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THE SCHOOLGIRL

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INCORPORATING
"SCHOOLDAYS."

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LEFT IN THE LURCH

One of many exciting incidents in "Diana the Undaunted," this week's brilliant long complete Cliff House School story

A Brilliant Long Complete Story of Cliff House School



DIANA the UNDAUNTED

Defiant in Defeat!

AFTER what happened in the Whitechester match, Diana certainly isn't playing!"

And with this emphatic declaration Tomboy Clara Trevlyn passed over the team list she had just compiled to pretty, blue-eyed Barbara Redfern, captain of the Fourth Form.

Barbara glanced at it. Over her shoulder peered Mabel Lynn—Babs' special chum of the golden hair—and Margot Lantham. Bessie Bunter, the fat girl of the Fourth, hovered in the background.

A moment's silence followed. Then Margot gave a little sigh.

"I suppose," she muttered, "you couldn't give Diana another chance?"

She made the suggestion somewhat timidly, for Margot Lantham was a new girl at Cliff House School, and was not yet sufficiently at home to voice opinions. Besides, she was so vitally mixed up in the dropping of Diana Royston-Clarke.

"No fear!" said Clara Trevlyn bluntly. "I'd be a pretty poor hockey skipper if I did!"

"Oh, quite!" agreed Babs. "Although Diana says—"

"We all know what she says!" scoffed Clara. "Trust Diana to try to make excuses! But 'tisn't what she says. It's what she did. You know what happened right enough, Margot. She went for you with her hockey-stick in her mad jealousy because you were playing better than she. Went for you—in a match! Went for one of her own side!"

"That's true," nodded Mabel Lynn. "Once more a silence fell in Study No. 7. They were heartily sick of the wretched incident that had spoilt all the enjoyment of defeating Whitechester in the first round of the Lantham Cup.

A COMPLEX character is Diana Royston-Clarke—often so likeable and so charming, at other times jealous and wayward. In the events which crowd this powerful story Diana's difficult nature is vividly revealed, showing that, although she is in conflict with Cliff House, she is always ready to face the consequences of her folly

"Besides," added Clara, "Diana isn't in training. In any case, she isn't worth putting into the team. And the next round's easy. Courtfield! Didn't we wipe them out seven—nil before Christmas? This team"—she indicated the list—"is going to repeat the dose. I'll say so!"

"Eight—nil!" grinned Babs.

She turned to Margot.

"What a score it'll be if we win that cup your father's offered!" she said. "You know, we ought to. Especially if you go on scoring five goals in every match!"

Margot smiled slightly at the mention of her previous Saturday's triumph, but the film of trouble still clouded her eyes.

Until that fateful match, she and the brilliant Diana Royston-Clarke had

By

HILDA RICHARDS

been firm friends. Together they had joined Cliff House at the beginning of the term. Margot had built such high hopes on this friendship. Alas! They had been suddenly dashed by Diana's absurd jealousy.

Imperious Diana, wanting all her own way, had found herself outclassed.

There had been those five goals of Margot's in the Whitechester match, that glorious chance of scoring the sixth, when, to everybody's astonishment, Diana had rushed forward.

For the hundredth time since the incident, Margot went over it. And again, worrying her, the question rose in her mind. Had Diana really and truly intended to hit her when she had struck her such a seemingly cowardly blow upon the knee? Or had that just been another accident?

Certainly it was not like the gay Diana she had known outside Cliff House School; but then, in almost every respect Diana had changed so amazingly since coming to Cliff House School.

But there it was! Clara, and the school generally, felt Diana had, actuated by sudden jealous spite, struck that blow in the heat of the moment.

Not Cliff House, who loved its sport, but who loved a sportswoman even better, to forgive or forget that in a hurry!

There was a step in the passage—a sudden tap at the door. Clara, looking up, called "Come in!"

The door opened. It was Diana Royston-Clarke herself who entered.

Diana! Margot felt her face pale and flush at the same moment. Diana,

proud, the old careless smile curving her lips, her mass of blonde hair brushed back from her forehead.

When Diana entered any room like that, it seemed as if something entered with her—some magnetic, arresting power which must compel everyone to look up, and, whether they liked her or not, to feel a glow of unwilling admiration. Diana laughed.

"Busy, everyone?" she asked pleasantly. "Hear we're playing Court-field, Clara."

"We are!" Clara grunted. "Should be an easy match," Diana decided, lounging elegantly against the door.

"Should be," Clara nodded. "Sociable, aren't we?" The hint of a sneer crept over the voice. "The one thing I like about our Clara is her unflinching good manners—what? Such a credit to the school! Am I in the team, Clara?"

The tomboy's eyes gleamed. "You are not!" she stated flatly. "Oh, pity!" Diana shrugged. "I thought you'd put your best eleven out even for Courtfield. Why aren't I in the team?"

A little silence fell. Then blunt Clara, with something of a snort:

"You know jolly well why you're not in the team!"

"Oh, because of what happened to Margot, you mean?"

"Because of that—yes!" Clara stated. "And if you want to know, Diana, I think it's like your awful cheek even to imagine you'd be in the team! Now buzz off! I'm busy!"

But Diana stood firm. "I see!" she said. "Still obstinate, eh? Still so cocksure of yourself! Well, thanks for telling me what you think of me. I suppose it's no good telling you that I never deliberately hit Margot?"

"Not a bit!" Clara assured her.

"I'll own," Diana admitted coolly—and added, just as if Margot was not in the room—"I was wild with Margot. I am still, if you want to know. She was doing her best to break my record. I didn't want it broken, that's all. I wanted to score that last goal—you see? Just for my own personal glory. Well, I didn't. I missed the ball and I whacked Margot's knee instead. And if Margot—with a curl of her lip as she glanced towards her former friend—"would only tell you the truth, she'd bear that out!"

Margot flushed.

"Diana, that's not fair!" "A dashed sight fairer than you letting the school think I hit you out of spite!" Diana flashed. "If anybody could give the lie to that story, you could. But no! It doesn't suit your book, does it?"—with bitter contempt. "It might make the school think that you're a less hardily-dealt-with heroine than you really are!"

Margot stiffened.

"Diana!" "Oh, stuff!" Diana cried impatiently.

"I didn't come to talk to you, anyway. Clara—"

"No, wait a minute!" Margot jumped forward. "Diana, let's have this out!" she said. "You must know I've never said a single word about what happened. In any case, I didn't see. All I saw was you making a swipe. The next I knew was that I was on the ground!"

Diana's lips curled again.

"But you let the school think it—that's enough!" she retorted. "I may be several sorts of a cat in my paddies, but I've never sunk so far yet, thank

goodness! Still, Clara believes it, don't you?" she added. "Because, of course, Clara likes to believe it, not having any particular affection for little Diana!"

"Will you get out?" Clara breathed deeply.

"When I've got satisfaction," Diana replied curtly. "Are you going to put me in the team?"

"No!"

"Thanks! Then I hope you jolly well lose!" Diana said. "Margot's in it, I suppose?"

"She is!"

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● "And Babs, and Janet Jordan, and all the rest of your personal friends, of course?"

Clara's eyes gleamed. Very slowly she rose to her feet. She said no more. Clara, always, was a girl of action, not words. Like lightning her hand reached for and grabbed a cushion.

And—whiz! The cushion shot straight across the room in an unswerving line for Diana's disdainful face.

But it never reached it. Diana, as if by instinct, divined the Tomboy's intention. Just in the nick of time she ducked. The cushion sailed on.

It was, perhaps, unfortunate that acid-tempered Miss Bullivant, the mathe-

matics mistress of the school, should have chosen that particular moment to be passing the door of Study No. 7. The cushion, whizzing on, completely missed Diana. But it did not miss Miss Bullivant.

"Phut!" "Ooooh!"

Miss Bullivant stood and astoundedly gaped.

Never a sweet-tempered woman was Miss Bullivant. At the best of times she was a martinet, looking upon the cheerful girls of the Fourth Form as her special enemies.

Her gaunt features seemed to freeze now. The little two points of fire, pinched, darted like lightning.

"Who threw that?" she stormed.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Diana chuckled.

"Diana, did you?"

"I did not!" Diana said coolly.

"Very well, take a hundred lines for daring to laugh!" At which the laugh speedily faded from Diana's face, to be replaced by a resentful frown.

Miss Bullivant stormed into the study. "Clara Trevlyn!"

Clara sighed.

"I'm sorry," she apologised. "Yes, I did throw it. But it wasn't intended for you, Miss Bullivant."

"I should certainly hope it was not!" Miss Bullivant cried with asperity. "All the same, I refuse to allow you to give rein to your hooliganistic tendencies, Clara Trevlyn. I have had reason before to reprimand you on the subject of self-control. You must be taught, once and for all, that you cannot use Cliff House as a bear-garden. No, please do not answer me back!" she cried angrily.

"How dare you look at me in that mutinous way? Clara Trevlyn, you are detained for the next half-holiday!"

Clara gasped.

"But—Oh, Miss Bullivant!"

"You heard?"

"Yes, I heard!" Clara said angrily, while Babs and Mabs and Margot stood in dismay. "I admit I made a mistake, and I'm sorry. All the same, I think that detention for an offence like that is a pretty hard punishment."

Miss Bullivant's sallow cheeks showed suddenly two bright and burning spots. Her eyes became gimlet-like.

"Clara Trevlyn, you dare try to instruct me in my duties—"

"No, but—"

Diana grinned again. This was good!

"Clara, please—" Babs begged. She came forward pleadingly.

"Miss Bullivant, please," she begged, "can't you—reconsider that punishment?"

You see, the next half-holiday is Saturday, and we've a frightfully important hockey fixture."

Miss Bullivant's thin lips compressed.

"That," she said acidly, "is a consideration which should have occurred to you before. I do not thank you, Barbara, to interfere in affairs which do not concern you, and for doing it you will take fifty lines. Playing hockey," she went on to Clara Trevlyn, "is a privilege. Privileges are earned at this school by reason of good behaviour. Your behaviour has been anything but good, Clara. The detention stands!"

And with that she stalked away, leaving upon the faces of the chums the most utter and dismal gloom.

"Well, my hat!"

"The old tyrant!"

Diana, who had never moved, laughed.

"Poor old Clara!" she chuckled.

"Does it mean that she won't be able to play? Well, that makes a vacancy. What about me now?"

"Get out!" Clara cried.

"Oh, yoicks—"

"But Babs and Mabs, seeing that Clara was in a dangerous mood—for already Clara was making a threatening step in the direction of the door—with one accord rushed at Diana. Diana, however, whisked away with a laugh.

"Thanks! Don't forget," she added mockingly, "what Miss Bullivant said about hooliganism."

"You cat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The door slammed behind her. Diana, chuckling, went on up the corridor. She felt better now—until, remembering the hundred lines, she scowled.

Blow the lines!

Diana didn't believe in doing lines, and immediately went in search of Jossie Cranston of the Third Form.

Jessie had a dangerous gift—that of being able to imitate passably other girls' handwriting, and Jessie, always notoriously hard-up, was never beyond taking the handsome tip which the wealthy Diana bestowed upon her, as the reward of shouldering her own penalties.

Jessie, as usual, professed herself pleased. She accepted the lines with alacrity. Diana, still in a good humour, went down into Big Hall. A crowd of girls was gathered round the letter rack. Lucy Farraday, the Quiet Mouse of the Form, turned with a flush as Diana came up.

"Oh, Diana, there's a letter for you!"

"Thanks," Diana said carelessly.

She took the letter, looked at the transcription, and tore it open.

It was from her father, the Mayor of Lantham.

There was not a great deal of news in the letter. Her father had just written to say how pleased he was that she was at Cliff House School—hoped

she was settling down, etc., etc., and that she and Margot Lantham were making the school ake notice.

Margot! A curl came to Diana's lips as she saw the name. A frown crossed her forehead as she read on.

"I was talking to Margot's parents the other night. They tell me that, among other things, Margot is hot-stuff at hockey. But, as you can guess, Di, I stuck up for you. I told them how you scored five goals in one match at Cliff House, and how once you were nearly selected for the junior hockey international team.

"The argument became quite warm in the long run, with two fond parents praising the merits of their daughters! Although, of course, we parted good friends. But now, Di, I want you to back me up. I want to hear of your doing things—"

Diana read no more. Quite savagely she crushed the letter in her hand. A swift gleam came into her eyes, and, turning suddenly, she flounced off.

Margot Lantham!

How she loathed the day she had ever met Margot Lantham!

Margot, whom she had brought to Cliff House, anxious to show off as her own aristocratic friend; Margot, who had made friends with her old enemies, Babs & Co.; who had outshone her on the hockey field, in the swimming bath; who had finally spoiled her record and—Diana was never reasonable—caused the whole school to turn on her.

"Bother Margot Lantham!" Diana seethed.

Strange she should feel this about the girl she had once called friend!

But there it was. Margot had humiliated her. Margot had stolen her place in the hockey team. Margot had covered herself with glory, while, at

the same time, she—Diana—was the despised, the outcast, judged guilty of a crime she had never intended to commit.

It galled Diana. If only—oh, if only she could find some way of getting her own back on Margot Lantham!

Diana gritted her teeth. The rest of the letter remained unread. Modishly she tramped back up the Fourth Form corridor, was in the act of passing Study No. 6, when, chancing to look in, she saw the very girl who occupied the centre of her thoughts, sitting there reading a letter.

To judge by the expression on Margot Lantham's face, it was not a nice letter. She was biting her lip and looked worried.

Actuated by a sudden impulse, Diana swerved and went in.

Margot looked up with a start.

"Letter?" asked Diana pleasantly, and her eyes narrowed as Margot, with a sudden nervous gesture, screwed it up and stuffed it in her pocket. "Letter from your father, perhaps, congratulating you upon the wonderful sensation you've made here?"

Margot turned a little pink.

"No, it isn't," she said. "It's—" And then she bit her lip. "What do you want, Diana?" she asked quietly.

"Oh, nothing! Just peeped in to have a look at the heroine." Her face expressed a sneer. "I thought you'd be pleased to know," she added, "that I've just had a letter from my father. He sends his love."

"Thank you!" Margot said, in a troubled voice.

Diana paused. She was thinking desperately of something to say that would hurt the girl. She wanted to hurt her as Margot, all unconsciously, had hurt her. She wanted to have a



FROM her place of concealment Diana could just hear the others' whispered talk. "I know you'll not let me down," Dora was saying to Margot. "I've come to you—and I want your help!" Diana tensed. What was coming? she asked herself.

row with her. Another time she would have been able to think of a thousand things.

"Well"—Margot looked up—"if you've finished, Diana—"

"Not quite."

Diana leaned insolently against the table. She was gazing at the girl, irritated with herself that the right girl would not come to her lips, yet faintly curious at the distressed expression on Margot's face.

"Perhaps Margot guessed she was spoiling for a quarrel, and, wishful to avoid it, abruptly rose.

Diana blinked.

"Here, I say, where are you going?"

"Out!" Margot said briefly.

"But, here—"

Margot, however, was gone!

Diana, realising that she was foiled, scowled. She turned furiously towards the door, and then, suddenly swinging round, her eyes fell upon the chair from which Margot had so quietly risen. She saw the note which that girl had crumpled up at her entry.

For a moment Diana stared at it. Then, with a laugh, she picked it up. No business of hers to read it, of course—

Diana knew that, but that made no difference. On small points such as these Diana had no scruples. She preferred to believe that the letter had come from Margot's father. She was anxious to see if Lord Lanthan referred to the argument Mr. Royston-Clarke had described. She smoothed it out. And then her eyes gleamed.

For the letter was not from either Lord or Lady Lanthan. It was, indeed, hardly a letter. Just a brief, rather distraught note, which made the colour rush into Diana's face as she scanned it. It read:

"Margot. Must see you. In fearful fix. Will you please help me out—just this once? Meet you outside the gates of Cliff House at half-past four."

"DORA KEITH."

"Yoicks!" breathed Diana. "Dora Keith!"

And then all at once Diana's eyes glittered. Never yet had she met Dora Keith, but she knew all about her. She had heard about her originally from Margot in the palmy days of their friendship.

Dora was Margot's cousin, and Dora—if everything Margot had told her was true—was rather a blot upon the Lanthan family prestige.

An out-and-out scapegrace, vindictive and bitter, always seeking trouble, and always, when faced with the consequences of that trouble, whining to Margot.

Margot was not proud of her. Nobody in the family was proud of her. Twice Dora had been expelled.

And now here she was cropping up again.

No wonder Margot looked worried. No wonder she had tried to hide that letter.

Diana laughed once more. She laughed pleasantly, joyously.

It pleased her to feel that Margot was in some sort of a scrape—even if that scrape was not of her own making. The little cat needed taking down a peg or two. Supposing—supposing she could use this development as a weapon against Margot?

With a pleased laugh Diana dropped the crumpled letter in the chair in which she had found it.

When the meeting between Margot and her cousin took place, she vowed she would be present.

If anything occurred at that meeting out of which she could make capital, she wasn't going to hesitate to use it!



Diana's Way

"MARGOT!"

"Dora!"

Diana Royston-Clarke, hiding in the deep shadows of one of the pillars which supported the gates, chuckled to herself.

It was dusk now, cold, with a biting breeze blowing in from the sea, that brought with it a misty rain. Not a very inviting evening, and not exactly the weather in which to play excavator. But Diana, wrapped in a warm fur coat, did not mind.

"I—I'm so glad you've come!" Dora Keith's voice faltered. "I was wondering for a moment if—if you would ignore my note. But, oh, Margot, I'm in a dreadful mess!"

Margot's voice was hard.

"Again?" she asked. "I thought last time you were going to turn over a new leaf."

"Well, I—I did!" The other girl's voice was miserable. "But—but—Oh, Margot, listen! You know I'm at Courtfield School? One of the prefects there—a cat named Freda Shields—has a down on me. She reported me to the headmistress for—for—well, never mind what!"

"But I do mind what! What was it?"

"Nothing. Just—well, if you must know, one of the Second Form kids was cheeky, so I boxed her ears. I didn't mean to hurt her, of course—"

"Bullying again—eh?" Margot's voice held a note of contempt. "And this Freda Shields caught you?"

"Yes, but—Oh, Margot, don't be so stern!" Dora cried. "I tell you the whole thing was an accident. Besides, I wasn't going to be cheeked. You wouldn't have stood it in my place. Well, you can't guess, I was mad—"

"And so," Margot guessed, with the sure knowledge of one familiar with Dora Keith's habits, "you made up your mind to take it out of the prefect?"

There was a pause.

"It—it wasn't exactly that," Dora's voice stammered. "Oh, Margot, for goodness' sake don't condemn me before you've heard. I—I never meant anything, really. I only intended to give Freda a scare. Anyway, this is what happened. While Freda was in her study last night I threw a lighted firework into the room—"

"Oh yoicks!" chuckled Diana.

"One of those double cracker things—you know!" Dora's voice went on. "It jumped all over the place, and—and somehow the wretched thing set light to the curtains. Beastly nettings, they were—just went up with a rush. You should have heard the commotion!"

Margot did not reply. But Diana could picture the stony look on her face.

"I—I didn't intend to set the study on fire, of course," Dora went on. "But I was panic-stricken. As Freda rushed out of the study, yelling for help, I dashed down the passage. Freda saw me; she called my name. I rushed on and out, wondering what on earth to do. Then—then I thought of this idea—"

"What idea?"

"Wait a minute! I'm coming to

that." Dora panted a little.

"An hour later I went back. Luckily there wasn't a great deal of damage done; but Miss Manners, the headmistress, was fearfully wild. Freda had told her all about me, of course. Miss Manners threatened to expel me. But, luckily for me, Freda had only seen my back. She couldn't be sure, on second thoughts, that it was me."

"And—what?" Margot asked.

"So I—I said I knew nothing about it. I said I had been in Courtfield. The worst of it is that several girls knew I had those fireworks. Some little sneak had given that fact away. I said that somebody must have got to my fireworks during my absence—"

"Well?"

"Well, the—uh—the upshot of the matter was that Miss Manners gave me the benefit of the doubt. She told me that she didn't entirely believe me, but she'd make further inquiries. She's making 'em now, and unless I can give her definite proof that I was out of the school at the time the fire happened, it's bound to come back on me. You see?" she asked desperately.

"Yes, I see." Margot's voice was discouraging, however. "It's just what I might expect of you, Dora. You did the same sort of spiteful thing at Thist-down, didn't you, and got expelled. I should have thought after that—"

"Oh, for goodness' sake, don't start lecturing!" the other's peevish voice chimed in. "Margot, listen, I'm in a hole. There's only one way I can prove that I was out of the school at the time the fire took place, and that is for somebody to come forward and swear that they were with me in Courtfield at the time. That—that's why I've come to you, Margot. I know you'll never let me down. It won't hurt you just to say that you happened to be in Courtfield with me." Her voice faltered.

"Margot—"

"Do you mean you want me to go and tell deliberate lies?"

"Oh, chuck it!"

"Deliberate lies," Margot repeated bitterly. "Well, Dora, I won't. I've done a lot for you. I told you last time I'd never help you out of another scrape, and I won't! The whole thing, as far as I can see, was your fault from beginning to end. You've got nothing but your own silly spite to thank. I refuse—"

"But—but, Margot, you realise what it means? I shall be expelled!"

"That," Margot retorted, "is your own affair."

"But just a word—"

"Thanks, I've heard enough! Good-night!"

"But, Margot—"

For answer Margot turned on her heel.

"Starchy cat!" contemptuously thought Diana, and stood, holding her breath, while Margot passed her. In the darkness she saw Dora standing perfectly still, like one suddenly turned to stone. She heard her lips frame again faintly the name "Margot!" A sudden pang of pity shot through her.

"Dash it all, it wasn't much to ask, she thought. Just one tiny fib. Impulsively she stepped forward.

"Hallo, Dora!" she said pleasantly.

Dora jumped as if she had been shot.

"You—who are you? Where did you come from?"

Diana laughed.

"Like a good fairy, I came from nowhere," she replied gaily.

"But—don't let Margot hear us talking."

"Here"—and she grabbed the other's arm—"let's go away from here—just for a moment. Don't resist; I'm not going to hurt you. I'm your friend.

You see," she added slowly, "I happen to have heard everything you told Margot."

"You—you did?"

"I did," Diana's eyes were glittering. Really, she was sorry for the girl. Like starchy Margot, of course, to desert her in her hour of need, she told herself contemptuously. Just the sort of thing that would happen to a girl who put faith in her friendship.

Perhaps in that moment Diana's sympathies for this scapegrace were rather actuated by her own false conception of her treatment at Margot's hands. Perhaps, too, the very fact that Margot had refused to do something urged her to do it.

She only knew, of course, what she had heard. She felt that, given similar circumstances, she might have done the same thing. Only, of course, she would never have run away. Running away from any consequences was not Diana's way.

Diana's nature was a curious mixture of good and bad. Sometimes the one warred against the other. Sometimes one was uppermost; sometimes, as now, they intermingled.

Pity for this girl who had courted such a disgrace, her own futile rage against the girl who she considered had shown her up, became welded.

It would annoy Margot if she became friends with her scapegrace cousin. Diana felt that. On the other hand, surely it was a rotten action to let a girl be expelled when a little bit from another would save her.

Her hand closed over the other's.

"Don't worry," she said. "I'm not going to blab. I've no love for your high-hat cousin, and if Margot won't help you out, there's no reason why I shouldn't. You see," Diana added cheerfully, "I've been in those sort of predicaments myself before now. Turning up trumps when I'm least expected to in my strong suit, you know."

In the gloom the girl stared at her.

"You—you don't mean—"

"But I do!" Diana laughed. "Why shouldn't I have been the friend you were with in Courtfield? They'd believe your yarn, you say, if they had proof. Well, here am I—the living alibi. Besides," she added mockingly, "it's so easy to be able to do something for Margot's cousin."

The girl looked dazed.

"But you—you don't know me."

"That," Diana decided, with a ringing laugh, "can soon be remedied. We're friends, aren't we—didn't we go out on the spree in Courtfield yesterday? Well, well, what now? Come with me, and share a pot of tea in Study No. 10. We'll let my Margot see, even if her valuable help is refused, it's quite easy to get help from another quarter."



A Girl with a Grievance

"MORE tea, Margot?"

"No, thanks!"

"Another cake, then?"

"No, thanks!" Margot

Lantham said worriedly. "Then try another of these sandwich-pots?" Bessie Bunter hospitably invited, cramming one of those delicacies into her mouth. "They're r-ripping, you know."

But again Margot, with a faint smile shook her head. "No, thanks, Bessie!"

"Not seedy?" Clara Trevelyn asked quickly. "Can't do with you being off-



CLARA swung round, and there was Miss Bulviant in the doorway.

"Clara!" she snapped. "What are you doing here? And what do you mean by wrecking my study like this?" Instantly the Tomboy knew that she could never hope to prove that she had not done the damage.

colour you know, Margot. You're our main hope for the Courtfield match—"

Again Margot shook her head.

"No, I—I'm all right," she replied. "I—I'm just a little worried, that's all. I—I—" And then she paused, looking pleadingly at the suddenly concerned faces which stared at her across the table of Study No. 4. "I—I don't know," she said worriedly. "But—" and paused—"Babs," she added, with a suddenness that startled the leader of the Fourth, "I wonder if you could solve a problem for me?"

"Well, I'll try," Babs laughed.

"Because, you see, you've got such—such sound judgment," Margot went on, whereat Babs blushed rosily. "But supposing you knew someone—a girl—a girl who was always getting into trouble—a girl who was spiteful, who had been expelled! Supposing," Margot desperately went on, "that you had done all in your power to help this girl in the past, and every time when she'd promised to turn over a new leaf—she went back to her old bad ways—"

"I should j-j-jolly well go and tell her to eat coke, you know!" Bessie said indignantly.

"No, please, Bessie! Let Margot go on. Yes, Margot?"

"And—and then," Margot got out gulpingly, "supposing, after all that, she got into a fresh scrape? Supposing she came to you and asked you to help her out by telling a fib that you would be ashamed to tell—what would you do?"

There was a pause. Babs eyed her queerly.

"And that," she asked, "is what has happened to you?"

"Well, yes, something like it."

"Then I," Babs said, without hesita-

tion, "would tell her to get out of it herself."

"But supposing that means she would be expelled?"

"I'd tell her to go to pot!" Clara put in.

"And you, Mabs?"

"I don't think I should feel justified even then, especially if the latest scrape was her own fault."

"It was."

"Well, then, don't worry," Babs advised. "To refuse in a case like that is the right thing."

Margot's face cleared. Really, she had been worried. Dora Keith didn't deserve her consideration, she knew; but, after all, the girl was her cousin, and it would be frightful if she got herself expelled. Had there been any other method by which Margot could have helped her, she would. But telling deliberate falsehoods—

No! Margot shrank from that. Still, it was a relief to talk it over with Babs & Co. Margot had an almost blind faith in Barbara's judgment. Babs was her ideal of a girl—straight, upright, fun-loving, a good sort, yet, for all that, ever in the forefront, even though she was Form captain, when harmless mischief was afoot.

She accepted now the sandwich Babs pushed across to her.

"Thank you," she said, almost gaily. "I feel better now. I hated really to refuse the help, but there was no other way. You see, it's rather unfortunate—this girl happens to be my cousin."

"Poor old Margot!" Babs said sympathetically.

There was a tap on the door. Leila Carroll, who hailed from U.S.A., came in.

"Hallo!" she exclaimed. "Say, who's the girl Diana's entertaining to tea?"

"Diana!"
 "Sure!" Diana," Leila grinned. "Thought I'd jazz 'em up in to see if you knew anything about it, I guess. Diana's playing hostess to a Courtfield junior, and my stars, are they hitting the spots! Such an all-fired racket, I guess, when I came down the corridor a minute ago, that I poked my head in just to see if they couldn't hand me a free smile. And there was this Courtfield girl and Diana sitting there, smoking and cracking jokes."

"Smoking?"
 Babs frowned.
 "I guess so. Gee, you can smell it even from here!" Leila sniffed. "But listen for yourself!"

And she held the door open.
 There was silence in Study No. 4. It was a silence that was broken by a sudden loud laugh from Study No. 10, which was only three doors away on the opposite side of the corridor. And then came Diana's voice.
 "You don't say she really fell for the story? Ha, ha, ha!"

"But she did," another voice put in, and at sound of it Margot Lantham sat suddenly upright. "As innocently as you like, she went out—and plopped right into the middle of the mud bath we had prepared for her!"

Babs frowned. Distinctly now she caught the scent of the perfumed cigarette Diana affected. It was no business of hers who Diana entertained, of course. It was her business to put an end to unseemly noises in the corridor; but Babs, more often than not, turned a deaf ear to that. But smoking—
 "Thanks, Leila," she said, and rose. She looked at Clara, who rose also. "The duffer!" she said, between her teeth. "Just asking for trouble!"

She went out, followed by Clara. Margot Lantham, rather pale and shaken, hesitated, then, with a sudden impulse, followed them. The door of Study No. 10 was ajar.
 Babs knocked.
 "Oh, come in!" Diana's voice sang out.

Babs went in, coughing a little at the haze which greeted her. Margot and Clara crowded in the doorway.
 Diana was there, leaning back in the chair, her feet upon the edge of the table. A half-smoked cigarette, which she had not troubled to remove, hung between her lips. Another girl, dark, with a very pale face, was seated on the settee.

"Smoking, Diana?" Babs asked.
 "What observation!" Diana scoffed.
 "Dora, let me introduce you to the oracle of the Form—Barbara Redfern, famous for her quick wits! Observe," she added mockingly, "how swiftly she jumps to a conclusion!"

"Allow me, too, to introduce Clara Trevlyn, our somewhat cloth-hopping game captain, who, having learned that the curved end of a hockey-stick is the part you hit the ball with, imagines that she knows everything else about the game. And the third guest," Diana peered—"why, if it isn't your own sweet relative, Margot Lantham! Come in, Margot old thing! Have a cig!"

Margot Lantham stood still. For a moment an incredulous light flamed in her eyes. She was looking—not at the scoffing Diana, but at Diana's guest—her own cousin Dora Keith, who, seated on the settee, met the look with bitter, scornful challenge from her own black eyes.

And Babs, Mabs, and Clara, suddenly and most surprisingly realising that this was the girl of whom Margot had been recently telling them, forgot Diana.

"Dora," Margot said quietly, "what are you doing here?"
 "That's my business!" Dora retorted.
 "And mine," Diana put in. "You see Margot dear, Dora happens to be my guest!"

"Oh, I didn't know you knew Dora!"
 "Well, now, isn't that strange—and you, the latest recruit to the Babs & Co. faction! I thought Babs & Co. knew everything!"

Clara's face darkened.
 "Look here, Diana—"
 "Thanks, old bean; cover up your classic features and I'll risk it! But about Dora! Any objections"—with a mocking look at Babs—"to my entertaining my friends in my own study? If there is, state it and get out! We were rather enjoying ourselves till you came in!"

Babs' eyes glistened.
 "I didn't come in here to interfere between you and your friend, Diana, but—"

"Well, that's a relief."
 "But I did come to warn you about smoking."

"Thanks again," Diana drawled.
 "Well, what are you going to do? Give me lines, a detention, expel me! It must be a fearful responsibility to be a captain, and have all the sins of the Form weighing on your conscience, what? When I want to smoke, I'll smoke," she added coolly, "and if I'm caught—well, that's my affair. Mind closing the door as you go out?"

Clara turned away.
 "Oh, come on! Let her go her own way!" she said impatiently.

Babs threw Diana an angry glance. Diana mockingly waved her hand.

Well, she had done her duty! If Diana was caught now she had only her silly self to blame.

She might have expected it, she told herself, if bitterly. Turning on her heel, she followed Clara and Mabs as they led the way out of the room.

Margot lingered a little, throwing a suspicious, searching look at her cousin, and then she, too, with a little shrug, followed her chums out.

Diana grinned.
 "Bit of a surprise to friend Margot—eh?" she asked.

Dora shrugged.
 "Snobbish upstart!" she sniffed. "As if it made any difference to me that I'm here. Dash it, she doesn't own the school just because she happens to belong to it. But who are those girls? Her chums?"

"In a manner of speaking!" Diana watched the smoke wreaths upwards as it blew from her lips. "They're the high lights of the Form, captain and so on—you know. Margot's got in with them since she came here."

"Oh, you mean she shares the same study?"

"No, not that. As a matter of fact, Margot is in Study No. 6. But—"
 And then Diana stopped as the door suddenly came open, and Mary Buller, in the terse prefect of the Sixth, stood on the threshold. "Oh, hallo, Mary!" Diana greeted brightly.

But Mary Buller did not reply to that greeting. There was nothing bright about her as she stood there. Mary's rugged face, indeed, was rock-like. The lines of her firm mouth suggested at once that there was going to be trouble.

There was! Mary had a great sense of duty, but greater even than that was her disgust for girls who smoked. She threw one sharp look at Dora Keith.

"Who's this?"

"Friend of mine," Diana explained airily.

"Then," Mary said, "it's time you learned to entertain your friends without breaking rules. You're smoking again, Diana!"

"Right!"
 "You know what it means?"
 Diana shrugged.

Mary's eyes gleamed.
 "You've been warned," she said, "now you can face up to it. Come on! Out of that chair! I'm going to take you to Miss Charmant!"

"But—"
 "Obey!" Mary snapped.
 Diana gave her one dagger glance, tossed her cigarette away, and rose.
 "Won't be long," she said airily to Dora.

Dora tried to look sympathetic. But Dora, at that moment, was not thinking of Diana. Heartless and callous as she was, Dora Keith cared not a button of what happened to her new friend, even though Diana had professed herself ready and willing to help her.

Dora was still thinking—and thinking revengefully—of her cousin, Margot Lantham, the girl who had let her down!

Her heart seethed against Margot. Perhaps, had Diana known the true nature of the girl she had so readily taken up with, even she would have been appalled.

Very humbly, almost distraught, Dora had rushed to Margot for assistance, never dreaming that the assistance would be withheld. Her dismay, her chagrin, when Margot had curtly refused to perjure herself in her cause, had filled her with fury.

Always she had been contemptuous of her cousin. Always she had secretly hated her, despite the fact that Margot, on so many occasions, had come to her rescue. But this—

This was the last straw. Stuck-up, starchy cat that Margot was!

She sat now, her eyes glittering as she listened to the retreating footsteps of Diana and Mary Buller down the corridor.

Well, her nest was feathered, she told herself. Diana had promised to help her, and Diana seemed the sort of girl who would keep that promise! On that account, there was no further need to worry, and her relief at that realisation unleashed the bounds of hate and rancour against her cousin.

Like Diana, Dora, when her fury was aroused, could be very bitter and revengeful. She longed now to find Margot, to tell her what she thought of her, to smack her face—to do anything that would take her down a peg.

She rose to her feet in sudden temper. Well, she'd jolly well go and see her cousin! It would be some relief, at least, to tick her off, to tell her exactly what she thought of her before she left. She knew where she lived. Diana had said Study No. 6. Well, why not?

Why not? Even while she asked, Dora found herself outside. Then she paused for a moment, wondering which way to take. She turned to the left, little realising that Margot's study lay to the right, and, closing the door behind her, made her way to the end of the corridor.

There for an instant she paused, and, taking the bull by the horns, turned to the left again.

"Where is it?" Dora muttered.
 Actually, Dora, by that time, was out of the Fourth Form corridor. Had she but guessed it, she was in the Mistresses Corridor, where the staff at Cliff House School was being temporarily housed

during reconstructions in the rooms downstairs.

In days gone by this corridor had been the prefects' corridor, and the rooms, in consequence, were all numbered. She passed them—eight, seven—and then suddenly her eyes gleamed. Six!

Margot's!

She tapped at the door.

There was no reply. Dora, after waiting a moment, cautiously opened the door. Inside the room was in darkness, for Miss Bullivant, who was its temporary tenant, was at the moment in conference with Miss Primrose, the headmistress.

Dora frowned in disappointment, and then, reaching up, found the light and switched it on. Her eyes darted round the room.

So this was Margot's, was it!

It wasn't! Had Dora been more familiar with the studios of Cliff House she would have realised at once that it was not. The possibility of a mistake, however, did not occur to her as she stared round.

It was a pretty, cosily furnished room, with a desk containing a variety of papers under one window, a brand new carpet on the floor, a bookcase full of richly bound volumes occupying one wall, and a small table, upon which stood a bowl of fragrant daffodils.

Dora looked bitter.

"Doing herself proud," she sneered.

But—and then her eyes gleamed. Perhaps, she told herself, she wouldn't be so proud when she came back. The urge to hurt, to spite her cousin was upon Dora Keith strongly now.

She couldn't take it out of Margot, but there was no reason why she should not take it out of Margot's belongings! She stepped forward, grabbing up the bowl of daffodils.

Swish! And away they went into the fire, while she dropped the bowl into the wastepaper-basket.

Now! Dora was grinning recklessly.

"Now the desk!"

One sweep of her arm, and papers lay scattered all over the carpet. The inkwell, uncovered, fell upon them and out spurted a stream of red fluid, which, sweeping over them, soaked into the carpet. Dora could have laughed then.

Now the books! Some fierce imp of mischief urged her on. She flung open the glass doors. Thud, thud, thud! and down came the volumes, falling in a heap. A shelf slipped of its own accord, filling the room with sound as it crashed upon the floor.

Dora's heart leapt at that. Oh, goodness, somebody must have heard! Fear for her own safety became uppermost. Breathlessly Dora turned towards the door.

Once in the corridor she ran, gasping a little as she reached the corner. Thank goodness nobody had seen! As luck would have it, the Fourth Form corridor was deserted, too. She reached Study No. 10, gulped relief when she saw Diana was not there, and, catching her hat and coat, rammed them on.

A pencil caught her eyes, a piece of paper. Rapidly she scrawled a note.

"Sorry! Had to go, or shall be late. See you to-morrow at Courtfield.—D. K."

So that was that!

Chuckling, Dora Keith went out. Down the stairs she tripped, into Big Hall, to find that deserted, too—for everybody by this time was at prep—and down the long drive towards the gates.

She was laughing as she went, feeling at last that her spite had found its vent.

How she would have loved to see Margot's face when she gazed at the wreckage of her room!

But—had Dora only known—



Crisis for Clara

"BOTHER the Bull!" Clara Trevlyn said that in loud and angry tones.

"But, Clara dear," Marjorie Hazeldene expostulated gently.

"Bother the Bull!" Clara repeated mutinously. "The spoilsport! For two pins I'd jolly well go along to her and tell her what I think of her! She had no right to gate me for a piffing thing like that!"

Marjorie Hazeldene shook her head. Janet Jordan, the third occupant of Study No. 7, sighed. "Clara's chums knew what was likely to happen when Clara was in that mood."

"Clara!" Marjorie rose. Her gentle face was very earnest, very pleading. Marjorie

(Continued on following page.)

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loved Clara. More than once she had saved the stubborn Tomboy from the consequences of her hot-headed folly, and, familiar with the sign of crisis, she saw one approaching now.

"Clara—please!" she begged; and so wistful her pleading, so gentle the hand placed upon the stormy Tomboy's arm that Clara simply had to look at her.

"Clara. I know it—it's beastly—"

"Beastly!" Clara interjected.
"But—you've got to be sensible," Marjorie went on. "What's the good of working yourself up into a paddy, like this? You're only upsetting yourself, and—" Marjorie bit her lip.
"Naturally," she added, "Miss Bullivant was rather wild with you—"

"Wild or not, she had no right—"

"No, of course she hadn't," Marjorie soothed hastily. "I'm sure, Clara, she never meant to detain you. She's probably sorry, now that she's thought it over."

Clara shrugged irritably.
"And a lot of comfort that is to me," she said explosively. "That's going to help me no end, isn't it?" She took a stormy turn up and down the study, and then flung round. The Bull's sorrow would not make her alter her detention, and the detention means that I'm out of the match on Saturday."

"But, Clara—"

"Oh, rabbits!"

"No, Clara, please—" Marjorie begged. "Listen, old thing! Do calm down, for goodness sake! I've got something to suggest. You want to play in the match, don't you? It would be too awful, after missing the first round, if you missed the second one, too. Now you've got to listen!" she said, with sudden determination.

"Clara, why don't you go to Miss Bullivant—"

"Eh?"

"Go to her," Marjorie counselled steadily, "and tell her how sorry you are. Tell her that you missed the first match, and ask her, just this once, to overlook the incident. Be apologetic, let her see that you really are sorry. She's not so awful as all that, you know, and now she'll have had her tea, and perhaps be feeling in a better humour. She might give you lines, of course—"

"Oh, blow the lines! I don't mind five hundred of those. But to miss the match—"

"Well, go," Marjorie anxiously advised.

"You think she really might—"

"I'm sure she will, Clara, if you only go in the proper spirit. But think of the team! What will it do without you?"

This last argument told. Clara got up.

"All right," she muttered. "I'll go!"
"And you—you'll be nice?" Marjorie anxiously begged.

"As nice," Clara promised, "as pud-deny pie! Watch me come back with a halo!"

Off at a swing she went, along the corridor, turned the corner, and knocked at Miss Bullivant's door.

There was no reply. Clara tapped again.

Still no reply.
"H'm! Busy," thought Clara, and glanced at the fanlight, from which a light came, clearly indicating that Miss Bullivant, who was of conscientious habits, was at home.

Perhaps she hadn't heard her, Clara thought. A third time she knocked. This time she pushed at the door. It opened.

"Miss Bullivant—" she began.

And then she stopped. She stopped as if she had suddenly become petrified.

Miss Bullivant was not in the study. Obviously, Miss Bullivant had not been in the study for some time. But someone else had, and, obviously, that someone else had not visited the room with any peaceful intentions.

As one stupefied Clara gazed wide-eyed at the pile of books on the floor, the papers swept from the desk, the up-towered wastepaper-basket.

"Oh, my hat!" she gasped.
In horror she stared at the damage. Goodness, the Bull would be furious when she saw this. What vandal had been at work? What silly idiot had done this?

Three halting steps she took into the room, some vague idea taking shape in her mind of clearing up the mess before the Bull came along.

Clara could guess the towering temper this discovery would provoke within her; and then what hopes for the success of her own peaceful mission? After all, it wouldn't be hard to clear up. Five minutes, and she could restore the room to complete order.

But supposing, while she was doing it, the Bull came back?

The thought gave Clara pause. It was a pity, perhaps, that it was not the first to impress her. For even as she hesitated, mentally debating her course of action, the door swung open. Clara heard. With a guilty start she flung round and gave a gasp as she saw Miss Bullivant herself framed in the doorway.

The start the mistress gave as she saw the wreckage of her room almost took her back into the corridor again.

Then:
"Clara!" she cried in a quivering voice.

"Oh, my hat! I—I—" And then Clara standing there, reading very well from the mistress' expression exactly what she thought, felt her face turn fiery red. "I—I—" she stuttered feebly.

"That is enough!" Miss Bullivant's eyes gleamed hardly. "Do not stutter excuses, Clara. I hope—acidly—" you are not going to deny what I can see with my own eyes? As the junior captain of games I should have expected from you some sense of sportsmanship, not this mean and paltry method of taking your revenge."

"My what?" Clara cried.

"Your revenge," Miss Bullivant's nostrils quivered. "I imagine this is a reprisal for the detention I gave you this afternoon."

"Oh, my hat!" Clara almost panted.
"You—you think I did this?"

"I fail to see, Clara, what other conclusion you could have me arrive at, the mistress said icily. "Here I find you in my room, the light on. Obviously you entered this room without permission, obviously you put the light on, since the room was in darkness when I left. You are a girl with a grievance—"

"But—but—"

"That is enough!"
"But, Miss Bullivant—" Clara flamed out.

"Please go!"
Clara, however, stood her ground.

"Miss Bullivant," she cried, "you're making a huge mistake. I didn't come here to wreck your study."

"That will be enough!" And very grimly Miss Bullivant caught the Tomboy by the arm. Very compellingly she propelled the utterly flabbergasted girl towards the door.

"I do not wish to argue with you, Clara. The matter from this point is

out of my hands. I had practically decided," she added, "to cancel your detention, but in view of this outrage you leave me no alternative but to report the whole matter to Miss Primrose—"

She stopped suddenly, picking up something from the floor.

"Here," she added, "is your handkerchief. Take it with you."

And Clara, the handkerchief in her hand, dazed, humiliated, found herself in the corridor. The door closed upon her.



Dealing With Diana

DIANA ROYSTON - CLARKE hummed a tune to herself.

At Diana was pleased. For the time being, at all events, Diana was finding the world a very good place to live in.

For in the first place Diana had expected a very upsetting scene when she was hauled off by Mary Buller to Miss Charmant. She had expected, and had been prepared for, a "wiggling" at the very least—perhaps a report to the Head.

She had gone in mutinous, determined to give as good as she got from this young Form-mistress who, after all, was not so much older than herself.

But nothing of the sort had happened. Miss Charmant's memories of her own schooldays were very green. Moreover, Miss Charmant's methods of dealing with recalcitrant girls were not the methods of other mistresses.

Perhaps better than any other mistress at Cliff House School she understood girls, and perhaps more than any of them, she had a better understanding of their characters.

Miss Charmant had made up her mind about Diana. She set to work upon her in her own way.

Rather to Diana's surprise she had been invited to sit down. She sat down. Then Miss Charmant, in that chummy and confiding way of hers, had begun to talk—not about smoking, but about all sorts of things—what a fine old school Cliff House was, what a fine crowd of girls generally inhabited it.

How pleased she was to be mistress in it! How, ever since she had taken her degree, she had moved Heaven and earth until finally she got her mistressship in it. Wasn't it a great school to fight for, to be loyal to?

Diana had experienced the most extraordinary emotions.

No mention of punishment. No mention of reprisals. But gradually the talk had veered round to the smoking question.

It hadn't occurred to Diana before that smoking was rather a silly sort of game for girls who wished to do their best at hockey. And, of course, Miss Charmant had informed her, she had had her eye on the hockey team. In spite of all that had happened, she really did want to get into it?

"Why, of course!" Diana agreed.

"Then," the smiling mistress had said, "you mustn't smoke. It's bad for you. It's bad for me. I don't want to see you spoiling your looks and your stamina, you know. There are more ways of being loyal to your school than by doing your best on the hockey field, and bowing to discipline is one of them. And Diana"—rather wistfully—"I do want us to be good friends."

Well, wasn't that amazing? Diana, who had gone into the room the stormy

Firebrand had come out in a sort of dazed whirl, almost with a feeling of admiration for Miss Charmant.

Of course she was right—she was the sufferer.

So behold Diana humming a tune, feeling very pleased with herself. She was in her study, carefully wrapping in pieces of tissue-paper the remainder of the cigarettes her silver box had contained.

Her first impulse upon returning had been to throw those cigarettes into the fire, but a more sensible reflection had told her that if they were no longer of any use to her, the working-men's club in Courtfield would be very glad of them.

Right-ho! She was going to Courtfield School to-morrow, and would drop them into the working men's club as she passed.

She had already read Dora's note. So lengthy had her chat with Miss Charmant been, that she had hardly expected her friend to be awaiting her when she came back.

She smiled as she thought of Dora. Bit of a fibber, she reflected, but not such a bad girl after all. Dashed idiotic of her, though, to go and set Freda Shields' study on fire. But, after all, she hadn't meant to do that.

Diana laughed. There, the cigarettes were finished.

To-morrow night the men of the working men's club would be enjoying them, and jolly good luck to they.

Meantime, there was this Dora business. Glad now to get that over—for, of course, Diana would never have dreamt of letting Dora down. She turned with a careless "come in," as a knock sounded on the door.

And then, quite magically, the pleased smile faded from her lips. Instinctively she stiffened as she saw who stood there. Margot Lantham!

"Looking for something?" she asked off-handedly.

"I was looking for Dora," Margot replied.

"Well, she's gone."

"How long?"

Diana shrugged.

"How should I know? Some time during the last half-hour, I suppose. I had to go and see Miss Charmant. When I came back she had vanished."

"Oh!" Margot's eyes fastened upon her searchingly. "So you've been with Miss Charmant?"

Diana frowned.

"Anything to do with you?"

"No, but—" Margot paused. Then, as if suddenly making up her mind, she closed the door and advanced into the room. "Diana, I want to talk to you," she said. "I suppose you know that during the last half-hour Miss Bullivant's study was wrecked."

Diana laughed outright.

"No! Who did it?"

"That," Margot said very significantly, "is what I'm trying to find out. Clara Trevlyn's unfairly got the blame."

Diana laughed again.

"Oh, I say, this is rich!"

"But," Margot went on, "Clara did not do it. It was just bad luck she was found in Miss Bullivant's room."

"And so," Diana asked, with a sneer, "you think I did it?"

"No."

"Thank! Then why should you come to me?"

"Because," Margot said steadily, "I feel that Dora's to blame."

Diana stared at that. Her brows came together in a frown. Dora—And then her eyes flashed.

What utter, spiteful rubbish! For

what possible reason should Dora wish to wreck Miss Bullivant's study? Why, Dora didn't even know Miss Bullivant, and most certainly wouldn't know where to look for her study, even if she had wanted to wreck it.

"I see!" The scorn in her voice made Margot wince a little. "My hat! What a creature you are!" she cried contemptuously. "Dora—eh? You don't like Dora, do you, Margot, even if she is your cousin? You'd rather see her expelled than give her a helping hand, wouldn't you? Because you're too much of a goody-goody to tell a little fib. Oh, I know! Dora told me all about it. And since you, her own cousin, won't

Diana, but you're wrong; I'm not just being catty. Diana—and very quietly she laid a lace-trimmed handkerchief on the table—"do you recognise that?"

"No!" Diana snapped. "Because," Margot said levelly, "it was a handkerchief which Miss Bullivant found in her study. She handed it to Clara, under the impression that it was hers. It wasn't. But it is Dora's."

Diana started.

"How do you know? I don't see any initials on it."

"I know," Margot replied, "because it is one of a dozen I gave her last birthday. That," she added, "is what



"TWO hours late, you are, and you've got to go straight to the head-mistress," Piper said grimly, as he unlocked the gates. The chums said nothing, knowing full well that Diana's spite, in stranding them out of bounds, was to mean punishment for them all.

help her, I'm going to! See? I suppose you guessed that. I suppose that is why you're trying to poison my mind against her now."

Margot turned white.

"Diana, you don't believe that?"

"Don't I? What else do you expect me to believe? Why should Dora try to wreck Miss Bullivant's study? I don't suppose she's ever heard her name even. The truth of the matter is," she added bitterly, "that Clara did wreck the Bull's study. Didn't the Bull gate her this afternoon? And now I suppose you think if you can find another scapegoat the Bull will let Clara off so that she can play in the match on Saturday? A nice trick, well thought out! But you won't get me aiding and abetting. I stick to Dora!"

Margot gazed at her. For one moment her eyes flashed the old admiration. Diana was wrong—oh, how wrong! But she believed what she was said. Having given her word, she was going to remain loyal to this scapegoat cousin. How typical of Diana!

"Very well!" she said. "I'm sorry,

makes me think Dora wrecked the Bull's study."

Diana sniffed.

"And that's your proof?"

"It is!"

"Well, take it!" And Diana, temptuously snatching up the handkerchief, flung it at her. "I don't believe it—I won't believe it!" she cried. "It's just a put-up job to get Clara off. Now," she said, and her face flamed furiously, "will you go?"

"But, Diana—"

"Oh, don't! Diana! me, for goodness' sake!" that girl struck in. "If you think you can persuade me that Dora wrecked the Bull's study, you're mistaken. I tell you Clara is to blame; it's just the sort of thing she might be expected to do!"

And Diana laughed brutally.

"Diana, please—"

"Oh, get out!" Diana snapped, and, beside herself, caught hold of the girl and pushed her into the corridor, then violently she slammed the door.

Margot, with a sigh, looked at it and walked off hopelessly towards Study No. 4.



They Little Knew!

"SOMETHING'S got to be done!" Barbara Hedford made that announcement early.

It was the following afternoon, and lessons for the day were over.

In Study No. 4, Clara, Margot, Mabs, and Babs were gathered.

Something had to be done, yes! For at the moment the situation seemed hopeless. Clara, though she protested her innocence, had been held guilty of the wrecking of Miss Bullivant's study.

An extremely unpleasant interview with Miss Primrose had culminated in a punishment which was almost worse than expulsion to the sports-loving Tomboy; for Clara, temporarily, had been suspended from the sports captaincy.

To say that Babs & Co. were glum was to put it mildly. As for Clara, she was in one of her most dangerous moods. Clara did not mind suffering for a misdeed she had committed, but to be accused of this vandalism brought out all the rebelliousness in her character.

Clara, disappointed in the first round of the Lantham Cup, had been looking forward to playing in this vital match. "But what," she asked now, "is to be done?"

"Tackle the real guilty party and make her own up," Babs said.

"But how?"

"How? Yes, that was the problem. Now that they had heard all that Margot had had to say, there was little doubt in their minds as to who the guilty party was.

Margot was sure of the handkerchief clue. Margot, too, very shrewdly advanced the theory that Dora Keith, in wrecking Miss Bullivant's study, had really meant to wreck her own.

From what she had heard of Dora Keith, Babs was inclined to support that view; but, even though she was convinced, she realised that the clue upon which the belief was based was extremely unconvincing. Dora Keith would scoff. Dora would just flatly deny the whole thing.

"Wait a minute! I've got an idea!" Margot cried.

"What?"

"Diana!"

"Eh?"

"Diana," Margot said with sudden excitement, "is going over to Courtfield this afternoon. Diana is going to tell Miss Manners that she was with Dora the other day, and so prove her alibi. Well, supposing Diana refused to help her and Dora had confessed to wrecking Miss Bullivant's study?"

The three stared at her in amazement.

"But Diana won't!"

Margot's eyes gleamed.

"She would if you made it worth her while."

"How?"

"By offering her a place in the team on Saturday."

Clara's eyes rounded.

"My hat! Are you off your rocker?"

she cried. "What place in the team?"

"Well, mine," Margot said slowly.

Clara snorted.

"When you're the best player we've got? No, thanks! I appreciate the thought, Margot, but to the dickens with that idea of mine!"

All the same," she added thoughtfully, "there's something in tackling Diana. Diana

seems to be the link between Dora Keith and this beastly business. Supposing," she added quickly, looking up, "we went to Courtfield with Diana?"

Babs frowned.

"Well, what good would that do?"

"And supposing," Clara said, with a gleam in her eyes, "we refused to let Diana tell her whoppers until Dora told the truth?"

Babs, Mabs, and Margot glanced at each other, a little startled. But it was an idea—or, at least, half an idea. The very presence of Margot and the Cliff House chums at Courtfield with Diana would frighten Dora Keith.

She would be afraid of Margot chipping in; and, if offered the alternative of two evils, would very probably choose the latter. At least, that is how it appeared to the chums, and, since only Dora Keith could save them now, any expedient, they thought, however desperate, was worth jumping at.

To think was to act. In any case, they had not a great deal of time. It would mean cutting tea, of course; and Clara, at least, ran a risk; seeing that she was in detention.

But not Clara to shy at a risk, and having made up their minds, Babs & Co. were all agog. In double-quick time, they had donned hats and coats, were tripping down the corridor and into the quad.

Then they paused.

An open car was drawn up in the drive, and Diana, warmly clad in her fur coat, was in the act of coming out. She turned with her old mocking smile as they came up.

"Not a very nice afternoon for a walk," she observed; and it wasn't, for an unpleasantly chilly drizzle of rain was falling. "Going far?"

The four paused.

"No farther than you!" Clara said gruffly.

"Really?" The smile on Diana's face did not change. "But how," she challenged, "do you know where I'm going?"

"Oh, rabbits!" Clara retorted irritably. "Come on!" she cried. "Don't let's stand gaping at her. We'll never get to Courtfield School at this rate."

Courtfield School! For a moment a light of startled astonishment glinted in Diana's eyes. Quickly those eyes sought out Margot Lantham. Margot was biting her lip. They were going to Courtfield School, were they? With Margot among them.

A sudden swift suspicion shot through Diana.

"And why," she asked, "are you going to Courtfield, Clara, dear?"

"That," Clara retorted, "is our business."

"O.K.! Keep the old wool on!" Diana laughed. "I'm not curious," she added. "And you don't jolly well deserve it, but if you'd like a lift, here's the car. I happen," she added carelessly, "to be going to Courtfield School myself, but I've got to make a call somewhere else first. You won't mind?"

The chums looked at each other. Well, why not? Diana had the car. It was an open car, true, but it was better than walking. Clara grinned.

"You mean it?"

"Of course. But you'll have to sit in the back."

"O.K., then, thanks!"

Diana laughed. The chums, unsuspecting, climbed into the back. Really, it was jolly decent of Diana—even Clara thought that.

But they little guessed the thoughts in the mind of Diana, and they did not see the peculiar smile upon her face as

more leisurely she climbed in beside the driver.

Diana guessed that the reason for this sudden visit to Courtfield had something to do with Margot's cousin. The presence of Margot Lantham herself indicated that. The fact that Clara Trevlyn, whom she knew was in detention, was disobeying orders in accompanying the Expedition, seemed to suggest that it was one of supreme urgency.

The Co., obviously, were trying some new stunt on against the girl they wanted to make their scapegoat.

So Diana told herself, and as the car bowed off, she smiled maliciously. Inwardly she was chuckling. Diana had no particular use for Dora Keith, but rightly or wrongly she did believe in Dora Keith, and if only to spite Margot, her ex-friend, she was determined to help her and frustrate Margot at the same time. She bent forward, speaking to the driver.

"Head towards Lantham," she whispered. "Pull up at the Lantham cross-roads, just by the Junction Cafe. Understand?"

"Yes, miss!"

"Right! Do everything I tell you, and there'll be an extra five shillings for you at the end of the trip. Step on it now."

The driver grinned.

"Righto, miss!"

In the murk of the gathering gloom the car bowed on. The four girls in the back huddled together for warmth. Through Friar Dale they went with a swish, roaring out into the open country. At the fork-roads, however, Babs gave a sudden cry.

"Diana, you're going wrong. That's not the way to Courtfield."

Diana flashed a reassuring smile.

"Don't worry, old thing. Calling at Courtfield on my way back," she said. "Shan't take you far out of your way."

The chums settled down. The car bowed on. The rain was falling steadily now, blowing into their faces.

Little Courtbury came and went, followed by Edgedale, the tiny hamlet five miles north of Courtfield. On roared the car.

"I say," muttered Clara, "where the dickens is she going?"

But Diana seemed to know. They heard her merry laugh. It was almost dark now—so dark, indeed, that the driver had put his side-lights on.

A crossroads loomed in front of them, in the centre of which was a green island, on which was marooned a signpost, emphatically announcing:

"FRIARDALE—10 MILES."

Beyond the island they had a vague glimpse of lighted windows of the Junction Cafe showing through a high lattice-work fence. Diana laughed.

"Drop me at the Junction Cafe, please, driver," she said. "I want to make some arrangements with the proprietor. Er—Babs, do you mind if I'm away about ten minutes?"

"Oh, my hat! But what—"

"Or," Diana interrupted, as though smitten with a brilliant idea, "why not come into the cafe? You can have a cup of tea while I'm seeing to my business, can't you? So much better than stopping out here in the rain."

It seemed, on the face of it, a sound suggestion. The chums glanced quickly at each other. A cup of tea sounded tempting, at all events, and, as Diana pointed out, so much more sensible than sitting out here in the rain. They did not suspect still, but had they seen the

malicious gleam in Diana's eyes they might have scented mischief.

"Come on!" Clara said.

Into the road they scrambled. Diana, with a wink at the driver, led the way towards the café. It was situated in a hollow, and bounded on all sides by a stout fence, on top of which, carrying a desolating tangle of interwoven branches of leafless ramblers, rose a three-foot depth of latticework. A six-foot gate of balustrade beneath a rustic arch gave access to the drive.

Towards that gate Diana led the way. Smilingly she pushed it open, politely holding it as she motioned the four girls through.

They passed in, with a rather wondering look at Diana, thinking that she really was trying to be charming. Diana waited till the last had gone in.

Then—

"Yoicks!" she laughed.

Clatter—the gates clanged to. In a moment Diana had slipped the latch over the staple. Then like a hare she flew back to the car.

"Driver," she called, "step on it!"

The chums heard the gate. Clara half-turned. Then she saw. Diana—Diana running as hard as she could go. "Diana!" she gasped.

Diana still ran.

"My hat!" Clara's voice rose shrilly. "It's a jape!" She had no business here at all. Look, she's getting into the car. She means to leave us stranded."

"Diana!"

But Diana, laughing, was breathlessly climbing up on to the footboard. The car was already moving. Slam! went the tiny door, and at the same moment the driver, engaging gear, shot off.

Diana turned, a merry laugh on her lips, just in time to see Babs, Mabs, Clara, and Margot in an infuriated group, come tumbling out of the gate. She waved her handkerchief.

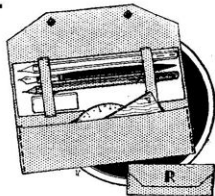
"Come back!" yelled the four.

But Diana only laughed again. Her eyes were sparkling, her cheeks flushing as the car disappeared round a bend of the road. What a sell for Babs & Co.!

What a sell, indeed! For Babs & Co. at that moment were the most distraught girls on earth. They were stranded, utterly, completely, twelve miles away from school!

For once, it seemed, the laugh was on Diana's side!

TO TAKE BACK TO SCHOOL



ARE you groaning and moaning—or are you rejoicing—at the thought of going back to school?

A little bit of each, I expect—but after seeing this jolly pencil-case that you can make yourself to accompany you on your return, you should be ready to turn somersaults with joy.

Even if you received one in your stocking at Christmas, I'm sure you'll love to make this one as well—particularly when you know how simple it is to do.

Buy half a yard of American cloth—you know, the sort mother uses on her kitchen shelves instead of paper these days—in any pretty colour you like. The cheerier, the better, I say—but then, I like bright colours.

HOW TO MAKE IT

Cut your American cloth so that it measures 10 inches by $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Turn up the bottom and stitch it. Use firm running stitches in cotton that is either the same colour as your cloth—or in a contrasting colour.

You may think that American cloth is hard to sew—but believe me, it isn't, as long as you use a stout needle.

Now sew two short strips of elastic on to the folded part—but don't take your stitches right through the double material. Catch the elastic in as many places as you like—to hold such things as rubber, ruler, pen, pencil, mapping-pen, and fat, coloured pencil.

Next, in the pocket you have made, slip a piece of cardboard. This is to keep the back of your case firm so that it is easy to fold up.

After folding your case, sew on two press-fasteners. Then clip your own initial or initials on to the front. You know where to buy these, don't you?

They shouldn't cost more than threepence—and you may be able to get quite nice ones for a penny.

The beauty of this pencil-case is that it takes up so very little room—and yet holds all you require for writing and drawing. The old high pencil-box that I used to have when I was at school—with the sliding lid that never slid, but always stuck—and the nook for a rubber that never held my fat rubber unless it was first cut in half—is definitely not fashionable any longer.

Also you will have the satisfaction of knowing as you gaze lovingly at your handiwork that there's nothing quite so smart as something that is made to measure—especially by yourself.

TO TAKE WITH YOU

If you find you really enjoy making this pencil-case, you might like to have a shot at another with the material you have left over.

What about a special drawing-pencil-case—that travels with you to your school art-room? You can then keep those very valuable special drawing pencils quite separate from ordinary H.B.s.—and all in a nicely pointed condition, too.

A geography case is another idea. This should hold your mapping pens, a specially soft pencil for tracing, and your coloured pencils for colouring counties and sea-borders.

Even these cases are not too many—especially when they make for efficiency at work—as they will. For in this way your assortments of pencils will always be where you know they are in good condition, and ready to be pounced on at a moment's notice!



Diana's Decision

"OH crumbs! What's the time now?"

"Six o'clock!"

"How much farther?"

"Four miles from here to Courtfield. Goodness knows what time we shall get back!"

Clara, Mabs, and Margot groaned. Four miles! And already Piper, the porter, would be locking the gates of Cliff House!

Black as the rainy night was their mood as they pushed on. What a tack Diana had played! A thousand times they had reviled themselves for allowing Diana to hoodwink them so easily. A thousand times they had threatened what they would do to the Firebrand when they laid hands on her. Yet Cliff House and Diana seemed terribly far away now.

The misty drizzle of chilly rain was still falling. It formed puddles in the

road into which, unable to see, they splashed. They were all drenched; stockings were soaked and shoes squelched as they hurried along.

Four miles—and six o'clock now!

Diana had calculated her time well, it seemed.

Of course, there would be ructions when they got back to Cliff House. It would be seven, at least, before they reached Courtfield, then another quarter of an hour by bus to Friardale. Another half an hour on top of that for the walk back from Friardale to the school. Two hours after gates.

Blow Diana!

Disgruntled, they tramped on. They said little now. Each of them was doped, chilled to the bone, and utterly fed-up when at last Courtfield came in sight.

Friardale was reached—the last lap of the walk to Cliff House embarked upon. Mabs sighed.

"Oh, my goodness, I feel half-dead!"

They all did. Clara, by that time, was glowering. It was striking eight when at last they reached the gates of the school, and the Tomboy savagely pulled the bell.

Piper, the school porter, a bunch of keys jingling in one hand, a lantern swinging in the other, came gruntingly out of his lodge.

"Which what I say is——" he commenced.

"Oh, open the gates!" Clara snapped testily.

"Which it is my dooty to report you," Piper said, staring inimically through the bars. "Two hours late you are, and you've got to go straight to the headmistress!"

The gates were flung open and the four entered. Piper blinked.

"Nice goings hon! What I says——"

But nobody waited to hear what Piper said. Savagely they tramped on. They reached the school house. Four dismal figures, they entered Big Hall, to be

greeted by a wondering crowd of girls. Diana was among them. She grinned mockingly.

"Nice walk?" she asked pleasantly. Suddenly Margot flashed round. Her eyes were blazing as she took a step towards Diana.

"You—you horrid thing!" she panted. "How you can laugh, when it's all your fault—all your doing! Why can't you be decent? Why must you spoil everything? I used to think you were my friend, but now I—I hate you!"

Diana looked as if she would reply, but Babs suddenly took Margot's arm. "Come along!" she urged. "Don't

suspension for the rest of the term. Meanwhile, I shall write a special report to your parents!"

That was that. Groaningly, the four left the study.

But in her study Diana was chuckling. Diana was well pleased with herself. It was a pleasure to have thwarted Babs & Co., but greater was the pleasure in the knowledge that she had brought Margot Lantham into disgrace.

And she believed in Dora Keith—was sorry for her. In any case, Dora was all right now, she reflected, for Miss Manners had accepted, without ques-

trast to the miserably bleak night which had preceded it, and Diana, who was seriously taking Miss Charmant's lesson to heart, laughed in glee as she spurred round the cinder track.

Diana, too, had by no means given up the idea of playing in the hockey match on Saturday. Let Clara say what she liked, the team was one short. In Diana's opinion, there was only one suitable girl to fill the vacant place. That was Diana herself.

Diana exulted as she ran on. She was fit, she told herself. Give her chance in the team, and she'd show them how to play hockey now.

She thought of the last match, in which Margot Lantham had outshone her. That little upstart! If she only got her chance on Saturday, she'd show that little traitress how to play. Never again should Margot show her up!

She was in form now. Then suddenly reaching the gates, she paused.

A girl was there—a girl who had dismounted from a bicycle, and who was watching her curiously. Diana flung her one foot and stopped.

Dora Keith it was. "Up early, Diana."

"What about you?" "Oh, I'm up early, too! Don't usually get up as early as this, of course," Dora added. "But I wanted to see you, and this is my only chance, Diana, I want to thank you again for what you did last night."

"Everything all serene?" Diana asked quickly.

Dora laughed. "Yes, rather! Freda Shields has actually apologised to me. But I didn't come to see you about that. I came to see you about this afternoon. I think, you know, we ought to jolly well celebrate."

Dora added seriously, "and I've come over to ask you if you'd come along to the Courtfield Restaurant after lessons."

Diana smiled. "Thanks—that's nice of you!" she said. "Love to, of course. But look here, don't stand there in the cold. Come up to the study with me and have a cup of tea!"

Dora, however, drew back. "Oh, goodness, not now! I shall be late."

"Late, rabbits! You've got an hour before breakfast. Come on!"

Dora paused. "Are—are any of the others up?"

"I don't know. A few, I expect. That idiot Clara Trevlyn always gets up early. And Janet Jordan and Babs. And perhaps your precious cousin, too, since she's so jolly thick with them. But that needn't make any difference to you."

Dora, however, seemed strangely reluctant. Diana caught her by the arm.

"No; wait a minute." Dora shook her head. "I won't Diana, thanks! You see," she added, "I'm not anxious to meet Margot."

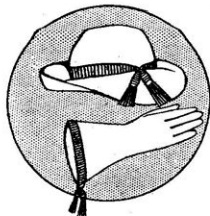
"Why ever not?" "Well, she might be feeling sore with me, especially after—" Dora grinned.

"But I forgot, you must know about it. You remember when the prefect hauled you off in the other evening?"

Diana frowned. "What did Margot say when she found her study?"

Diana stared. "Her study? What ever are you talking about?"

"My hat! You don't mean to say you haven't heard?" Dora laughed outright. "You see," she added, "I



HATS— IN HOLIDAY MOOD

Just sew a piece of the same ribbon around the tops of your gloves. Tie in a knot, and fray the ends as you did for your hat.

Done in a twinkling, but very smart for all that!

FOR SMART SCHOOLGIRLS

My other notions for hat-trimming this week are very seasonable—just right for walks on windy days, and for giving a colourful touch to a wintry countryside.

A strip of astrakhan two or two and a half inches wide sewn around your beret would look very gay. Imagine a strip of grey on a navy beret, or black on a red or green. Very dashing!

Another idea is a piece of Peter-sham ribbon again. Sew this around the edge of the beret and tie it in a bow at the back of the head.

A bright feather which you can get from any old shop these days—or even pick up in the woods if you're a country dweller—makes another up-to-the-minute trimming. Cut two little holes to one side of your beret, and thrust the feather in there and out of these. Make a few over-stitches just to keep it in position, and you'll be as smart as a fashion plate.

And remember that the cuter the angle of the feather these days—the more correct!

PPETERSHAM ribbon makes a wonderfully inexpensive and effective trimming. (Petersham is that rather stiff, corded ribbon, you know.)

With one and three-quarter yards of it you can make such an attractive band for a school hat—and trim your gloves to match.

Just by looking at the sketch, you can tell how it is done—but I'll describe it briefly for you, so that there's no possibility of going wrong. There's no need for you to remove your school hat-band if it is sewn on very carefully—though I confess this trimming will "sit" better without another band underneath.

But if you do keep your old hat-band on, then you must use Petersham ribbon that is wider than your present band in order to conceal it.

Cut a length that will go right round your hat and tie in a knot at one side.

That's all! Then just fray the ends to a depth of at least an inch to make a smart finish.

Your school hat will then look very week-endish, especially if you trim your gloves to match.

worry about her. Let's go and see Primmy and get it over!

They went to see Miss Primrose, after having hung their wet things in the cloak-room. The headmistress eyed them sternly.

"And what," she asked, "is your excuse, Barbara?"

Babs bit her lip. Even though the four of them had suffered, it was not playing the game, of course, to give Diana away. She blurted something about having got carried on by mistake.

"I see!" Miss Primrose's eyes were steely. "I do not regard the explanation as adequate, Barbara. You, Mabel, and Margot will each do special detentions for the next three evenings. Clara, ~~you~~ are already in disgrace. I must warn you that the very next offence brought to my notice will invite your

tion, her fabrication that she had been with Dora in Courtfield at the time of the fire in Freda Shields' study, and, therefore, Dora could not possibly have been to blame.

That fire, of course, was still a mystery at Courtfield, but Dora was no longer regarded with suspicion.

Diana was smiling when she went to bed that night. She was impervious to the lowering looks of Clara Trevlyn, or the unfriendly glances of the rest of the Co. She chuckled.

"Happy, aren't we?" she taunted. "I don't think I've ever seen Babs & Co. wearing faces that suit them better. And after such a lovely walk, too!"

"Shut up!" snapped Clara.

Diana chuckled again. She went to bed. She was first up in the morning, however. It was a bright, sunny morning, in vivid con-

was determined that I shouldn't leave Cliff House without having a smack back at her. When you left, I went to your study."

Diana blinked.

"She wasn't there," Dora went on. "I don't know where to find her. Anyway, it struck me that it would be rather a jape to wreck the study, and so I got to work. There was a desk in the corner—"

"Wait a minute!" Diana was gazing at her queerly now. Her eyes were aight. "I don't get this," she said. "You say you wrecked Margot's study?"

"Why, of course!"

"How did you know it was Margot's?"

"Well, you said it was Study No. 6," Dora faltered. "Why, Diana—"

But Diana did not reply immediately. Her eyes were upon the other. There was an expression in those eyes—an expression of consternation, of astonishment.

Diana saw at once the hideous mistake that Dora had made—the mistake for which Clara Trevlyn had got the blame. So Margot had been right! It had been Dora Keith who had wrecked that study!

"Diana, why—why are you looking at me like that?" Dora stuttered.

Diana laughed shortly.

"Because you're a duffer, and so am I!" she said shortly. "I suppose it never occurred to you that you had made a mistake?"

"A—mistake?"

"Yes. That study you messed up was No. 6 all right, but," Diana told her, "it wasn't Margot's. It was Miss Bullivant's!"

Dora's face paled.

"Oh, my hat! A mistress?"

"And, as a matter of fact," Diana went on, "Clara Trevlyn of our Form got the blame. Clara was caught in the room. And the result is that Clara's detained for goodness knows how long!"

Dora grinned.

"Well, that's all right, isn't it?" she asked, with a laugh. "I mean, as long as they won't suspect me—"

"What?"

"Well—"

Diana looked at her incredulously.

"You mean to say you're going to let Clara Trevlyn suffer?"

Dora pouted.

"Well, she's no friend of yours, is she?"

"She's no friend of mine—no." And with glinting eyes Diana looked at this precious friend of hers. "I don't care a rap about Clara Trevlyn, but I do care, Dora, for playing the game. The fact that it wasn't Clara Trevlyn doesn't make any difference. It might have been any other girl. I'm not blaming you for wrecking the other's study, I'm not blaming you for making a mistake. But I think the only decent thing you can do, now that you realise you have made it, is to come into the school and own up."

But if Diana thought that, Dora did not. Her eyes widened. She stared at Diana's suddenly grim face as if she could not believe her own eyes—and in that moment she couldn't.

Diana, her friend, saying this! Diana, the girl who had not hesitated to tell fibs to save her!

"Oh, chuck it!" she said roughly.

"Do you think I'm scatty?"

"You won't?" Diana asked quietly.

"No!"

"All right!"

Due Dora, as if guessing what was in the other's mind, saw the sudden string which Diana made at her. She

twisted round, throwing out a foot at Diana, and bringing her, on hands and knees, crashing to the earth.

In a trice she was on her bicycle, bowling away.

Diana rose, breathing fire. She brushed her hands upon her shorts, glaring at the flying figure down the road. Her face was crimson suddenly.

"What a fool! Oh, what a fool she had been! She had believed in this girl—had, in her peculiar way, trusted and put her faith in her."

Of course, she had backed up Dora Keith largely with the idea of spitting Margot.

As this thought came to Diana she recalled Margot's fierce outburst of the previous evening.

"Why can't you be decent?" Margot had cried.



IN fury Diana watched as Dora mounted her machine and sped away. The girl she had recklessly befriended was afraid to own up to the deed for which Clara had been punished!

A curious expression flitted across Diana's face at the memory of those words. At the time they had cut her, and the thought of them still hurt.

"Margot thinks I can't do anything decent, does she?" muttered Diana. "She'd look pretty silly if I proved her to be wrong. I can see her come crawling to me—begging my pardon. And then I'd show her the door. That would be a fine revenge!"

The vague idea that had come to Diana took sudden shape.

She pictured herself doing the "Far, far better thing than she had ever done!" She saw herself in the role of—well, hardly a heroine, but something precious like it. Shouldering someone else's blame! Yes, at the moment that sang to her.

She would go to Miss Primrose and say that it was she who had ragged Miss Bullivant's study!

It was not altogether self-glorification that made Diana come to this decision.

Diana had her own code of rules, her own standards of fair play. To hit back at a foe, even maliciously, was permissible in that code. Had Dora wrecked Margot's study she would have rejoiced, hating Margot as she hated her now.

Had Clara Trevlyn been blamed for anybody else's crime, Diana wouldn't have cared a fig. But in this she felt that her own honour was involved. Knowing what she knew now, her own good opinion of herself would never be the same if she allowed Clara Trevlyn to take the blame.

And hadn't it been through her that that little sneak Dora had had the opportunity to work this havoc?

Almost furiously Diana flung off towards the School House. Her eyes

glinted, her fingers clenched, she made her way to Miss Primrose's study and tapped upon the door.

The voice of the headmistress bade her come in. She stared in surprise at her visitor.

"Well, Diana?"

"I've come to own up," Diana said bluntly.

"Own up? Bless my soul, what have you been doing now?"

Diana eyed her steadily.

"About the wrecking of Miss Bullivant's study the other night."

Miss Primrose stared.

"I did that," Diana said calmly. "I did it because Miss Bullivant gave me lines for laughing. I was mad with her—"

"Indeed?" Miss Primrose's eyes glinted. "This is rather a disgraceful confession to make at this hour, after allowing Clara Trevlyn to be blamed!"

Diana shrugged.

"I see!" Miss Primrose's eyes

gleamed. "Very well," she said. "I am glad that you have some sense of honour, even though, apparently, it has taken so long to come to the surface. Diana," she added sternly, "I am not going to give you a lecture. I want you to understand, however, that, had I discovered this by any other means, I should have been justly and properly expelled you. As it is—her lips compressed—she is, I shall not take that extreme course, because I am glad, if it is rather belated, that you have found the courage to come to me of your own free will. In the meantime, you, and not Clara, will be detained on Saturday. You hear that?"

"Yes!" Diana muttered.

"Very well, you may go!"

And Diana, turning, went, a contemptuous smile curving her lips. Now she had taken the step, she rather marvelled at herself, realising all that it meant.

She had saved Clara Trevlyn—the girl she regarded as her enemy. She had made Clara's place in the team to meet Courtfield a certainty.

And yet—had she held her tongue, she might have had that place!

Diana laughed whimsically, thinking of her quixotry. Well, she was a fool! She always had been a fool, but she somehow felt very pleased at being a fool in that moment.

Later that morning the news was made known. It was news which caused rejoicing in the Fourth, and to Clara Trevlyn particularly. If the confession was belated, Diana, everyone agreed, had done the right thing.

But only Margot Lantham of them all was uneasy. The others never doubted. It never occurred to them that Diana would willingly take upon her shoulders the sins of another girl.

But Margot knew Diana better than

any other member of the Fourth Form, and Margot was reflecting, with curious feeling, that at the time the raid on Miss Bullivant's study was made, Diana had said she had been with Miss Charmant! And there was also that handkerchief belonging to her cousin.

Greatly puzzled, Margot sought out Diana.

"To what do I owe the inconvenience of this delightful visit?" demanded Diana, in her most stilted and cutting tones. "Come to chuck a few more bricks at me?"

"No," said Margot, in a low voice. "What then?"

"Di," burst out Margot, "can't we be friends again—please?"

"What, friends with a girl who never does anything decent?" jeered Diana, glorying in the words. "Oh, no, you can't be serious! You toddle along your way, and I'll toddle along mine. Much more satisfactory—"

"It wasn't you who ragged Miss Bullivant's lady—"

"I'm a bit of a fibber, too, am I?" returned Diana coolly. "There you go again. You see how impossible it is for you and me to be friends. And now, as I've got tons of lines to write, d'you mind shifting?"

Sorrowfully Margot turned and departed.

Diana smiled a thin smile. She was trying to persuade herself that she was triumphantly enjoying her moment of triumph in Margot's obvious unhappiness.

"That'll teach her a lesson!" she muttered.

But she little knew that she herself was to share in that lesson before many weeks were over.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

"OUT OF FAVOUR WITH THE FOURTH"

By HILDA RICHARDS

COMPLETE
IN THE
"SCHOOLGIRL"
NEXT
SATURDAY

WHAT is the title of the magnificent long complete Cliff House School story which will appear in THE SCHOOLGIRL next Saturday.

Diana Royston-Clarke is again the storm-centre of a stirring tale, which also features all your other favourites of the famous Fourth Form.

It shows Diana in her most audacious mood; for the Firebrand is determined to make the chums of the Fourth "sit up and take notice." She certainly succeeds, and how she does so you will read in one of the most vivid school tales ever penned.

Don't miss this fine story. Order your copy of THE SCHOOLGIRL right away. And don't forget that another big sheet of film stars' autographs will be GIVEN AWAY next week.

THOSE PALS YOUR PETS

During the winter your pets will need extra attention if they are to be as well and as happy as you want them to be.

IMAGINE having to sleep in a cold, draughty kennel these long winter's nights! Why, the very suggestion makes you shiver, doesn't it? But there are lots of unfortunate dogs who have to suffer thus—just because their owners don't give a little thought to their comfort.

If your dog has a kennel out of doors, do see that it's quite draught-proof, won't you? It's quite a good notion to nail a thick sack round the outside of the kennel; this will keep any chill draughts from creeping through the cracks in the woodwork.

LOTS and lots of dry straw for his bed, of course! And be sure that the kennel is in the driest place—preferably under cover—so that rain or snow can't drive in.

WHEN your dog comes home from a scamper see that he's nice and dry before going to lie down in his kennel. Imagine his misery if he has to go to bed with a wet coat! Five minutes with an old towel or cloth will work wonders.

PUPPIES are especially sensitive to cold and wet, so if you can manage to have your own pup indoors he'll appreciate it. But don't bring him indoors if you intend him to be an "out-door" dog; once he's tasted the delights of a warm kitchen he'll never submit quietly to being kept outside in a kennel. So start as you intend to go on!

OTHER pets are just as susceptible to inclement weather. Tame rabbits, guinea pigs, cats—all like warmth and dry beds. But pussy can usually be trusted to look after herself; she'll always find a cosy spot somewhere.

THE homely canary likes comfort, too. Curiously enough, a canary's cage is usually hung in a window, which is really the worst possible place, because there is always a draught between the sashes. If possible, the cage should be hung at a distance from the window—though don't put it on a table, or pussy may start playing tricks!

IF your pets are properly cared for they should look their best during the winter months, for it is the time when their coats are in the most perfect condition. But constant grooming is necessary. Even a tame rabbit—if it is of the beautiful long-haired Angora variety—looks better for a combing!

BUT although you should do your utmost to give your pets every comfort, it doesn't do to spoil them. Like the girl who, because it was a very cold day, gave her dog hot water to drink! No, your pets don't want "coddling"; they just want to be well cared for. And you'll have the pleasure of knowing that they're well and happy.