

EVERY SCHOOLGIRL'S OWN PAPER

"DIANA
UNDEFEATED!"
Long Complete Cliff House
School Story Inside

THE SCHOOLGIRL

No. 281, Vol. 16
20th Century
JAN. 20th 1937

EVERY
2^D
SATURDAY

Incorporating
SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN



ONE FALSE STEP—

Read how Diana dodges detention, in this week's brilliant long complete Cliff House School story, entitled:

"DIANA UNDEFEATED!"

A Stirring Complete Story of Famous Cliff House School

Diana Undefeated!



BY
HILDA RICHARDS

A Choice of Pianists



"SINGING!" Mabel Lynn said thoughtfully. "You can sing, Babe?"

Barbara Redfern blinked. "But what?"

"And then," Mabel added, "I shall visit five others. Marcelle can sing; that's two. Miss Ellingham hasn't got a bad voice, neither has Marjorie—that's four. Then Rosa Redworth; that's five. But what," Mabel demanded, looking at the girls assembled in Study No. 4 in the Fourth Form corridor at Cliff House School—"am I going to do about No. 6? That's the question!"

Clara Trevlyn, the business Tomboy captain of games, sighed exasperatedly.

"The question is," she said, "what the deuce is biting you? What is all this about singing?"

Mabel laughed.

"Oh, sorry! Didn't I tell you? Primmy's idea—"

"The Head's?"

"Haven't you heard?" Mabel went on. "Primmy," she explained, referring to the august headmistress of Cliff House School, "has a friend. That friend is Professor Barrowby, professor of music and education at the European College of Music in London. This afternoon he's coming to see Primmy, and it's Primmy's idea to show him what singing talent we have at Cliff House by making half a dozen of the best singers in each Form give a vocal."

"Oh!" said Babe.

"And Primmy," Mabel finished, "has asked me to get out a list, as Miss Chastry, the music mistress, isn't here."

"Oh!" said Clara. And they stared. Bessie Dexter, the fourth occupant of the study, looked excited. Distinguished visitors to Cliff House were by no means uncommon, but a visitor of such caliber as Professor Barrowby, whose name was a byword in musical circles, was an event.

"But, look here, you know," Bessie began.

"And the question is," Mabel pursued, "who shall be the sixth girl? I've one in mind—"

"I should jolly well think you have!" Bessie cried.

"Well, I wasn't thinking of you, old Ben."

"Oh, pur-ree-ally, Mabel," Bessie warily glossed, "I don't see what you're worrying about at all. In fact," Bessie added, "I don't suppose why you want six singers when you've got me. Once the professor hears, can he just won't want to hear anybody else?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But—"

"Tipe down, Estima. If you don't, I shall get cross—like that. And the Tomboy playfully brought the flat of her hand down upon the top of the fat one's head, whereof Bessie, with a gasp, indignantly collapsed into the arm-chair.

"There's only one girl," Mabel said.

"And she," Babe decided, "is—Lily Walters!"

"Yes!"

Lily Walters, the waif from the slums of Courtfield, who, thanks to the generosity of the father of Diana Repton-Clarke, had lately joined Cliff House (from the Lanthorn Council School! They had heard Lily sing. A trifle illiterate and awkward she might be, a little awkward in her behavior, but there was no doubt that Lily Walters had one of the loveliest voices they had ever heard.

"Would she do it?" Mabel asked doubtfully.

For Lily Walters, at this moment, was not happy. Though she officially belonged to Study No. 4, she was very rarely in it.

Queer, sensitive girl that she was, Lily had not had a very pleasant time since she had arrived at Cliff House. Ties between her liking for Babe and her affection and loyalty for the stout Firstform of the Form, Diana Repton-Clarke, she could not make up her mind to do.

Diana claimed her, and Diana, that respect had some right, since she looked upon Lily as her protégée. On the other hand, Miss Primrose, because Diana had exercised an influence that was far from the best, had sternly forbidden the waif to have anything whatsoever to do with Diana.

THE powerful story of a girl who wouldn't give in—even though the whole School seemed to be against her

"Having," Clara grinned, "departed from Cliff House on a stretcher!"

"I suppose," Bessie said wistfully, "that's reason to be funny! Well, I just think it's silly! Everybody knows what a ripping voice I've got!"

Mabel smiled.

"But don't you see, Bessie mine, it's a singing voice I'm after! Voices aren't meant to rip things!"

"Where is she now?" Clara asked.
"In study No. 10, with Diana, most likely," Mike answered.

"Well, we'll see about it," Babe said.
"I'll go along and find her."

She went out, shaking her head a little. Really, Babe did feel rather wretched about Lily. She liked the girl immensely. She knew her capacity for affection and loyalty. She knew how Diana, having discovered that she had a voice, had arranged for her to have singing lessons with Professor Larkin at the Courtfield Opera House; how Diana, in order to get her away from Babe & Co., had staged a certain underhand trick to turn Lily's affections from Study No. 4 altogether.

That, up to a point, had succeeded. But Babe said full-will knew, indeed—that Lily liked her; that were it not for Diana, Lily would have been most happy to be friends. Diana was holding her back, however.

She tapped at the door of Study No. 10.

"Come in!" a voice said.
Babe stepped in. Diana Hoyston-Clarke, the Freshman of the Fourth, who normally shared that room with Margaret Lanthorn, was alone. She was sitting back in the easy-chair before the fire, her shapely legs crossed in the lines of silk stockings, resting on a ledge that was part of the decorative work of the mantel; a half-smoked cigarette between her fingers.
She turned her face as Babe came in—that attractive face framed in billowing, glowing blonde curls. A novel fitted across her features.

"Oh, it's you!" she said. "Close the door as you go out!"

Babe lit her lips.

"Diana—"

"I said, close the door!" Diana snapped.

Babe breathed heavily. She threw one look toward the room. Obviously Lily was not there, however. With a rather angry glance at the Freshman's disdainfully tilted head, she went out.

Up and down the corridor she searched, looking in study after study, but no Lily was to be found. Neither was she in the library or the music-room. Instinct took her to the dormitory.

And even as she was in the act of pushing open the door, she knew she had found the girl she sought. A strangled sob came to her ears, followed by a distraught, muttering voice.

"Oh, why can't they be friends! Why must Diana and Babe 'do each other'! It's my fault! Everybody's my fault. They were good enough friends before I came 'ere, and I—I've been and spoiled it all!"

Silently Babe opened the door; quietly stepped in.

Lily Walters was there. She did not look up at Babe's entry. She did not even hear. Face downwards, she was stretched across the bed, her thin shoulders heaving with sobs, her fingers convulsively clutching the folds of the pillow.

"Lily," Babe said softly, and touched her shoulder.

And at that Lily Walters jumped with a frightened start. Two brown eyes, bedewed with tears, looked passively into Babe's face.

"Oh!"
"Lily!" Babe sat on the edge of the bed. "Lily dear, please, please don't go upsetting yourself like this," she begged. "Lily, listen." And while Lily bit her lip, hiding her head, Babe put an arm round the quivering shoulders. "Lily, my dear—"

Instinctively she drew the despairing girl closer. What could she say? How to meet such grief as this!

Lily did not reply; she gave a sort of half-sigh.

"Oh, Barbara—"

"Lily," Babe said tenderly. "Lily, please don't cry, my dear! Oh, I'm so sorry, Lily, but you can't blame yourself! You mustn't blame yourself. It's not your fault."

"But, Barbara, Diana's done so much for me!"

"I know," Babe said soothingly.

"But, Diana—oh, well, don't it, Lily, you should know by now what sort of a girl she is! Why do you think she acted so?"

"Just as you call her the 'Freshman of the Farm'! Simply because she's always flaring up in these moods. Simply because, once she's set her mind on a thing, she'll just go through fire and water to get it, trampling everything and everybody under foot as she goes along. And, Lily, I don't hate her, you know. I never have hated her. In fact," Babe said, "there are a whole heap of things that I do like about Diana."

"Barbara, can't—can't you and Diana make it up!"

Babe sighed.
"Lily, you know I've tried. I'm still trying. But I'm afraid—with a shake of the head—"that it's no good. Until Diana comes to her senses again, she just insists on going by her own way."

"Mamma!" Lily fiercely gazed, "what she doesn't like you being in charge of me! Oh dear, I don't know. It—it's all so muddled at this big school! Oh, Barbara, what are I to do!"

"Just," Barbara smiled, "stop worrying your silly old head, and come with me. Things will straighten themselves out, you'll see!"

Good comfort, indeed! It didn't help Lily. But she washed her face, tidied her hair, and, looking a little brighter but still troubled and perplexed, went with Babe downstairs.

"Well, here we are," Mike said brightly, as they entered Study No. 4. "We've got something to ask you, Lily. This afternoon there's a fairly important singing master coming to the school—"

Lily's eyes showed alarm.



DIANA swept into the room, confronting Babe. "How dare you interfere!" she stormed. "I'm looking after Lily. I brought her to Cliff House—and unless I play for her at the concert she's not going to sing!"

Lily's lips quivered.
"And—and"—Babe got the words out with difficulty—"Lily, I do want you to forget it all," she said. "Do try to be happy here, dear. I know rotten things have happened. I—"

She paused. "Perhaps, Lily, even I haven't understood as I might have done, but I do now."
Lily looked at her. Wandering the look; affection in her eyes that betrayed it. Poor Lily, torn this way and that! Poor Lily, who really, in her heart, did so love Barbara, but found that affection so dreadfully at war with her fierce loyalty for the Freshman Diana. She said:

"Not Professor Larkin—" she asked.

"Not him, no! Somebody more famous! A real top-liner," Mike laughed. "A friend," she added approvingly. "of Miss Fitzmaurice's. We're getting a sort of team up in the Farm—a singing team to entertain the old professor, you know. We want you to be in it."

Lily's face flushed. In mentioning that word "team," Mike had struck the right note. Lily did so want to do the thing the Farm were doing.

"Oh, I—I'd like—" she began—and then stopped. "But—but, what about Diana? Will she mind?"

Hopeless the glance Mabe gave Babs. Clara snorted.

"I'm blessed if I see——" she began.

"No," Babs said, but with a warning look. "Why should Diana sing?" she asked. "It isn't interfering in any way with anything she wants to do. This is a Form matter——"

Lily paused.

"Then, then, can Diana play for me?" she asked. "Oh dear, I don't want to make trouble—but well, I would like Diana to play," she said. "I always felt, when Diana's at the piano, that I can sing my best, you know."

"But Lily, you know Miss Frimrose's voice."

"Yes, but—but——" Lily pointedly raised her head. "Oh, Barbara, wouldn't it be all right? Just for once? If—if you asked her, Frimrose? Please, she might take notice of you? Please, Barbara, do ask," she pleaded.

Babs sighed. There was no resisting that appeal. In any case she reflected, Miss Frimrose would not refuse, and if she succeeded—well, it might lead to a better understanding between herself and the Firebrand. She nodded.

"Very well, I'll try!" she said. "You'd better wait here, No." she added, "you come with me, Lily! Miss Frimrose might want to see you!"

Swiftly Lily rose to her feet. Clara and Mabe made a bow at each other as the two went out of the room. Up to the headmistress's study Babs went, Lily languidly following. She paced outside the door.

"Just wait," she said. "In case you're called." And as Lily, gulping, nodded, she knocked. Miss Frimrose invited "Come in," and Babs entered.

"Well Barbara!" the headmistress asked her with her kindly smile.

"I—I've come in, see you about the singing this afternoon," Babs said.

"Yes, Barbara! I hope Mabe has got the list out. And I should particularly like to see," Miss Frimrose said, every word meaning to the waiting Lily outside, "the new girl, Lily Walters, included. I hear she has a very nice voice."

"Yes, Miss Frimrose, that—that is what I came to see you about," Barbara started. "But—but I'm sure you'll understand, Lily would like to sing and really wants to sing. But there's the question of a pianist! You see—she wants Diana to play for her."

"Lily is—rather shy," Babs explained hurriedly, "and the only girl who has ever played to her singing is Diana. Rosten-Clarke, and—and—well——"

Lily's eyes glowed. Dear, dear Barbara! What a brick! What a sport she was! She hung tensely on the headmistress's reply.

"Then came Miss Frimrose's voice.

"Barbara, I am sorry!" Frigid, Miss Frimrose's tone. "I thought you understood the position regarding Diana Rosten-Clarke and Lily Walters! I refuse, utterly, to allow Diana to have anything to do with Lily. It is an unprincipled—surprised—that you, an captain, should even mention the matter! I am aware that Diana is a good pianist, but Peggy Preston of your Form, for instance, is equally good. Peggy must play, Barbara! Now go!"

And Babs, flushing, went to be met by a withal Lily in the passage outside. Lily took her arm.

"Oh, I'm sorry, Barbara! I—I didn't think she'd go for you like that! But you did your best, didn't you? I know! I need every word. Beams," Lily nodding observed, "as if she's got her knive into

Frime. But, I wish," with a sigh, "that she'd said 'Yes.'"

Babs bit her lip.

"Lily, I'm sorry!"

"But, it isn't your fault, is it?" Lily asked. "I mean, you've done your best. But, after she said she wanted me to sing, you know, you'd have thought she'd've given in that much." She sighed. "Oh dear, I—I suppose I can't back out, can I?"

Babs looked at her quickly.

"No, Lily, you can't! Not now. You heard what Frimrose said. She specially asked for you, and—and you've positively promised, you know. But come on," she added, brightly, "don't look so glum about it. Even Diana can't very well fly in the face of Miss Frimrose's orders. We'll go along and see Peggy Preston."

And without giving the wait further opportunity for voicing her doubts, she jabbed her off there and then to Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form passage. Peggy Preston, who shared that room with Pupilla Howell, looked up brightly as they came in.

"Oh, halo, Babs! And you, Lily!" she cried. "This is a pleasure! Come in, Lily! Diana a beauty!"

"No, thanks," Lily gulped shyly.

"Barbara, what is it?"

"Well, Babs laughed, "as the Form's most expert pianist——"

"Meaning me!" Peggy shook her head. "I decline! What about Diana?"

"Well, then, as the Form's second best!" Barbara laughed. And then, while Peggy listened, and while Lily remained, looking apparently indifferent and gaily about it all, Babs explained. "And so you see, Peggy, we'd like you to play for Lily while she sings. Will you?"

"And what," Peggy asked, "does Lily say about it?"

"Well, I—I'd be glad if you would," Lily said loyally. "Yes——" and then broke off as there was a sudden step behind her, and as a hand brushed against her sleeve, she spun round, confronting the scornful features and glittering eyes of Diana Rosten-Clarke.

"And why," Diana demanded, "should you prefer Peggy Preston's playing to mine, Lily Walters? Am I no longer good enough for you?"

The Humbling of Diana



LILY fell back. Her face turned a fiery red. Babs sang round. Peggy

cooched.

"Diana?" Babs cried.

"Thanks! Speak to me when I ask you!" Diana shortly returned. "At the moment I'm speaking to Lily. Oh, don't look scared, stupid! I heard everything you said as I came along the corridor. I've heard, too, all about the singing business, and I know, for some idiotic reason, you're anxious to be in it. But what's this about Peggy Preston playing for you?"

"Oh dear, Diana, it isn't my fault!"

"No. When I heard you asking her! I've played for you all the time, haven't I?" Diana scorned.

"Why aren't I good enough for you now?"

"Diana, please!" Babs begged.

"Let me explain. Miss Frimrose

says——"

The Firebrand's lips curled.

"Frimrose!" she cried. "Bringing

her into it again! I suppose——" with a sneer—"you just had to go and ask her permission! You would! If you'd said nothing about it, the question would never have arisen!"

"But——"

"Diana!" Lily cried.

"Be quiet!" Diana stormed. Her fiery temper betrayed itself in her burning cheeks. "It's been the same," she added furiously, "ever since Lily came to this school! If it hadn't been for you poking your nose in, things wouldn't be as they are now! Lily's mine! I brought her here; I discovered that she could sing. Because——" and here her chest heaved—"because I tried to give Lily her chance as a singer, you and Frimrose stood in my way. You tried to put Lily against me——"

"Diana, no!" Lily distractedly cried.

"Diana, you mustn't——"

"And I suppose you still think," Diana cried, "that you're going to keep on getting away with it! I'm the one who plays for Lily when she sings. Nobody else ever has done it, and nobody else is going to do it! Lily——violently she flung round on that girl——"you don't have to sing unless you want to——"

"But——" Oh dear!

"And unless I play for you, you're just going to refuse to sing!" Diana went on.

Lily choked.

"But——" Oh, Diana, please!" she begged. "Don't go up in the air like that! Barbara really is trying to do her best! Yes, she has," she added, as she saw the disbelieving curl of the Firebrand's lip. "And—and, Diana, I must sing—I've got to sing! Oh dear! I—I've promised now, and Miss Frimrose wants me to sing."

Diana strove.

"Yes, Diana, with Peggy Preston playing for you instead of me!"

"Oh, Diana! Oh, can it be managed any other way?"

Diana paused. Then her eyes seemed to flash.

"You—you little traitor!" she bitterly choked, and turned on her heel.

"Oh, Di——Diana!" Lily wailed.

But Diana, quivering, was stamping off down the corridor. Lily wailed, her face white, her eyes wide. Babs, with a cry, started forward. Angriely she ran after the Firebrand.

"Diana——"

She reached her, impulsively stretching out a detaining hand.

Diana halted; swung round. For a moment her thin-lipped face was transformed. Then——

Smack!

And while Babs staggered back, putting a dazed hand to her smarting face, the scolding Firebrand strove on to disappear into Study No. 18, with a crashing slam of the door which shook the whole corridor.

Lily quivered. For the first time in her life she felt angry. Angry with Diana—of all people!

She stood still for one moment, eyes glancing, then, as Babs turned back to Study No. 4, she swept towards Study No. 18. Flashed and angry of face, she pushed open the door of Diana's room, Diana, with a scowl, flung round.

"Diana," Lily burst out, "you ought to have done that!"

"Sh!"

"To Barbara, I mean! That wasn't fair!"

Diana's eyes goggled. In utter amazement, she stared. And then as she realized it—as it was borne upon her that this child of the drama was daring

to communicate with her—the blood ran up into her cheeks in a crimson tide. She fashed round.

"Why, you—" she began in a blaze of rage.

She was about to add: "Miserable little she!" But swiftly, instinctively she bit back the words. On the instant, in the very middle of that living degradation, her mood changed again. No temper! No ferocity! That wasn't the way to keep aside Lily's regard or her affection. Amazingly her hands dropped to her sides.

Lily, suddenly ascertain, blinked. "Lily—Diana shook her head—"I'm sorry! I'm a cat—a beast! I shouldn't have done that! I—I forgot myself. I—I wouldn't have done it if it hadn't been for you! Oh, Lily, if you only knew how wretched, how miserable I am—"

She sank down into a chair, covering her face with her hands, between the fingers of which she watched her victim. Lily, stoically unprepared, a little alarmed, stood stock still.

"But now—"
Diana's shoulders heaved.

"You're all against me!" she cried. "Yes, even you! I—I don't mind about Baba and the others, but you—yes, why do you think so?" Her head—"
"Because I've tried to do my best for you, I've got a bad name! Even you read on me in the end—"

"Oh howls!" Lily murmured. "I—I didn't mean it! Dad-Diana, don't carry on like that!"

"But it's true!" Diana's voice was almost a wail. "You don't like me any more!"

"But I do—I do!" Lily earnestly broke out, and trembled now, all her heart going out to this miserable girl.

"D-Diana, I—I'm sorry!" she gulped. "I am—I am! Diana, you know I like you! You know—hardly—I'd do anything for you! It—it wasn't my fault I promised to sing. It wasn't my fault Peggy Preston is playing for me. Diana, you know I want you to play—you know that I can't sing half as well when you don't play. Oh, Diana, you do believe that, don't you?"

Diana looked up.

"Dear Lily!" she murmured. "I'm sorry, kid! You're sure you do like me?"

Eagerly:
"Yes!"

"And—and you forgive me for what I did to Baba?"

"Oh, Diana, of course!"

"Then—then I'm happy!" she murmured, and felt a twinge of contempt pass through her at the trick she was playing. "And Lily," she whispered shyly, "I—I'd love to play for you, but—but as I can't, I—I don't mind now. Sing your best, Lily. Remember—"
with a misty smile—"I'm still paying for those lessons of yours, and I do so want you to become famous later on. But go now. You know, if you're ought talking to me, you'll get into awful trouble—"

"But—"
"No, not Go!"

She pushed her out—gently, sadly, but reluctant, went, stumbling off upon the corridor, her mind in a whirl. Oh, poor, poor Diana! What a misunderrated girl she was! How rotten for her! It wasn't her fault, after all! She had tried to do her best, but her methods were wrong. If only—if only Diana were playing!

That was her awful thought for the rest of that day. That was her thought when, during the afternoon in the



"YOU can't go out—you're detained!" Frances said grimly. Diana attempted to wrench herself free of the prefect's grasp. "Well, anyway, I'm going!" she panted. Unseen by the Firebrand, Miss Primrose approached.

music-room, she found herself in front of Professor Barrowby and Miss Primrose. A queer, excitable little man the professor, with his long white beard and the spectacles which seemed to hover, rather than sit, upon his aquiline nose.

Gettering, he had stood while Barbara Rollers, Elsie Ellingham, Marcella Biquet, Rosa Redworth, and Marjorie Elmshead had sung. So far he had spoken no word, however. Nervous Lily felt, dreading the hour of her ordeal. Almost panic-stricken was she when Miss Primrose suddenly ordered her on to the platform, and Peggy Preston took her seat at the piano.

A crowd of the Fourth were there, all demurely seated on the forms which were spread in front of the platform. As Lily nervously coughed, the door opened.

A girl with a billowy mass of blonde hair, brushed well back from the brows, wedged herself into a piano between Clara Trevelyan and Phyllis Howell.

Claire frowned.

"Lily!" she said.

"Little one!" Diana nodded. "Move up, will you?"

"Silence, please!" Miss Primrose said. "Now, Lily—this is Lily Walters," she explained to the professor. "Our latest newcomer. Lily, professor, has a very nice voice. Are you ready, Lily?"

"Y-yes!" Lily stammered.

But her eyes were not upon Miss Primrose, but upon Diana. Diana, catching the glance, mechanically shook her head. The opening bars rang on. Peggy panned, striking the note. Lily opened her mouth, starting a note halted. Miss Primrose angrily shook her head.

"No, Lily; pray start again!"

Lily crimsoned. Someone tittered. They started again; but again, as if magnetized, Lily's eyes went to Diana. Again Diana, a look on her face that suggested she was going to cry, averted her head. Tremblingly Lily started, faltered, and then completely broke down.

"Oh dear!" she gasped.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Clara. "I say, what's the matter with Lily?"

"Nothing's the matter with Lily," Diana answered. "It's that awful announcement! Who told Peggy she could play the piano?"

"Lily, start again!" Miss Primrose said, somewhat vexed.

Lily gulped. This time she shut her eyes, as though by that means she would shut out Diana's reproachful face. She went through it now, her voice gathering strength and sweetness. Perfectly, purely the notes came, stirring, thrilling, making more than one girl catch her breath. The song finished. There was a dead silence.

Diana sat spellbound like the rest, her cheeks suddenly flushed. That voice! That voice! She felt a lump in her throat. That was the voice that Professor Larkin, at the Courtfield Opera House, had promised would one day belong to great opera. That was the voice which set all her vain ambitions agog.

That was the voice which had given her that first staggering idea of "managing" Lily, of having her protégée trained, and then, when fame came to her, acting as her managers; of claiming before the world the honour of having brought Lily out; of being her hostess; playing for her; presenting her to Royalty and aristocracy.

That was the ambition for which she was fighting so fiercely now. Was she going to be robbed of that prize!

The Rival Nightingale



DIANA could almost have choked in the fury that possessed her. After all she had done, after all efforts on Lily's behalf, she was cast aside like this!

She went to her study. Dash them all! How she loathed them! She had paid for Lily's lessons. There were the thanks she got! That professor was going to take Lily in hand, was he? She no longer counted. And Lily— A gust of unrestrained anger swept over her. Lily, that little bewildered milk-ops, to stand there and let them get away with it like that!

She stared moodily through the window, and then irritably she leaned. Futilely, angrily she raised against everything and everyone until, feeling that she could remain cooped up no longer, she switched her hat, flung on her coat, and went out. Diana was confined to school boards, but Diana in her present mood cared nothing for that.

With no clear idea of where she was going or what she intended to do, fled only with a vague idea to get away from it all and think things out, she stamped through the gates, impatiently jumped on to the Courtfield bus, which happened to come along, and, to her own vague astonishment, found herself in that busy town half an hour later.

Bother it! What had she come here for!

Then she thought of Professor Larkin. She smiled grimly. Diana rather wanted to take it out of someone. Who that someone was didn't matter. It would give her a twinge of malicious satisfaction to inform Professor Larkin that there was no more fun for him, that Lily Walters, for whom he had prophesied such a glorious future, was being taken in hand by another professor, who intended to enter her for the diploma competition at his own Opera House.

The commissioner knew her. He related as she went in, beautifully tripping up the corridor. She tapped on the door of Professor Larkin's room, looked in, and then, hearing the strains of music from the hall, went in. Half-way up the corridor she passed, suddenly starting.

What was that!

A girl's voice had suddenly broken into song—a voice so sweet, so pure, and thrilling in tone that for one dizzy second Diana thought it must be the voice of Lily Walters herself.

But it wasn't. There was something—just a little something—that was different. All the same, the girl, whoever it was, had a really beautiful voice—a voice to thrill a voice, Diana thought, which compared very favourably with Lily's. Curiosity impelled her forward. At the continued doorway which gave on to the body of the hall she paused.

"Voilà!" she muttered.

She stood still, looking on with undying glowing eyes. On the stage a girl of Lily's age was standing. She held a sheet of music in her hands. It was she who was singing. The professor, at the piano, was playing. He stopped, however, directly he saw Diana.

"Miss Rayston-Clarke!" he gasped. "My dear Miss Rayston-Clarke! What a great pleasure it is that! Miss Smithson," he added coldly, "you may go!"

The girl on the stage pointed.

"But don't you want—"

"I am busy!" the professor snapped. "I have no more time! We will sing

them suddenly, spontaneously, there was an outbreak of clapping. The little professor was almost tripping in his excitement. His face was flushed.

"Wonderful—wonderful!" he cried. "The girl is a genius—a genius, Miss Professor! That voice—ah! Never in a girl of her age have I heard anything so wonderful. She will make a name—a great and glorious name! Miss Professor, she must be trained."

Lily stood amazed and tongue-tied. There was a buzzing among the girls. New the respect, almost awe, with which those assembled gazed upon the maid of Courtfield now. Back in a new flood came all those aims of Diana. She jumped to her feet.

"But she is being trained!" she cried. "I am having her trained!"

"What?"

"Diana," Miss Professor began severely, "please sit down!"

"But I'm not going to sit down!" Diana cried. "I mean—Oh, dash it! Please, no! Let me have my say!"

"I tell you I'm paying to have her trained. Professor Larkin, at the Opera House, is doing it for me! I claim—"

"Diana, sit down!"

"But, hear me—"

"Diana," Miss Professor said, "what you have done, or intend to do, no longer counts. You have shown yourself utterly unfitted to exercise any influence upon this girl. If you are interested in Lily, as you say, then she can still have her lessons with Professor Larkin; but not, as you doubtless hope, under your guidance. Now, please be quiet!"

Diana's eyes rounded.

"You mean, after all I've done—"

"I mean, Diana, that I do not consider you a fit associate for Lily."

"Diana turned dead white.

"I see!" she cried. "I'm not fit, eh? I'm fit enough to find out what she can do—to pay for her lessons! But I'm not fit even to sit down and play the piano for her! Well, what about the tid her!"

What about coaxing her? Lily, answer up. Who would you prefer to coach you, Peggy Freston or me?"

Lily looked scared. She caught Miss Professor's forbidding eye and stammered:

"Oh dear! I don't want to—"

Diana sneered bitterly.

"I see!" she cried. "You're turning on me!"

"That's enough!" Miss Professor cut in. "Diana, leave the room!"

"Right!" she said. "I'll leave, but—"

—with flashing spite—"please don't think I'm going to take this lying down. I've paid for Lily's lessons simply because I've wanted to help her! If I don't help her—well, then, those lessons are cancelled from this moment!"

There was a moment's deadly silence. The professor's heart! Miss Professor bit her lip. But before anyone could speak the professor stopped forward.

"Then in that case, Miss Professor, you must allow me," he said gravely.

"Such talent must not be lost to the world. With your permission I will myself take this girl in hand. At the end of the week, at the Courtfield Opera House, there is a Diploma Competition which I will prepare this girl for. If she can obtain the diploma, as she doubtless will, then that will entitle her to a year's free tuition at the European College, in London. After that—be struggled—"well, she should be a star!"

And while Lily went fast red, then white—while a ripple of lead clapping went up from the assembled Fourth Formers—Diana, with one bitter look, sick and humiliated at heart, turned on her heel.

it through again to-morrow, perhaps. Now, my dear Miss Rayston-Clarke—"

And, in his usual fawning, hand-washing way, he approached her.

"No, please, wait a minute!" Diana said. She looked sharply at the girl.

"I heard your voice," she commented. "I liked it. Who is Miss Smithson, professor?"

"She is one of our assistant dressers," the professor answered. "She has a nice voice. I get her sometimes to practice little pieces which I myself compose—as the one you heard as you came in."

"And," Diana asked, still eyeing the girl, who shifted a little beneath the scrutiny, "she is adopting singing as a profession?"

"My dear Miss Rayston-Clarke, no! How can she? You yourself have some idea of the expense involved in training the voice, and there are—ah, so many other considerations! Miss Smithson would like to sing, as your Lily Walters would like to sing. But when it is pay her fees and so on! It is not," the professor, feigningly surprised, "every girl who is fortunate enough to possess such a rich and charming voice as yourself, Miss Rayston-Clarke."

But Diana was not listening. She was not even conscious of the professor then. Her thoughts had taken a new and startling twist. Here, she was thinking, was a girl who might prove a formidable rival indeed to Lily Walters—here a girl who, if entered for that diploma, would give Lily a fight for it!

Lily was no longer her prestige. Lily had been taken out of her hands. That old idea, Barrowby, had provided a win for her in the diploma. Miss Professor expected her to win. Babs, Peggy Preston expected it. What a snook in the eye of somebody else was!

"Professor," she said quickly, "just a minute! I would like to hear Miss Smithson again. Do you mind if I play while she sings?"

"Why, Miss Rayston—"

"Please!" Diana said impatiently.

"Diana," the professor melted at once. Diana was an social lioness. Diana was the daughter of the Mayor of Lambeth, and, next to Lord and Lady Lambeth, the mayor was the most important local celebrity. Apart from that, he was rather overpowered by the magnetic personality of Diana.

And as, while Diana played, Christine Southon sang—delightfully her voice came, while the professor, listening, beat time. At Diana's suggestion, she sang "Come, Sing to Me," followed by "Hark, Hark, the Lark." That was enough. Diana's mind was made up then.

"Thank you, Christine!" she said.

"That was very, very sweet! Above! Perhaps," she added, "you would like to buy yourself some chocolates"—and pressed into the astounded and delighted Christine's hand a new half-grown.

"I'd like," she added, "to play for you again some time."

"Oh, miss, I wish you would!" Christine said sincerely. "I think you play best of all!"

"Thank you very much." Her face was bright with excitement now. Christine disappeared, while the professor congratulating his client unceremoniously. Diana turned radiantly.

"Professor," she asked, "is it able to enter that girl for the diploma contest?"

He looked amazed.

"Why, of course! But the money—"

"And you think, if she entered, she would beat Lily Walters?"

"But, my dear—"

"Answer me!" Diana snapped.

"Well, since you ask, I do not think

she would best Lily—no," he replied, nastily panted. "The girl has a wonderful voice, but she requires coaching."

"Then," Diana asked, "do you think you could coach her in the time?"

"But, my dear, the fees!"

"Oh, bother the fees! I'll pay those!" Diana said impatiently. "Now, listen, professor! I want you to go ahead. Get hold of that girl! Give her lessons! Give her everything! But," she cautioned, "don't tell her that I'm paying. Don't let her know until I tell you that I've got everything set up to do with it. You won't be asking anything more of Lily Walters—I'll tell you why in a minute—but from now until that contest takes place you've just got to work on that girl and give her everything you're good! She's got to best Lily Walters! You understand?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

"Well, you—no," the dazed professor murmured. "But—"

"And," Diana said, "when the contest comes off, I want to play for her. Arrange that, too, will you?"

her muff and handed it to the prefect. Sarah gave a jump.

"Diana, who gave you this?"

"Oh, Madame Judith!" Diana said.

"Hope it doesn't contain bad news, Sarah. I suppose"—maliciously—

"you'll be reporting me to Primary for breaking detention?"

"No rather rough, of course," Diana considered, "when I have to explain to Primary that I was detained by Madame Judith."

Sarah's face whitened.

"Diana, please!" she cried. "I—I had no intention of—of reporting you to Miss Peirson!"

"And—and, for goodness' sake," she got out, "please don't—don't say anything about this."

She drew the letter out, and finished as she read it. Something like a mean case stung her lips.

Diana stared curiously.

"What is it?"

"Oh, nothing!" Sarah muttered.

But Diana still stared. Strange, weird girl! But at the moment that need of hers changed again. Just that swift spasm on Sarah's face was enough to cause it. That quick, guilty, almost terrified start told Diana at once that she was in some scrape, and called all her wits to the surface.

She hardly knew why she did it—certainly not because she liked Sarah. But impulsively, responding to the need of the moment, she looked up.

"Sarah," she asked again; and the different note in her voice made Sarah stare, "what is it? Can I help?"

Sarah nervously rubbed her chin.

"No, no! It—it's money," she said.

"I—I owe Madame Judith two pounds. She—the threepence, if I don't pay, to come to the school."

"And you haven't got it?" Diana pressed.

"No!"

"Then! Rather nasty, isn't it?"

Diana paused. "I wonder, Sarah, if I might lend you two pounds? Just to help things out. You can pay me back when you've got it, of course. It's not a gift!" she added, with a touch of the old Diana. And before the bewildered and surprised Sarah could reply, she flicked open her bag and withdrew the two pounds in question. "There it is," she said.

"Oh, Diana, how can I thank you?"

"Just don't," Diana shrugged, and walked on, leaving Sarah feeling very much like some reprieved prisoner, and her own heart happier and lighter in consequence. Diana liked doing good turns.

But that lightning of heart was immediately effaced when, passing the music-room, the door came open, and into the passage, just in front of her, came Lily Walters and Peggy Preston—Peggy with a shawl of waste under her arm.

All those little demons of jealousy, all the rage she had felt earlier, bubbled up anew. Lily—her Lily—hunchbacking with this girl she now looked upon as her enemy! For the life of her she could not resist a sneer.

"Well, been getting some practice, Peggy Preston? I should think you need it, you know, if the stuff you gave this afternoon is the best you can do!"

Peggy hung round, Lily, noticing her benefactor for the first time, turned red, then white.

Peggy's eyes flashed.

"That's not very charitable, Diana!"

"No! Well, you should know," Diana returned contemptuously, "being so full of charity and kindness yourself. Charitable of you, wasn't it, to step in and collar the learner for something I'd started!"

Peggy's eyes glistened. She caught Diana's eye.

"Wait a minute!" she said thickly;

PREPARED was Diana, even if at times she experienced a qualm. Hatched was Diana, even if at times that excitement was tempered by a sharp reproach from her better self on the question of Lily Walters. She had looked for a weapon to hit back at her enemies, and, lo! here was the weapon put into her hands. Christine Knibbison, with training, should—and would—beat Lily Walters in the diploma contest next Saturday!

Jubilantly Diana stroled to catch the bus. She was hugging herself. What a nasty shock for those people who had sneered at her in her auditions concerning Lily! What a crow, what triumph for her, when those people who had taken Lily out of her guardianship were confounded by her new protégée!

With light foot Diana stepped on the bus which would take her back to Cliff House. There she twisted as she heard her own name. A woman in black stood behind her.

"Oh, Miss Clarke—"

"Rogston-Clarke!" Diana corrected, with an angry snarl.

"I'm sorry! Miss Rogston-Clarke," the woman smiled. "I am Madame Judith," she said.

"Oh, I know! The dressmaking woman!"

"Yes. I—I wonder, if you are going back to Cliff House, whether you would give Miss Sarah Harrigan this."

Diana eyed her curiously. Mechanically she took the mission, handed to her. She knew all about Madame Judith, though she had never had dealings with her herself. A steady sort of customer, she decided. A woman who made up dresses and things against orders for Cliff House School girls, who charged exorbitant prices and then entered these prices by threatening to take her bills to Miss Peirson. No use at all had Diana for her sort—but then, again, Diana had no need for unpopular Sarah. This, she guessed, was a bill. It would please her mother to get one over Sarah!

"All right, I'll take it," she said.

The bus rolled off. Half an hour later it dropped her outside the gates of Cliff House, and almost the first person Diana met was the prefect for whom she bore the letter. Sarah, who was day prefect for the day, bore down upon her with a snarl.

"Diana, you've been out!"

"Quite right!" Diana said coolly.

"Where have you been?"

"Oh, just collecting a bill for you!" the Prefect said earnestly, and, with official assurance, fished the letter from



QUICKLY, stealthily, Diana snatched up the music that Peggy would read for the concert and hid the sheets under the seat of the armchair. Perhaps, she thought maliciously, this would stop Peggy playing for Lily!

while Diana stood biting her lip.

"Diana, I want—"

"Let me go!" Diana cried furiously.

"You let her go!" an unexpected voice broke in. And Diana, turning, saw Sarah Harrigan striding up the corridor. "What is the meaning of this, Peggy Preston? I saw that! You deliberately picked a quarrel with Diana. Take a hundred lines!"

Peggy turned red.

"But I didn't—"

"Take two hundred lines!"

Peggy stood, trembling and furious.

"But—"

"Another word!" snapped Sarah. "And I'll give you a detention!"

"For which?" Diana asked meekly.

"Thanks! Prigblyingly nice of you, Sarah, to step in! Well, bye-bye, Peggy. Hope you enjoy your lines!"

And looking at Lily not at all, but with a laugh into Peggy's face, she tripped on a cushion, a window and towards Sarah. Good old Sarah! Her two words had been wanted.

She went into her study. She picked up the key, checking as she staid into the glowing coals. Then she turned as a knock came on the door.

"Come in!" she called out.

The door opened. Lily, her face working, stood there.

"Well!" Diana frowned a little fustled. "Oh, yes!" she scowled. "Come to tell me how well you're getting on with Peggy Preston?"

"Diana, no!" she cried. "Oh, dear, you know I'd rather have you playing for me than anyone; but Peggy—well, she's nice, and she's trying so hard. It wasn't like you to go for her like that!"

Diana purred. Some queer little turn she had got. Her first impulse, to flare up, was smothered as soon as it was born. Again she knew a stink. Again she felt small, mean, and paltry as she met the wide, appealing eyes that gazed at her. Impossible, impossible to be angry with Lily. Lily didn't understand. Lily couldn't help things.

She sighed, releasing once again into her injured innocent mood.

"Come in, kid!" she said. "I'm sorry! I suppose I was a beast, an usual, but—well, what would you do in my place? You see how it is! Everybody against me; everybody hating me. Even you!"

"Diana, no, no, no! I don't, nor never 'ave done!" Lily vehemently protested. "Diana, don't say that!"

"But it's true!" Diana asserted. "No, Lily, old thing, I'm not blaming you. But look at things as they are. Here you were happy with me in this study; now you're with Barbara Redfern, in here; and while she parades you as a future opera star—carrying on the work I left off—I'm just cast aside like some old shoe! You don't even stick up for me any more—"

There was a movement in the passage. A cough. Barbara looked into the room.

"Lily, tea's ready," she said.

Lily turned crimson. Diana smiled, as much as to say, "There, what did I tell you?"

"Lily," Babe said anxiously. "A my broke from the Courtfield girl."

"I don't want tea?"

"No, Lily."

"No, I don't!" Lily broke out. "I don't, I don't!" And then, most amazingly she broke down, most astoundingly she put her face into her hands and burst into tears. "I—don't want nothing," she blurted—"nothing! All I want is to get away from this school—to get away from everybody!" And, while Babe stared in dismay, she

turned, flinging herself into the corridor.

Babe gave Diana one sharp, searching glance, then drew the door to and followed her.

Diana Dares All



"SHELL, get it!" Diana told the professor says. "It was the next day at Cliff House School.

The scene was Study No. 4; the three girls present, Barbara Redfern, Mabel Lynn, and Peggy Preston. Peggy had just come from the music room, where she had been playing for Lily's latest singing lesson—Lily herself having gone off without saying where she was going. Peggy had been having a talk to the professor. That was the news she brought.

It was news that was received with jubilation by Babe and Diana, liking and loving Lily as they did, they were anxious to see her get on. If she was the diploma they would be sincerely sorry to lose her, but the dazzling prospect which the winning of the diploma opened for the wall stamped that as just a selfish thought. Music, obviously, was the career for which Lily was destined. In singing lay her future and her fate.

"There are," Peggy said, "about a dozen girls competing in the contest—all privileged singers, sponsored by some singing master or other. Professor Harrowsby himself is paying Lily's fees, and they run into goodness knows how many guineas. That shows how much confidence he has in her—"

And then she stopped as the door opened, and a pretty but menacing face looked in. A little silence fell.

"All the conspirators!" Diana Ruyton-Clarke's eyes lifted mockingly.

"Conspiring the chickens, as usual! Shouldn't it if I were you! They don't always come home to roost, you know! And, with a nervous grin, she went on, leaving the three wonderingly drawing.

Coolly she marched to Sarah Harrigan's room, where Sarah looked up as she entered and smiled. Diana smiled, too.

"O.K.," she asked. "All bright and smiling now—what?"

"Yes, thank you!" Sarah said.

"Good enough. I called to ask," Diana stated. "If I might have your permission to use the phone in the prelate's room."

"Why, yes, certainly!" Sarah said.

Diana smiled. Off she went. Going to be useful, Sarah, she thought, and strolled into the prelate's room, dialled the Courtfield Opera House, to find out how Christie Swithson was getting on. Professor Larkin's voice came back:

"Ah, Miss Ruyton-Clarke! My dear Miss Ruyton-Clarke, is that you? I take it you will not object to rehearsing some songs with Christie for the concert. Of course, my dear Miss Ruyton-Clarke, there is no need to let her know that you are actually financing her lessons, but to play with her now is very, very necessary. I am talking the first lesson this afternoon at three. Can you get there?"

"I can, and will," Diana promised.

And at two o'clock that afternoon she put on her hat and coat. At five past two, despite the fact that she was detained, she snatched hurriedly out of Big Hall, hastily drawing on her gloves. Frances Barrett, temporary captain of the school since Biella Moore's leaving, stopped her.

"Diana, you're not going out."

"Your mistake!" Diana scowled.

"You're detained."

"All the same, I'm going!"

Frances' lips came together. She put one hand upon the Firebrand's shoulder. Up rushed the colour into the Firebrand's face; glittering and vicious her eyes suddenly became. Instinctively her arm swept back. At the same moment there was a cry:

"Diana!"

And Diana, springing round, saw Miss Primmson, rushing upon the scene from the vestibule doorway which led to her private quarters. Now also, peering from the stairs, the half-covered face of Lily Waldron.

"Frances?" Miss Primmson came up.

"What is this?"

Frances looked grim.

"Diana," she said, "is determined to break detention! She was impudent. I told her to go back, and she refused."

"Indeed! Diana, what have you to say?"

Diana shrugged.

"Nothing."

"You will," Miss Primmson said, "return to your study immediately! If I have any more news someone from you, Diana, I shall expect you. And just," she added, "to make sure that the students in no further temptation, Frances, you will lock the door upon her, and keep the key until call-over. Take her away!"

And Diana, silent and furious, was led away. Across the Hall she walked, followed by the wide-staring eyes of Lily. Into her study she was thrust, and the door was locked upon her. Diana scowled.

"Clear!" she muttered.

She stooped across to the window and flung it open. Study No. 10 overlooked the Cloisters, beyond which was Lane's field. Outside the window ran a narrow ledge, ending twenty feet further along, in the coping which surrounded a loaded roof. Diana's eyes glinted.

No one was about.

Deliberately she climbed on the ledge. It was risky, perilous work, especially in places where the frost of last night still adhered to the stone-work. But Diana was not thinking of risks. She was thinking only of her determination to get to the Opera House. Inch by inch, hand clutching at the wall, she made her way. In safety she reached the roof, scowled over it, and then, with cautious result to her new made gloves, caught the coping's edge, and dropped into the cloisters. Breathlessly she rose, sent one quick glance round, and then ran for the safety of Lane's Field.

Just before three o'clock she reached the Opera House.

Plot Against Peggy!



TUESDAY, Wednesday, Thursday came and went.

Friday, the eve of the Diploma Competition which was to make or mar Lily Waldron's future, dawned.

The week had passed like a flash for Barbara Redfern & Co. It had passed like a flash to Peggy Preston; but it dragged on leaden wings for Lily Waldron, who, for the first time, found herself in the spotlight of the school's interest.

For the whole of Cliff House was talking of nothing but Lily Waldron now. Since Professor Harrowsby had given his verdict upon her singing Lily had been looked upon with new respect and new admiration. Even her old enemies, Lydia Crosswaind & Co., forebore to sneer and jibe now, for was not this the girl who might make Cliff House famous?



"I'm sorry," Diana answered Miss Primrose. "You wouldn't let me play when I wanted to—so I must refuse now!" Miss Primrose nodded. "Very well!" she said. "Then Lily's entry is cancelled!"

But Lily was not happy. She was worried about Diana. She was frightened for Diana. In her friendship for Babe she felt somewhat like a traitor towards Diana. She did so admire the Firebrand, was so utterly grateful to her, but she couldn't understand Diana in this strange, self-pitying mood of hers, when she seemed to be so recklessly heading for expulsion. And for some strange reason, these last few days, Diana seemed to be definitely avoiding her, to be keeping out of her way.

When she passed her in the corridor she went by with averted face and just a muttered word. When she ventured to peep into her study, Diana, on pretext of a protest coming along would hurriedly push her out. Strangely, again, Diana was not often to be seen during the afternoon or even in the evenings. The Farm said that Diana had a fit of spleen and was keeping to herself. But Lily knew the truth.

Diana was breaking bounds! That troubled Lily, too. She heard Miss Primrose's threat. Miss Primrose had very definitely promised to expel Diana.

When Diana went on these mysterious errands she did not know; nor, it seemed, did Diana ever give her the chance to ask. But Lily, loyal, kept her mouth closed.

But Diana, if Lily had only known, was off every afternoon to the Courtfield Opera House. There Diana played to Christine Smithson, while Christine sang.

Once or twice at Cliff House, Diana had passed to listen outside the music-room door to the sweet ball-hits tones of Lily Walters' singing and to Peggy Preston's playing; more than once she had asked herself if Christine Smithson was at home. After the Thursday practice she put the question direct to Professor Larkin.

He stroked his chin. "Well, I'm not sure," he said. "Christie is good. She has power in that voice of hers. She also has confidence, which Lily Walters does not possess. But I am still thinking"—he

shook his head—"that when the time comes it will be Lily and not Christie who will get the diploma! One cannot make a guess in a week, my dear Miss Royce-Clarke!"

Back to Cliff House that night Diana hung in willy willy. Lily had the better voice, had she? But Lily lacked confidence—as if she didn't know that! And yet— Here she wavered again. Once Lily started singing, once she had got fully into her stride, so to speak, she gave no indication of betraying nervousness there. Bother it! Were all her efforts to cover over Babe and Peggy Preston and the rest going to be in vain?

She reached Cliff House. In the cloak room she doffed her hat and coat. On all sides she heard girls talking about Lily's wonderful voice. Irritably she hung herself up to her own study—and then stopped. A pale-faced girl, looking a little plumper and a little healthier than when she had stepped into Cliff House a fortnight ago, rose to meet her.

"Lily," Diana said. "Oh, Diana, I—I hope you don't mind!" Lily gasped. "I just had to come and see you," and even in the midst of her wonderment Diana remarked the wall was speaking better and sweeter of those eyes which had so drooped. "Diana, I—I feel so miserably," she said. "Why haven't you been having anything to do with me?"

Diana shrugged. "What's the good? It only means having room, and—and I'm sick of room!"

"But, Diana, you—you've been breaking bounds. Oh, I know!" Lily cried. "No, Diana, I haven't said anything to anyone, but—but, oh dear, Diana, you know that if you've caught Miss Primrose will expel you, and—and I don't want you to be expelled! Diana, if you had to leave Cliff House I should leave, too."

A queer constriction came to Diana's heart. But she steeled herself.

"Well," she said, "you seem to be getting along very well without me."

"But, Diana—"

"Everybody's talking about you. You're thick enough now with Babe & Co., aren't you? You *will* said," Diana added bitterly, "that you could never sing to anybody else's playing but mine! But I've noticed you manage to rub along very nicely with Peggy Preston."

Lily's face showed despair. "But, Diana, oh, Diana, you know that I'd rather leave you," she said. "Peggy's nice. She does her best, but—but she's not as good as you. But how can I help it," she added miserably, "when Miss Primrose is always there! Diana, please, don't be hard—"

Again Diana steeled her heart against the sympathy which threatened to invade it. Only by hating Lily—spitting her—could she help to achieve her object—to make sure that Christine Smithson was that diploma on Saturday. It was Diana's plan to undermine Lily's confidence, to play upon Lily's fears, her affection, her loyalty. An anxious Lily, a Lily who felt she was misunderstood, was not going to be a happy Lily. And an unhappy Lily stood less chance of the diploma!

"It's no use pretending, Lily," she said now, with a forced tone of emotion. "You're through with me. You've no use for me any more. You'd be glad if I were expelled!"

She lifted her eyes, half expecting an outbreak from Lily. She was vaguely startled and disturbed at the saw Lily's face. Lily was rigid, as white as chalk, her eyes burning with some intensity, her lips quivering. No word she said. She turned on her heel.

"Lily?" Diana inquired, and here to the door.

But Lily did not heed. She went down the corridor. Diana, faintly alarmed herself now, watched her as she approached Study No. 4, the door of which suddenly flew open. A crowd of girls—Babe, Maba, Clara, Emma, Janet Jordan, and Peggy Preston—rushed out to meet her. A whoop went up.

"Here she is!"

"Lily, Miss Primrose wants you to sing in the music-room again!"

"Yes, rather! Come on, old thing!"

And crowding round Lily, they seized her arms. Again Lily did not speak. She allowed herself unresistingly to be led off to the music-room, where Professor Barrowsby and Miss Finrose were awaiting her. Miss Finrose smiled.

"Ah, here you are, Lily! As there is only one more practice before the contest the professor would like you to go through that last song again."

Lily stood stock-still. Her little face was crimsoned now.

"And who's playing?" she asked.

"Why, Peggy Preston, of course. You like Peggy—"

"Yes, I like Peggy all right," Lily blurted. "But I don't want her to play. I—I want Diana."

"What?"

"Well, you heard," a voice put in at the door, and there stood the Firebrand, her face flushed, the old half-woolung light in her eyes. "It's clear enough that—"

"Diana, leave this room!" Lily—

"I want Diana to play!" Lily persisted stubbornly.

"Good old Lily!" Diana ironically cheered.

"Diana, will you—this moment!" Miss Finrose cried angrily, and herself caught the triumphant Firebrand by the arm, herself pushed her through the door. "Now, Lily, what is this ridiculous idea—"

Lily faced her quiveringly.

"Well, I'm doing the singing," she said. "I can show my own pianist, can't I? And I want Diana!"

"My hat! Aren't we getting temperamental?" Professor Frost suggested, while Babe ~~stared~~ stared in consternation and dismay.

"Lily, I am sorry. You cannot have Diana. You know why. You are getting along very well with Peggy, my dear. The two of you form an ideal team. I don't know what Diana has been saying to you, but I do clearly perceive that she has been saying something. Lily, please do not start making a fuss at this juncture. The contest is to-morrow, and the professor has spent a great deal of money on you. We have all, indeed, taken a most tremendous amount of trouble. And it is all for your benefit," she added.

Lily gulped, wavering. Babe, shaking her head, came forward.

"Lily, please" she begged. "Was't you—for my sake?"

Lily, gulping, hung her head. That dash of rebellion, lit by Diana's glances, had spent itself.

"All—all right," she said hoarsely.

But, feeling vaguely treacherous towards Diana, all the same, she mumbled the claim—a rather van, forlorn little figure, bewildered and troubled by her own confusion.

But it was not a very successful practice, after all, and Diana, listening outside, frowned. As her as Lily was concerned, her subtle thought-out plot was succeeding, she felt. But Diana was not frowning yet.

Diana never did things by halves. She had shaken Lily's confidence, had made her feel more wretched and miserable than ever. But helping Lily was Peggy Preston. Right! Now she'd attend to Peggy, she vowed quietly.

Straightway she marched off to Sarah Harvigan's study. The priestess, checking impôts at her table, looked up as the Fourth Former entered.

"The other day, Sarah," Diana said, "I did you a good turn."

Sarah frowned.

"Yes. Well, I'm sorry I can't pay you back yet—"

"I've not come about that. I don't

want a button if you never pay me back. In fact," Diana said, "I never intended that you should pay me back. But I think—carefully—that one good turn deserves another, don't you?"

"Well, if I can—"

"You can!"

"What is it?"

"Get Peggy Preston gated for Saturday afternoon."

Bought Justice



"PEGGY PRESTON"

Peggy, in the music-room, with Babe, Clara, Marjorie Handstone, and Mabel Lynn, looked round with a start.

It was Friday afternoon. The last rehearsal before the contest had taken place, and Lily had drifted off. Peggy was busy collecting her pieces of music together.

"You may remember," Sarah said cynically, "that I gave you two hundred lines the other day. Yesterday you handed those lines in."

"Well!"

"This morning," Sarah went on, "I created them. You have only done one hundred and fifty lines."

Peggy flushed.

"Then I can only suggest," she said

EVERY

SCHOOLGIRL

MUST GET
ANOTHER
SCHOOLGIRL
TO READ

"THE SCHOOLGIRL"

quietly. "that you must have made a mistake. I counted every line before I handed them in."

"I am telling you," Sarah laughingly granted, "that you were fifty lines short." And giving, she added sharply, "don't give me cheek. You will do a hundred lines for the fifty you engendered to do, and you will do another fifty for daring to back-sneer me for telling you about them. Another word, Sarah added warningly, "and I'll give you a detention!"

But it was obvious that there was going to be another word. Not Peggy the girl in surrender meekly in such a needless injunctive! Spurred on by the clearness of her own conscience, perhaps remembering now how unfairly those lines had been given, she bridled in angry resentment. Her face reddened; her lips compressed. From Babe & Co. came an angry sneer.

"I'm not checking you," she retorted. "And I did do the full two hundred lines, and I don't say—with rising spirit—why you should go suddenly picking on me—"

"Yes, rather! Play the game!" Clara murmured disapprovingly.

"Clara, fifty lines! Peggy"—Sarah's mean little eyes glinted—"how dare you

make such a statement! Who is picking on me?"

"You are!" Peggy passionately cried. "That's enough!" Sarah's lips came together. "You have gone too far, Peggy. For that you will be detained—to-morrow afternoon," she added rapidly, determined to earn Diana's two pounds, "you will be confined to classroom, with a special detention task?"

"What!"

"Oh, bother it! Look here—!" Clara angrily broke out.

"That's just what!" Mabel Lynn cried indignantly. "I—"

"No, no! Please—please!" Babe cried. "Sarah, wait!" she added, as that scolding priestess turned towards the door. "As captain of the Fourth Form, Babe went on steadily, "I protest. You know very well that Peggy is booked to play at the Courtfield Opera House to-morrow afternoon."

Sarah glared.

"Peggy," she hit out, "should have thought of that. The detention stands!"

And, with a snarl, she flounced out, closing the door behind her.

The chums stared at each other in horror and dismay. Peggy's lips quivered. Gated! But worse than that, if Peggy could not go to the Opera House, who was to play for Lily?

"Well, what are we going to do?" Clara asked plainly, glaring at Babe.

"There's only one thing to do," Babe replied, her eyes flashing, "that's to see Finrose."

And, without giving any of them a chance to say more, she whisked out of the room.

While Diana Rayton-Clarke was, at that very moment, smilingly leaving the Opera House, Diana was immensely pleased. Charlie, like every other girl with whom Diana came in contact, had swiftly fallen under her spell.

"For the first time that afternoon Diana had chatted to Charlie. Diana had inspired her. The result was that Charlie had put forth everything she had. She had been brilliant. Even Professor Larkin was pleasantly surprised, and was half inclined to change the view he had given yesterday.

And now, Diana was thinking, the game was as good as in her hands. She had succeeded in undermining Lily's confidence. Sarah was on her side, if Lily, in her present frame of mind, had no Peggy to play for her—why, then—

On reaching Cliff House, she made her way at once to Sarah Harvigan's study. Sarah greeted her with a smile.

"You need it!" Diana sagely cried.

"Don't!" Sarah laughed.

"Oh, yikes! That's what means she won't be able to play to-morrow."

"That's what it means," Sarah agreed complacently, and looked quickly at Diana as there was a tap on the door.

"Ahem! Come in!" she cried.

Diana stepped aside. Miss Finrose, accompanied by Barbara Bellows, stepped into the study. The headmistress' face was grave.

"Sarah, I regret to say that Barbara here has had to bring me a complaint. She frowns at the Professor."

"Diana, you may go!" she added; and Diana, with a shrug, strode out of the room, to retrace its sinister situation.

"I hear," Miss Finrose added, "that you have detained Peggy Preston to-morrow afternoon!"

Sarah bit her lip.

"That is so, Miss Finrose."

"I see!" Miss Finrose's expression did not change. "I am not acquainted with your decisions," she said. "But I must request you, Sarah, when giving out punishments, to bear my wishes in

mind. Peggy's presence at the Opera House to-morrow is vitally important, as you know. Her detention must be postponed.

And Diana, listening, gritted her teeth. She wasn't finished yet—not by any means!

Contest of Song

SATURDAY!



The day of the Diploma Contest. To-day every girl who cared to apply had a free ticket for the Courtfield Opera House. And CLE House was counted about Lily Walters, for they all felt now, thanks to Professor Barrows's glowing interest, that in Lily Walters they had a future opera star.

Everybody was bright, happy, and smiling. Even Diana came out of the shell-like reserve in which she seemed to have so safely encased herself these last few days.

For, as it happened, Diana was free, too. The long list of gettings and punishments she had earned for herself these last few weeks had expired yesterday. Amazingly she strolled into Study No. 4 after dinner. Baba, Lily, Peggy, and Made were there. Diana smiled.

"Just popped in, Lily, to wish you the best of luck," she said. "And you, Peggy!" She paused. "I'm sorry if things haven't been what they ought to have been!" she said awkwardly. "But—well, mistakes will arise! But we've all got Lily's interest at heart to-day, and I think, if only for to-day, we should patch up our differences."

Lily's face flushed with pleasure. Baba & Co. lagged and smiled, were only too anxious to have done with differences.

"And," Diana drawled, "I've got my fingers as cold as calling at two o'clock. Rather jolly if we all went to the Opera House together—what?"

"Oh, Diana, that's topping!" Baba said.

"Good! Expect you, then?" Diana laughed, and, with a friendly smile, left the room.

But the smile disappeared once she was in the corridor outside. A rather hard, unpleasant light glittered in those deep blue eyes of hers. Up the corridor she went, stopped at the door of Study No. 4, then quickly slipped in.

Peggy Preston's inner-case, with all the numbers she would require that afternoon, was already packed, lying in the chair. Quickly Diana went over to it. Out of it she matched the selected numbers, lying there under the seat of the armchair. Into the case, in their place, she packed other numbers, which Peggy, most obviously, had thrown out. Two o'clock came. With it Diana's case.

Peggy, with a laugh, flew to match up her case. With Diana apparently in the highest of spirits and Lily seemingly happy, they all hurried in. In twenty minutes they were at the Opera House, to be greeted by Professors Larkin and Barrows, who were already on the scene. A list of competitors was hanging in the hall. Eagerly they gathered round it.

"And then there was a cry. "Oh, goodness! I say, Lily, you're last!"

Lily was last, the names having been arranged in alphabetical order.

"Rather good, I think!" Diana said.

"Rather useful, in fact! Give you a chance to see what you're up against, Lily. Hilda!" she cried, as if in surprise. "There's my name—"

"What?"

"Well, look! Next to that girl—what's her name?—Miss Christine Smithson. They've got me down as her pianist."

Baba blinked.

"But how did you—"

"Oh, I suppose it was Larkin?" Diana shrugged. "I told him I wouldn't mind playing for one of the competitors. It's not every girl who can afford to bring her own pianist, you see, and these things must be fixed up. Well, well, that means I'm in the show, too. Glad to be playing for somebody!"

She flushed a look at Lily's face, which quite plainly revealed his owner's thoughts—how she wished Diana were playing for her!

Diana, as if reading that thought, sadly, regretfully, shook her head. It was a quarter to three then, and the contest was fixed to begin at three. Diana paused.

"Brought your music, Peggy?"

"Oh, of course."

"Well, we'd better get into the hall. We'll sit in the audience, you know, until called upon. What numbers have you brought, Peggy? May I see them?"

Peggy, with a smile—she was really pleased to be on good terms with the First-brand—opened her case. She drew forth the music it contained, and then she gave a gasp of utter horror.

"Great goodness!"

"What's the matter?"

Peggy was staring at the sheet in her hand as if she could hardly believe her eyes.

"I—I've brought the wrong sheets!" Everybody stared in consternation.

"But how—?" she began.

"I don't know! I could have sworn that I put the right ones in!" Peggy gasped. "I went over them half a dozen times!"

"Well, no good crying over spilt milk!" Diana put in, with brisk practicality. "Looking, you've time to run back and get them. Lily won't be on for about three-quarters of an hour. That means you can get to Cliff House and back here with ten minutes or so to spare. I'll lend you my car," Diana added. "It's outside."

Peggy gulped.

"Oh, Diana, it—it's frightfully decent of you!"

"Not at all," Diana said. "Come on!"

She led the way. Foully looked was the smile on her face. Outside was the luxurious limousine which had brought the party here, the chauffeur at the wheel. He stared towards Diana as she came out, and Diana deliberately winked. The chauffeur smiled slightly.

" Jennings," Diana said, "I want you to take Miss Preston back to Cliff House. And stop on it," she added.

"Take the road past the cemetery; it's slightly the longer way round, but you won't meet my traffic, and you'll get there quicker."

"Yes, miss," Jennings said.

And to smile again as Diana winked, and Peggy, trembling and uncomprehendingly, climbed into the car. Then, with a smooth purr of the engine, they were off.

The stage seemed set at last for Diana's triumph. Diana, going back to join Baba & Co., congratulated herself upon a smart bit of planning.

" Jennings," Diana said, "I want you to take Miss Preston back to Cliff House. And stop on it," she added.

"Take the road past the cemetery; it's slightly the longer way round, but you won't meet my traffic, and you'll get there quicker."

"Yes, miss," Jennings said.

And to smile again as Diana winked, and Peggy, trembling and uncomprehendingly, climbed into the car. Then, with a smooth purr of the engine, they were off.

The stage seemed set at last for Diana's triumph. Diana, going back to join Baba & Co., congratulated herself upon a smart bit of planning.

"**W**oman's Power?"

"No!" "Ha, she came back yet!"

These questions were being asked on every side three-quarters of an hour later.

By that time the contest was in full swing. No less than eight of the competitors had been up on the platform. Near the front of the stage, in the stalls, the Cliff House girls sat, anxiously looking towards the door.

But no Peggy had appeared. Peggy, had they only known it, was straddled eight miles away in the middle of a bleak, lonely road, while Jennings, Diana's chauffeur, pretended to be fiddling with an engine that would no longer go.

Miss Primrose was there, sitting with an anxious face, next to Professor Barrows. Lily was there, shaking with nervousness, waiting with dread for her own turn to come. Supposing Peggy never turned up!

Lily, shrinking, sensitive thing that she was, shuddered.

For Lily had now decided that what, ever happened, she must win that diploma. It meant, for one thing, that she would leave Cliff House—and that seemed the only way of bringing peace between Baba and Diana! For the sake of her own peace of mind, she'd got to win! But Peggy—if she didn't turn up—

On the stage the grim-faced judges stared down at her. Oh looks—and she had to face them soon!

But now there was a stir, a rustle, as the announcer came on to the stage. Everybody looked with interest, as, leading him in a frock which many there recognized as belonging to Diana Houston-Clarke, of the Fourth, a girl strolled out—a girl with wavy black hair, smiling, pretty, and confident.

After her—and here there was a gasp—came another girl, a girl dressed in shimmering opalescent satin, looking splendidly lovely. Diana Houston-Clarke!

The audience coughed.

"Name of competitor, Miss Christine Smithson," he said. "Miss Houston-Clarke has very kindly volunteered to play for her."

There was a stir. Lily gulped. Diana shuddered.

Diana playing. How she wished for one moment that she stood in that lucky Christine's shoes. The opening ban trilled out.

The audience became silent.

And then Christine started to sing. Everybody jerked upright. Clearly, covertly, tensely the notes came forth, though it was obvious she was looking, not at the audience, but at Diana seated in front of her. The responsive judges stirred. One or two of them looked at each other. Lily herself sat spellbound. What a glorious voice the girl had!

"Oh, my hat!" Baba muttered. "I say, Lily's got something to beat there—"

There was no doubt that Christine could sing; no doubt she had poise, presence! Not for a moment did she falter; not for a moment did she fumble for a note. Diana glowed. She played as if inspired, sensing that the audience was impressed.

The song came to an end. A roar of applause ripped through the hall from gallery to stage. Everyone was on their feet.

"Bravo! Bravo! Encore!"

For a full three minutes the applause continued, only ceasing when they stopped down and Diana smilingly took her place between Lily Walters and Hilda Beddren in the auditorium. Lily stared at her with eyes of worship.

"Oh, Diana, you played lovely!"

Diana laughed. Her big moment was yet to come.

She sat there, listening. She knew

now that Christine had the contest in her pocket. Impetuously she waited while the others went up one by one, while Babs & Co. shifted with groaning uneasiness, and Lily's face whitened under the mental strain she was enduring.

Diana smiled.

Loosely it would be when, at the end of the contest Christine was announced the winner. When, proudly joining her upon the platform, she could announce to an astonished audience that Christine was her protégée, that it was she who had entered her for the competition! Oh, to see Primrose's face then! To see Babs'!

A stifled gasp came from beside her. She turned. Something crept her heart as she saw watched Lily's face working.

"Lily, what's the matter? Aren't you well?"

"I'm all right!" Lily muttered. "Oh dear! Where's Peggy?"

But Peggy was not to be seen. The eleventh competitor was singing now. Babs was looking anxiously round. Miss Primrose had gone across to Lily. The competitor went out in a ripple of polite applause.

"Lily, what about your pianist?" Miss Primrose was saying. "It is obvious Peggy is not going to turn up. Would you like Mabel or Barbara to play for you?"

Lily shook her head.

"No, no! Neither Mabel nor Babs knows these pieces."

"But, my dear, somebody has got to play—"

Lily paused. She was shaking now. She couldn't go through with it—she couldn't! Diana wanted to laugh, but found that she couldn't. The little one turned desperately.

"Oh, please, Miss Primrose—"

"Yes, my dear?"

"There—there's one girl who—she could play," Lily muttered. "That is Diana! Oh, please let me have Diana! If Diana doesn't play, I—I can't sing!"

There was a moment's silence. Diana sat tense, her lips closed in a grim line. Miss Primrose looked agitated. Babs sat her lip. She looked at Diana, who steadfastly stared in front of her. But, obviously, now, it must be Diana—unless Lily was to resign from the contest.

"Diana?" Miss Primrose said.

Diana's smile flickered.

"Will you play for Lily?"

Diana paused. What a moment for her! She had never imagined this, not in her wildest dreams. To win the competition and to have Primrose handling herself at the same time!

Excitation rose in her heart. Her red lips curled delightedly.

The announcer was on the platform.

He looked round.

"Is Miss Lily Walters here?"

"Please—please wait a minute!" Babs agitatedly gasped. "Diana—"

Diana sat still.

"Diana," Miss Primrose pleaded—"for the sake of the school! You are the only girl—"

"I am sorry," Diana said coldly. "You would never let me play when I wanted to; I must refuse now!"

Diana, dismayed silence. Miss Primrose flushed.

"Very well," she said. "I am sorry, Diana. Lily, if you cannot sing to anyone else's playing, I am afraid we must cancel your entry." She half-rode, and then Babs, her glance withering, as she fastened it upon the Firebrand, sprang to her feet.

"No!" she cried. "Miss Primrose, please wait! I'll play! Lily, listen! You're going to sing. I know the numbers, and I can play them by ear. Don't look at Diana—she's let you down, Lily."

"Oh dear! Diana," Lily pleaded, "you—you played for that other girl. Why won't you play for me?"

"Because I don't want to!" the other snapped.

"Or perhaps because," Babs said contemptuously, "you want Lily to lose, just out of spite! Or, perhaps," she added, with a flash of inspiration, "you even loved Peggy away to make Lily lose." And then, as Diana flushed, as Lily eyed her in horror, Babs' eyes flashed. "So that is the truth, is it?" she asked quietly.

"Oh, yes!" Diana said savagely.

"Yes—"

"But!" Diana sneered. The colour ran up in her cheeks. "Oh, go on; get on with your playing!" she cried impatiently. "Get on with it! Beat Christine Smithson, if you can! Yes, if you can!" she sneered. "She's already got the contest in her pocket. Your Lily hasn't an earthly. And if you want to know why I played for Christine," she added, her reckless desire to boast rising uncontrollably above her inner judgment. "I'll tell you. I played for Christine because she's my girl. You made it your business to take Lily out of my hands! Well, this is my answer. I'll beat you all! Christine is mine! I paid her best!"

She could have kicked herself next minute. Everybody was eying her in conversation, Miss Primrose in horror. She looked up, and saw Lily's incredulous face, saw those big eyes staring at her with the hurt of a faithful animal suddenly thrashed, in their depths. For a moment she felt small and mean, a traitress, unworthy. Then she stiffened.

"Lily Walters," the announcer called.

"Lily, come!" Babs said impatiently.

Lily went, with one amazed glance at the Firebrand. That glance told Diana that she understood; that she knew her for the girl she was.

But Diana didn't care—or she said herself she didn't. Rather Babs! Rather Lily! Rather them all! She'd humiliated them! This was her hour!

But, had she known it, she had provided the strangest reactions in the person of Lily Walters. Lily, at last, came in by her true colours. Lily, undeniably followed Babs on to the platform, trembling, but determined. Her hand went up. If only she had Peggy to play! But Babs was her friend, Babs had stood by her. She would do her best for Babs.

"Chin up!" Babs muttered.

She played the opening bars. Lily steadied herself. She began to sing.

The audience listened, marvelling at the sweetness of her voice. Unconsciously she began, gathering strength as she went on.

But Babs was not Peggy, nor was she Diana. Babs played better from ear than with music, but this was the first time she had played to Lily. Once or twice Lily faltered. Though the audience hardly noticed it, the judge did. Once or twice during the song she looked hopelessly at Babs. The song came to an end.

A storm of handclapping. Babs and Diana stood next back into the auditorium. The judge conferred, and the chairman of the judging committee rose to his feet. He came forward.

"Will Miss Christine Smithson step this way?"

Diana glowed. Babs & Co. exchanged a hopeless look. And then—

"And will Miss Lily Walters step this way?"

Babs, what was this!

The two girls faced each other on the platform. The judge smiled.

"The judge," he announced, "has had some difficulty in making up their minds. We congratulate you both. Unfortunately, there is only one diploma to be awarded, and it would be unfair to either of you to give it to the other. I think," he added, "the audience will agree with us when we announce that our only possible decision is that another contest shall take place."

Babs & Co. sat up. Diana scowled. The audience cheered.

"This contest," the judge went on, "will take place in a fortnight's time at the European College of Music's Concert in London, when I hope I shall have the pleasure of being able to decide which of these two girls will be the eventual winner. Meantime, thank you both!"

There was a burst of applause, a murmur of excitement. Lily, pale as death, started to come down. Diana rose to her feet. Babs looked at her.

"Well," she said, "Diana, won't you do the dearest thing now. If you had played for Lily, she'd have won!"

"I know!" Diana returned cheerfully. "And that is," she added bitterly, "why I don't play for her in the next contest. Lily prefers you. Well, let Lily have you. My choice for the subsequent will be, as it is now, Christine Smithson. Get on with Lily! I'm finished with her! Christine!" she cried.

"Yes, Miss Repton-Clarke!"

"Get your clothes. I'm going to take you home. I want to talk with you!" She pushed past Lily as that girl came up, paused, and once again turned, with the old mockery in her face, to Babs. "Well," she said lightly, "we live to fight another day—oh, Barbara Redden! I don't think—with a sneer—" "But when that day comes, there'll be no doubt left. All that my protégé requires is another fortnight's coaching. I'll see that she gets it!"

And, leaving Babs & Co. grimly carrying the weeping Lily, she touched past them, and, absently taking the arm of Christine Smithson, who was waiting for her in the aisle, walked away.

THE END OF THIS VOLUME'S STORY.

"JUST THE FIREBRAND'S WAY"

By HILDA RICHARDS

is the title of the powerful, extra-long, complete Cliff House School story which appears in next Saturday's SCHOOLGIRL, and it brings to a thrilling climax this brilliant series starring the Firebrand of the Fourth. Don't miss it!

SCHOOLGIRLS AGAINST A SCHEMER: Thrilling Developments Crowd This Week's Chapters of This Grand Morcove Serial



HER SECRET AT SWANLAKE

By **MARJORIE STANTON**



The Ferrand Pearls

"**W**HONT any of you have another sandwich?"

"Yes, please—I will!"
"That kid would—of course!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"More lemonade, girls?"
"Yes, please, Pam!"
"No, thanks, Pam!"
"But I," said regular Polly Lissan, "will have this last French pastry before Nanette gets it!"

There was more laughter in the dining-room at stately Swanlake, where Pam's school chums were enjoying refreshments at the end of their dress rehearsal.

"A jolly useful rehearsal!" declared Betty heartily.

"Fine!" came from the others who were stuffing things from the refreshment-trays and quaffing lemonade.

"Yes, wuther, but Jove! And I must say, Polly dear, you are to be congratulated upon providing us with a grand production! I think, gosh, went as Paula Greof's pretty dress, 'though has never been a better example of Polly's versatility—what?"

"Heav, hear!" from Bessy and others.

But Study No. 12's talented playwright did not rise and bow. Instead, she reared her head to listen to sounds from outside in the night. Then she grimaced.

"Oh dear, there's the car! Back again to Morcove—ugh!"

"Next Saturday—over here again, all of you," Pam consolingly predicted. "I shall be staying for supper, on Saturday afternoon. You can all come back here with me in the car."

"For another rehearsal—right?" said convulsed Polly. "That's a date?"

"And I don't see who, for once," Pam added, "we shouldn't get the boys to look along from Grangermeer to see at rehearsal!"

Lord cheer!

FOR NEW READERS.
PAM WILLOUGHBY of Morcove school has become a day-girl in order that she may have time to act as waitress to
CLAIRE FERRAND—a girl who, after being all for life on a sheep station in Australia, has come into a fortune. That she is able to settle down in England she is to try with the Willoughbys at their stately home—Swanlake.
VIVIANE MURRO, having tossed Claire's baggage, refuses to take her place. She insists Claire must tell a plausible story to the effect that the luggage is wanted by the police, she represents herself as an amateur detective and offers to take Claire to the East Wing at Swanlake until she can clear her name. Claire consents, and Viviane arrives at Swanlake to be welcomed as the real Claire Ferrand.
BETTY BARTON, one of Pam's Morcove friends, is at once suspicious of Viviane. The real Claire Ferrand is discovered, but, as she is suffering from amnesia, she can tell nothing. Viviane, then still under duress, discovers, thanks to Claire's solicitor for the Ferrand pearls—hoping to steal them. A telegram arrives to tell her the pearls are being sent!
(See next page.)

girl whom Morcove and Swanlake knew as Claire Ferrand came in, all smiles.

"Oh, are you off now? See you again soon, of course!"

"Yes, Claire—Saturday!"
"Aphonia," said the girl, who was still suspected of being as false as she was fair, although it had been impossible to catch her tripping. "I shall be here. You won't mind if I don't come out to the car to see you off? After Australia, you know, this climate—a bit chilly!"

This was followed by her saying good-night all round with a degree of cordiality that puzzled Betty & Co.

Two minutes later, when the girls were getting their things on in the hall, Betty whispered Pam:

"Claire seems to be in a very sweet mood all at once!"

"It was that telegram, I suppose," smiled Pam, "to say that someone is on the way from town with those pearls that she's been hankering to wear. Although I can't see any occasion for wearing them—"

"Except to show off!" muttered Polly.

"Huss I got to after the play again, simply to give her a chance to wear the family jewels? Hello!" she next moment sparkled at Miss Black, who was suddenly in their midst. "You going to see us off?"

"Rather!"

Nice girl, Miss Black! The chums had enjoyed a score of instances in the last few hours, of her good nature, her warm interest in their activities over the amateur theatricals.

Now, in striking contrast to "that Australian girl," who stayed at the dining-room fireplace, Miss Black joined in the surging out of doors on to the right-hand drive.

The car to run Betty and the rest back to Morcove School was waiting there; but how came another car, at the end of its run up the mile-long drive, pulling up, with a final swish, in front of the porch.

Out jumped a young man in a

The door opened, and that well-known

groatcoat, duck "town" clothes, and a bowler hat. He raised the letter to the girl.

"Good-evening!" he said, a little awed by his first impression of Swanlake. "I am from Miss Ferrand's lawyer—"

"Oh, no! Will you go in? She's there," Pam said, and ran back to the hall doorway to call. "Claire!"

"Thank you, miss!" said the clerk to Pam; and then he crossed the threshold, while Pam ran to rejoin Miss Blank and the departing Novocian.

Out into the great hall came "Claire Ferrand," putting on a very grand air. "I was expecting you," she smiled. "My lawyer sent me a telegram to say you were on the way."

"Yes, miss. And I was to explain," the young clerk rather sheepishly continued. "Mr. Andrews did not think he had better send you more than some pearls—"

"Oh, I see?"

"Mr. Andrews felt that you would not be wanting to wear any of the other jewellery, miss, as it's mostly diamonds, and a bit old-fashioned. So he left that at the bank. But this package—"

"The clerk had to tug it out of a side-pocket of his overcoat. Had the package been only a little bigger, it would never have gone even into such a capacious pocket.

"Thanks!" smiled the girl, who was really Vivienne Munro, living by her wits. "Won't you sit down while I open this?"

The clerk sat down on the very edge of a chair which he felt sure was Chippendale.

Vivienne had red blocks of sealing-wax to break and simple brown-paper wrappings to tear off. Then her overcoat was beheld a leather jewel-case, the lid of which had the faded gilt monogram of some past member of the Ferrand family.

She pressed a spring-fastener, and raised the lid.

Pearls! Oh, wonderful, shimmering pearls—worth a small fortune at least!

There they lay, cooled and otherwise arranged on their bed of faded silk. The Ferrand pearls! A necklace and several brooch-like ornaments, forming a complete set.

Vivienne Munro, into whose system, having hands part of the Ferrand fortune seemed to be falling like a ripe plum, gave an enraptured sigh. She gazed and gazed at the fascinating display.

"I've not seen you before, have I?" she at last remarked to the clerk very earnestly.

"Er—no, miss."

"I've never been to Mr. Andrews' office. When I got to London, from Australia, he met me at the docks and drove me to the hotel where I was to stay, and he came to see me about everything next day at the hotel. You'd like some refreshment after the journey."

"Oh, thank you, miss, but—"

"Quite all right. I've only to touch the bell."

And Vivienne did that with an air of having every right to give orders.

"If you'd just sign this typed receipt,"

"Right—ho!" nodded the impostor, taking the offered paper, to go with it to a writing-table. "Oh, this is a card-case!" appeared—"this young man from my lawyer's must have something in his bag before he goes. Just take him to the dining-room. There"—she returned towards him, smiling, a few moments later—"your receipt for the pearls. Nothing else! Then good-night."

And she moved on silently, jauntily, holding the jewel-case close to her fast-beating heart.

"Hush—at least!"

She was laughing to herself as she locked the bedroom door that. She had not a thought, at this moment, but what it made her want to laugh aloud.

This moment of triumph—after all! She opened the case upon her dressing-table, and took up the shimmering necklace.

To put it about her neck, as she did, was to feel how lovely it would be to have such a thing to wear. But, of course, she would not be able to keep it—no, no! Everything in the jewel-case would have to be turned into cash sooner or later.

"And what I shall do," she cradily pondered on, "begin with one of the brooches. It would be a good idea to pawn one of them at once as possible. Pawning's better than trying to sell."

She was still feasting her eyes upon necklace and brooches alike when she heard a merry laugh from downstairs. That was "Miss Blank," assumed at something Pam had said. They did get on so well together, those two.

Vivienne Munro went across to the door, to open it and listen.

"Laughing over something about me, are they?"

Then as suddenly she went back to the dressing-table and the jewel-case, giving her wide grin again.

"You can laugh—Miss Blank, as they call you," she retorted fiercely. "Laugh at whatever joke there is, to amuse you. But this is my joke, anyhow, that these are your pearls I've got hold of, and—you don't know it?"

Not So Good!

HALF-PAST ELEVEN next morning found Vivienne Munro depositing two pieces of luggage at Exeter railway station, to be taken out later in the day.

She intended to catch an afternoon express up to London.

Meanwhile, this fine old cathedral city seemed a very good place in which to "cash" one of those brooches. Of course, there could be a pawnbroker's shop somewhere. There was, Vivienne reckoned, her arrival.

She soon found what appeared to be the very right kind of establishment. It was a high-class silver-smith's shop, with several large windows to attract passers-by on one of Exeter's thoroughfares.

But a sign hinted discreetly that, by going up a little alley at the side of the shop, and going in by a little door, one would find oneself at the pledge counter.

At that counter stood Vivienne presently, wearing the smile of beauty in distress as she spoke across to the polite young man who had come round from the glittering shop to answer her ring! upon the counter bell.

"You do sort of—advance some of money?" she prefaced politely.

"We are licensed pawnbrokers—yes, miss."

"That's what I thought, by the sign outside—with a suitably nervous laugh. "Well, it's awfully silly of me, but I've caught down here without any ready money! All this way from London—where my home is, you know—and unless I can best up a little cash—well!"

The young man nodded. He quite understood.

"So what I've done," Vivienne purred on, "I've brought along this pearl brooch that I happened to have

with me on my holiday. Convinced, you know. Do you think you can let me have—five pounds?" she inquired carelessly. "And I suppose I can get the brooch out of pawn by posting the ticket and the money from London, say, next week?"

"Oh, yes!" said the young man, answering the letter of her two questions. But Vivienne thought he was saying "Yes" to both.

"Of course, if you can make it more than five pounds," she laughed. "It's a really valuable brooch, as you can see. It has been in my family—oh, ages!"

"If you will excuse me a moment," said the young man. "I will just ask the chief to step round, as it is a jewellery pledge."

"Right!"

For a minute she remained alone in the dim little apartment that it was. Then the chief appeared, with a very fatherly look for Vivienne across the counter.

"But this brooch, young lady—"

"Oh, it's quite all right! I mean, it's mine right enough; I had it from my mother on my last birthday!"

"Just—"

"I thought you might be doubting my right to so pawn it."

"Oh, no! But the fact is, miss, there are not real pearls."

"Not?"

"No." And he passed the brooch across to her. "I'm sorry. I wish I could help you, but I don't see how I can. A brooch like that, miss—"

"But it's ridiculous!" she rather flared out. "They must be real pearls! They're part of the Ferrand—I mean, my mother always said—"

"Then I'm afraid your mother, miss, was deceived."

"And I say you're wrong—you must be! Are you just wanting to beat me down? If so—oh, how much, anyway, will you advance?"

"Oh, no," disclaimed the very worthy silver-smith, "there is nothing like that about us. We have similar brooches in our windows—a specially cheap five- or six-shilling each."

Vivienne, clutching the returned brooch, stood drawn back, right-tipped, glaring at him.

"Then keep your five-shilling brooch!" she raged out at him. "And I'll keep mine!"

"I am afraid"—he bowed—"you must."

She banged out of the place. Her rage was no longer directed against him, but was all for the lawyer. Not such an old tool, after all! For she saw what it meant. In his wisdom he had decided not to send down the real pearls to Swanlake. He considered them far too valuable for Claire Ferrand to have the use of them at her age.

Yet he had not wanted to appear unkind. So he had taken one of the Ferrand jewels—and filled it with imitation stuff. There was not a genuine pearl in the whole array.

"A lot of synthetic stuff!" she reminded to herself, stamping along the pavement.

That was the simple explanation, but—making! He had meant well, of course. If any of the "pearls" had got lost, then he would have been ready with the comforting surprise. "Don't worry," he had wanted to be able to say in such a case—"they were only imitations."

Vivienne turned into a fine cafe, and was in the mood to snap at the waitress who came up.

"Yes, yes; no, nothing else!"

Then, casting her hat, because it seemed to press like steel upon her forehead, she sat thinking—thinking.

What is to do now? She had meant to go on to London and never be heard of again at Swanlake. The pearls—if only they had been the pearls—would have set her up for life. She could have got full value for them in the end. But now—

Where was the "soup" in clearing out with nothing more of the real Claire's than a couple of crumpled bags and the remains of that fifty-pound cheque? Was it for that, and no more than that, she had dared so much?

And yet, what a risk it would be running to go back, still to carry on the impersonation, with the real Claire still under the same roof.

Supposing the girl's memory was suddenly restored to her? And it might be—at any moment! Nobody could predict, but the common sense of the case was that every day the girl stood a better chance of suddenly remembering.

Even as she, Vivienne, was sitting here, drinking her midday cup of tea, Swanlake might be in a state of great excitement.

Oh, it was beginning to seem too risky to hang about in Exeter even an hour or two longer. Go back to the railway station, and a policeman might tap her on the shoulder as she claimed the luggage. "Sorry, miss, but no information received."

She drank down her tea hastily, asked for the bill, and escaped from the crowded cafe.

All nerves again! Queer, she had gone on quite calmly at Swanlake the last few days, somehow taking it for granted that the girl would not suddenly recover her memory. But now—

The strain was too great. There was Swanlake still offering her a luxury life, always providing that the real Claire did not recover her lost memory.

And in addition to being kept in luxury at Swanlake, fresh cheques might offer of profligate by the importance. One could easily write to the lawyer for another cheque for dress and pocket-money. "He can't refuse me that!" Yet the risk was hourly growing greater.

"No, I simply must check it in now," she sighed to herself. "Go to London to try my luck at some other game. My luggage, though—must I go without that? Dusk, why did I tell them at Swanlake that I'd be catching the afternoon express up to London for my shopping jaunt! If—if Claire has suddenly got her memory back since I left—

but at this instant Vivienne's natural caution came to her aid.

An idea! She would ring up Swanlake from here in Exeter. Perfectly safe to do that. By the way she was considered she would be able to tell if conditions were still as safe as green. If they were, then—perfectly safe for her to claim her luggage at the station and go on to London.

Where, then, was the nearest call-box? Eagerly she looked about the busy, narrow street, saw one of the familiar telephone signs on the opposite side of the way, and excitedly stepped off the pavement to get across.

"Hi, look out there!"

The warning shout was followed by the sharp scream of a car's suddenly applied brakes.

Then there was a sudden awful silence, with traffic at a standstill and men and women standing appalled. Vivienne, knocked down by a car, scrambled up again instantly—unhurt, as she had expected. Then she felt a pain at her left ankle. A crowd formed round her. The very pretty young lady driving the car that had hit Vivienne jumped out in a state of great concern.

"You're hurt! So sorry, but I'm afraid you weren't looking. What can I do for you?"

A policeman was already in evidence, with his notebook out.

"Oh, it's nothing—don't make a fuss!" Vivienne panted, and she would have limped back to the pavement, but the policeman checked her.

"Better just take particular note, in case. We'd like to have them on our accident book. Your name, please!"

"I was in Exeter to see to a few things for my mother about the Barmcombe girl's work. And then—this happened!"

Why Be Afraid?

VIVIANNE MUNRO, still limping slightly, came out of a telephone call-box looking intensely relieved.

Thank goodness! The situation at



LADY EVELYN gave Vivienne a puzzled look. "Surely," she said at last, "you're the girl who was in that accident yesterday?" Vivienne's heart missed a beat. It seemed to her, all at once, that exposure was very, very near.

"Vivienne Mun—I mean—"

But she could not change to her false name now, too late! The policeman was already writing.

"Vivienne who, miss?"

"Er—Munro," she hesitated.

The young lady motorist was going to wait for the policeman to question her. Meanwhile, her distressed look assured Vivienne of genuine regard and sympathy.

"Your address, miss?"

"Oh—er—I—I haven't a permanent address. I—"

"Well, where can we find you if we want you?"

It seemed to Gustered Vivienne that she would simply have to say "Swanlake"—after giving her real name to the policeman! And then, by a desperate reaction of her mind, she made up a false address.

The policeman jotted it down. Again Vivienne started to limp away, and this time he offered an objection. The staring crowd let her through, and so she was gone by the time the policeman addressed his first question to the young lady motorist.

"And your name, miss?"

"Lady Evelyn Knight," was the answer. "You know—Barmcombe Castle."

"What were you doing, miss?"

"Well," said her youthful ladyship,

Swanlake was unchanged. She had just spoken with the real Claire Farnard, and—

"Oh, but what a silly I was to be so jumpy all of a sudden!" Vivienne was smiling to herself as she limped away, making for the railway station. "Of course the girl is still the same!"

So now—back to Swanlake, to go on with the risky imposture a little longer.

From day to day, hour to hour—no reason why one shouldn't! And it was all to gain and nothing to lose. That girl, the real Claire, was not going to recover her lost memory as quickly as one believed at times. The lawyer—he was intended to be business in the North, so he was safely out of the way. Anyhow, he could be trusted to give timely notice of his coming down to Swanlake.

As for that mishap in the street just now—oh, she was all right there. The slight accident had even provided her with an excuse for returning to Swanlake instead of going on to London.

Vivienne's luggage, a few minutes later, was portered to a "local" that would be stopping at the station which served Swanlake.

And so, at the end of the wintry afternoon, when Pam got back from her day's attendance at Morocco, she found Miss "Ticky" at the drawing-room fire-side, with one foot resting upon another chair.

"Hallo!" Pam mildly exclaimed. "I

"Thought you were going to London for a night or two for some shopping!"

"Don't seem to be able to keep away from Swanlake!" laughed the sham Claire Ferrand. "Got knocked down by a car in Buxton—oh, nothing; just a bruised ankle! But I didn't feel like going up to London to be limping all the time?"

"What a nasty thing to have happened," Pam generously sympathized. "Whose car was it?"

"Oh, I don't know! Some post girl in a Boyer. It was my own fault. "Yes; well, if that ankle is bothering Claire, there's always Mrs. Goodson, you know, where's Miss Blank?"

"Upstairs, I fancy. I think she's doing a few things to those dresses for the play."

Pam, with a pleased nod, walked out, to go racing upstairs in search of Miss Blank. There was news for her that would give her delight, Pam was sure. Betty and the other girls were being allowed to come over to Swanlake again to-morrow afternoon, after school.

"Why is it that the Head is being so good about it all?" Pam was soon telling Miss Blank, who sat working Mrs. Goodson's sewing machine. "Lady Leedy was at the school for a few minutes to-day. She's a governor, you know. I expect the girls was talked about, and our little stunt for it."

"To-morrow—and again on Saturday!" Rehearsal, two days running, Pam!

"I think so—you?"

"How jolly! Tell me, Pam, do you think I'm doing this right? It's that stage dress for Judy Carlow that had to be almost comical."

"Why, it's marvellous"—as Pam gladly inspected the lot of work—"what you have done!"

"Little enough—in return for all the kindness I've received, Pam! Oh, I do feel so—so ashamed—going on day after day—"

"Now! Come on down to tea! Pam affectionately commanded. "By the way, Claire Ferrand is back!"

"Yes. Pity she met with that little accident. I hate the idea of expense being in pain."

"No do I."

Their kindly natures made them ask Claire Ferrand more than once, during the evening, about her bruised ankle. She still made light of it; but in secret, trifling though the hurt had really been, it worried her.

That night she was kept awake for hours, not by any pain resulting from the accident, but by the frightening thoughts she looked like being involved with a limp for several days, at least—and that was a serious thing for a girl in her position.

Not only would the Prep hamper her during any sudden flight from Swanlake. There would be a low-and-very for a girl who was limping!

Next morning her ankle seemed to be better. But it troubled her again, as much as ever, as the day wore on.

She had been asked why hadn't she spent the day in bed? But how could she dare keep to her bed when, at any moment— Ah, how that fear of what might happen, at any moment, kept on haunting her!

Came tea-time, and came the Monrovo chow, in vicious spirits after the motor run from school to Swanlake. Once again the hall filled with girlish voices and laughter whilst the outdoor things were being discarded.

Vivienne could not believe it when Betty and others said their own sorry to hear about her street accident. Her

own nature was as hard and selfish, she quite expected the juniors to be callous about her, since no real friendship existed between herself and them.

But consideration was pouring enough. Monrovo could feel really sorry that she had had to suffer a certain amount of pain, even though she was still their "Miss Tricky."

As for Miss Blank—what a friendship it had become by now, between that girl and Study No. 12!

Almost there was a scrimmage in the drawing-room to decide which juniors should have the delight of sitting on either side of this young lady who still could not remember anything.

Vivienne did not fail to notice such signs of popularity, and her feelings carried against one who was the victim of her daring fraud.

Suddenly a perfume-bottle disappeared at the doorway, announcing:

"Lady Evelyn Knight!"

"What?" yelled the entire Study No. 12 "shameless." Oh!

"But jargon!" was Monrovo's own special shriek. "Harrah!"

There was, of course, a general standing up, and a busy getting down of caps and jackets and plates.

Lady Evelyn was entering, looking her hair wind-blown, her leather goli jerkin a gross one, and her shoes good for hiking. Her lively "Hallo!" was far all the shame, upon whom she also dropped in at Monrovo's.

Pam advanced to offer her own serene greeting:

"And you're going to stay on for the rehearsal?"

"But I can't! This is just a—"

"Not you mean!" dimmed the juniors.

"Oh, Lady Evelyn, do—do?"

"Very well then, I will!"

"And may I introduce," Pam quickly proceeded. "Claire Ferrand—the girl, you know, who is over here from Australia!"

"Oh, yes!" And her youthful ladyship nodded and smiled, like the good mixer she was. Then, taking a closer look at the girl who had been introduced as Claire Ferrand, she gave a slight start. Her face brown went up.

"But surely you're the girl I knocked down in Buxton only, yesterday!"

"Oh—oh, was it you in the car?" remembered sham Claire Ferrand. "I—I would never have recognized you!"

"I was a bit dustered at the time, was glad to get away, in fact—all that crowd—"

"I know, and I did feel so sorry for you! Are you still quite, quite sure I wasn't to blame at all? For one horrible moment," the youthful material laughed round upon the juniors. "I had half a mind to give a false name and address to the policeman!"

She made a slight turn, aware of Pam's wishing to introduce someone else—Miss Blank. But something just then, caused Lady Evelyn to look aside again at Claire Ferrand.

It was the bestowal of a second and pointed glance which, as Betty and several others noticed, caused their Miss Tricky to turn deadly pale.

And suddenly that girl tried to get to a chair quickly, but failed because of her limp.

She swayed, then dropped to the carpet as if a blow had felled her.

CONTINUE this absorbing Monrovo mystery serial in next Saturday's number of THE SCHOOLGIRL. Order your copy right away—and don't forget to tell all your chums about the fine features now appearing in your favourite paper.

Souvenir Gift for Film Lovers!



FREE 16 PAGE BOOKLET

Every copy of this issue of PICTURE SHOW will contain this beautiful Souvenir booklet

CHAMPAGNE WALTZ

telling the picture story of the film, words from the principal song, who's who in the story—illustrated, and latest portraits of the stars,

GLADYS SWARTHOUT and FRED MACMURRAY

Order Your Copy Now.

Another FREE 16 page booklet with the following issue:

SHOW BOAT

PICTURE SHOW

On sale Tuesday, Jan. 19th, at all Newsagents.