterly, and most unfairly, she blamed Babs & Co. for all her troubles. When she thought of Margot now she thought of her with a gleam of spite. Dash Margot! It was her fault! If she'd never outshone her at hockey—

Well, let her wait! She'd show her! More sensibly Diana decided upon her future course of action. To outshine Margot, to become the heroine of the school was her ambition now. Well, she'd do it! She'd rid herself of staleness. She'd waste in like a Trojan to train.

In less than a week she'd be back to her old form, the old dazzling, scintillating hockey player, who left spectators bewildered, who simply made rings round her opponents.

No more smoking! No. Training hard and intensive!

She started the following morning.

Up before rising-bell was Diana. From her locker she extracted her most daring bathing costume. Towel over arm, she tripped down to the swimming bath, and there blinked when she found Clara Trevlyn, Margot, Janet Jordan, and Barbara Redfern already indulging in a dip.

They were splashing merrily as she entered, Margot and Janet indulging in an impromptu race.

By the tips of her fingers Margot won. Janet laughed.

"Jolly good!" she said. "A bit more training and I shall have to be looking out for my laurels. Did you swim at your last school, Margot?"

Margot smiled modestly, as she climbed out of the bath.

"I swam the hundred yards," she said. "Did you?" Janet shook her head admiringly.

"Have to watch you," she said laughingly. "Didn't know you were quite such a champion, Margot. Oh, halo, Diana!" she cried, as she saw that girl standing on the bath. "And I

say, what a costume! Come for a dip?"

"I have!" Diana said loftily, her eyes fastened upon Margot. A gleam came into them.

Margot had won the hundred yards championship at her school, had she? Well, she'd done the same thing at the Courtfield Gala. If there was one thing Diana could do it was swim! What a chance to take her down a peg!

"What about a race?" she asked suddenly. "Two lengths of the bath. Bet I beat you, Margot!"

"Done!" cried Margot merrily. She looked supremely confident as she lined up beside her study-mate.

"Ready?" she asked. "No, wait a minute." Diana had seen a movement at the entrance to the bath.

The next moment her eyes shone as Dulcia Fairbrother, the fair-haired captain of games came in, accompanied by Lady Patricia Northanson, of the Sixth Form.

She chuckled a little. Here was an audience which was worthy of her efforts—the games captain and Lady Pat, Cliff House's aristocrat of aristocrats who, in real life, was the Duchess of Northshire.

"Hallo!" Dulcia said good-humouredly. "What's this—a race?"

"Yes, Dulcia," Diana volunteered. "Margot and I! We're going to see who's the better over two lengths!"

And she smiled—pleasently, radiantly, dazzlingly.

Diana was glad they had appeared. She was going to show them this time!

Margot Lantham, standing by her side, was looking quite awed at finding herself in the presence of the games captain.

"Time us, Dulcia?" Diana asked.

"Right-ho!" Dulcia agreed briefly. "Well—ready?"

"Yes!"

"Go!"

Splash! The two bodies hit the water as one. What a dive! What a perfect picture they made!

Diana thrilled. With strong strokes she swam forward, laughing in her glee as she found so early that she was leaving Margot behind.

Babs & Co. stood on the edge and admiringly watched.

Up the bath! Two streaks of light they seemed, Margot a bare yard behind. Diana was swimming strongly now. She reached the rail, touched it, her graceful figure flashing like a fish as she turned. A laugh of exultation came to her lips. She was winning! Winning!

On! Straining now! Everything Diana had she put into the effort. She gritted her teeth, while the girls on the edge stood in wondering admiration.

The strain was terrific. Too late Diana began to regret that she had rested so completely upon her swimming laurels after winning the Courtfield competition. Still, she was beating Margot!

But was she? Diana, every ounce of will concentrated upon her own efforts, did not see Margot. She did not realize that that girl had been saying something up for the homeward stretch.

All Diana saw was the rail of the bath five yards ahead. Gasping she was, but anxious to make Margot's defeat as humiliating as possible, put forward one last spurt.

Four yards—three—and then—Diana almost sank in her astonishment. The water ahead of her swirled. There was the glistening, gleaming head and shoulders of Margot, and Margot it was, who, over a yard in front of her, touched the rail first. Margot it was whom Babs and Mabs and Clara applauded, for

whom Dulcia Fairbrother and Lady Pat clapped their hands.

Margot had—had beaten her!

One furious kick Diana gave. The kick took her to the rail. Margot was there, holding on, laughing breathlessly. She greeted Diana with a smile.

But the smile faded when she saw the look of fury upon her opponent's face.

"Good race, Diana!" Dulcia chuckled. "Bit off a little more than you could chew that time. Well swum, Margot—well swum indeed!"

"Topping!" Lady Pat approved.

Diana gritted her teeth almost sick with the humiliation of her defeat. It was no consolation whatever when Dulcia Fairbrother, helping her out of the water, patted her upon the arm and said:

"A good show, Diana. A very, very good show indeed!"

Diana trembled.

"But, Diana added, "you rather met your match, you know."

Met her match! That—from Dulcia! Her match, indeed! Why, if she hadn't been out of practice she'd have left Margot Lantham standing! She couldn't reply. Rage, uncontrollable, choked her.

To Dulcia's surprise she flung off towards the dressing-cubicle. In a perfectly towering temper rubbed herself down, and wrapping herself in a rather too ornate bathing-wrap, flung out of the bath.

Clara chuckled.

"Our little Di seems peeved," she remarked. "Doesn't like being beaten, eh?"

Margot looked troubled.

"But it's so silly," she said. "I—I really didn't think she'd take it like that."

She looked worried.

Diana, before, had always shown herself a good sport; on some occasions such a generous, adorable girl, that Margot, responding to the radiance of her personality, had secretly considered herself rather lucky to have such a dazzling friend.

It took all the pleasure out of Margot's morning. It made her feel rather nettled that Diana should choose to behave in this extraordinary way.

Margot was never happy if she felt friction in the air.

Healthy, open, sports-loving girl that she was, Margot never kept her own grievances a secret, and hated to feel that others had secret grievances against her.

"I'll have it out with her," Margot thought. It was too silly to go on like this. Immediately she had dressed she went to Study No. 10.

Diana was there, standing by the window, staring moodily into the sunny quad.

She turned as Margot came in, and Diana's lips quickly turned again. Margot's tips compressed a little.

"Di!" she said. "Di!"

Diana continued to stare out of the window.

Margot sighed. But she was not to be outdone. She went forward, tapping Diana on the arm. Diana shrank away.

"Diana!" Margot's eyes were pleading, yet perhaps they also held a hint of anger. "Di, what's the matter?"

"Nothing!" Diana returned between her teeth.

"But there is! Diana, have you anything against me?"

"Oh, shut up!" Diana snapped.

A little gleam came into Margot's eyes.

"I'm not going to shut up! Diana, I want to thrash this out. Something's happened and we came here. You're not the same; you've changed."

Diana just shrugged.

"Have you anything against me?" Something in Margot's quiet insistence suddenly caused Diana to see red. "Anything against you?" she shrieked, wheeling round. "Haven't you been out to go one better than me from the first moment we put foot in the school? You, with your sweet smile, and butter-won't-melt-in-your-mouth manner, worming your way into favour with the girls that I hate! Anything against you! I should say so! You're just a little crawling worm! That's what you are! Get out! I hate you!"

"Diana!" gasped Margot.

"Diana—Diana!" jeered the other. "How affectionate that sounds! And all the while you're working behind my back—"

"It's not true—"

"Oh, yes it is! Get out! D'you hear?"

And so furious did Diana look that Margot instinctively backed to the door. "Very well," muttered Margot. "But before I go I should just like to say—"

A book was on the table, and Diana, snatching at it, hurled it with all her force at Margot. It scudded past her head as she ducked; it rebounded from the door as Margot snatched at the handle. Then the door opened and Margot disappeared into the passage.

Diana, trembling in every limb, gazed after the retreating form of her erstwhile friend.

A great wave of self-pity overwhelmed the headstrong girl. Deep down she knew that she was in the wrong. The accusations she had brought against Margot, she realised now, were only the wild vapourings of jealousy.

She longed to run after Margot and confess this; own she was at fault; ask her forgiveness.

But her foolish pride stepped in. "Too late!" she sighed miserably. "Too late! I've done it now! What a fool I've made of myself—what a fool!"



The Two Dianas

CRASH!

The door of Study No. 4 in the Fourth Form corridor flew open.

Barbara Redfern jumped. Mabs, unpacking a bag near the fireplace, almost fell over; and Bessie Bunter, who was in the act of pouring herself a glass of water, started so suddenly that the water, spilling over the side of the glass, saturated an exercise book.

One and all turned towards the door, where Clara Trevely—eyes aglow, face aflame—now stood.

"Chump!" Babs said.

"Idiot!" breathed Mabs.

"And lul-look here!" stuttered Bessie.

"Sorry! Excuse the enthusiasm!" Clara grinned. "But I've just heard from Dulcia Fairbrother. Our opponents in the first round of the Lantham Cup—"

Babs' attention immediately became riveted.

"Oh, yes! Who?"

"Whitechester!"

"Whitechester!" It was Babs' eyes who glowed now. Whitechester! Cliff House's most doughty opponents. The school who were their chief rivals for hockey honours; who had vowed, this season, to wrest the hockey championship from Cliff House.

Twice already this season the two had met. First time Cliff House had won,

second time Whitechester. Now they were to meet again, in the first round of this new competition.

"Oh, my hat!" Babs cried. "What a match!"

"What a match!" Clara chorled. "And what a team! Look!" she cried eagerly, and spread out the list she held in her hand on the table. "I've got out what I consider the best team. It's a shame about old Flap, of course; but after the show Margot Lantham put up, we just couldn't possibly leave her out. I've given her Flap's place."

Babs nodded.

"And jolly sensible!" she agreed. "What about Diana?"

Clara frowned.

"Not up to it yet," she said. "I'd like to include her, but—well, you saw her, Babs. Anyway, I've put her down as reserve."

Margot rather shyly came in. "I was—was wondering if I might speak to you, Babs."

"Why, of course!"

"It—it's about—"

And Margot bit her lip. Oh, she hated the task, but she had to go through with it! "I—I was wondering," she said, "if I could change studies."

Clara's eyes gleamed.

"Diana been going for you?"

"Well, it—it's not exactly that; but—"

Margot bit her lip. "Please don't ask me to go into explanations!" she pleaded. "Diana, I'm sure, doesn't mean to be nasty; but—well, I feel that it would be better for both of us if we parted for a bit."

She saw the look that Babs and Mabs exchanged, and flushed.

"Please don't think I'm complaining,



"DIANA, why do you spoil everything?" Margot spoke reproachfully. Diana's eyes blazed. "So you take their part? Well, go—I don't care!" But at heart Diana knew how much she cared, knew that once again she must play second fiddle to Margot.

Babs nodded. She was in perfect agreement with that.

Diana, obviously, was not up to it yet. Later on, when she had found her feet again, her claim could not be refuted. As for Margot, however—she found herself dimpling at the very thought!

"Jolly good!" she agreed, scanning the team list. "Oh, jolly good! If anything, Margot's better than Flap! I'm sorry that Flap has left, but—"

She frowned a little. "Have you broken the news to Margot, Clara?"

"No, not yet."

"Well, I think I would if I were you," Babs advised. "I will buck her up a bit. She looked rather down in the mouth at breakfast, I thought, and it's obvious there's been some row between her and Diana. I—"

And she stopped, looking up, as the door opened, and Margot, rather hesitantly, stood there. "Why, talk of angels!" she cried. "Come in, Margot!"

but you—you understand?" she finished falteringly.

Clara smiled. It was a rather hard smile. Clara had no illusions. She liked Margot. Never, never in the past had she liked Diana, and she did not like her now. She understood all right. So did Babs and Mabs.

"I see!" said Babs. "Yes; I think that can be fixed. We'd like you in here with us, Margot, but the rules say that there aren't to be more than three girls to a study while the other room is available. But if you like Study No. 6, I think I can fix that up for you—in Philippa Derwent's old place, along with Peggy Preston and Phyllis Howell. I'll see Stella about it at morning break."

"Oh, thanks!" Margot returned gratefully.

"And, meantime," Clara said heartily. "I've a bit of news for you, Margot, old thing. Here we are!" And she planked down the team list on the table.

"See that?" she asked, her finger stabbing at Margot's name.

"Oh, you—you mean 'I'm in the team'?" Margot gasped. "Really?"

"Why, of course!"

"But—but Diana—isn't she included?"

"Diana?" Clara told her, "is entitled to nothing until she's shown she's fit for it. Diana's not up to the mark yet, you know. In any case, there's the list, and, having been called upon, you're bound to play."

Delighted Margot! What happiness was hers in that moment! How for one instant she longed to run to Diana to tell her this glorious news, not remembering again, with a pang, that changed Diana, the straining of their old happy relationships, she caught herself up.

Oh, why had Diana changed? Why had Diana chosen to treat her like this?

Other girls in the Form were asking that question, too. The news of the race in the swimming bath had leaked out, and whispers were going round. Diana, important and dignified as usual, heard them, flushed, and felt more furious than ever. She knew exactly what the school was thinking. They thought she was jealous.

Jealous—of Margot! If only she'd been in training!

Diana continued to tell herself she was not jealous. Neither had she lost belief in her own prowess. She was just out of condition, that was all. She required practice. Give her a fortnight, even a week, and she'd outline the best.

But bitter it was for Diana to feel that, while her own star further waned, that of Margot Lantham grew stronger and steadily brighter. The whole school was talking of Margot now.

The admiration was given an impetus at midday break, when, after morning lessons, it became generally known, though Clara's official notice on the board in Big Hall, that Cliff House's first opponents in the Lantham Cup were to be Whitechester School.

Diana, desperately determined to get back to the old form, did not see that notice till she came in just before dinner, having spent the interval in joining in an impromptu game of hockey on Senior Side. But her eyes gleamed when she scanned it.

"Brenda Fallace; Leila Carroll, Jean Cartwright; Amy Jones, Rosa Rodworth, Janet Jordan; Joan Sheldon Charman, Clara Trevelyn (capt.), Barbara Redfern, Margot Lantham, June Merrett. Reserve: Diana Royston-Clarke."

The last lingering hope faded. She was left out then! Margot Lantham was included! Margot was replacing her—she, the girl who had once scored five goals in a single match!

Diana seethed. For a moment a very hard look came into that handsome face of hers.

Diana, in sudden tempestuousness, swung round, and, without a glance to right or left, stamped off across the hall towards the stairs.

She saw nothing, heard nothing, as she swept on up the stairs, and, in a quivering rage, sailed round the angle of the Fourth Form corridor.

Then, with a gasp, she gazed back as two exclamations simultaneously sounded—one a wail of sheer horror, the other a cry of utter consternation. She stopped and turned.

Rosa Rodworth, a bottle of ink in one hand, stood there, her cheeks suddenly crimson. Lucy Farraday, the Quiet Mouse of the Form, who had been carrying a white frock draped over one arm, was almost in tears.

For upon that white frock were several disfiguring blobs of ink.

Diana saw that. Immediately a light of contrition transformed her face. She saw then what had happened. In colliding with Rosa, carrying the ink, she had caused Rosa to spill it on the frock of Lucy, who must have been coming down the corridor with her.

Rosa was indignant.

"Why, you clumsy idiot! Why the dickens—"

"I'm sorry!" Diana said. But her immediate concern was not for Rosa, but Lucy—Lucy, who, biting her lip, was sadly unfolding the frock to see the extent of the damage. "Oh, I say!" she exclaimed. "I'm sorry, Lucy! What beastly luck!"

Lucy's eyes had filled with tears.

"I—I—" she muttered, and shook her head. "It—it was my best frock!" she stammered. "I—I was taking it to Mrs. Thwaites to ask her if she'd iron it for me, as I've been invited out to Courtfield Hall to-night! Oh, goodness, what can I do now?" she asked. "You haven't got another?" Diana asked quickly.

"No!"

"Poor old thing!" Diana shook her head. She frowned a moment—at herself. What a blundering idiot she was! Then impulsively she put a hand on Lucy's arm. "Never mind," she said cheerfully. "We'll soon fix that up. Come with me."

"Lucy stared."

"But—"

"Come with me!" Diana repeated, in that commanding way of hers.

Lucy, rather wondering, went with her. Diana laughed a little as she climbed the stairs which led to the Fourth Form dormitory, while Lucy, still wondering, followed her in. Straight to her own cupboard Diana went. There she unlocked the door, flinging it open, displaying to the amazed Lucy's eyes a line of dazzling frocks.

One, a beautiful thing in white satin, she selected and tossed on the bed.

"There we are!" she said gaily.

"That's a new one, Lucy—one I haven't worn myself yet; came straight from Paris. It should fit you. Try it on."

"You mean—you'll lend it to me?"

Lucy asked.

"Try it on," Diana insisted.

So Lucy, stripping herself of her gym tunic, tried it on. Diana, with the eye of an expert, stood aside surveying the effect.

Certainly it was a most beautiful and expensive frock. Beside it, the ink-spattered artificial silk that Diana had spoiled looked cheap and tawdry. Lucy looked transformed, radiant.

"Oh, Diana, it's beautiful!"

"Like it?" Diana asked carelessly.

"I—I love it!" breathed Lucy.

"Okay, then!" Diana laughed. "Tit for tat. It's yours, Lucy, for keeps!"

Lucy looked incredulous.

"Diana, you—you don't mean that?"

"Don't I? Have you ever heard Diana Royston-Clarke say anything she didn't mean?"

"Oh, Diana!" Lucy's eyes swam with gratitude and delight. "How ever can I thank you?"

"Simply," Diana answered, "by just saying nothing. And that also goes," she added warningly, "for saying nothing to anyone else in the school. I don't want them to think that I'm doing my little good deed to curry favour, Lucy. You understand?"

Lucy gulpingly nodded, her face aflame. Diana turned with a laugh, her heart for a moment lifted of the

tempest that had torn it, feeling the reflection of the other's trembling joy.

The frock mattered nothing to Diana. She had a wardrobe full of them. But Lucy Farraday, the poor, Quiet Mouse of the Form, who always adored pretty things, but never had the money to pay for them, it mattered a great deal.

Perhaps in that moment there was nobody so wonderful as Diana Royston-Clarke in the whole world to Lucy Farraday.

But as soon as the dormitory door was closed the incident, to Diana, was forgotten. Of such strange and contrary fibre was the Firebrand of the Fourth made.



The Chance She Wanted

"WELL, that's fixed!" Babs said merrily after lessons. "Stella's agreed that you go into Study No. 6 with Phyllis and Peggy, Margot."

Margot smiled.

"Thank you, Babs! It—it's very nice of you, really. I—I hate to give you such a lot of trouble, but—but I was wondering—"

"Wonder on!" Babs invited cheerily.

"Well, I—I've got a lot of stuff in the study. In the bureau, mainly—" Margot hesitated. "Diana didn't like the bureau, you know; said it was too solid and old-fashioned. If there's no objection, I'd love to have it in Study No. 6."

"No objection at all," Clara Trevelyn cheerfully informed her. "And any way, if you want it, Diana can't raise any objections. What about going along and grabbing it now?"

Margot paused.

"But, Diana, don't you think I'd better tip the porter or someone to do it? If—if Diana—" She bit her lip.

"I don't want another scene," she said, "and Diana would be bound to cut up rusty again."

Clara grimaced.

"Well, Diana is Diana if she didn't," she opined. "All the same, can't get old Piper's assistance this time, because it happens to be Piper's afternoon off. Still, if you're not keen on meeting dear Diana again, we don't mind. Feeling strong, Mabs?"

"Yes, rather."

"And you, Babs?"

"Of course!"

"Then come on; we'll do the job! Margot, if you really want to make yourself useful, help Bessie to toast the muffins. We'll be back in no time!" And Clara cheerfully swung out of the study—Clara, at least, had no fear of Diana—and Babs and Mabs followed her out.

"Come in!" Diana's voice called as Babs knocked at the door of Study No. 10. They entered, to find Diana frowning out of the window. She turned as she saw them.

"And why," she asked, with a hint of a sneer, "am I honoured by this visit?"

"You've heard that Margot is changing her study?" Babs asked.

Diana felt a swift stab.

"Is she?"

"She is!" Clara's lips compressed.

"She's going into Study No. 6."

"Really? Not into Study No. 4?"

Diana asked mockingly. "Can't you find room for her, Barbara? Or is it that you like her company at a distance?"

I rather fancied, having got so thick with her, she'd move into your study."

Babs eyed her steelily.
"You know, Diana, that only three girls are allowed in one study," she said. "You're just trying to be spiteful. In any case, we haven't come to quarrel with you—"

"Sweet children!" Diana scoffed.
"We've come," Clara blunty added, "to take Margot's bureau! Any objection?"

Diana's curved lips wreathed in a scornful smile. Take the bureau—ch? So Margot really meant what she had said! Margot, having put herself on a pedestal of her own, meant really and truly to desert her! For perhaps just a moment Diana felt a sinking of the heart—a faint pity for herself. What an end to friendship!

But immediately that vanished. Pride came to take its place! Bother Margot! Why should she worry about her? If she wanted to clear out, then let her clear out—and jolly good riddance to her!

In any case, the old friendship could never be the same again. She'd be glad to get rid of her—yes, glad! She gave a sudden, queer laugh.

"Objection? Why should I?" she scoffed. "Jolly pleased to get rid of the beastly thing! Glad to get it out of the way—and its owner, too!" she could not help but add, with a flash of bitterness. "Come on! Get hold of it! I'll help you to shift it."

The four eyed her wonderingly.
"Thanks, we can manage!" Clara said tartly.

"Oh, don't talk rot!" Diana replied. "It's not a three-girl job. Come on, let's get on with it! Mabs, you and Clara take that end, Barbara and I will take this. Now, careful!"

Really, it was jolly decent of Diana. So Babs thought, little guessing the feelings of hurt pride which warred within her.

"Lift!" Diana cried.

They lifted. The bureau was heavy. It was unwieldy, too. Clara and Mabs backed towards the door.

Obviously, they saw now, it was a four-girl job.

Four—five yards.
Clara, red-faced, was panting.

"Hold your end up, Diana. Dash it, I'm getting all the weight! If only—"

And then from Clara went up a shriek.

Crash! went the bureau, as simultaneously it slipped from Babs' and Diana's grasp, and fairly and squarely dropped one end upon the Tomboy's foot.

"Oh, my goodness! My foot! My foot!"

"Oh, yooks!" Diana gasped in dismay.

"Clara!" cried Babs.

"Oh-h!" And Clara, standing on one leg, clasped the injured foot in anguish. Her face was white. Her whole frame was trembling. "Oh, my goodness! Oh, my hat! My foot's crushed!"

It was Diana, with that quick presence of mind, who jumped forward, who was immediately on her hands and knees.

Clara, white-faced, almost swooning, was leaning against the wall of the corridor, supported by an anxious Mabs.

"Barbara, give a hand!" Diana

commanded. "Help with this stocking!"

The stocking came off, revealing the top of a foot already swelling, with an ugly abrasion across the instep.

Diana frowned.

"Looks bad," she said. "Can't do anything here. We'd better take her to the matron. Mabs, get somebody else to help with the bureau."

Really it was amazing how Diana took charge. How she, all raging bitterness a few moments before, could now be so gentle, so tender, so solicitous.

Supported by her on one side, on the other by Babs, Clara limped off, almost swooning.

With the assistance of Phyllis Howell and Jean Cartwright, attracted to the scene by the sound of the crash, Mabs got the bureau installed into its new home.

Later, however, came the news which completely robbed Diana of her concern on Clara's account, and filled her with dancing glee.

Clara Trevlyn was detained in sanatorium. Clara would not be able to play in the match. For that game now Barbara Redfern had taken over the captaincy, and Diana, the reserve, would play.

In her study Diana hugged herself. Surely it was an ill wind that blew nobody any good. She was sorry for Clara Trevlyn, but her sorrow did not lessen her exultation. In the Fourth there was gloom.

Diana, whatever she might think of herself, was not looked upon yet as being fit to take her place in a first-class match.

But Diana rejoiced. Really, she felt almost grateful to Clara. It was tough luck on the Tomboy, of course. Clara—what must she be feeling!

(Continued on the next page.)

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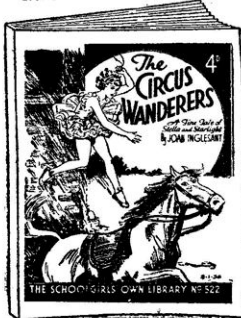
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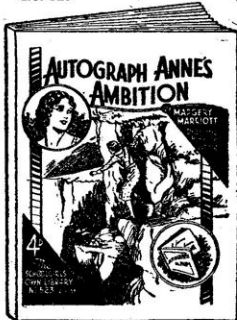
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Poor old thing! And with one of those amazingly swift revulsions of feeling, Diana felt her heart soften towards the Tomboy; felt suddenly that she would like to do something to minimise her disappointment.

Well, why shouldn't she? Just upon impulse Diana acted then. Off she hurried into Friardale. There she bought the biggest and best bunch of flowers in the florist's shop, and sailed back to the sanatorium in triumph.

Clara, very disgruntled, her leg propped up in bed, stared at her.

"For you, old sportsman!" Diana gaily laughed. "Just to cheer up your hours of loneliness. Where shall I put them?"

Clara was silent. She was not impressed. She had never made any attempt to conceal her dislike of Diana, and she had the shrewdness to guess that had her accident not meant that Diana gained thereby, Diana would never have given her a second thought.

"Give them to matron," she said. "She'll know what to do with 'em." It wasn't exactly a hearty reception.

Diana, perhaps, had reason for feeling a little piqued. She ought to have known better, anyway, she told herself bitterly, and feeling that a good intention had gone astray, she left the flowers where they were and flounced off to her own study.

Here a second rebuff awaited her in the shape of Miss Charmant.

"Diana," the mistress remarked quietly. "I gave you lines, instructing you to deliver them to me this morning. Where are they?"

"I haven't done them," Diana said sulkily.

"You mean you did not intend to do them?"

"Oh, I forgot!"

"Very well." Miss Charmant's eyes gleamed. "I shall expect them before bed-time. If not"—she paused—"if not, then I shall have no alternative but to detain you for the next half-holiday."

She went out, leaving Diana with a frown of fury upon her brow. She wouldn't do the lines, she wouldn't!

And then Diana paused, reflecting. A detention on Saturday. A detention which meant that she would not be able to play after all, in the match.

She fumed. In a perfect paddy she flung about the study. But she saw for once that she had to bow the knee. Having won her place in the team, she doesn't risk losing it.

How she hated Miss Charmant!

For once Diana had to submit. With very bad grace she snatched the impot paper towards her. With a crash she flung herself into a chair, took up her pen, and savagely bit at the end of it with her firm, white teeth as she stared mutinously at the empty impot sheets in front of her. Bother Miss Charmant! Dictating to her like this—making her do lines! Well—

And then Diana gave a sudden, sharp exclamation. Down went the pen, its end bitten to pieces in the fierce concentration of that last outburst of fury.

Up jumped Diana, one agonised hand suddenly clapping her cheek, while shooting pains that were like darts of fire jumped from her gum into her head. What had she done?

But the temper-bitten pen told its own tale. Fool! Idiot that she was, she had splintered the wooden holder in her gum!

Diana at that was more furious than ever—furious with herself this time for her own silly behaviour. She felt tenderly round the gum, found the edge of the splinter, and shutting her eyes in dreadful agony pulled it out.

There! That was better, though her gum still felt sore and tender, and a dull, aching, throbbing pain took the place of the sharp anguish of a moment before.

Savagely she wrote her lines; took them in. By then it was bed-time, and still conscious of that tingling gum, Diana went to bed.

In the morning the ache was still there. In the evening it was still there, and aching and throbbing all day, made her feel quite groggy. A fine old wreck she'd be at this rate.

Friday came. That beastly tooth. Some portion of the splinter must have remained.

When she went to bed that night she was feeling strangely sick, almost ill. And to-morrow was the day of the Whitechester match!

"I'll have to get rid of it—I'll have to!" Diana told herself. "If I go on at this rate, I shall never be able to play."

But she didn't. Half the night the



LOOK TO YOUR LOOKS IN WINTER TIME

You value your good looks all the year through, of course, but in wintry weather they need more attention than ever

Do you like winter—or don't you? Are you one of those girls who simply expand to keen, frosty air, or are you one of those who loves to huddle over a roaring fire and pity the poor things out of doors?

Never mind! Whichever you are, your precious schoolgirl good looks should certainly be at their glowing best in winter.

Your hair first. This being kept covered more in winter than in summer, you must somehow see that it gleams as much as ever, even with so little sunlight to help.

Brushing and combing must be regular in winter-time; a hundred strokes every night should be your rule.

Even the glossiest hair tends to become brittle in frosty weather, and natural oils seem to disappear. But that's no reason why your hair should appear dull or lifeless.

AN OIL BATH FOR YOUR HAIR

You must supply those oils yourself. So every fortnight I want you to give your hair an oil bath. It sounds very difficult, I know, but it's as easy as anything, really.

Just before you give your hair its regular shampoo, rub vaseline or olive oil well into your hair. Allow it to stay on for as long as you can—a whole day for preference.

Then wash your hair, using an olive-oil or coconut-oil shampoo in winter-time. You'll be delighted at its softness and glossy appearance afterwards.

Girls whose hair is naturally oily will very likely decide that they don't need to give their locks an oil bath even in winter-time; but they should certainly change to a shampoo with an oil base this weather.

FOR A TOO-DRY SKIN

Outdoor and indoor girls alike are apt to find that their skin in winter tends to become dry and rough. That's old Jack Frost again.

So when you find the slightest sign of this, I want you to buy a two-penny tin of cold cream.

Smear this on to your face at

night, allow it to soak in, and then wipe it off. If the harm is already done, and your face is very rough, leave the cream on all night, and repeat the performance the next night, too.

As an extra precaution, a dab of cold cream smoothed into your face before going out for a wintry walk will work wonders in keeping the wind from stealing all your skin's smoothness.

Hands, too, suffer in winter if they are not cared for. Cold cream is invaluable for these, too, or vaseline if you find cold cream too extravagant a luxury for your hands.

Careful drying is most essential in winter-time. Don't just dab your hands on the towel and dash off, but dry them methodically if you'd keep "chaps" at bay.

WARM TOES

Other destroyers of good looks in winter are—feet. Even with a skin that's satin-smooth, and hands like lily petals, how can you look your best with feet like ice?

So this must be remedied. If your feet are cold in school, try wiggling them round in circles from the ankles. They'll soon begin to glow, you'll find.

And as this inconspicuous exercise is also ankle-slumping at the same time, you'll feel you're really doing yourself a double good turn!

Wear your gloves whenever you are out of doors, and little woollen socks inside your shoes, too, if you fear the arrival of chilblains.

These shoe socks needn't show at all. You can make them yourself in a twinkling from two straight pieces cut from the leg of an old stocking and sewed together. (Four pieces measuring five by nine inches should make a pair to fit the average size school foot, and won't show above your shoes.)

Remember your "apple a day" in winter-time, even when hot puddings are the rule and salads not so plentiful.

Fresh fruit, lots of exercise, warm toes, and a little help from cold cream—and in winter-time your good looks should be at their glowing best!

tooth ragged, keeping her awake. Her whole gum felt numb next morning.

"Bother it! Why must she have this on-to-day of all days? But no matter. Once on the field she knew she would forget it. Once on the field she would be her own dazzling, daring self once more. In fancy she could hear the shouts ringing in her ears: "Good old Diana! Oh, well played, Diana! Marvellous, Diana!"

She could almost feel it in her heart to be sorry for Margot Lantham!



It Meant So Much

NEVER, since the hockey final of last term, had a junior match at Cliff House attracted so much attention.

Long before the time arranged for bully-off, the sidelines of Junior Side were crowded. The whole school, it seemed, had turned up in force. Practically every member of the Second, the two Third Forms, and the Fourth, were there to a girl.

Fully seventy per cent of the Lower and Upper Fifth, and an unusually large number of the stately Sixth.

Mistresses there were, too—Miss Charmant, conspicuously pretty even in that crowd, Miss Bland, Miss Scott, Miss Wright, the dour and formidable Miss Keys—and, yes, even Miss Primrose herself.

Mrs. Thwaites, the matron, was there, too, guarding a nathair which held a flung but impotent Clara.

Poor Clara! She, who should have played in this great game, was to be merely a spectator.

In the dressing-room in the pavilion an excitement more intense even than that which prevailed round the sidelines predominated.

"Oh, goodness, I'm all nerves!" Amy Jones said. "I know now what my brother must have felt like when he had his first Cup Final at Wembley. Where's that blessed hockey stick?"

"Don't worry," she counselled, "you'll forget all about it the moment the game starts. Margot, you look a little pale. Feel fit?"

Margot laughed a little nervously.

"Yes, thanks. But—but— It's rather an ordeal, you know," she confessed. "This is my first match. Oh, I do hope I shan't let you down. You think we'll win, Babs?"

"Of course!" Babs said.

But she wondered just a little. The game was by no means a foregone conclusion, especially with Clara Trevelyn out of the side. She glanced again at Diana.

"Diana, what do you think?"

"Oh, we'll win—of course we'll win!" Diana said, as though defeat was the remotest of possibilities. "Think of defeat and you'll get defeated, that's what I say. If we all go out with the intention of winning, then I don't see what's to stop us."

"Except," Janet Jordan grinned, "Whitechester. They might also go out with the intention of winning, Diana."

There was a laugh at that. A laugh, however, that held a hint of nervousness in its note. Everyone except Diana seemed to be feeling the tenacity of the ordeal. Another few minutes and the game would commence—a game against worthy opponents, with one girl, at least, an unknown factor in the team.



"WHAT about a race?" Diana challenged. Margot looked delighted. "Right-ho!" she agreed. Diana exulted. Here, at last, was her chance to beat Margot; yet here was her opportunity to triumph over the girl who had outshone her in so many things.

But Diana, who, of course, was that unknown factor, did not seem put out. Even Babs envied her her supreme confidence, her serene outlook.

Calm, dignified, she stood among them, already dressed, a laugh upon her lips, the sparkle of excitement in her eyes, watching the crowds as they continued to collect, and indulging again in all those lovely rosy dreams which had been hers since she had finally found her place in the team.

She knew she looked her best. She knew that the others envied her. If only this dreadful tooth would stop aching! But bother the tooth. Bother everything! Wait till she was in action!

Beside her Margot Lantham looked pale, insipid. Margot, in fact, was suffering badly from "cold feet." Margot had not the airy confidence possessed by Diana. She was thinking of all that the match meant—not to her but to the school.

Then—at last. The signal to go out. Diana grabbed up her hockey stick. Out she went—first, this time—to be greeted by a roar from the sidelines, just-thick with spectators. A roar it was for Cliff House, but Diana took it all to herself.

"Now, Cliff House!"

"Show them what we're made of!"

"Margot! Margot!"

Diana shrugged irritably as she heard the name. Well, no matter! Oh, this tooth—this tooth! The stab of pain it suddenly gave caused her to pull up short. She felt for an instant her face turn white, but she gritted her teeth. To the dickens with the tooth!

Now, proudly, she was taking up her position. She smiled as she gazed round. She wished for one spiteful moment that Lord and Lady Lantham

were here—just to see what a really awful miff their hockey-playing daughter could be made to appear. Now! The centres were moving forward, ready, tense for bully-off. A silence, breathless, palpitant, settled over the ground. Then pheeep!

Off!

Crash, clash! Sticks met. The ball went out to the wing, came skidding back. Margot made a dive at it. Missed. Diana laughed soft contempt as she rushed to scoop it with her stick! She had it!

"Now, here we go!" Diana thought.

There she went, indeed. What skill, what grace, what speed! The crowd stood on tiptoe in excitement. Here was the real Diana, the dazzling Diana whose prowess they all knew so well. Like a bullet from a gun, she shot off. She went through the Whitechester backs in a way that made them appear to be standing still. With almost impudent ease she beat the backs. And all at once found herself on the edge of the striking circle.

She had the game in the hollow of her hand!

So Diana felt. She lifted her stick. First goal to her, she exulted gloatingly. First goal in the first minute!

Back went the stick, and then, as if suddenly pierced by fire, that agonising tooth sent one swift, searing stab to her brain that completely put her off her stroke.

Crash! Her stick hit the ball. Hit it without direction or force. A roar of disappointment went up.

"Oh, Diana!"

Immediately afterwards—

"Margot! Margot! Oh, Margot!"

A shriek.

Diana turned. Now she saw. Her

thrust had sent the ball skidding across the ground, right in front of goal.

There was Margot, like an express train, after it. There was the Whitechester back, also after it. The two met—crash!

What happened even Diana did not see, but there was the Whitechester back sitting on the ground, and there was Margot, striking—striking—crash! Stick cracked against leather. A moment's dreadful silence. Then a shout which echoed to the skies.

"Margot! Margot! Goal! Goal! Goal!"

"Well played!"

Margot! It was her shot. Margot had scored from it!

Fury boiled over within Diana. Oh, hang this wretched face of hers! Why hadn't she had the tooth out?

She felt a rag. Back to the centre line. Off again! Another chance, when Babs passed out to her, and Diana, seizing upon the ball with eagerness, began the old dazzling run once more, only to pull up as if shot when that dreadful tooth of hers got going again.

A roar of disappointment went up as the Whitechester centre-half, rushing forward, neatly took advantage of that moment of agony, easily robbed her, and sent the ball bounding into the centre.

"Oh, Diana!"

Diana took a grip upon herself. This wouldn't do. This wouldn't do, even though her face, the whole of one side, was in agony. She felt weak with the pain of it.

Then, to her chagrin, Margot scored again.

Cliff House howled its delight.

Diana fumed. What with her anxiety to show Margot Lantham up, her throbbing face, her impotence when muffing what looked like easy passes, she was almost beside herself before the interval came.

She did her best, but it was a poor best. Every time, it seemed to Diana, when she had a glorious chance of showing her mettle, that dreadful tooth turned upon her.

Meantime, Margot, playing steadily,

was earning all the honours. Her name was on the delighted crowd's lips. There were shrieks for her.

Thud! Another goal—this time to Whitechester—followed immediately by a fourth for Cliff House. Margot again!

"Hat trick!"

"Margot! Margot!"

"Go it, Margot!"

Margot was going it. She was in her stride row. Diana, furious, impatient, played desperately. Her passes went wide. Once, presented with an open goal, she made such a hopeless mess of it that a groan went up from the crowd.

At half-time she found black looks thrown at her, heard girls saying: "Why on earth was that dud included?" "Diana could have wept. Dud! She! Her face—oh, heavens!"

Grim was her silence in the dressing-room. She felt she would choke if she spoke. It sickened her to see the dreadful fuss made of Margot. Well, there was still the second half.

But the second half, alas, was more disastrous than the first. Margot, on the other hand, was playing even more sparkingly, more brilliantly. Four goals—and then five!

Diana gritted her teeth. Margot, in her first match for Cliff House, had equalled her own record!

The cat!

Diana could have wept. She saw everything slipping away from her. Margot, was it? Margot! She'd show them! Pain, rage, egged her on. One more brilliant flash, and again—hopeless luck! She missed the goal.

Ten minutes from the end, and there was Margot, rushing up the field, ball at the end of her stick. The sixth, and record-breaking goal—just hers for the asking!

How she hated Margot Lantham! Margot Lantham was showing her up. Margot Lantham, who, if her own plans had not gone so sadly agley, should have been biting the dust of humiliation, was the star of her side!

And here was Margot, racing—racing to score that sixth goal—the goal which

would beat her own proud record at Cliff House, and make its scorer a heroine for evermore.

Oh, she shouldn't—she shouldn't! Not that! That would be the last bitter crumb. There was no need for it. Cliff House were comfortably ahead. Her record Margot had spoiled, but Margot should not surpass it. No!

Diana found herself running forward. Here came Margot, the open goal ahead of her. Already the spectators were starting to shriek. Then, like a flash, Diana was upon her, her stick thrust forward.

It should be she, not Margot, to score this point. Sticks met. In utter amazement, Margot stood still, while feverishly Diana hooked the ball away, at the same moment swinging her stick to speed the ball to the net.

So swiftly did it all happen, so gaspingly spellbound were the crowd that nobody realised Diana's motive. They saw that stick come up, they saw it whiz forward, intending to hit the ball.

But it did not hit the ball. Over the ball it passed, and, sweeping resistlessly on, caught Margot Lantham a crack on the knee which caused her to collapse almost without a sound. Certainly, to the team, to the spectators, it looked like a premeditated blow.

But Diana—

Diana stood staring. She stared stupidly, dazedly. She couldn't believe for a moment that that was Margot down there, groaning, writhing, as she grabbed at her knee.

She had done that! She—but no, she had never meant to touch Margot. Even hating Margot as she did, the last thing she would have dreamt of doing was committing such a dreadful assault. She choked.

"Margot!"

But even as, her eyes suddenly blinded by tears, she blundered forward, the umpire's hand was on her shoulder. She saw the furious, scathing glares of her fellow players, and the umpire, speaking with cold, deadly scorn.

"Diana, that was a coward's act. Leave the field!"

Diana started.

"I? But you never believe—"

"Leave the field! You are not fit to play. Barbara, Rosa, take her away."

Oh, what a mistake they were making! Margot—stricken there! They thought she had done that!

Pain, sensation, every emotion had left her. Margot! She swivelled round as Babs and Rosa caught hold of her. Margot was her friend! No, no, no!

"This way!" Rosa said, tight-lipped.

But—but—

They did not understand. Unrelentingly Diana was dragged back. There was the crowd—muttering against her. That was her reward. They were jeering at her.

She had blackened herself, disgraced the whole school. They believed she had allowed her jealousy and temper to run away with her to the extent of a savage attack upon a player on her own side!

The pavilion loomed up. She was pushed into it. There, still dazed, Diana sank into a seat. There was a weight at her heart. Something dull, heavy, seemed to be pressing her down.

She—Diana—the girl who intended to take Cliff House by storm, who this afternoon should have achieved her greatest triumph, was scorned, despised, outcast!

She felt, from that moment, that never, never would she be able to hold up her proud, imperious head again. While Margot, the girl she meant to outshine, was the heroine of the school!

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

DIANA is down—but she is not defeated!

Scorned by the School—who now believe

that she deliberately struck Margot on the

hockey field—Diana is yet able to hold

up her head, is able to show Cliff

House that although she is defeated

she has not lost her defiance.

Next Saturday's vivid long

complete Cliff House

School story is tensely

dramatic and will thrill

you from be-

ginning to end.

It is en-

titled:

"DIANA THE UNDAUNTED"

This fine tale has been specially written for next Saturday's SCHOOLGIRL by Hilda Richards, and it is a story you must not miss. All your favourites of the Fourth Form at Cliff House are to the fore. Don't forget that in next Saturday's number you will receive another big sheet of famous film stars' Autographs, to add to your Gift Album. Order your SCHOOLGIRL as soon as you can—to avoid last-minute disappointment!