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INCORPORATING
"SCHOOLDAYS."

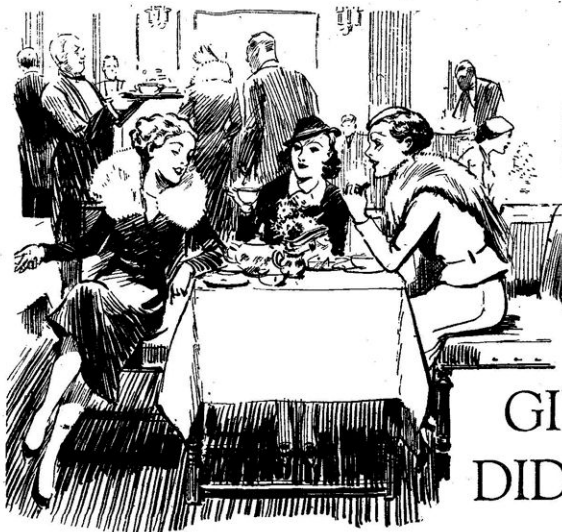
Week Ending February 8th, 1936.



AT HER LAST GASP

A dramatic moment in
this week's long com-
plete Cliff House School
story—"The Girl Who
Didn't Care!"

A Magnificent Complete Story of the Cliff House Chums, Featuring Diana Royston-Clarke



THE GIRL WHO DIDN'T CARE!

By
HILDA RICHARDS

Friends Again?

"**H**IP-HIP—"
"Hurrah!"
"Who says good old Cliff House?"
"Hurrah!"
"Who says good old Clara Trevlyn?"
"We do!"
"Who's put Cliff House in the final of the Lantham Cup?"
"Clara Trevlyn!"
"And who's going to win the Lantham Cup?"

"Cliff House! Hurrah!"
Clara Trevlyn, coming down the steps of Cliff House School with Barbara Redfern, captain of the Fourth, Mabel Lynn, and fat Bessie Bunter, paused.

"Well, my hat!" she cried.
And she blinked at the crowd of excited, cheering girls in the old quadrangle.

Girls flushed, animated, eyes shining, faces beaming with happy excitement.

Not merely girls of the Fourth Form, to which she herself belonged, but girls of the Third, the Second, the Upper and Lower Fifth, and, yes—amazing as it appeared, even some of the lordly Sixth.

They formed a dense crowd beneath the School House steps, and Georgina Skeppington, of the Lower Fifth, and Flora Cann, captain of that Form, carried between them an enormous banner. On that banner was inscribed the words:

"CLIFF HOUSE IS PROUD OF
YOU!"

Barbara laughed.
"Seems," she said, "you're famous, Clara."

"Yes, but—"
"I say, though," Bessie Bunter exclaimed, her eyes sparkling, "that's juj-jolly nun-nice of them, you know. Of course, I always realised I was the most popular girl in the school—"

"Eh?" Mabs asked.
"Well, that banner, you know." And Bessie smirked in satisfaction. "That just shows you what the school thinks of me!"
"Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha! You think that's meant for you, Bessie?" Mabs gasped.

"Well, who else?"
But even Bessie did not feel so sure next moment, when a thunderous roar broke forth.

"Clara! Clara! Speech, Clara, speech!"

Clara Trevlyn flushed. She, at least, had no illusions as to the nature of this enthusiastic demonstration, and while it pleased her, it also filled her with a little dismay.

Clara, if she had proved herself the best junior sports captain that Cliff House had ever had, was no hand whatever at speech-making. But the crowd would not be resisted.

"Ahem! Girls—"
"Hurrah!"

"I'm jolly pleased—"
"Good old Clara!"

"That," Clara gasped, "we've got so far in the Lantham Cup. It—it's a real treat to see everybody so enthusiastic. But we haven't won it yet, you know—"

"Oh, but we will!"
"We'll do our best," Clara went on.
"I'll promise you that. We meet Sar-

mouth Sea Guides in the final on Saturday, and from all I've heard, they're a pretty tough nut to crack."

"And so are we!" cried Rosa Rodworth.

"Hear, hear!"

"Meantime, as I've told the team, there's going to be no letting up as regards practice. The Lantham Cup is the hardest competition we've ever entered for, and the final is likely to be the hardest match of the lot.

"It's up to every girl in the team to practise as hard and as often as ever she can—and—and—" Then Clara became stuck. "Well, that's all," she feebly finished. "If—if every girl does that, we'll jolly well win the cup!"
"Hurrah!"

It was not a good speech—Clara would have been the first to admit that. But if it had been Miss Primrose, Cliff House's beloved headmistress, announcing that every girl could have an extra half-holiday, it could not have been more enthusiastically received.

For at that moment Clara Trevlyn, as captain of the junior team, was Cliff House's heroine.

HAVING turned the whole school against her by her conduct, Diana Royston-Clarke is left to go her own way. But Diana doesn't care! The only one who would like to see Diana restored to popularity is her one-time friend, Margot Lantham. And despite the fact that Diana will have nothing to do with her, Margot determines to save her from the consequences of her folly

Cliff House, as the banner stated, was proud of her and her team which had won such valiant battles in the Lantham Cup—not only against school teams like themselves, but against all comers.

Never in the history of the school had a hockey competition excited such enthusiasm, such interest.

"And now," Clara said, "to practise. Fall in the team. Fall in everybody who'd like to help and form a scratch side. But—" And then she stopped as a tall, graceful, smiling figure came out of the School House, and Stella Stone, the admired captain of the school, touched her on the shoulder.

"Clara!"
Clara swung round.
"Oh, yes, Stella?"

"Dulcia Fairbrother asked me to tell you that if you like to bring your team over to our senior side in ten minutes, the first eleven will give you a scratch game. You see, we're all anxious, now that you've got so far in the competition, for you to win the final."

There was an excited nudging of arms. Barbara Redfern's eyes shone. Clara turned rosy red with pleasure, then quite pale with the pride that announcement provoked within her.

The Junior School to play the Sixth! Why, it was an unheard-of privilege!

"Oh, Stella, does Dulcia mean it?"
"Of course!"
"Then—then thanks!" gulped Clara.
"Oh, my goodness! We'll be there, never fear." And her face shone. "Fall in, the hockey team!" she cried. "Fall in to play the First Eleven. Where's Brenda Fallace?"

"Here!" shrieked Brenda.
"Joan Cartwright!"
"Here!"
"Leila Carroll?"

"Geo, I guess I'm here," Leila cried, her eyes shining.

"And Janet Jordan. Rosa Rodworth. Any Jones—"

"All present," Janet called cheerily.
"June Merrett, Margot Lantham, Barbara Redfern, Joan Charmant!"

"Present, except Margot Lantham," June Merrett returned brightly. "Margot's in her study, I think."

"Right-ho! Here—I say, Fatima, cut off and fetch her, will you? Tell Margot that she's wanted, we're playing the First. Tell her that she'll find us in the pavilion."

"Y-yes, rather!" gasped Bessie. "But I s-say, dud-d-don't you think I'd better take her place? After all, if you want to lick the Sixth—"

"Oh, push off, old chump!" Clara laughed good-naturedly, and gave Bessie a playful push.

Bessie glowered. Poor old Bessie, she would so have loved a share of the lime-light that was being focused upon Clara and the hockey team at the moment.

Bessie had no doubt about her ability to create a sensation if she was given her place in the hockey team. For the matter of that, no one else had, either. But Bessie's idea of a sensation and the rest of Cliff House's were somewhat at variance.

"But look here—" she protested.
"Bessie, don't argue!" Clara said. "You heard—obey!" Margot's was our star.

If it hadn't been for Margot—well, we should not have been where we are. Trot off like a good little roly-poly, and don't argue with Aunt Clara when she's busy. I'll give you a place in the team when we play the Second."

Bessie sniffed. She was offended. But still, there it was, she told herself. Clara, of course, was jealous of her hockey, and the next best thing to being in the team was to do things for the

team. And even Bessie admitted that there was something in that contention.

For Margot Lantham, the new girl, who had arrived at the beginning of the term with Diana Royston-Clarke, had certainly proved herself a tower of strength to the Cliff House Junior Team, and had, moreover, secured the bulk of the goals which had led them to the final of the cup which her popular father, Lord Lantham, had put up for competition.

Up the stairs she rolled, along the Fourth Form corridor, and knocked upon the door of Study No. 6.

Margot Lantham's sweet voice bade her "come in!"

Bessie went in. Margot was reading a letter, a rather worried frown between her eyes. She smiled up at the fat girl, however.

"Yes, Bessie?"
"Clara told me to tell you," Bessie said, and delivered her message. "The match is on Senior Side in ten minutes' time."

"Thank you, Bessie."
Bessie lingered, however.
"A letter, Margot?"
"Yes, old thing!"

"From your pater?"
"Yes," Margot frowned.

"Oh, I say, how ripping! Your pater sends you heaps of postal orders, doesn't he? I mean, being rich, and all that. Ahem! As a matter of fact you know, I was expecting a letter, too, by this afternoon's post, from my titled uncle, Lord Dilwiter de Bunter."

"Meaning," Margot guessed, with a smile, "that you've been disappointed in a postal order, Bessie? Well, I can lend you a shilling, and here it is. Tell Clara I'll be along as soon as ever I've seen Diana."

Bessie blinked.
"What are you seeing Diana for?"
"Oh, nothing!"

"Well, she's practically in Coventry, you know," Bessie said warningly.
"Yes, Bessie, I know!" Margot's voice was a little impatient, however.

"Do go."
Bessie went, closing the door after her. Margot bit her lip a little, and her eyes went to the letter again.

It was, as she said, from her father. But there was a line in it which troubled her.

"And I do hope, Margot, that you and Diana are still remaining good friends. I know that Diana can be a difficult girl at times, but I am sure your understanding of her is sufficient to overcome any of those more unruly traits she might display at Cliff House School. She is a capricious creature, but at heart she is fine gold, a staunch friend!"

There was more in that strain—much more. Lord Lantham did so admire Diana. And so, as a matter of fact, did Margot. But the Diana she had known before she had come to Cliff House, the stormy firebrand who had earned the displeasure of the whole school by endeavouring to keep Clara Trevlin out of the last match against Claremont—ah, what two utterly different girls they were!

Likeable, lovable the one; stormy, tempestuous, wanting her own way the other. Margot had been amazed. Not even yet could she reconcile the two Diana's.

And yet, at the bottom of her heart, the old affection for her firebrand friend was still there. She could not forget those many good turns Diana had done for her in the past.

Unruly she might be, but withal there was much in her to be admired; so much that made her a girl different from

all others, that Margot now felt churlish for ever having doubted her.

It had been decent of Diana to save her scapegrace cousin, Dora Keith, from expulsion at Courtfield School. It had been grand of Diana, a few days ago, to rescue her from the falling coping stone, when she might have courted serious injury herself by doing so.

It had been so generous of Diana, when, after accidentally spoiling Lucy Farraday's frock, she had given her one of her own, worth at least ten times as much as the damaged article. But—

Yes, those were her good points. Yet what about the bad?

Diana, hating Clara, bitterly antagonistic against Clara, had deliberately schemed to get her disgraced for the semi-final match, and had come within an ace of succeeding.

Diana, piqued because she had not been selected to play for Cliff House in the third round of the Lantham Cup, had played for Cliff House's opponents, Diana had, in the first place, turned against her.

"Oh, bother!" Margot said distressfully.

She rose, crushing the letter in her pocket. She must see Diana—she must. With the whole school against her, Diana needed a friend. Would she be a friend if she stood aside now? Diana was down—

"I'll see her!" Margot vowed. She hurried out. Along the corridor she went, knocking at the door of Study No. 10. An impatient voice rapped out "come in!"

Margot went in. Diana Royston-Clarke turned to meet her. Diana was dressed for going out. A beautiful mink coat was slung carelessly across her arm.

Margot's eyes widened.
"Diana, you're never going out?"
The Firebrand raised her brows.

"Your mistake, I am!"
"But you're rated!"

"Well, think I don't know that?" Diana laughed, almost contemptuously.

"But—but—" Margot stared in stupefaction. "But—"

"But—but—" Diana mocked.
"What a parrot you are! I'm gadding, yes! I'm going out! I may be expelled—but at what you are trying to tell me? Well, here's the answer to that one, too! I don't care!"

"Diana!"
"I don't care!" Diana retorted, almost violently. "I'm fed-up with Cliff House, Margot! They don't want me here! Well, I don't want them! I'm sick of obeying laws and irksome rules! In future I'm going my own way!"

Margot's face paled.
"But, Diana—"

"I'm going," Diana replied, a gleam in her eyes. "to have a good time! If my idea of a good time interferes with the rules, then I'm sorry for the rules, that's all! I make one slip. What happens? The whole school turns its silly back upon me. Girls nudge each other when I come into the Common-room. They turn their heads away when they meet me in the passages. They've given me a bad name. They mean it to stick."

"Right! It shall! While I've got the name, I'm going to have the game! And that's all that's a pace."

Margot felt back a pace.
Oh, great goodness, what was this? For a moment she felt afraid—desperately afraid.

Diana was in her most tempestuous humour, in her most recklessly headstrong frame of mind. She meant what

she said; she would do what she said! And then—

Sooner or later—expulsion! Sooner or later—disgrace! Once before she had been expelled.

"But Diana—" Margot jumped forward. In her sudden distress, she almost clutched at the Firebrand's arm. "Diana, please listen to me!" she cried distractedly. "You don't know what you're talking about! You don't! Are you mad? The whole school doesn't hate you."

"No?"
Again the sneer of contempt.
"Diana, it—it doesn't!" Margot gulped. "Oh, please don't look like that! The school is—is just punishing you for—trying to keep Clara out of the last match. They'll forget it, Di—
—you know they will! Please, Di, don't do anything mad! Don't get yourself expelled! It—it would break my heart!"

Diana looked queerly at her one-time friend.

"Yours?"
"Diana, you know it would!" Margot spoke as if the words were being forced out of her. "Di, listen, please! We were friends until we came here. We drifted apart. It was your fault—and mine, if you like. I saw in you such a different girl here from what I had known that I—I was taken by surprise. But Di, I can't forget the old friendship. I can't forget what we were to each other before we came here. I want to be friends again, Di. You want friends now, old thing. Won't you let me be your friend?"

Diana for a moment turned her face away, perhaps to hide the queer expression which passed over it. For a moment her heart softened; for a moment, in an overpowering rush, the old affection, the old tenderness for this girl swept back.

Friends, yes! There were times when she felt that she loved Margot.

"You mean you'll stand by me?" she asked.

"Di, yes!"

"Even though the rest of the school turns against me?"

"Of course! Di, don't go out! Don't go and get yourself into another bother!"

"Silly kid!" And then most amazingly Diana laughed. "All right! The pleading has it. I'll own that I've missed you. I'll own, if you like, I've been a beast! But—Oh, I don't know! It sickened me to see you hobnobbing with Clara Trevlyn and Barbara Redfern. I thought that when we came to Cliff House you and I were going to have such a ripping time. Babs & Co. are up against me. They always have been, and always will be, I suppose. But, you like them, don't you, Margot?"

"Yes!" Margot faltered.

"Better than me?"

"No, Diana! Of—of course not!"

Diana's face wrinkled into a grin.

"Then that's all right," she said.

"Now here we are." She tossed away her coat; threw her hat carelessly upon the settee. "Let's start again, Margot, shall we? You move back into this study—"

"Yes!" Margot said at once.

"Good!" Diana's face lightened. She

looked happy, carefree once again.

"That's it, old thing! Then I won't

break bounds. I'll be a good little girl.

But—"

Her face clouded again.

"Oh, yooks, that just reminds me!

I've got two hundred lines to do this

afternoon, in addition to my detention.

I didn't intend to do them, wasn't going

to do them—till you came in. Margot,

help me, there's a good kid!"

So like the old Diana, that—with that wistful appeal at the end of her speech! Margot for a moment felt a lump come into her throat, felt tears of happiness tremble upon her lids. In that moment she would have done anything for Diana. But before she could reply the door opened.

The face of Mabel Lynn, surrounded by its aureole of golden curls, looked in. She stared for a moment rather witheringly at Diana, then switched her gaze to Margot Lantham.

"Oh, Margot!"

Margot spun round.

"Yes!"

"Clara's waiting for you. Do buck

up, old thing!"

The door closed as Mabs went out.

Diana's eyes gleamed.

"Margot, you're not—"

Margot bit her lip

"Oh, great goodness!" she gulped.

"Di, I—I'll have to go and see Clara.

There's a practice match on—"

Diana's face hardened.

"Meaning," she suggested, "that you

won't help me with my lines? If that's

what your friendship's worth—"

"No, Di. Please don't misunder-

stand!" Margot said desperately. "I'll

come back—honestly, truly I will. I

won't be five minutes."

"All right!" Diana assented.

"You'll wait for me?" Margot ques-

tioned.

"Just." Diana returned, "five

minutes. If you're not back by that

time—"

She did not finish. But Margot knew

by the inflexible little shake of the head

which accompanied the words that

Diana would deem that she had put

Clara before her, and would, in that

event, consider this renewed offer of

friendship decidedly off!



Going Her Own Way

"WELL, where is she?"
"Why doesn't she come?"
Clara Trevlyn and the members of the Junior School hockey team were becoming impatient.

And small wonder! For every girl except Margot Lantham was ready now. Every girl, dressed and ready for the fray, was on Senior Side, where the First Eleven in all its strength, was gathered to meet them. But of Margot there was no sign.

Babs was looking anxious. The time for the game to begin was already past. The Sixth were lined up ready, looking rather impatiently across at the crowd of juniors.

The Sixth—rightly, perhaps, since it regarded itself as the cream of the school—had granted the Fourth a privilege in offering to give them a practice game, and the juniors, very conscious of that honour, were feeling a little resentful against this one girl who was holding up the game.

Dulcia Fairbrother, captain of games, strolled up to them.

"Well, you kids going to make a move?" she asked. "We're waiting."

"I know!" Clara shook her head.

"But we're waiting, too—for Margot Lantham. We've sent Mabel Lynn off

to fetch her, and it's silly to play the game without her, when she's our best

goal-getter. Ah, here is Mabs!"

Mabs, at that moment came flying across the turf. But Mabs was without Margot.

"Where is she, Mabs?" Babs asked.



THE ball skimmed from Babs' stick straight towards Margot—a perfect pass. But to everyone's amazement, Margot made no move to intercept it, did not attempt to score. What had come over the team's star player?

"I—I—" Mabs gasped. "Oh, my goodness, I'm winded! I found her at last in Diana's study."

"Diana's?" Clara's face became grim. "What's she doing in there?"
"I don't know!"
"Was she dressed for practise?"
"No!"

A groan burst from the team.
"Well, I'm sorry," Dulcia said. "But I can't keep the First hanging around all the afternoon. But—" she stared across the field. "This is Margot, isn't it?"

Margot it was, hurrying rather breathlessly.

"Margot, buck up!" Babs shouted.
"I'm sorry," Margot panted as she came up. "Oh, Clara—"
"Well, don't waste time in words. Buck up and get changed," Clara said. "The Sixth are waiting!"
"But—"

"Oh, goodness, come on!" And Clara seized her by the arm, propelling her towards the senior pavilion. "There, stick there—and a pair of pads. We shall be all right now, Dulcia," she called, as the games captain strolled back to her team. "Give us just two minutes."

"Well, buck up then," Dulcia answered.

"But Clara," Margot protested. "I—I came to tell you—"

"Never mind that. Here, Babs, pass me a pad—"

"But Clara—"

"Oh, rabbits! Come on."
Margot, breathless and bewildered, found herself pushed into a chair. Clara did not stand on ceremony. Almost roughly she grabbed up one leg, fastening a pad about the ankle, while Mabs grabbed the other. Babs found a stick and put it into her hand.

"Clara, listen—"

"We've done enough listening," Clara said. "How do you expect us to play the Sixth without you? And mind," she added, "you do your best. This is only a practice match, but we've got to show the Sixth that they can't have it all their own way. We're relying upon you."

Margot gulped.

"But let me explain," she panted.

"I can't play!"

"What?"

"I've promised Diana—"

Clara's eyes gleamed. From the field came a shout.

"Clara, buck up!"

"Diana," she said between her teeth, "is outside the pale, Margot. You've no business to be chummy with her now. The school comes first, doesn't it?"

"Y-yes!"

"Right! Then on the field you go. Coming, Dulcia."

And Margot, breathless, bewildered, found herself being tugged on to the pitch.

"Oh good gracious, what would Diana think of her now?"

Would she understand?

But there was no help for it. As Clara said, the school came first. Even Diana would admit that. Even Diana would understand. Her side wanted her, must have her. But Diana—

Diana—

The game commenced.

"Now, Margot, take it!" shrieked Juno Merrett as she passed from the wing.

But Margot was not looking out. Margot, distracted, never saw the ball, even though it skimmed towards her and, passing her, went on to Mary Buller, who struck it across the field with almost contemptuous ease.

"Margot, keep your wits about you," Clara called.

"Y-yes," stuttered Margot.

But she didn't. She couldn't. Un- easily she found her gaze wandering to the school, she found her mind not on the game but upon Diana, the girl to whom she had promised her friendship this afternoon, the girl who would inevitably, unless she were given a helping hand, get herself disgraced. She owed so much to Diana.

"Margot, look out!" shrieked Rosa Rodworth. "Oh, you muff!"

Margot crimsoned. She had missed again. Where was she? Where was the team? Up the other end the Sixth had carried the ball into the opponent's goalmouth. Grace Reeve scored, and great was the hullabaloo around the touchlines.

Margot gulped. She must do better. She must pull herself together!

But she couldn't. Her spirit seemed to have deserted her that afternoon. Her mind was on Diana; wilful, careless Diana, who, not understanding, might think she had let her down.

Time after time she muffed shots. Once she unwittingly turned a pass over to Dulcia, from which the Sixth scored a second time.

Clara was frantically worried.

"What's the matter with the chump? She's off colour."

Off colour Margot certainly seemed. It appeared that she could do nothing right. Heretofore she had been the mainstay of the attack. Now her efforts lacked sparkle, some of her passes would have disgraced Bessie Bunter.

That fire, that flashing verve to which the team were so accustomed, was missing.

Round the lines girls were murmuring. On this form, it was being said, the Junior team wouldn't beat the Third, never mind carry off the Lantham Cup final.

And certainly colour was given to that view when, five minutes after Babs, working hard, robbed Mary Buller of the ball, ran it up to the striking circle and passed.

Margot was there. If Babs had deliberately planned that movement she could not have executed it better.

With only the goalkeeper to beat, the shot should have been the easiest thing on earth.

The ball skimmed across the ground, straight for Margot's stick. Everybody

held their breath. And then—what a sigh, what a groan went up!

Margot, apparently, never even saw the ball until it had passed between her stick and her feet. Then it was too late.

"Margot, you duffer!" howled Clara Trevelyn.

Margot flushed crimson. Just before the end, making desperate efforts, Clara got through and passed to Barbara Redfern, who scored. But that was the only goal for Junior School against the four the First Eleven had put up against them.

The final whistle piped out at last. In a disconsolate, crestfallen group the team gathered in the centre of the field.

Dulcia Fairbrother, coming over, shook her head.

"Not a great performance," she said. "I'm afraid you'll have to do better on Saturday if you're going to win, Clara. The whole team wants waking up."

"Oh, we weren't playing, you know," Clara replied. "Saving ourselves up, you see."

Which, though it was the first lame excuse which came into the Tombo's head, was an unfortunate remark, which brought a frown to Dulcia's face.

"Hardly," she observed a little crushingly, "a compliment to us, Clara. Still, we've learned our lesson!"

And, leaving Clara started and crimson-faced, she walked quickly away.

FIVE, TEN, fifteen minutes! In Study No. 10 the frown upon the face of Diana Royston-Clarke grew blacker. For Margot, of course, had not returned!

Diana paced the room restlessly, thinking furious thoughts.

Nobody wanted her. Every girl, even those she had called friends, had turned against her.

That hurt. That wounded proud Diana, who so desperately wanted the limelight.

Well, she was going her own way. Margot obviously did not mean what she said. She had been a fool, she tempestuously told herself, to believe her. She had just been wasting her time.

Well, better Margot! She had fooled her once, but she wasn't going to fool her again!

Savagely she snatched up her coat. Before the glass she rammed her hat over her glossy, billowy mass of curls. From the drawer of the bureau she took her handbag. She peered into it to see if she had plenty of money, and, with a haughty shrug, quitted the study.

Down the stairs she went, into Big Hall. One or two girls stood there awaiting the afternoon post. They stared as she came down.

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Nancy Bell.

"Are you going out, Diana?"

"I am!" Diana shortly replied.

"But you're in bounds."

"The reason," Diana sneeringly informed her, "why I'm going out. If I weren't in bounds, I should probably be stopping at school. Now go and tell the headmistress, little sneak!"

And, impervious to the wondering looks of the other girls, she strode on.

Out of the school she went, in full view of the headmistress' window. Down the drive, walking just a little faster than usual, but by no means hurrying. It was as she was passing Senior Side that a thunderous roar reached her ears.

"Well played, Stella! Now, Margot, on her!"

Diana turned her head. And then her

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eyes flashed. She saw Margot there. Margot, the unhappiest girl on earth at that moment, who was striving desperately but unavailingly to make up for some of her past mistakes.

So that was Margot, was it! Margot, unable to refrain from hobnobbing with the Clara crowd. Margot playing the hockey practice she had promised to postpone.

Diana's lips curled in bitter scorn. There was a friend for you! She did not look again. She walked on.

She walked to Friarfield, and there, visiting the garage, she took a car to the Royal Restaurant, in Courtfield.

Haughtily she climbed out of the car, glanced languidly at the uniformed commissionaire who opened the door for her, and, with a proud toss of the head, marched into the restaurant.

Almost immediately she heard her name.

"Diana!"

Diana turned. Then her face lit up. "Why, Augusta! And you, Tina! Well, well!"

She laughed. Very beautiful and very attractive Diana looked when she laughed. The two girls she addressed, both much older than herself, and dressed even as she was, in rich furs, rose with cries of welcome.

"Sit down," Augusta said. "Have some tea. Waiter!" She snapped her fingers at one of the passing waiters. "Bring extra tea, please!" She leaned forward confidentially.

"Well, Di, fancy seeing you! It must be ages since we all met last!"

Ages it had been—at least, it had been nearly three months. Diana had met Augusta Lance and Tina Potten at the Cabaret Hotel, in Paris, during Christmas, where she had been spending a holiday.

Gay, reckless both girls were—careless spendthrifts who had simply adored being ordered about by Diana, even though she was younger. They were unfeignedly pleased to see her.

"We're here for a week," Tina said. "Living in the hotel. Father's away, you see. But when he comes back he's coming straight to Courtfield to fix up the details of some property he's buying, or something. But fancy meeting you! Oh, Di, it's too lovely!" And she laughed. "I hear you're at school now. Does that mean you can't come and make whoopee with us?"

"Why should it?" Diana asked.

"But won't you get expelled, or some thing?"

Diana laughed. "Do you think I'm afraid of being expelled?"

"Oh, my goodness!" Augusta shook her head. "Still the same old Diana," she chuckled. "Doesn't care a rap. Well, look here, old thing! Tina and I were planning a visit to the cinema when you came in. They've got a Hepburn picture on there this week, you know, and I simply adore Hepburn. Coming?"

Diana laughed. She thought of her detention. That she had already broken. To go to the cinema after tea meant that she would also have to report in after "gates."

She thought of the two hundred lines to be handed in to-night, lines which now would never get done.

Miss Primrose, she knew, would not be inclined to have mercy on her again. Too often she had taxed the headmistress' patience, flouted her authority.

Expulsion loomed before her, but Diana did not hesitate for a second. She laughed recklessly.

"I'm with you!" she said.



The Harm is Done

"MARGOT!"

Margot Lantham, hurrying off the field in front of the rest of the team, turned quickly as she heard her name.

"Wait a minute!" Babs ran after her. "Margot, old thing, what was the matter? Were you off-colour?"

Margot glanced at her queerly. "You mean—oh, the match!" she said. "Well, yes, I wasn't feeling myself. But—but—don't worry, Babs. I—I shall be all right on Saturday. I—I'm sorry for the awful mess I made of things; but—well—Babs, do excuse me now," she added, with a fleeting smile, and, without waiting for an answer, raced off towards the school as fast as her legs would carry her.

Babs stared after her, with a frown. Not like Margot, that. But the hockey she had served up that afternoon had not been like Margot, either.

Even Babs, liking the girl as she did, willing to go a very, very long way to find excuses for her, had had to admit to herself that Margot's hockey had been one of the poorest performances of the season, and she felt vaguely distressed.

Margot was off-colour. She didn't look well.

Clara joined her. Clara's face was like a thundercloud. Clara, so far, had said nothing to Margot, not wishing to upset her, but apparently she had been thinking heaps and heaps of things about Margot.

All the sunny joy had faded from the Tomboy's face. That carefree happiness which had so characterised her before the match, had completely vanished.

Clara had hoped, if not to beat the Sixth, to make a draw of the game. She had hoped, at least, to arouse the frenzy of the girls who had been watching round the ropes.

So far from that, the Sixth had inflicted a humiliating defeat upon the star team of the school. The play, uninspired, had provoked very little but grumbles. If Margot played like that on Saturday—

Now here was Margot running off, without even waiting to change her pads.

"What the dickens has come over the girl!" she said to Babs.

"She—she seemed worried," Babs said hesitantly.

Clara grimaced.

"Not half as much as I am. We're absolutely relying upon Margot. She played as if she didn't understand the game this afternoon. Never even seemed to be able to keep her eyes on the ball. Spotted her looking towards the school house all the time, as if she was expecting to see someone come out. And—My hat!" Clara suddenly stood stock-still. "Babs, she said something before the match about not wanting to play!"

"I heard!" Babs replied, biting her lip.

"Because she'd promised Diana. Babs, what did she promise Diana?"

But Babs worriedly shook her head.

Clara's eyes gleamed. Her mind had been set going on a train of thought now. Clara did not like Diana. She liked her still less since that desperate attempt of Diana's to exclude her—



WITH a contemptuous gesture Diana spurned Margot's outstretched hands. "Please mind your own business," she said loftily. "And don't follow me about."

Clara—from the last match against Clarence.

Clara suspected Diana, had always suspected her, and she saw in this—quite wrongly, as it happened—a new plot to wreck the final.

It would be like Diana, of course, to get hold of Margot—to worry her and make her unfit for the match.

"There's something on!" she said between her teeth. "Diana's playing some new catfish game. I'm going to get Margot. Come on, let's get these pads off!"

To the pavilion they returned. In a few moments the pads were off. Clara, followed by Babs and Rosa, reinforced now by Mabs and Leila, tramped grimly up the Fourth Form corridor.

She tapped at Study No. 5, and the quiet voice of Phyllis Howell bade her enter. But Phyllis looked blank when they asked for Margot.

"No," she said, "she's not in here."

"Come on, Study No. 10," Clara said. To Study No. 10 they went; but the study was empty. A pair of hockey pads lying on the chair showed that Margot had been there.

It was while they were staring in blank consternation at those pieces of evidence that Bessie Bunter rolled up the corridor.

"I sus-say, you girls—!" Clara asked savagely.

"Eh? Oh, really, Clara, I wish you wouldn't glare at me like that! You put me all in a flutter, you know. Yes, I have seen Margot running like anything down the drive. You see, I happened to be coming out of the tuck-shop—"

"Did she go through the gates?" Babs asked.

"Yes, of kik-course she went through the gates!"

The chums stared at each other. The same uneasy question was in each of their eyes. What had come over Margot?

But Margot, at that moment, was not thinking of Babs & Co. Margot was running down the lane towards Friardale. She knew now that Diana had gone out; and Margot, realising what trouble would await the heedless Firebrand if that absence was spotted, was intent upon finding her and bringing her back before it was too late.

Long acquaintance with Diana's habits gave her a shrewd idea as to the course the Firebrand would take, and, without hesitation, she made for the Friardale garage. The foreman met her.

"Miss Royston-Clarke? Why, yes!" he said. "She came in about an hour ago. Took the best car into Courtfield, she did. Told the driver to put her down at the Courtfield Restaurant. Anything wrong, miss?"

"Let me have a car," Margot said, white-lipped.

Oh, what a fool—what a headstrong fool Diana was! If she was caught—

Impatiently Margot beat time with her foot while she was in the car. After what seemed years to Margot, it pulled up at the Royal Restaurant.

In a flash Margot was out. Diana was well-known here, so was she herself. Breathlessly she ran up to the commissionaire.

"Oh, porter, have you seen Miss Royston-Clarke?"

"Why, Miss Lantham!" The man's face broke into a smile. "Yes, miss, I have that; but she's gone now. Left five minutes ago with two friends."

Margot felt desperate.

"You—you've no idea where she's gone?"

"Oh, yes, miss, I heard the order she gave to the driver quite clearly! They all went off to the Courtfield Palace Cinema."

Margot thanked him, and climbed back into the car.

Oh, what a fool Diana was, she told herself. And yet, could she blame her? It was she who was the fool, she told herself bitterly! She who had led Diana down. She had promised to come back to her. Had she gone back to her, Diana would never have played the truant like this. Diana felt that she had been fooled—had been made sport of. No, no, no!

But now, here the car was at the entrance to the glittering Palace Cinema, Courtfield's super cinema, and there—Margot could have cheered in her delight—was Diana, passing up the steps with two richly dressed girls.

Out of the car like a shot was Margot. Rocklessly she flung a ten-shilling note to the driver. Up the steps she darted, catching at her chum's arm.

"Diana!" Diana turned with a start. Her face became haughty.

"You!" she said, between her teeth.

"Diana—I want to tell you, please," Margot said desperately. "Diana, about this afternoon. Diana, don't go in!" she gasped. "Listen to me!"

But Diana gave a short, bitter laugh. Very deliberately she took the hand which Margot had laid upon her sleeve and contemptuously struck it down.

"Please," Diana said sneeringly, "mind your own business! And don't follow me about! I want to go in, and I'm going! Good-bye!"

And while Margot stared in stupefied consternation, she passed through the foyer.

"Diana!" Margot called.

But Diana did not turn.

Margot went white. She did not reason. It was her fault, her fault, she told herself bitterly. But Diana must come back! Not Margot to be easily thwarted, and, with some idea of saving Diana from the certain punishment she was courting, she dived into the theatre.

An attendant, however, barred her way.

"Ticket, miss, please!"

"But—"

"I'm sorry, you can't pass this barrier without a ticket!"

"Oh goodness!"

Impatiently Margot went back to the booking-office. She bought her ticket, and was admitted.

But when she reached the inside of the theatre it was dark, the big film having just started.

Despairing and dismayed, she gazed round for Diana, but of Diana there was no sign. And not until an hour and a half later—just when call-over bell at Cliff House was ringing—did she see her again.

By that time it was too late. The mischief was done!



Trouble For Two

"SHE'S gone!"

"After Diana?"

"Looks like it."

Clara, Babs, and Mabs gathered in Study No. 4 in a gloomy group.

Clara was worried. Her worst fears were now confirmed. Somehow, the

Firebrand had got Margot under her thumb again. Margot was making an utter duffer of herself. It was no business of Clara's, of course, if Margot decided to be friendly with Diana, even though Diana was held at the moment in such contempt by the rest of the Form. But it was Clara's business that Margot was cutting hockey.

She bit her lip.

"What's come over the idiot?" she asked, between her teeth. "She was all right yesterday. Why should she suddenly take it into her head to run after Diana?"

Babs shook her head.

"Well, they were friends, you know, and—"

"But they're not friends now."

"No; but—" Again Babs sighed.

"Oh, I don't know. But Margot always has had a soft spot in her heart for Diana. They were such chums before they came here. I suppose it's not easy for Margot to break away all at once. Still—"

"Still," Clara repeated, and dwelt upon the word, moodily frowning.

"Well, I'm fed-up!" she declared.

"Margot played like a novice this afternoon—against the Sixth, too! The Sixth will never give us another match, and you can't jolly well blame them!"

But what am I to do about the team? She burst out frantically. "I can't include Margot if she's going to keep this up."

"Why not wait?" Babs counselled.

"We'll have a talk to her when she comes in. She—"

And then she paused as a knock came at the door, calling "Come in!" Miss Primrose entered.

"Oh, Barbara!" she said. "Have you seen Margot?"

"No—at least, not since the match, Miss Primrose."

"You do not know where she has gone?"

"No, Miss Primrose."

"Oh!" she frowned. "It's a great pity," she said, "because Lord and Lady Lantham have just looked in, and wish to see her."

She turned to someone in the corridor. "I am sorry, Lord Lantham."

"I am sorry, too, for giving you this trouble," came a man's voice from the corridor. "But is that Miss Redfern and Miss Trevelyn? Perhaps you wouldn't mind, Miss Primrose, if I spoke to them?"

"Most certainly!"

"Thank you!" And Lord Lantham, grey-haired, gentlemanly, came in.

"How are you, girls? You say you do not know where Margot is?"

"No, Lord Lantham."

"A pity. Still, she didn't know I was coming. I just happened to be passing, and seeing her. Miss Primrose, please don't wait unless you want me. I will get Miss Redfern to show me out. Now which of you is Clara Trevelyn?"

"I am," Clara stated.

"Oh, you're the captain of the hockey team—eh?" Lord Lantham smiled.

"Heard a lot about you and Barbara here. Allow me to congratulate you on having got so far in the cup. The final comes off on Saturday, doesn't it—at Courtfield? Well, good luck! I shall be there—with Lady Lantham, to present the cup and the medals. Er—forgive this if it is an impertinent question, but Margot will be playing, of course?"

"Of course!" said Babs; but the faintest shadow crossed Clara's face.

"She will?" his lordship asked.

"Well, y-es," Clara said hesitantly.

JANE ALWAYS KEPT TO HERSELF

JANE had always been like that. She was well-liked, good at games, always ready to do a good turn—and yet there was something different about her.

Girls would have liked to be friends with her, but though she had lots of admirers not one could call herself a friend. None had ever been home to tea with her, none had played on her tennis court.

When Beryl Day had a new frock, she told everyone about it until they knew more about it than she did. Jane would listen, too, and be as pleased as the rest, but it would be by accident if they discovered that she also had one—and from the same shop, too.

Not many of the girls in the Fourth had maids at home. Beryl Day was very excited when her father got promotion, and they were to have one.

"Mother's going to get her a green and primrose uniform," she told the girls gathered round her before lessons. "D'you think it'll look nice?"

"Rather!"

The general verdict was that Beryl was lucky, and the interest in her mother's maid was enormous.

JUST LIKE JANE

"What's her name?" asked Pearl Charles. Beryl's brow furrowed.

"Oh, now let me see. April, May, or June or—now what other month is there?"

"Augustine?" suggested a laughing voice from among the listeners.

"Why, yes!" gasped Beryl. "How did you guess, Jane?"

"She used to be our maid—before we had to give her up," Jane explained. "And we used to call her Maynard—her surname."

A little silence fell on the group then. It seemed so funny that Jane should have heard all this talk—and yet this was the first time she had mentioned what she knew.

But that was Jane's way; and it seemed that it always would be. For Jane kept to herself even more in the weeks that followed, and only Beryl and a few other girls thought that perhaps there was some worry at home.

*Jane preferred to "walk alone"—
until one day she realised the
value of a bosom friend*

A SECRET WORRY

Jane certainly worked extra hard at her drawing. It was Beryl who said that it was probably because she was entering for the Fitzwilliam Award which entitled the winner of the local Exhibition to a year's Art training in London.

Beryl knew all about it, because her father had been secretary to Mr. Fitzwilliam, and Mr. Day was now on the committee of the Exhibition.

She would have liked to ask Jane how things were going, but somehow she didn't like to—Jane was so aloof. But she did notice that Jane didn't seem to have as much money to spend as before, and she felt sorry.



"What is the matter?"

"Oh, nu-nothing!" But—but—" Clara crimsoned. Clara hated to be driven into a corner. And how could she tell Margot's father, the donor of the cup, that she was seriously considering dropping Margot from the team altogether? "Well, we—we had a practice match this afternoon, and—and Margot wasn't on form," she said.

"Oh, nothing wrong? She's not ill?"—with a sharp look.

"I don't think so."

"Just a little staleness—eh?" His lordship beamed. "Perhaps a bit tired. Well—well, there's plenty of time. But I do want her to play, you know. Her mother and myself are looking forward to this match. Her mother, indeed, is quite excited. Clara, please do your best. I believe it would break her mother's heart if she did not turn out now."

So there was another problem which Babs & Co. must face. Margot, if only on her previous performance, had certainly earned her place. Lord Lantham, her father, was the man who had made the competition possible. Lord Lantham had appealed to them.

Plenty of time, he said—yes, four short days. But would Margot succeed in coming back to form during that time?

Long after he had gone they discussed it, Clara almost frantic. At last she stood up.

"Well, we've got to see it through," she said, between her teeth. "I don't pretend to understand what be is stinging Margot, but I jolly well do know that Diana is at the bottom of it. Margot's not ill. If only she gives

her mind to it she can play. And now, as we've practically promised Lord Lantham that she shall play, we'll make her stick it. Babs, we're going to take Margot Lantham in hand."

Babs' eyes were questioning. "We're jolly well going to make her practice!" Clara said, between her teeth. "We can't let her father down, and we can't let the school down. Something's got to go, and it isn't going to be him or the school. Diana's at the bottom of this. Diana's got to pay the piper. And I vote—"

But what Clara voted was never known, for at that moment the bell for call-over went.

TWO ABSENTEES there were at call-over. Diana Royston-Clarke and Margot Lantham.

Miss Charmant, who called the register, looked up sharply after the last name had been answered.

"Does anybody know where these two girls are?"

"No, Miss Charmant," Elsie Effingham replied.

"Very well!"

Miss Charmant looked rather worried, however. She did not like having to report girls of her Form, but the crime of being out of bounds after the gates were closed was a matter which was beyond her jurisdiction, and must be reported right away.

If any of you girls see either of them, tell them to report to Miss Primrose right away."

Call-over dismissed, the girls talked in muttered tones to each other. Where was Margot Lantham—the girl

All the entries for the Exhibition were in. Jane kept more to herself than ever, if that were possible. The Days' maid told them that Jane's father had invested all his money in an invention of his own that might mean wealth—or nothing. And Beryl admired Jane more than ever, and decided the whole family must be charming.

Jane and her family moved—and Jane didn't tell any of the girls in her class; she kept it to herself.

Then, just before the day of the Exhibition, Jane got tonsillitis. Beryl and the others were very sorry—but they cheered up when Beryl told them that Jane had won an award.

At Beryl's suggestion they clubbed together and sent her a telegram of congratulation. It was returned—marked unknown. At the same time Beryl's father told her that the letter notifying Jane of her success had also been returned.

BERYL TAKES A HAND

Beryl thought it was up to her to do something about it.

She went to the headmistress. The headmistress at once gave her Jane's new address, and off Beryl went.

Jane was still ill, but very pleased to see Beryl. Beryl's news was the most wonderful tonic she ever had.

"I've been worrying so terribly all the time," Jane confessed.

"You're an idiot," Beryl said bluntly. "If you'd only confide in others a bit more, you'd be tons happier, cause you're quite sweet, you know."

Jane nodded slowly, and Beryl squeezed her hand as she saw the film of tears in her eyes.

"Girls, I want you all to come to our house-warming," a laughing voice cried. It was Jane—a different Jane, even more charming. "Dad's invention was a marvellous success, so we've been able to take a bigger house again. And—and the Days have very kindly given Augustine back to us!"

She turned and affectionately pulled Beryl's hair.

"Well, it's only fair," said Beryl. "We shall need a maid in a service flat, and Jane can always help when she comes," she finished with a laugh.

"What a friend!" Jane teased, and they walked off arm in arm.

upon whom all their hopes depended for the cup next Saturday?

Rumour linked her name with Diana's. The fact that both were absent gave colour to that rumour. Clara was more bitter than ever.

"It's Diana. Diana is keeping her away," she said.

Quite a crowd—Babs, Mabs, Clara and Marjorie Hazeldene among them—remained in Big Hall after the dismissal. Babs, keenly concerned, went to the window and peered out.

Outside a wind blew ceaselessly, and a fine cold rain beat upon the panes.

Then suddenly a light gleamed in the drive. The door was pushed open. Margot Lantham, accompanied by Piper, the porter, stood there.

Immediately a rush was made towards Margot. Margot, standing there, drenched to the skin, her face white and miserable, a handkerchief in her hand which she dabbed to her nose.

Clara groaned.

"Oh, my hat! What's the matter with you? Got a cold?"

"Oh, it's—it's nothing!" Margot said.

"Nothing?" Clara waved a hand. "Ye gods and little fishes!" she cried.

"Nothing! And here I'm wanting you, as fit as ever you can be for the final on Saturday! Where have you been?"

"To—to Courtfield," Margot stuttered.

"With Diana?"

Margot did not reply.

"Where's Diana?"

"Oh, I don't know!" Margot said irritably, and sneezed. "Please don't bother me now," she said weakly, "I've got to go and see Miss Primrose."

She strode off, leaving the girls looking askance at each other.

Clara seemed on the verge of tearing her hair. Everybody was looking surprised and anxious. Nobody judged Margot for breaking bounds, but the cold obviously the result of a long walk through the rain, was a matter, they felt, which concerned every one of them, seeing that Margot was the star performer for Saturday's match.

There were shakings of heads as weakly she strode off towards the stairs, a concerted breaking up. Then suddenly the door opened again.

"Voicks, everybody!" cried a cheerful voice.

And there, to everybody's astonishment, stood Diana Royston-Clarke, the Firebrand of the Fourth.

Diana, with a smile on her lips, with her furs huddled about her, a blush in her pretty cheeks, the old reckless light in her eyes.

Diana, the girl who was supposed to be in detention, reckless, carefree as ever. Looking, in fact, as if she had just come in from the tuckshop.

"Well, here we are!" she chuckled. "A bit late, but better late than never—what? Don't look pleased to see me," she added disdainfully, and paused as Clara strode towards her. "Dear, dear! What now?" she asked mockingly. "I do believe Clara is going to speak to me!"

Clara's eyes narrowed. "What have you been doing to Margot?" she demanded.

Margot? "Margot?" Diana shook her head. "Oh, Margot Lantham! Well, what a question! What should I have been doing to Margot?"

"You've been out with her."

"Your mistake, cleverstick! I haven't."

"Then how—"

"Please, de-ear," Diana answered, "don't ask questions. Then, you see, I shan't be tempted to tell you fibs. Margot's business is her own. My business is mine. It's not my fault she was in the Courtfield Cinema when I was in there. I didn't ask her to be there. Ahem! Here comes the Bull!"

The Bull, otherwise Miss Bullivant, duty mistress for the day, was bearing down upon them. She stared at the cheerful Firebrand as if she could not believe her eyes.

"Diana, you have just come in?"

"Yes, Miss Bullivant," Diana answered sweetly.

"You have been out?"

"If," Diana replied innocently, "I've just come in I must have been out, mustn't I?"

There was a gasp from the girls. The nerve of Diana! Miss Bullivant's sallow cheeks turned pink.

"Diana, I regard your attitude as offensive. You will take fifty lines for daring to make a joke of my question. You know, of course, that you were detained this afternoon?"

"Oh, perfectly, Miss Bullivant," Diana answered, without turning a hair.

"You also, had an imposition of two hundred lines, due in before call-over this evening."

"Yes, Miss Bullivant, I know that, too, but by some oversight I've forgotten them."

Again the girls gasped. They looked at Diana as though she was some strange being from another world. That anybody should have the cool cheek to make such a suggestion to the Bull—

Diana, however, seemed not a whit put out. She looked, in fact, as if she were really enjoying herself.

Miss Bullivant's eyes glinted. "Diana, that is enough!" she said.

"I shall report your insolence to Miss Primrose. You will come with me."

"Yes, Miss Bullivant," Diana answered meekly, and with a wink to the room, swaggered after the mistress as angrily she led the way to Miss Primrose's quarters.



Not Wanted Now

NOT until they were undressing in the Fourth Form dormitory, preparatory to retiring for the night, did Babs & Co. see either of the delinquents again. Then Margot came in, her face rather wan, and sniffing miserably.

"What happened?" Babs asked. Margot shrugged.

"Miss Primrose gave me a reprimand and a hundred lines."

"And jolly lucky for you!" Clara snorted. "How's the cold?"

"Oh, not so bad," Margot answered listlessly, and went to her bed.

But she flung round next moment as the door opened again and Diana, one big, beaming smile, came in.

"Well, well, and what not!" she cried. "Fancy, now! To-morrow is a whole holiday, isn't it? And your own Diana gated for the whole of it. Too bad! And rather awkward, too, you see, because I've promised a couple of old friends of mine that I'd spend to-morrow with them, Barbara, you're the oracle of the Form, what would you do in a position like mine?"

"Stop playing the fool!" Babs returned shortly.

"Meaning, of course, that you'd like me to stop in and do the detention?"

Babs shrugged. "I don't care what you do. If you're not asking for expulsion, though—"

"But it clashes with my own plans," Diana pouted.

"Oh, shut up!" growled Clara, climbing into bed.

"Dear, sweet Clara!" Diana mocked. "Always the last word in solace—what? Well, well, rules were made to be broken, you know, and, much as I regret it, I'm afraid that detention will have to go to pot. Too tough! But there you are!"

Margot bit her lip. "Diana, you'll never break bounds again!"

Diana grinned. "Wait and see," she answered serenely.

"But—"

"The station is now closing down," Diana answered, mimicking a radio announcer's voice. "Good-night! Good-night!"

She climbed into bed. Margot, too, climbed into bed. But not to sleep. Her cold worried her a bit, and she was anxious, too, on Diana's account. She had let Diana down. She had tried that evening to make it up to Diana. She had followed her into the cinema, hoping to tackle her when the lights went up; but when the lights went up Diana was not to be seen, Diana and her friends having crept out during the film, which, unfortunately Diana had already seen in London, months ago.

That effort to save Diana had failed.

But Margot still blamed herself. It was her fault—her fault, she told herself bitterly. Diana, the Firebrand, the reckless, the daring! Diana stick-at-nothing was in her most difficult mood now!

She said that she didn't care. She meant it! Only would she commence to care when she was disgraced, and cast out of Cliff House for ever!

Diana was living for the moment and the good times the moment brought with it. Only when it was too late would she repent.

Margot saw that. It was a vision that filled her with distress and foreboding. At heart Diana was still her friend. Diana had always been her friend, even though recently there had been strife between them.

All that Diana needed now was a friend—a real, staunch friend, who would turn her from the reckless path she was so bent upon treading; who would win her away from that more evil self which had her in its possession.

She was the friend! Of all the girls in Cliff House, she was the one and only who could turn Diana from her purpose. Her duty was plain.

She awoke heavy and red-eyed, with a cold, next morning, to find Diana's bed already empty.

In a flutter, Margot dressed. Oh, how heavy her head felt! She sneezed as she bent over the washstand, and looked apprehensively towards Clara's bed. But neither Clara nor Babs was in the dorm at that moment, having gone with the rest of the team for an early-morning dip.

In feverish haste Margot dressed and hurried downstairs. It was as she passed the landing window that she started.

For in the drive, in the act of disappearing through the gates, was Diana.

"Diana!" she breathed.

Down the stairs and into the quadrangle Margot flew.

"Diana!" she gasped.

But Diana was gone. Not until she reached the gates did she see her. Diana then was two hundred yards or more along the road which led to Friarale. Again Margot called out:

"Diana!"

Diana laughed. There was a tantalising "come and catch me if you can" expression in her face as she looked back. Then suddenly she crossed the road and disappeared into Friarale Woods.

Almost Margot was tempted to let her go. But her sense of duty urged her on.

Along the road she ran, scanning the bank where Diana had left the road, and seeing her flying figure through the trees, blundered blindly off the path to take the shortest cut.

Squelch! And suddenly it seemed to Margot the ground gave way under her. A clammy tentacle seemed to have twined itself round her foot, dragging her down, down, down! She let out one terrified shriek.

"Oh, Diana! Help! Help!"

Diana, having guessed Margot's purpose, bent on leading her a mischievous dance, turned.

Her face turned a little pale. Margot had one foot stuck in the bog now. She was caught by one leg almost to her knee. Diana's breath left her lips in a little hiss. Gone in a moment all thoughts of her own pleasure, her own mischief. Like the wind she ran.

"Margot, you silly duffer!"

"Diana!"

"Give me your hand!" Diana yelled. "Now, hold tight, grip your teeth! I'm going to pull!" And, gripping Margot's outstretched hand with both her own, she braced herself, pulling fiercely.

"Now," she yelled, "lift your foot!"
 "I—I can't!"

"Again!"
 Again! Margot bit her lip. She had never realized that Diana was so strong. Grimly, fiercely, Diana hung on, pulling, pulling, her heels buried in the soft turf beneath the pocket of marsh.

Then suddenly there was a sucking sound, and Margot lurched forward, her legs covered in dark, sticky slime, and shoeless. But free—free at last!

"Oh, Diana!" she moaned.
 "Now, old thing!" Diana grunted.
 "Yoicks, I'm puffed! Perhaps that'll teach you not to follow me wherever I go. If you got both feet in that little lot, goodness knows what might have happened! Why didn't you stick to the path?"

"Because I—I— Oh, Diana!"
 "And look at you, coming out on a morning like this, with such a cold!" Diana shook her head. "But here, let's dry that foot!"
 "It—it's all right, Di."

"Let me dry it!" Diana insisted.
 She had her own way. She always did get her own way. Off came Margot's stocking; with the beautiful white silk scarf she wore, Diana dried the foot, reducing the scarf to a sticky, mud-stained rag.

Then very deliberately she turned aside, took off one of her own stockings and one of her shoes. Very deliberately she rolled the stocking, and then, keenly, looked up.

"Come on, give me that foot! You're going to wear this shoe and this stocking. Oh, don't thank me! I'm not doing this because I like it! But you've got a cold, and I haven't. If you walk back to Cliff House without a shoe and stocking, it might be the death of you!"

"But what are you going to do?"
 "I haven't got a cold," Diana said shortly. "And, thanks, anyway, for messing up my day!"

So the shoe and the stocking were donned, and Diana, one foot bare, walked back with her to Cliff House School.

Margot tried several times to thank her, but the indifference with which Diana met the overtures was not encouraging.

But, oh, Diana was splendid! Even in her recklessness, her rebelliousness, wasn't this just like the Firebrand? Diana could so easily have left Margot to her fate.

They reached the school just as rising-bell was ringing out. Up the drive Diana limped, Margot at her side. At the top she paused.

"Diana—"
 "Well?"
 "Di, can't we—we be friends? You've been so frightfully nice to me!" Diana's eyes gleamed.

"As for that," she retorted, "it's no more than I'd have done for anyone else. As for the other—no, Margot! You fooled me once! You're not going to fool me again! If you'd come back from the match the other day, everything would have been all right. When I have a friend," she added, with stinging contempt, "I want a friend I can rely on—one who will stand by her promises! You didn't! That's all!"

Margot felt her heart breaking.
 "But, Diana—"
 "Rabbits!" Diana snapped, and limped off into the school.

QUIVERING, LIPS trembling, Margot gazed after her. Oh, Diana—Diana! What a queer mixture of good and bad she was! What a mixture of nobleness and folly!

Diana despised her! Yet, in spite of that, Diana had dragged her out of the marsh, had deliberately risked a cold by depriving herself of her own shoe!

Those were the sort of traits in her character to which Margot could never be blind—which made her long to help Diana—which made her more desperately than ever want to be her friend. She wouldn't let Diana be expelled—she wouldn't!

For a moment she paused, then, with a sigh, she went on up the stairs. She looked into Study No. 10, but Diana was not there, having gone upstairs to the dorm to change into other shoes and stockings.

Margot paused a moment at the door, a sudden thought striking her. Supposing—supposing she put her things back into Study No. 10?

Once she had shared a study with Diana. Diana had liked it. Would Diana take it as proof of her sincerity if she did that unknown to her?

Margot made up her mind. Back to Study No. 6 she raced. There she found her books. She carried them in. Now the stool. That went in.

Five times she hurried back and forth, each time returning with an armful of her belongings.

It was on the sixth journey, while staggering along under a pile of papers and albums and other literature, that Clara, Rosa Rodworth, and Janet Jordan came up the corridor.

Clara stared.
 "Hallo! What are you doing, Margot?"
 Margot gasped.
 "I'm moving," she said.
 "Where?"

"Into Study No. 10."
 Clara's face suddenly set.
 "Oh!" she said flatly. But it was obvious that the arrangement found no approval in her eyes. "Chums again?" she asked.

Margot bit her lip.
 "Please," she begged, "do—excuse me!" And she pushed past them, staggering into Study No. 10 and dropping her luggage on the floor by the window.

With a laugh on her lips she straightened up, and then, happening to glance through that window, became rigid.
 For treading the drive was Diana—fully dressed, sauntering carelessly towards the gates.

Diana was going out again!
 Margot's lips set. A look of pain came into her face. Once more she jumped for the door. Downstairs she flew, almost colliding at the bottom of the steps with Babs, Mabs, and Leila Carroll, who stood talking there in a group.

Babs swung round.
 "Margot, what on earth! Where are you rushing off to?"
 "Diana!" gasped Margot.
 "You're not going after her again?"
 "I am! Please—please let me go!"
 Margot panted, and stopped as Babs & Co. surrounded her.

"Margot," Babs said, "don't be a goose! Diana doesn't want you. There's a hockey practice on in ten minutes, and you're wanted. Besides, you should be indoors nursing that cold of yours." She took the other's arm.

"Now, Margot—please," she begged.
 But Margot struggled.
 "Please, I must go!"
 "No, you mustn't!" Babs said, her grip tightening. "Don't make a goose of yourself, old girl. Diana doesn't want you—she's shown that!"
 "But—but supposing she's expelled?"



IN utter dismay Margot gazed at the pile of her belongings, with its cruel notice. So Diana had turned her out of the study. Diana didn't want to be friends!

"That's her own look-out. She's jolly well asking for it, anyway. Now, come on. Mabs, grab her other arm!"

And Margot, weakly resisting, but helpless in the grip of those two girls, was dragged upstairs.

BUT IN the subsequent hockey practice Margot still failed to reveal her old form. Anxiety for Diana, her cold, the general wretchedness of her mental condition, made concentration upon the game impossible.

Diana was just asking for trouble! Diana was not only asking to get expelled; she was practically forcing Miss Primrose to expel her.

Margot groaned.

But had she known it, she need not have worried. Diana had gone no farther than the tuckshop, having missed her appointment with her Court-field friends.

Margot did not see her when she returned, though Diana paused for a moment with a careless smile upon her face to watch the hockey practice in progress, and just in time to see Margot miff a shot which simply asked to be hit.

Again the practice was not a success. Margot, if anything, was more feeble than yesterday. When practice had been in progress half an hour, Clara Trevlyn came over to her.

Clara's face was so worried that it was almost harsh.

"Margot," she said, "what's the matter?"

"I—I'm not feeling quite myself."

"Your cold," Clara asked, "or Diana?"

Margot did not reply.

"Because," Clara went on, "you're playing rottenly. The best thing you can do is to go and lie down. Babs, you might see her up to the study, will you?"

Babs nodded. Margot, by that time, had neither the energy nor the will-power to resist, but her heart lightened. There might—even now—be a chance of saving Diana!

Together the two reached the Fourth Form corridor. Babs, with Margot's arm in hers, made towards Study No. 6, but Margot shook her head.

"No, Babs, not there. Study No. 10. I'm back with Diana now, you know."

She missed the wondering stare which the captain of the Fourth levelled at her. With some vague hope in her heart that Diana might have returned—as indeed she had—she hurried up the corridor to Study No. 10.

And then suddenly she stood as if transfixed, her face turning the colour of ashes. Something like a moan came to her lips.

For in the corridor, piled against the wall, was a collection of miscellaneous articles she recognised as her own things, which she had carted into Study No. 10 that morning.

And on them was a sheet of paper containing the words:

"PLEASE RETURN TO STUDY NO. 6.—DIANA ROYSTON-CLARKE."



In Friardale Woods

PALE the moonbeams which slanted through the diamond panes of the Fourth Form dormitory at eleven o'clock that night, revealing the two lines of beds placed foot

to foot, in which thirty-two girls slept soundly.

Or rather, in which thirty-two girls should have been sleeping soundly. One of them was awake.

That girl was Diana Royston-Clarke. Diana now rose from her bed, a smile on her lips. She had spent the day indoors, but that had not prevented her ringing up Augusta and Tina, and making an appointment for a dance at Courtfield for to-night.

She hadn't done her detention tasks, though she had thought about them.

Reckless, defiant, she didn't mean to do them. Margot apparently she had snubbed for ever, for not since she had put her belongings outside had Margot approached her.

Diana felt a bit of a cat about that. But it was Margot's own fault, she told herself. There were times, thinking over the past, when she felt the same old yearning tenderness for Margot—when she would have given a lot to have wiped out all those obstacles which had come between them, and made it up.

But always her pride, stiffened by the dislike of Clara Trevlyn and Barbara Redfern & Co., had come like a wall to shut out those good impulses.

Clara was her enemy. Margot had deserted her in favour of her enemy. There could be no reconciliation after that.

Meantime—Diana shrugged. Meantime, she had no use for Cliff House. She didn't care very much if she were out of it. She was just going her own way, and if in the end she was expelled—well, what did it matter?

She rose now, hastily, making no sound as she dressed.

A few beds away Margot Lantham sat up.

"Diana!" she breathed.

"Go to sleep," Diana whispered.

"But—"

Margot compressed her lips. After her humiliation of the morning she had resolved, once and for all, to have nothing further to do with Diana. Let Diana go her own way, Babs had advised, and Margot, surrendering to the impossibility of saving a girl who seemed bent upon her own destruction, had for a space agreed.

But during the day—a day which she had spent nursing the cold she had contracted through following Diana the other night—those visions, those dreams, that sense of having betrayed Diana, had come to haunt her.

Again that incident when Diana had risked a cold herself, by giving her her shoe and stocking. Oh, Margot's head ached with it. But she couldn't desert her—she couldn't!

She set her lips.

"Diana!"

"Quiet!" Diana said, and padded towards the door.

Just a moment more Margot hesitated. She was humiliating herself; she was making a fool of herself, she knew. Diana scorned her, but if Diana was caught—No, she couldn't let her go! She rose, dressing cautiously.

Meantime Diana, creeping down the stairs, let herself out of the lobby window and tiptoed across the quad into Lane's Field. She reached the road leading to Friardale, when the flashing beams of a car appeared over the hill. Diana paused.

"Hallo, who's this?" she asked herself.

Sheer instinct made her crouch in the hedge. The car came on.

Then suddenly it stopped in front of the gates of Cliff House, and two figures

alighted. One was Miss Primrose, the other Miss Bullivant. Diana heard Miss Primrose's voice.

"Jenkins, put out the lights, please. I am expecting Miss Everett in a quarter of an hour. We will wait in the car."

Diana pouted. That didn't sound very good. To get to Friardale Lane she would have to pass that car, and to pass it with Primmy inside was rather like snatching the dinner out of the mouth of a hungry lion.

Apart from that, it had started to rain. The alternative—to stand hiding there in the drizzle for a quarter of an hour.

Both Miss Everett, whoever she was! One of Primmy's bridge-playing friends, she guessed.

Well! Diana shrugged. She wasn't so keen on the dance as to catch a cold for it. If she couldn't get along, Augusta and Tina would understand, and slipping back quietly, she found a gap in the hedge and scrambled through.

Silently she passed through the shrubbery, came to the lobby window, climbed in, and locked it behind her.

Meantime Margot, still unconscious of Diana's return, was crawling along the line of hedge that separated Lane's Field from the Cliff House playing fields on the Friardale Road.

She did not see the car, which was in darkness, as she reached the road and set off briskly towards it. But her feet made a clatter, clatter on the stones, and set Miss Primrose, inside the car, leaning forward.

"Jenkins, who is that? It sounds like a girl. Switch on the lights."

Immediately the lights blazed out. And immediately Margot, dazzled, stood still, one hand instinctively going up to shade her eyes. Then she gasped.

For upon her dazed ears came the sound of a car door opening and shutting, and Miss Primrose's scandalised voice crying:

"Margot! Margot Lantham! What are you doing here—at this time of night?"

"HALLO!"

"What the—"

"Who the dickens has turned the light up?"

A series of drowsy voices came from the occupants of the Fourth Form beds.

Barbara Redfern sat up with a jerk. Clara Trevlyn, in the next bed, opened her eyes.

Mabs, on the other side of Babs, muttered as she rubbed her eyes. And then everyone stared in the direction of the open door.

In a moment silence descended.

For through that doorway came a shamed, dejected figure, fully dressed, followed by Miss Primrose. The girl was Margot Lantham.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Clara. "What the dickens—"

"Margot, you will go to bed at once!" Miss Primrose's voice was icy. "Since you refuse to give me a satisfactory explanation why you were in the road at this time of night, you will remain within bounds until you come to your senses. I am sorry, if that interferes with the match on Saturday. But I must remind you that playing in the match is a privilege which is not meant for unruly sound-breakers. And please"—her eyes swept the dormitory at a matter went round—"silence, girls! Margot, hurry up and get into bed."

"Y-y-yes, Miss Primrose!" Margot said wretchedly.

She went to her bed. Very listlessly, following the wondering eyes of the dormitory, she undressed and crept between the sheets.

The lights went out. From Clara's bed came a fierce whisper:

"Margot, you silly duffer!"

From Margot's bed came a sound that was suspiciously like a sob.

"Margot! Oh, my hat!" Clara's voice was despairing. "What on earth have you done now? Why were you out?"

There came a chuckle from Diana.

"Following me, perhaps?"

"Margot, is that true?"

No answer.

"But—but—" Clara's voice was wild. "Oh, you cuckoo!" she almost panted. "Margot, what's the matter with you? Why on earth are you running around after Diana? What about the match? You know we're relying on you!"

Another sob.

Diana laughed again.

"Well, well, she will follow me about. I've warned her not to, and this is what comes of it."

"You mean," Babs asked, "that you were out of bounds?"

"I was," Diana chuckled. "But I didn't know Margot was following. I saw Primmie in the lane and hurried back, you see. I'm not quite ripe for expulsion yet—haven't broken enough of the merry old rules, and so on. Margot must have followed me and barged right into the old gorgon."

"And now I suppose you're going to own up to?" Clara asked.

"What? And save your silly match? Not likely! Of course, if Margot likes to sneak, she can—Here, who threw that?"

"I did!" Clara Trevlyn said sulkily.

Another chuckle answered her.

But Clara lay down in despair. Margot gazed! What hopes for the final now! The rest of the Form were glum, too.

If feeling against Diana Royston-Clarke had been bitter before, it was terribly bitter now. Many biting remarks were flung towards her in the darkness. But that made no difference to Diana. Nor, for the matter of that, did it to Margot.

On the morrow, when she saw Diana going out again, she followed in the hope of being able to put a stop to Diana's folly.

If it meant expulsion for herself, she was going to try to save her chum.

But Diana saw her. It was a misty morning. Diana, gleeful, mischievous, set out at once to lead Margot her usual dance. Once again she plunged into the woods. Once again Margot followed. But in the woods the mist was like fog. At times it was difficult to see two yards ahead.

"Diana!" she cried.

Diana laughed mockingly.

"Come and catch—"

The sentence died on her lips. For suddenly from under her feet the ground slipped. There was a rush of sliding earth, the tinkle of loose stones.

Diana flung back—too late! The soft ground gave beneath her. One high heel caught against a protruding root. She fell.

"Help!" shrieked Diana.

She felt herself falling helplessly through space. Frantically she tried to clutch at something that would stay her fall, but it was useless.

COLOUR at the NECKLINE

*A plain frock will take on a new
lease of life with fresh trimming
at the throat*

WHAT an amazing variety of trimmings can be made with a scarf! They can be worn over a coat or under a coat, tucked into the neck of a jersey or tied belt-like round the waist. They can be useful—but, above all, very decorative.

A plain frock that's just crying out for a spot of colour, will respond marvellously to a scarf at the neck.

You can wear it like a halter, like a sailor, like a Boy Scout—or like the picture here.

Cut two slots—one a little below the other—in the front of your plain frock that's going gay, and neatens off the edges of the slots with trim buttonhole-stitch.

Then slip a scarf around the neck, threading one end through one slot, and one end through the other.

EASILY REMOVABLE

No need to fasten them down at all, you'll find. So you can always remove the scarf with perfect ease for washing or pressing.

If you haven't an odd scarf that seems just destined for this purpose, a strip of wide ribbon will do just as well, you'll find.

You will very likely discover a remnant on any bargain counter that would be perfect—for you'll require seven-eighths of a yard. And this is a length that drapers simply love to get rid of, I've found.

But whether you use an old scarf or buy some new ribbon, I know you'll be pleased with the result—for it is one of those trimmings that just can't go wrong!



A moment later—crash! She was brought up with a sickening thud that seemed to jar every bone in her body, while a fierce pain seared her leg from ankle to hipbone.

Then blackness came and she knew no more until, hearing a sudden scrambling sound, she opened her eyes in time to see a body hurtling down towards her.

A second later Margot Lantham had crashed to the ground beside her, to lie there still and silent.



Atonement

"MARGOT!" Diana gasped. Margot did not answer. Diana blinked. She shuddered to think what might have happened to Margot—Margot, lying there—so inanimate, so dreadfully white. Perhaps with a bone broken. Perhaps already—

Diana almost shrieked. No, no no! Not that!

Margot had followed her. Margot, too, had come toppling over the edge of this awful cliff. Diana had been leading her on. This was the result. Margot, already detained through her, had risked another detention—had meant, Diana saw now, to face expulsion with her. Margot had tried to save her.

Something seemed to turn over inside Diana. She closed her eyes.

"Margot!" The name left her lips almost in a croak.

White, expressionless, Margot's face was turned towards the skies.

"Margot!" Diana made a move, and then she bit her lip to keep back the shriek of pain. Her leg! Oh, my goodness, what had happened to her leg? She couldn't move it. But Margot was lying there—

"And—and I've done this," Diana thought. "I've done it."

She almost screamed in her distress. She saw herself suddenly as she was, the radiant, adventurous, mischievous, making Firebrand, whom this girl, her chum, had tried to save. Margot—

Diana set her lips. In that moment it seemed that everything that had come between her and Margot dropped into insignificance. Surely—surely Margot had atoned. Surely—but it was she who was the cat, she the beast! If she had known—

Supporting her weight on her hands she dragged herself forward. Oh, this leg—this leg! Every move was agony, every move made her feel faint.

She gritted her teeth. Inch by inch she reached Margot, inch by inch drew nearer. Now, almost on the verge of collapse, she had drawn close up to her.

There came to the Firebrand's eyes tears of pain, of remorse. At last, hardly breathing, she put her cheek to Margot's lips. And then her heart leapt.

"Thank goodness!" she breathed. Never in her life had Diana felt more thankful for anything than for that. But she must get help—she must get help!

She sent her voice echoing into the quarry. "Help! Help! Help!"

No answer.

Again she shouted. No reply. Margot was still unconscious.

Diana set her teeth. It dawned upon her that the only aid could come from herself. Groaning, she raised herself to her feet. Her leg—her leg! She could have screamed with the pain.

But she gritted her teeth. Thank goodness she could stand.

With a great effort she bent, and with all her strength managed to raise Margot to her feet. The girl was a dead weight in her arms, but desperation lent Diana added strength, and she managed to support the other by clutching her beneath the armpits.

There was a path twenty yards away which ran tortuously up the face of the quarry. A step at a time, each step a



WHEN AUNTY COMES TO STAY

—There are so many things the schoolgirl daughter of the house can do to make her visit even more enjoyable

RUN along to the railway station and make inquiries about the most convenient trains that aunty can catch. And if you live some way from the station—see that the bus fits in, too. This will save mother time, and aunty will certainly appreciate it.

ASK mother to be sure to send your love when she writes making the final arrangements. It's so nice for a guest to think that even the youngest members of the family are looking forward to seeing her.

IF mother hasn't time, suggest that you go along to meet aunty. Even if mother is going—and aunty doesn't arrive in school hours—snatch off the time to accompany her.

SOME bright spring flowers in aunty's bed-room would look very welcoming—and this is something you can do. They need not be expensive to look pretty. Clever arranging will work wonders with just twopennyworth, you'll find.

SEE that the family inkpot has some ink in it before aunty comes. She's sure to want to "drop a card," and it would never do if you discover all the ink's evaporated and it's early closing day!

IF aunt is a shivery person, fold an extra blanket over the chair or the rail of her bed just for the first night. It's dreadful to be cold in bed—and almost impossible to get up in the night and demand more bedclothes.

perfect agony, Diana, clutching her burden, moved.

One, two, three feet—another attack of reeling giddiness. Then on again, sheer will-power urging her now.

She was at the foot of the cliff. Oh, goodness, goodness! How was she to get up it? But she must—she must!

Steeling herself to the ordeal, Diana started the climb.

MISS CHARMANT paused as once again she looked up from the register at assembly that morning.

"Does anyone," she asked puzzledly "know where Diana Royston-Clarke and Margot Lantham have gone?"

Up shot Bessie Bunter's hand.

WHEN you first meet aunty, whether it's on the station or at home, show her that you're really pleased to see her.

HELP to carry her bags from the station to the bus—and keep an eye on them during the journey, for she'll probably be busy talking to mother or admiring the scenery from the windows.

ONCE home, she and mother will have lots to talk about—so here's your opportunity to show them how nicely you can make tea. And will it be welcome!

TAKE aunty's cases up to her room, then leave her to have a little rest if she appears tired.

IN a final glance around make sure there are at least three hangers in the wardrobe, a towel and some soap on the washstand, and some water and a glass handy. An ashtray, too, should be on the dressing-table if she smokes.

WHEN you clean your school shoes in the morning clean aunty's as well; she'll be so pleased.

IF she is to have breakfast in bed, ask mother if you may take it up. Then you can say good-morning before you dash off to school. And tuck the daily paper on the tray, too, for her to read in snug comfort.

—THEN, when aunty's visit is over, not only will she be really sorry to go, but I shouldn't be at all surprised if she doesn't make it clear that she has one of the nicest nieces in the world—you!

"Pip-please, Miss Charmant, they've gone out!"

"Apparently!" Miss Charmant looked peeved. "But I want to know precisely where they have gone, Bessie. If you can shed any light upon that—"

"Yes, Miss Charmant, I can, you know," Bessie said eagerly. "I—was in the tuckshop before breakfast when Diana passed. Then Margot came running along after her. I shouted to Margot, because I wanted to borrow another shilling—I mum-mean Margot owed me a shilling—"

"Thank you, Bessie, that will be enough," Miss Charmant frowned again. Then she crossed over to Miss Primrose, who frowned angrily as she listened.

"These two girls have broken deten-

tion deliberately," she said. "Barbara, you have no idea where they have gone?"

"No, Miss Primrose!"

"Very well!" Miss Primrose's eyes gleamed. "Barbara, you will take five other girls, and you will go and search for them. When you find them, bring them back immediately. You understand!"

"Yes, Miss Primrose!"

There was a murmur of excitement then. Everybody stared at Babs. Where had Diana and Margot gone? was an exciting question. Who was to join the search-party to bring back the truants became even more the question of the moment.

After assembly Babs was besieged.

"Babs, let me come!"

"And me!"

"No, no, no!" Babs shook her head. "Clara, you'll come. And you, Mabs, Marjorie, you, too, please. And you, Leila. You, Jemima—that's the half-dozen, I think."

"Whoops!" Leila cried. "Which way do we go?"

Nobody, of course, had any idea of that. But Babs suggested Friarale, as that was the nearest village, and as it was also served with links of communication with Courtfield and the outlying districts.

In great glee the six got ready. In triumphant mood they sallied forth. Only Clara, however, was not rejoicing. Clara was despairing. This latest escapade, she declared, put the lid on it.

There would be no Margot for the match on Saturday now. That meant playing below strength.

"Well, where the dickens do you think they've gone?" Jemima asked. "Not in the woods," she added, with a glance at the mist-shrouded trees they were passing. "Hardly Diana to make in that direction."

"Hark!" said Leila Carroll.

"Eh?" exclaimed Marjorie.

"Listen! I guess I heard something in the woods."

They stood still, listening. Babs glanced at Clara, whose face was glum. Then, faint and far-off, came a cry.

"Anybody about?"

"My hat! Diana!" cried Mabs. Diana's voice it was!

Babs exchanged a quick glance with her chums.

"Come on!"

She was the first to clamber up the bank, the first to dart among the trees. She stopped.

"Diana!" she cried

A pause. Then, far-off and weak:

"Here!"

"Come on!" Babs cried. "In the direction of the quarry!"

The mist was thinning now. In parts, indeed, the wood was almost clear. Ahead they heard a faint, gasping cry. In a body they started forward. The twigs crackled underfoot, and Marjorie gave a shriek of consternation as her foot trod on one of the treacherous little pockets of marsh. Then:

"Diana!" cried Babs.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Margot!"

For a moment they stood staring incredulously at the sight that met their eyes. There, in front of them, was Diana, her face thin and drawn and dead-white with pain, her eyes half-closed.

Clinging to her, still dazed and obviously only half-conscious, was Margot Lantham.

"Diana!" Babs gasped.

She darted forward—not a second too soon. For Diana, with a gasping cry, tottered forward in a dead faint.

Mabs and Jemima were just in time to catch Margot as she fell from the other's nerveless arms.

FRIDAY!

The day before the match. Cliff House waited with impatience for the doctor's report on its two invalids.

Diana was the worst. Diana, with a small bone broken in her leg, was in the sanatorium.

Margot, suffering from shock, was with her, but it was known that she had made a marvellous recovery since she had re-entered Cliff House.

The story she had told, while astounding everyone, thrilled everyone—how Diana, with a broken ankle bone, had saved her at the bottom of the quarry; how, desperate, almost unconscious, she had struggled with her to the top of the cliff; how, as Babs & Co. appeared, her strength had given out at last.

But more than that. For Diana, repentant, remorseful, had told the

Lord and Lady Lantham, with her father sitting beside them.

She watched a good game, a well-conducted game. She watched it with sparkling eyes, carried away at times with excitement.

There was no denying that in her heart of hearts Diana longed to be playing in that game.

Every movement of the game she watched intently, imagining herself to be there on the field, telling herself what she would do with that pass, seeing a chance to score, longing for the feel of a hockey stick in her hand.

But it did not make her bitter. Diana was changed. No longer did she feel her old jealousy for Margot, or for Clara. She was content now to watch their triumph.

When Margot got the ball she cheered.

"Well played. Margot! Now—now!"

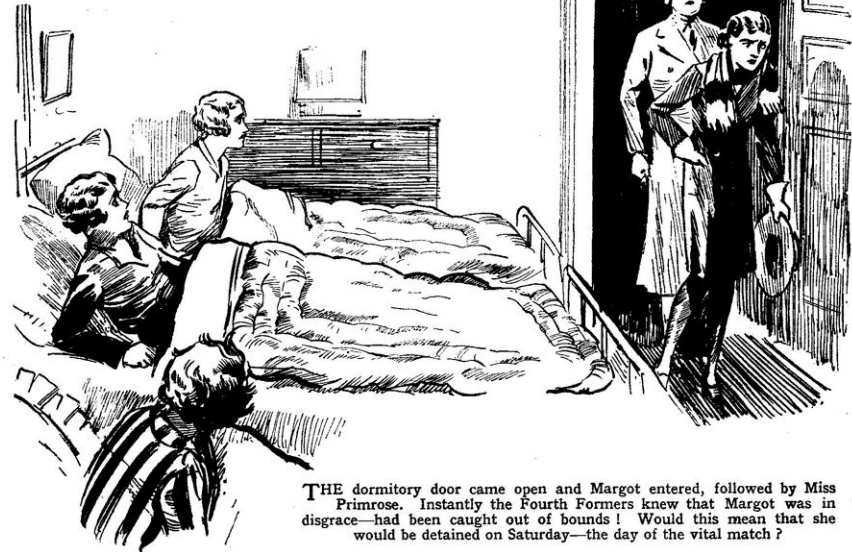
Clara passed first, flushing with pride as the medal was pinned on her tunic. Then Brenda Fallace, then Rosa Redworth, followed by Jean Cartwright and Barbara Redfern. The next was Margot.

Impulsively Diana rose "Lady Lantham," she asked. "Yes, Diana, my dear?" "Can—can I present this one?" "Why, certainly!"

So Diana took the medal, and as Margot came up, she leant forward.

Proudly, smilingly, she pinned it on Margot's tunic, and as she did so she whispered:

"Margot, is all forgiven?" "Oh, Diana!" "And forgotten?" "Diana, you know it is!" "And from now on we're chums again!"



THE dormitory door came open and Margot entered, followed by Miss Primrose. Instantly the Fourth Formers knew that Margot was in disgrace—had been caught out of bounds! Would this mean that she would be detained on Saturday—the day of the vital match?

whole truth to Miss Primrose. Miss Primrose, realising now that Margot had been trying to save Diana, pardoned her; and Diana, for her bravery and her pluck, was pardoned also.

But would Margot play? Babs & Co., with Clara among them, stood impatiently outside the sunny door as Dr. Longmore came out. There was an immediate surge in his direction.

"Doctor—"
"Will she play?"
The doctor smiled. Babs & Co. hung breathlessly upon his reply.

"Margot," he announced, "will be fit and well by to-morrow. She will be able to play."

"Hurrah!" cheered Clara impulsively. "But I am afraid the other—Miss Royston-Clarke—will not play hockey again this season!" he announced.

AND ON the morrow Margot did play. And Diana, with her foot done up in bandages, watched the match between

And Margot, hearing Diana's voice from the touchline, was spurred on to play as she had never played before. Oh, it was fine. Margot was thinking, to know that she and Diana were good chums once more, that never again would strife cause a rift in their friendship!

Diana was watching Margot's every move. She applauded generously every bit of brilliant play; she gave Clara a special cheer when the Tomboy, playing a magnificent game, almost scored.

And when at last Babs got through the opposing team's defence and scored the first goal for Cliff House her cheers were as loud as any.

But her delight knew no bounds when Margot secured the second, giving Cliff House the victory by the narrow margin of one.

What excitement there was then! Very gravely Lord Lantham rose to present the cup to the flushed and triumphant Clara. Lady Lantham rose to present the medals.

Margot flushed red.

"Of course!"
"Thank you!" Diana laughed. She shook Margot's hand. "There's not a thing in this world," she added gravely, "that gave me more pleasure than presenting you with that medal, Margot! Good luck, old thing! And"—with a smile—"may our friendship prosper!"

All of which was a queer little speech, meaningless to most of those who heard it. But Margot knew its significance, and she smiled.

Dear, dear Diana! Did this mean that in future she was to be the same admired and adored friend she had always known?

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

Full details of next Saturday's long complete Cliff House School story, the first of a new series featuring Gail Gregory and Janet Jordan, appear on the following page. Turn over now and read about next week's magnificent tale