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# The Schoolgirl's Own 2<sup>d</sup>

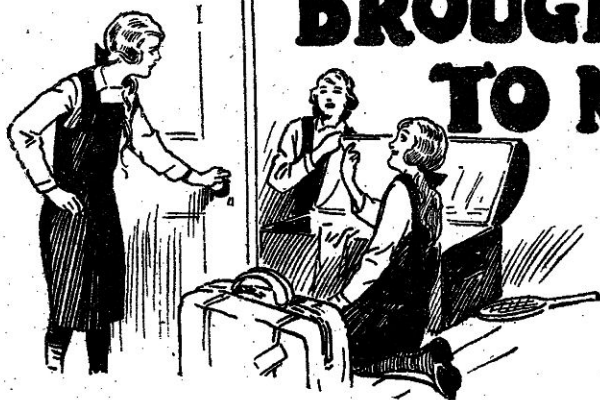


**DENOUNCED BY THE GIRL  
SHE HAD CHEATED!**

A dramatic incident from  
the splendid complete  
story of Moreove School,  
which appears inside.

A Grand Tale of Morcove School, featuring Dolly Delane, the "Doormat."

# BROUGHT BACK TO MORCOVE!



By  
MARJORIE  
STANTON.

No longer a Morcove girl, but allowed to revisit the school which, owing to the duplicity of another girl, she was forced to leave. Such is Dolly Delane's unenviable plight in this splendid complete story.

### Betty's Bright Idea.

"TO-DAY is Friday," Betty Barton murmured, as if in deep thought. "It would be a grand idea if—"

"If what, Betty?" asked that famous madcap of the Fourth Form at Morcove School—Polly Linton, to wit. "I believe you are still thinking about poor Dolly Delane and that plucky letter we had from her this morning."

"I am," said Betty, coming away from the study window. "I am always thinking about Dolly these days. It was such rough luck, her having to go home before breaking-up day."

"Cwuel luck!" chimed in a certain elegant Fourth Former who scarcely needs to be named. She shook up a cushion as she spoke, and then lolled back very restfully in the study's best arm-chair. "Haow twue it is, geals; twoubles never come singly! Hardly had Dolly Delane learned that she had just missed winning the Gwace Pullen prize, when she had to go home and stand by her parents, on account of the distwess they were in. Wotten luck—yes, wather!"

"But you had an idea, Betty?" exclaimed Polly eagerly.

"And it's this," came the Form captain's prompt reply. "The coming week-end is our last before breaking-up day."

"Hooway! Yes, wather!"

"You go to sleep," advised teasing Polly, ruthlessly screwing up a ball of paper and shying it at lolling Paula Creel. "That's the best thing you can do."

"I weally think it is—yes, wather!" beamed the elegant one, sinking still more languorously into the chair. "The term's hard work has weduced my vitality to a low ebb, geals. I am—"

"You are a standing nuisance, that's what you are—or a sitting one, anyhow!" chuckled Polly, crossing over to sit down plumply on Paula's lap. "Quiet, now! No noise!"

"But—but—"

"Yes, Betty, dear?" Polly continued, blandly indifferent to poor Paula's feeble attempts to unseat her. "Do let's have the idea, for I'm sure it's a good one!"

"Not feasible, perhaps; that's the worst of it!" Betty said, smiling ruefully. "But how nice it would be, if only we could get permission to visit Dolly Delane, at her home, over the week-end!"

Polly jumped up excitedly, much to Paula's relief.

"Get Miss Redgrave to drive us over in the car—that's what you were thinking?" the headstrong one of Study 12 fairly shouted at her chum. "Stay a couple of nights somewhere in the village—"

"Bai Jove, geals, wipping!"

"Yes," said Betty, nodding, "and, what's more, bring Dolly back with us, just for breaking-up day!"

"Hurrah! Grand idea!" exploded Polly, and she rushed at Betty and made that girl do a bit of a waltz with her, then rushed at Paula, hauling her out of the chair.

"Paula, you heard? Isn't it spiffing! Paula—"

"Yes, wuw-wather! But Polly, deah—Polly—"

"We'll do it!" Polly declared. "As many as the car can hold! It will help to cheer up poor old Doll. She can surely be spared from the farm to come back for a single night at the school. It will be just the thing to soften the blow she has had to undergo—eh, Paula?"

"Yes, wather! Howevah," said Paula, ruefully rubbing a shoulder that Polly had slapped, "I do wish, Polly, deah, you would soften some of your blows! Black and blue, bai Jove!"

The study door opened, and Madge Minden came in, exclaiming, in the expectation of being amused:

"Now, what is all the noise about, girls?"

"Aha!" cried Polly. "Wait till you hear the grandest idea that ever was! You'll be one to come, Madge, darling. We can squeeze six into

the big car—seven, if Paula has a hassock on the floor!”

Betty was mirthfully gesturing to Polly to keep calm.

“You seem to forget, Polly, dear, it’s a tremendous favour to ask of Miss Somerfield. It may not be convenient; the car may not be free.”

“Burr!” Polly disposed of these misgivings with an airy wave. “It will be arranged, because Miss Somerfield will see at once that it is going to mean such a pleasant surprise and consolation for poor old Doll!”

“Yes, wather, geals! And, this being Fwiday, and it is pwobable we shall wide off first thing in the morning, I wather think I’ll go and pack,” beamed Paula, drifting to the door. “What shall I require, geals?”

“Well, let’s think,” said Polly, very seriously. “A dustcoat for the journey, and a raincoat in case of rain—”

“Yes, wather!”

“An afternoon frock for Saturday, and a ditto for Sunday,” Polly reeled off gravely. “An evening frock for Saturday, and another for Sunday night. Oh, you won’t want much. Get all that in an attaché-case easily, can’t you?”

Paula yelped:

“Wha-a-at! Cwush four of my best fwooks into a handbag? Look heah, pway be sewious! Can I bwing a portmantean?”

“You can not,” said Polly flatly. “A toothbrush and a nightdress, that’ll be my mark. Ha, ha, ha!”

“Haw, haw, haw!” chuckled the amiable duffer, drifting off. “Weal, I’ll see what I can do—yes, wather!”

“We had better see what we can do—about getting permission!” was Betty’s laughing rejoinder. “It does sound a tall order! Only, we are doing absolutely no work this last week in the term, so that’s to our advantage.”

“My advice is—go, Betty! ‘On, Stanley, on!’” Polly urged, pointing the Form captain to the door. “No sleep for me to-night, unless I know that in the morning we are off on this jolly jaunt!”

“About which,” smiled Madge placidly, “I am still in the dark.”

But she was to be fully enlightened now. So was Naomer Nakara, as that roguish little thing suddenly came whisking into the room.

Madge took the projected excursion sedately, but for Naomer it was the signal for a Dervish dance round the study.

“Ooo, yes! Queek—queek! Eet will be so nice! And we shall take Dolly a beeg plum-cake, in case she not have enough to eat at home!”

“Darling,” smiled Madge, running a caressing hand over Naomer’s head, “I don’t suppose things are quite as bad as that at Dolly’s home. But we will load up the car all we can, if—if—”

“If!” sighed Polly, throwing herself down into a chair. “Oh, if only it can be arranged! Wonder how long Betty will be?”

Polly never was a good one at being kept on tenterhooks. When a thing was going to be done, she liked to get on with it at once. So it was quite a merciful relief to her that Betty was soon back, smiling happily.

“Yes—Polly, Madge—it’s all right!”

“It’s settled? Hip, hip!” cheered Polly, bounding up from the easy-chair. “What do you think of that, Naomer?”

And the pair of them waltzed together round the room, in a transport of delight.

“I saw Miss Somerfield and Miss Redgrave to-

gether,” Betty explained gaily. “I’m to see Miss Redgrave again about it, later on this evening. Meantime, we can decide who is to go. Seven is the limit, and even then it will be a squeeze, but we don’t mind that.”

“Ooo, no; I squeeze myself to nothing!” promised Naomer, giving a sort of tight shrug of the shoulders. “And zen I sit next to Paula, and I squeeze her to nothing, too!”

“Bai Jove, I watch you don’t!” said Paula, coming into the study in time to hear the dusky one’s ominous remark. “Weal, geals, I understand that the awangement has been agweed to in the wight quarter—what?”

“So who are the seven to be?” Betty debated promptly. “We are five already, and we must allow room for Dolly’s coming back with us.”

“As regards the sixth girl to go,” said Betty, “I think it should be Eva Merrick.”

There was a pause. For once, Betty’s listeners did not seem to be in agreement with her.

“I was thinking of Helen Craig,” Polly remarked at last. “Still—”

“I am not forgetting Helen,” Betty hastened to say. “But it’s like this, girls. Eva Merrick was Dolly’s study-mate. Eva was the girl who beat Dolly over the Grace Pullen prize, and we know that Dolly’s people have said they would like to meet the girl who just beat their own Doll.”

“Then let Eva be number six,” agreed Polly heartily. “Yes, Betty, I quite see—”

“Another thing,” the Form captain went on gravely, “don’t you think it will be a good thing to get Eva away from Cora Grandways for once?”

“Yes, wather!”

“I know,” Madge chimed in sadly. “It is such a pity to see Eva getting so thick with Cora! And it has all come about so suddenly, too. Eva was quite all right up to a few days ago.”

“We see nothing of her now,” deplored Betty. “Ever since I had Dolly’s letter, at brekker-time this morning, I have been trying to get hold of her when she was not with Cora. But Cora is Eva’s own shadow these days for being always with her. I want to show Eva that letter of Doll’s. She ought to be interested.”

“Is she there now, perhaps?” Madge wondered, with a nod to indicate one of the neighbouring studies.

Betty shook her head.

“I looked to see, coming along. She is still out with Cora, in the sidecar. But as soon as Eva does come in, I’ll get hold of her. Meantime, what about some tennis, as prep. is finished?”

And they all adjourned to the open air, feeling highly elated over the novel sort of week-end that was in store for them, thanks to Betty’s bright idea!

#### She Wanted to Forget.

IT was as late as the girls were allowed to be out at this time of the year when Cora Grandways brought her motor-cycle and sidecar whirling in through the school gateway.

Eva was the occupant of the sidecar. She retained her seat until the outfit’s flyaway driver had brought it to a standstill outside the cycle-sheds, but she did not seem inclined to wait about whilst Cora was making the machine safe for the night.

“Well, it was a lovely spin, Cora!” she said, with a levity that seemed just a bit forced. “Thanks ever so! See you later!”

“Oh, yes; I’ll drop in on you in a few minutes!”

Eva sauntered away, straightening a hat that

had got rather blown awry during the breezy run, and then twirling her gloves. Those who saw her going towards the school porch, in the cool of the summer's evening, must have felt rather uneasy about the girl. Her very step was that of a girl who has acquired a bold, careless disposition. It would have been very easy, in the twilight, to mistake her for Cora Grandways, such a mincing air was Eva's.

Bold and careless she was feeling, too, these days. Not only that, she was forgetting what it had been like to feel so tortured by her conscience over the great wrong done to Dolly Delane.

Perhaps it was because Dolly was no longer in the school, no longer a study-mate whose cheery spirit, in the face of defeat, had been such a reproach to Eva's guilty mind. Be that as it might, Eva's heart and mind were quite hardened now.

She had done a very mean thing—well, yes. And she would have been wiser and better not to have done it. That she was ready to admit to herself. But it was done! It was too late to think of confessing, and so—

"Oh, hang! What do I care?" she said to herself, shrugging, as she gained the privacy of her study. "It's never going to be charged against me, that's the great thing. Cora is the only one who knows, and she won't blab."

No, there was Cora's own word for it—for what Cora's word was worth—that she would never tell, providing Eva remained her "crony." That condition—a hateful one it had seemed to Eva, when it was first put before her. But now—

"After all" she mused softly, flinging herself down in a study armchair, "it's rather fun going with Cora again. She does do things! The way we came along just now!"

Eva, as she went over in her mind the one or two other things that she and Cora had done this evening, suddenly wiped her lips rather severely with a perfumed handkerchief. It would never do for anybody in the school to guess that she had smoked a cigarette with Cora during a break in the run round.

It was only a moment after this that the door opened and Betty looked into the room.

"Hallo, Eva! You're back, then! I say!"

Betty had rather a job to speak as heartily as she did. It was impossible for her to be blind to a certain stand-offishness about this other girl now that she was so "thick" with Cora.

"Well, what?" asked Eva languidly.

There was a pause. Betty had closed the door, and was gazing at the girl who had changed for the worse just lately.

"Eva—Eva, dear, you—you never seem to want to be friendly now. I wish you would say why it is: We all feel it, Eva."

"I'm sorry!" shrugged Eva, lounging back and looking down herself to her crossed ankles. "I haven't wanted to offend you."

"I should hope not, Eva. But you haven't wanted to mix with us as you used to do, have you? You have let us see so plainly that Cora is your friend now."

"Well, Cora hasn't any other friends, so I—I thought I might as well," was Eva's lame excuse.

"Eva, if Cora hasn't any other friends, you know very well why that is. She won't join in and play the game, but much prefers to be in open enmity to us Study 12 girls. I can remember the time when you yourself said you were fed up with Cora's horrid ways."

"Oh, if you are going to harp on what is past—"

"I wouldn't, Eva, only Cora is still the same. She hasn't come round to you, but you have had to go back to her. Isn't that a great pity?"

Eva flung up her head, and looked defiantly at the Form captain through the gloom.

"No, I don't see that it's a pity at all; and if you have only come here to pester me about my being friendly with Cora—"

"I have not, Eva!" Betty hastened to protest earnestly. "It is something much better than that. Some of us are going to spend the week-end visiting poor old Doll. It's a great treat, and most of the girls would give anything to be in the party. But it must be limited to six, and we are sure that you—"

"I don't want to come, Betty! No—no, don't count on me!" Eva said, starting up in sudden



### CORA HAS THE UPPER HAND!

"Cora—wait!" cried Eva. "Shut that door, and listen to me. I—I can't bear to face Dolly! Cora looked at her domineeringly. "If I say you are to go, you are to go!" she said.

agitation. "I—I— Why should I go and see Dolly?"

"Why? Oh, Eva, when she was your study-mate and chum, and was so sporting over the way she took her defeat at your hands in the Grace Pullen exam! Surely you will want to come?"

"No, I don't, Betty!"

"Remember, too, that Doll is going through a hard time. She—"

"Oh, don't keep on!" Eva cried out quite wildly, walking about the study. "It's silly, I call it, this idea of going over in a drove to see Dolly. If her people are having a hard time, why flock in upon them?"

"We shan't put them to a bit of trouble or expense, you may be sure!" Betty answered

spritely. "Just as if we would! We shall put up in the village, and—"

"Well, I don't want to come."

"Eva—"

"No, so that's that!" the guilty girl said harshly, taking up a book and slamming it down again. "Plenty of other girls want to go—"

"Oh, plenty!"

"Then let one of them have my place."

Betty was looking distinctly pained by now.

"How strange—how callous you seem about poor Doll!" she exclaimed at last. "I suppose, then, you don't want to see this letter I had from her this morning? It was addressed to me, but, of course, it was meant for all old chums, and you were a chum of Doll's, Eva—one of the best, weren't you?"

One of the best!

Ah, the coals of fire were starting to burn again upon one's guilty head! If Betty said much more, it would start one's conscience crying out again.

"Bother you, Betty!" was Eva's sudden, impatient cry. "Do give over about Dolly! She has left the school, and that's the end of Dolly!"

"Is it? It may be, so far as you are concerned. Some of us, though, aren't like that!" Betty said indignantly. "Eva, I'm just ashamed of you! This is what comes of going with Cora, and—"

"Ha! Ha, now what are you saying about me, Betty Barton?" was Cora's insolent cry, as she came flaunting into the room. "Slanging me behind my back, as usual?"

Betty had long since learned to treat any gibes of Cora's as being beneath contempt. So she now calmly walked out, dismissing the sneering words from her mind. But that Eva should be "in" with Cora like this, that Eva should not want to go and see Dolly—this Betty could not understand.

Now that Eva and Cora were alone, the latter sat down, whisked out a cigarette-case which she secretly carried about her, and calmly stuck a cigarette between her lips.

Then she whipped it away, laughing.

"Sorry! I nearly forgot. It isn't done at Morocco, is it, Eva? He, he, he! Well, what about to-morrow? Saturday, and a halfer! I'm for a spree of some sort, Eva."

"Yes, all right," agreed that girl, with another touch of desperate levity.

The ranking things that Betty had said—without knowing, of course, what pangs of the conscience they were causing the unsuspected cheat—had made Eva feel all the more inclined to enter into anything that Cora might propose. It was the way to forget!

"What did Betty Barton want, Eva?" asked Cora.

"Oh, only to ask me to join a party that's motor-ing over to Dolly's during the week-end!" shrugged Eva. "As if I want to go!"

"Yes, just as if— He, he, he!" sniggered Cora. "When it was Dolly who would have won the Grace Pullen, if— But we don't mention that, do we? No, mum's the world! Look here, though—of course!"

And suddenly Cora was on her feet, looking wildly excited.

"You will go on this trip, Eva! You'll go with me! Splendid! I'll get permission to follow the car with my outfit, you in the sidecar!"

"Cora, no! Oh, I—"

"Yes! Don't be silly!" Cora rallied her crony by compulsion. "Needless to say, I don't care a hang about seeing Dolly. But there is the ride—over a hundred miles each way! What a spree!"

"Not with those others girls and Miss Redgrave!"

"Bah! What do you take me for?" Cora laughed craftily. "I shall have to promise to follow the car all the way. Need I keep up with them? Eva, I am going straight away to get round Miss Somerfield!"

"No, don't! Cora—"

"Hold your noise, silly! I'm going to say that, if you go with me, it leaves room for another girl in the car. And I shall give the usual promise to drive carefully and keep the car in sight, and—and— Oh, it'll be lovely! We must do it—we simply must!" Cora chuckled, whipping open the door.

"Cora, wait! Shut that door—listen to me! I can't go. I can't bear to—to face Dolly," was the miserable admission which was wrung from Eva huskily. "How can I, Cora?"

Cora had closed the door again. She came towards Eva with a nasty look, a domineering air.

"If I say you are to go, you are to go, Eva! I shall have to have one passenger, and it has got to be you. None of Betty's precious pals overflowing into my outfit, thank you! So make-up your mind, Eva, and, for goodness' sake, don't look so humpy!"

The girl whose guilt was known to the other sat down, breathing fast and hard.

"If you make me go, Cora—and I know I can't stand out against you—I shall be miserable all the time!"

"I shan't, that's the main thing!" laughed Cora. "Besides, you— Oh, buck up! Think of the spree we can have! The chance of a life-time! I'm off, I tell you, to fix it up!"

And she was gone in a flash, dancing along the corridor in her delight at this fresh outlet for her flyaway nature, while Eva Merrick subsided into a study chair once more, and stared dully at the wall.

This time to-morrow she would be meeting the calm, clear eyes of Dolly once again!

### The Girl Who Came Second.

DOLLY DELANE came, with a rather staggering step, across her father's tidy farmyard, carrying a brimming bucket in either hand.

It was five o'clock in the afternoon, and feeding-time for the pigs. Hence a comical row of porcine heads showing along the top of the rails fencing in the various pens. Hence, too, the fearful squealing which was the porkers' "Hurry up!"

Dolly was getting to them as fast as her youthful legs would carry her when she was bowed down with such a big and difficult load.

"Here you are, then!" was her breathless, laughing cry, as she put over the first pailful. "Urr, greedy! Keep your feet out of the trough, you!"

This was to the bully in one sty, who wanted the lot to himself. From next door came a very plaintive squealing of younger pigs, who feared that they were not going to get a look in at all.

But over went a pailful of special mixture for them—"the darlings!" as Dolly commented on them aloud to herself—and she stood and watched them as they pushed and shoved amongst themselves, in contest for the titbits.

It had been a hard day for the girl who was no longer a member of Morocco School.

When she came home, in a hurry, to lend a hand about the place, and so help dad and mother through very critical times, it had been with no

delusions about farmwork being only a "pretty-pretty" business.

Helping dad and mother—really doing work that could set free some paid hand for other labour—meant sheer going at it from early morning to nightfall. Fortunately, she was blessed with a willing spirit. Hadn't she been called "Dolly, the Doormat" at Morcove, because of her obliging disposition?

This had been a hard day. But here she was, now that most of the toil was behind her, still refusing to look tired out. Just at present her shoulders felt pulled out of joint, but she picked up the empty pails cheerfully and trotted away for another "ration." Not a squeal was to be heard after that. Dolly's own particular charges, the pigs, were just enjoying themselves!

Over at a rain-water butt, the bustling girl rinsed her hands, and dried them on a towel that hung close by. Then, keeping her sleeves still furled to the elbows, she went across to a meal-shed, and heaped corn into a bowl for the chickens.

Five minutes later she was out in a sunny meadow that lay hard by the farmyard, with a host of hens and pullets pecking around at the scattered corn. It had been a perfect day, except that the afternoon heat had been almost too much for those who had no time to take a rest in the shade. Still, the great heat was good for the corn, dad's only hope this year!

Dolly's thoughtful eyes strayed to the distant fields of ripening wheat, and she looked pleased at the heartening sight they afforded. But when her gaze came back to the meadow in which she was, sorrow clouded her pretty face at last.

This was the grazing meadow in which such a fine herd of milkers used to browse, but gone were the cattle now. Not turned into hard cash, either, but simply wiped out by the dreaded foot-and-mouth plague.

With a hard sigh, she shook the last grains of corn to the fowls, and was going off to get on with another task that was in her day's self-appointed routine. But suddenly her spirits collapsed, and she found herself almost in tears.

One rueful thought had brought another in its train. It was no use. She simply had to stand and think of all that had happened just lately, the chain of cruel misfortune that had been fettered upon herself and those she loved.

And was it a wonder that once again it gave her a bitter sadness to think that by rights there should have been a fifty-pound cheque for her next week?

The Grace Pullen Prize, instituted for the very purpose to which Dolly had intended to put it, if only she had won—to pay for another term's schooling—thus being able to continue her career at Morcove, as her loving parents so wished her to do, without being an expense to them in these hard times.

If she had won! But the galling part about it all was that she really had won, only she had been cheated out of the prize, cheated by a girl who had acquired one of the exam. question-papers on the day prior to the contest. And that girl had called herself a friend! She had been one's own study-mate!

"Fifty pounds!" Dolly sighed aloud to herself. "It was not that Eva needed the money. She will buy herself—not much happiness with it, I should think. I wonder if she is sorry?"

And then, in a sadder tone than ever:

"I wonder how she would feel," Dolly mused, slowly walking away, "if she knew that I knew?"

But, there, it did no good, brooding. There was nothing better to be done than to try and forget the cruel wrong. She, Dolly, would not have been at home here, on the farm, to-day, only it had been her painful ordeal to realise that the wrong could never be righted. She knew, but she was not in a position to denounce the cheat.

Hark!

A fine motor-car suddenly coming up the lane to the farm—a most unusual thing. And, surely, one could hear voices—girls' voices—the sort of high-spirited outburst that Morcovians often indulged in when returning from a holiday jaunt!

Dolly took a run and was soon mounted on a flint wall. Excitedly she stared, clearly seeing the oncoming car as it came gliding up the lane.

The Morcove car! With Morcove girls in it! "Oh, I say!" Dolly gasped deliciously to herself, jumping down from the wall. "It's some of the girls—Betty and the rest, and Miss Redgrave, I do believe!"

She had run only a few yards when she had to stop dead and wipe her eyes. Blinding tears had gushed from them. She was feeling unstrung all at once, because this was such an emotional joy—to be going to speak with her dear chums of Morcove once again!

#### Eva Merrick's Peril.

HALF a minute later Dolly was looking her old happy self as she stood, ringed about by the girls who, with Miss Redgrave, had alighted from the car.

Everybody was talking at once. Paula Creel's dear old drawl was in Dolly's ears again, coupled with Naomer's shrill outcries and Polly's boisterous jabber.

"How are you, Doll? Bit of a surprise for you, eh?"

"Yes, wather, what? Haw, haw, haw, Dolly deah—"

"Ooo, queek, queek, let me see ze baby cows! Eet is so nice to be here—"

"After such a grand ride! Oh, Doll, it was such lovely scenery, coming along!"

"What a beautiful part of the world you live in, Doll!"

"We made Madge bring some music!"

"Bai Jove, wather! Dolly deah—"

"How are your people, Dolly? And you? My word, girls, doesn't she look business-like? Ha, ha, ha! Good old Doll!"

Such were a few of the hearty remarks which attended all the give and take of hugs and kisses. Dolly had a vague notion that Miss Redgrave herself gave her a loving smile and a tender kiss, but there could be no taking much notice of the youthful mistress whilst Betty and the rest were crowding around.

In fact, when at last Dolly saw a chance to get in a word about letting her people know, she suddenly discovered that dad and mother were already out here, in talk with Miss Redgrave.

"Mother darling! Dad, isn't it jolly? Isn't it just too kind—"

"The best thing that has happened for many a day, my dear, next to your coming home to stand by your poor old father and mother," Mr. Delane said cheerily. "Come in, young ladies; come indoors—"

"But we are such a crowd!"

"Yes, wather!"



**A JOYOUS SURPRISE.** Excitedly Dolly gazed at the oncoming car as it came down the lane. It was the Morcove car, and with Morcove girls in it! "Oh, I say, it's Betty and the rest!" Dolly gasped.

"And there are more to come yet," Miss Redgrave laughingly enlightened Dolly and her parents. "Two girls have come by motor-cycle and sidecar. They dropped behind, but should soon be here."

"Two more of you?" Dolly exclaimed delightedly, turning to her chums. "Who would they be now?"

"Well, Cora Grandways is one, Doll. She—she was very keen on coming."

"Oh, yes; for the ride, I expect," was Dolly's nodded response. "And the other?"

"You will be so pleased, Doll," exclaimed Polly. "It's Eva—Eva Merrick! She's one of your old chums, isn't she? Your own old study mate."

"Yes," Dolly said, trying not to look taken aback. "Oh, yes! Well—er—do come in, and tea won't be long!"

Then the chorus of voices started again. The motorists had had tea. They had already secured quarters for the night, down in the village. And the long and short of it was, they were not going to let their surprise visit put the household about the least little bit. That was not the idea at all.

Dolly at last ran to her mother.

"Mother darling, do you hear this? They simply refuse—"

"Yes, I know. How foolish of them!" lamented Mrs. Delane, looking as if there was nothing she would have liked better than to house the whole party, including the two still to come. "But they just shan't go away yet!"

"I'm seeing to that!" cried Dolly's father, and they found that he had sprung to the wheel, and, like the expert motorist he had been for years, was steering the school car round to a lock-up garage that had once been a loose-box.

"Haw, haw, haw!" chuckled Paula. "Haow

wich! Weal, geals, we'll have to stay aaround now, what?"

They trooped into the quaint old farmhouse that they knew so well from previous visits, but it was not long before the youngsters were flocking forth again, eager to go round the place with Dolly. Miss Redgrave stayed within doors, however, engaged in a quiet talk with Mr. and Mrs. Delane.

"Now, Doll," said Betty seriously, as soon as they were roaming around, "are you quite, quite sure you haven't minded our coming?"

"Oh, Betty! Just as if it isn't simply glorious for me! When I have been thinking of you all so much, and the dear old school!"

Madge had to interpose a remark here concerning Naomer. Morcove's royal scholar had scampered off on her own, and Madge didn't want things to happen.

"Oh, Naomer won't do any harm," was Dolly's reassuring answer.

"So long as she doesn't let the bull out, Doll!"

"Bai Jove, yes, wather! Er—my gwacious—"

"There's no bull now," Dolly informed them casually. "We lost him along with the rest of the cattle."

"Oh, Dolly!" came from them all then compassionately, and there was a silence eloquent of the girls' intense pity for their former schoolmate and her people.

They had needed to be on the spot like this to realise fully the disastrous run of luck that Mr. Delane had had. They could remember his pedigree herd; and now—all wiped out!

"And you—you are turning to so bravely!" Betty exclaimed earnestly. "Bravo, Doll!"

"Yes, wather, bai Jove!"

"I don't know about 'bravely,'" shrugged Dolly, with restored cheerfulness. "I'm helping all I can, and of course it saves money."

"I hope it isn't wrong to say so, but I think you should have won the Grace Pullen, Doll, instead of coming in second!" was headstrong Polly's outburst. "Eva won the prize, and we all know Eva doesn't really need the money."

"Yes, well—"

"By the way, Eva and Cora haven't turned up yet," Madge said, glancing away to the main road. "Perhaps they are hung up miles from here. It was only three in the afternoon when they dropped behind."

"Puncture?" conjectured Dolly.

"Don't know what it was, and Cora didn't know, either," was Polly shrugged answer. "What arms, girls—look!" she laughed, suddenly catching hold of one of Dolly's with its sleeve rolled above the elbow. "Brown as a berry!"

"Bai Jove, wipping! The simple life for me, geals, when I leave school! What a pewpetual delight, bai Jove, to be suwounded with—er—er—yes, wather!" Paula began to falter. "How—evah—"

For suddenly she realised that she and her chums were going to be "suwounded" with hissing geese!

At the same instant impish little Naomer could be seen, capering behind the feathered flock that she had just let through from another field. Betty and the rest did not know which to laugh at most—the hissing geese; or chucking Naomer; or Paula, looking wildly around for sanctuary.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Geals, don't laugh, it may make them—er—fewocious, what? Dweadful cweatures, yes,

wather! Shoo—geraway! Ow! Shoo! Dolly deah, do they peck?"

"Sometimes, Paula."

"Dweadful, dweadful!" groaned Paula, beating a precipitate retreat from the hissing birds. They seemed to have an old grudge against Paula, for as she backed away they devoted their hisses to her.

Then suddenly even the clamour made by the geese was not sufficient to drown the warning trump-trump! of a motor-horn. Polly yelled:

"Here they are—Cora and Eva!"

The outfit was being driven right into the farmyard by its daring driver. Jolting and bounding over the uneven surface, and with its engine roaring loudly at low gear, it came quickly towards the girls, causing the geese to scatter with hoarse croaks of alarm. Then Cora shut off the engine, stopped the motor-cycle, and swung out of the saddle.

"Hallo, Dolly! Having a taste of the simple life, are you? My word, you don't look any better for it! Here is Eva Merrick. What's the matter, Eva? Surely you know how to open that sidecar door by now!"

For Eva was getting very flustered. As yet she had not met Dolly's eyes, but was giving her attention to the latch of the sidecar door, which seemed to stick.

And now, all in an instant, a startling thing happened.

The girls who had come by car were amazed to see Dolly Delane make a sudden rush at the motor-bike. She was raising her hand as if she would strike a blow at the girl who had yet to alight from the sidecar. At the same time she shouted—in anger, as it seemed:

"Get out—get out of that!"

Then the bewildered onlookers realised, with sudden horror, what Dolly's strange conduct meant.

She brought down her raised hand to beat out a tiny flame that was flickering around the outfit's engine. It was some petrol that was on fire—petrol!

"Oh, look out!" yelled Cora, falling farther away from the motor-cycle. "It'll explode! The tank! Look out, both of you!"

Dolly Delane could have jumped back in a flash; but Eva Merrick was still huddled in the sidecar, and now she was simply paralysed with fright. She had seen the flame—one that flared up from the region of the carburettor. There must have been an overflow of petrol, and by some means or other it had become ignited.

And the storage tank of petrol was right above the flames!

Dolly, however, did not run away after the first and ineffectual attempt to extinguish the deadly flare. She went even nearer, and with only her apron hastily caught up at the hem, she beat steadily at the fire.

A moment more and the danger was past. Dolly had put out the flames, whilst Betty and Polly were standing just as close on the other side, simply hauling Eva headlong out of the sidecar.

She came tumbling forth with a tottery step that told how unnerved and helpless she had been rendered by sheer fright. Credit was due to Betty and Polly for the way they had hastily lugged her away; but these two girls were as ready as any to recognise that only Dolly's presence of mind had averted a dreadful accident.

"Yes, wather!" palpitated Paula, all of a shake herself. "My gwacious, if the petwol tank had caught! But it's all wight, Eva!"

"Yes, Eva; pull yourself together," pleaded Polly. "And you know whom you have to thank for perhaps saving your life—your old study mate, Dolly Delane!"

The very girl whom Eva had cheated out of the Grace Pullen prize!

#### From Bad to Worse.

THAT evening it was arranged between Miss Redgrave and Dolly's parents that the girl should go back to Morcove in the car on Monday morning, so as to be present, after all, on breaking-up day.

It was a proposal that Mr. and Mrs. Delane hailed with delight, and when Dolly wanted to demur to going they only concluded that that was because she felt she could ill be spared.

Her help was invaluable about the farm—no mistake about that. But her father and mother were not going to let her deny herself what they imagined must be a very great joy. In any case, it only meant her being absent for some twenty-four hours. She would leave home first thing Monday morning, and would be back again on Tuesday evening, sleeping just the one night at the school.

One night for her again, after all, in the old dormitory!

Dear, familiar faces to be encountered once again in the dear, familiar haunts. A place for her in the great assembly on Tuesday morning, when the headmistress' end-of-term speech would



**CORNERED!** Cora jumped up with assumed gaiety and grinned widely. "You didn't mind us putting on a spurt and getting here before you, did you, Miss Redgrave?" she asked. "I did mind very much, Cora," was the stern reply.



set the hundreds of scholars cheering wildly. In all this, what a great joy for her indeed! But ah, what of the moment when, during the prize-giving, the name of Eva Merrick would be called?

Would that moment be too much for her, Dolly Delane, the girl who was so certain that she had been cruelly cheated?

That was the dread that was upon her—a secret dread which she dare confide to no one.

Hard enough had it been to feel resigned to the heartless fraud which a trusted school chum had perpetrated. Would the moment for the cheat to take the fifty-pound cheque into her dishonest hand be too much for human nature to bear?

"I must nerve myself when the time comes, that's all," Dolly was saying to herself over and over again. "It will never do for me to make a scene—oh, no, no! I've no actual proof, and so even my best chums would feel that I was only making a spiteful accusation. To see the dear old school again—oh, I shall be so delighted! But the prize-giving—to hear Eva being cheered, to see her coming away with that cheque!"

Poor Dolly! It certainly was going to be a test under which the very pluckiest of natures might break down.

Now and then she was seized with the forlorn hope that Eva, at the last moment, would own up. But cold reason told Dolly that it was no use building on this. If Eva had ever been troubled in her conscience, she could not be feeling troubled now, or her manner would be so different.

Nor had Eva, indeed, any intention of owning up.

Hourly she was finding it easier to flout the voice of conscience and to harden her heart.

Before Monday morning came round she was calling herself a silly for having funk'd this weekend visit. A nice bit of fun along with Cora she would have missed!

Saturday's outward run from the school had been a spree in itself, especially after they had contrived to drop far behind the car. Then they had had a bed-room to themselves in the village, and so they had been able to sit about at the open window and smoke whilst they talked, until the chimes came at a late hour over the sleeping community.

Cora was wanting her, Eva, to join her during the holidays, and she felt very much inclined to fall in with the idea—for part of the time, anyhow. It was becoming such good fun to be "thick" with Cora.

And so, after an early breakfast on the Monday morning, the return journey began, with Eva Merrick in a mood that was just like Cora's—a lawless, ripe-for-mischief mood.

The two girls were not content merely to start off in high spirits, like Betty and the others. Cora never had seen any fun in being merry and bright and yet well-behaved. Now she had a convert to her reckless code.

"Look here, Eva, we don't want to get their dust all day," Cora said, with a grin and a wink, a few minutes after starting. "So it won't be long before we get away from them."

"Miss Redgrave will smell a rat," warned Eva; but a certain don't-care look showed that she was quite ready to take any chances.

"Let her!" laughed Cora. "It's the end of term, anyhow, so I can't get 'gated.'"

"You might get expelled, Cora."

"So might you. Ha, ha, ha! Pity you said

that, isn't it?" Cora twitted the girl whose guilty secret she knew. "All right; but I must tease you a bit, Eva!"

It proved how far gone Eva was in callousness that she could give a saucy smile and loll back in a free and easy manner, exclaiming:

"I don't mind, Cora. I know you are never going to blab, now I'm your friend. The outfit's running fine to-day, Cora!"

"Isn't it? Let's do a stunt!" chuckled the flyaway girl, opening out a control.

Next second they were simply tearing along the road, rapidly overhauling the car that Miss Redgrave was driving at a steady twenty miles an hour.

Cora's demon had got to work in her. A very demon she herself looked just then, bending low over the handlebars, and her tense face screwed up, as it were, against the rushing wind.

Trump, trump, trump! She kept the motor-horn blaring. Tr-rump, rump! She was going to overtake and pass the car, and hang any subsequent row!

Miss Redgrave heard, and could do nothing except draw in the car. Behind her, the girl passengers suddenly paused in their light-hearted talk to give heed to sounds which told them what Cora was doing.

Then the motor-cycle and sidecar drew level with the car, and Cora carried off her audacious deed by laughing aside for an instant at the mistress.

"Bai Jove, geals!" gasped Paula. "Was there evah a more weckless geal than that Corwa?"

"Urr, you wretch!" Polly had to content herself with fuming, whilst she glared out at the scorchers. "Serve you right if you get locked up one of these days!"

Then the motor-cycle and sidecar flashed ahead, and the girls knew how vexed Miss Redgrave was feeling, whilst she refused to put on speed to try and catch up the couple.

"Did you see Eva just then?" Betty exclaimed regretfully to those who were with her in the body of the car. Dolly was one. "Eva's going from bad to worse rapidly. I don't know what we can do."

"It seemed to begin with her winning the Grace Pullen," said Madge gently. "Success must have turned her head, I'm afraid."

Dolly said nothing; but she was wondering—was the winning of the Grace Pullen prize indeed the cause of Eva's breaking out like this? Or, rather, was the cheating for the prize the cause?

What if Eva had only taken up with Cora so as to seek distraction from the hauntings of conscience?

"From bad to worse!" Betty had said sadly; and how true it was of Eva!

Truer than any of them suspected, if they had only known:

Even now, whilst Eva Merrick was being whirled on ahead of the school car by Cora Grandways, she was having a sudden idea that marked another step in the moral declension.

It had flashed upon her that it would be a fine thing to renounce the prize, at to-morrow's prize-giving, in favour of Dolly Delane!

The fifty-pound cheque could be passed on to Dolly, on the grounds that she, Eva, felt she owed a big debt of gratitude to her former school-fellow over Saturday's timely action, when the petrol was on fire. The school, from the head-mistress downwards, would applaud the desire to

reward hard-hit Dolly in a practical way. That meant more praise, more kudos!

It meant, too, the complete salving of one's conscience.

Eva's mind was made up at once. She would do it! And this prompt decision left her supremely happy all at once.

Now she could go ahead and really enjoy whatever Cora proposed, as she could not have expected to do ere this. Splendid idea, to let Dolly have the prize, whilst retaining for oneself all the glory of having won it!

Suddenly Cora spared her coney in the sidecar a hasty glance, whilst they still whirred along.

"You look awfully jolly all at once, Eva!"

"I feel so. Are you going to slow up and let the others get us in sight again?"

"Not likely!"

And on and on they sped, roaring up the rising portions of the road, and then going all out along level stretches, or purring swiftly down gentle descents. Cora's speedometer never marked less than five-and-twenty to the mile, except where other main roads had to be crossed.

In this way they came by eleven o'clock to the fine old town where, last Saturday, the entire party from Morcove had lunched. The runaways knew that Miss Redgrave intended to give them lunch at the same restaurant in High Street, and so they boldly decided to seek some other place.

By eleven-fifteen they were doing themselves very well in a first-class teashop. At a nicely-screened corner table at the far end of the room, they had a white cloth spread with cold ham, salad, apple-tart and cream, and coffee.

This was what Cora liked—and so did Eva, just at present—to be on one's own, giving orders to the waitress with an air! They had the place to themselves, and, after the tasty meal, they did not hesitate to light up cigarettes, simply to be "grand" and grown-up. If the waitress should see them, so much the better.

Cora reached for a Society illustrated that was lying about, and lolled back, smoking calmly and looking through the pages. Now and then she held the paper across to Eva, to draw that girl's attention to some beautifully-dressed Society girl who had been attending a Society function.

"That's the life I'm after, Eva, when I'm done with hateful Morcove!" grinned Cora. "My people have the money, so I guess I'll manage it!"

"It must be very nice," agreed Eva, shaking her cigarette-ash into a finished coffee-cup, "to mix with the people who really count. I would just love to—"

And there she broke off, snatching the cigarette away from lips that had formed themselves into a round "Oh!" of sudden dismay.

At the selfsame instant, Cora quickly dropped her cigarette to the floor and set a dainty foot upon it.

Miss Redgrave was in the shop!

The youthful mistress and her scholar companions were all bearing down upon this corner-table, whilst a tell-tale haze of tobacco-smoke still hung in the air!

#### One More Night, and then—?

It was a moment for Eva to go to pieces utterly, but not so with Cora. That girl, instantly becoming as bold as brass, jumped up, with a forced gaiety, grinning her wide grin.

"Hallo! Miss Redgrave, you didn't mind our

putting on a spurt, did you? It was such a safe, quiet road!"

"I did mind very much, Cora!" the mistress said, with excusable severity. "You have broken the promise which was the one condition on which Miss Somerfield let you accompany us."

"Oh, well, don't be cross—not at the end of the term!"

"I am very angry, Cora. Eva, stand up when I am speaking!"

That girl clumsily blundered to her feet, going red and white by turns.

"This will be reported, and you will both do a holiday task!" continued Miss Redgrave sternly. "I guessed you had got ahead of us to have lunch at some other place."

Then she advanced a step nearer to the table, and looked down into Eva's coffee-cup, where the half-finished cigarette was lying in the dregs.

"Eva!"

Miss Redgrave's eyes darted under the table.

"Stand aside—move that foot, Cora! I thought so,—as she saw a squashed cigarette. "You have both been smoking! Abominable conduct! In a public place like this, too!"

Cora had the nerve to grin, but Eva remained very red, her eyes cast down.

"Well, girls, sit down," Miss Redgrave now turned to say to Betty and the rest. "We, too, will lunch here, for it seems a very nice place."

"I can recommend the ham!" said Cora airily.

"I recommend you, Cora, to have done with impudence!" was the severe rebuke that Miss Redgrave administered, in front of the approaching waitress.

"Bai Jove, it's too bad!" Paula commented softly, as they found seats for themselves. "Geals, they have spoilt Miss Wedgwave's outing properly!"

"It wouldn't be Cora not to make misery for others!" Polly said fiercely. "The wretch! Eva, too! I'm disgusted!"

"Yes, Eva, too!" echoed Betty sadly. "That's the pity!"

Only Dolly, amongst that batch of firm friends, knew how insignificant was the misdeed which Eva had been found out in, compared with the terrible deed which was chargeable against her.

A cheat—a common cheat!

What would Betty and the rest have to say? How could they ever contain their bitter disgust and scorn for a one-time friend, if the affair of the stolen examination-paper became known to them?

But it never would be known now—never!

To-morrow this misdemeanour of Eva's would be forgiven, if not forgotten, when she was called forward to receive the great prize. Then the fact that Eva Merrick had achieved a wonderful success for herself—by sheer hard study—and had thereby brought great credit to the Fourth Form, would be a thing to get her accorded fresh cheers and handclaps. And after that—

After that, the boisterous going away from Morcove of all the girls, and for the one who had been cheated a return to the life of toil at home, with no hope of resuming one's schooldays ever!

Ah, the bitter sweetness to poor Dolly, early that evening, to be set down once again at the porch of Morcove School!

Back again, and scores of girls rushing to give her such a hearty, loving greeting, but back again only for a night!

Only to be there in the great assembly on the

morrow, to have to cheer along with the rest when the cheat's name was called for the prize!

And yet it was worth while paying even that bitter price, in return for the joy of being under the school's roof once more. She came away from a kindly talk with Miss Somerfield, to find ever so many of her former schoolmates begging her to look in upon them some time or other. If only this evening could never end! she was inclined to wish. It was such great happiness, even though there was the embittering knowledge that she was so close to that false friend and cheat again.

Dolly kept away from her own old study, so as to avoid being alone with Eva. They met once in the corridor, and Eva seemed to be very sweet all at once. But how could that sort of thing atone for all the rest?

Very beautiful the old school looked in the glamorous sunset light of this last evening of the term. She roamed around, encountered girls who, after all, were much too busy, getting ready for going home, to be able to do more than smile in passing.

She wandered forth, seeing the playing-field for the last time by the light of the setting sun. Hockey next term, but she would not be here. And supposing dad's corn harvest went wrong, where would she and her parents be by the time another breaking-up day came round for Morcove School?

Perhaps without a fixed home. Only a good harvest could save dad from the hands of people who held a mortgage on the farm, and whose interest was in arrears.

Finally, in the deepening twilight, she wandered back into the shadowy school, and sought Study 12.

"May I come in, girls? I know you are busy getting packed. Still—"

"Dear old Doll, come right in!"

"Yes, wather, bai Jove! And have this chair, Dolly, deah!" Paula beamed, rising quite briskly from her usual lounging-place. "It's a tweek to have you back, Dolly!"

"You keep that chair," smiled Dolly. "I like to see you there, Paula. It's good to see everybody doing just the same as usual."

"As a matiah of fact, I weally must go and see about my packing," Paula said, very seriously.

"Howevah, pwesently—what?" And she sat down again. "Yes, wather! Anothah term ending, gails. Once more the weavy wound of—Ow, what are you doing, Polly? Dwop it! Heal—stop!"

"Let go, then!" laughed Polly, still pulling at a line of string which Paula had inadvertently got wound round an ankle. "I want string—yards of it!"

Then poor, long-suffering Paula found herself being simply towed across the room by the line, Polly hauling in, so as to get the string round a box. Every time Polly pulled, Paula gave an awkward leap and groaned, wagging the entangled foot in vain.

"Dweadful—dweadful! I won't come back next term! I wefuse! Ow! Nothing but disastwous pwedicaments, making me look widiculous! Polly, deah—"

At this instant Naomer whisked into the study. Polly hailed her gladly.

"Oh—er—Naomer, darling, just help Paula!"

"Ooo, yes, I help her! Ha, ha, ha!"

"No! Get away!" howled Paula, fending off the impish one frantically. "Dwop it, Nao—Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Eet is breaking-up time!"

"I'm bweaking up fast, I know that!" lamented Paula, after being tumbled back into the easy-chair, with Naomer on her lap. "Understand, I wefuse to return to Morcove School! Why do you do it, Naomer?"

"Because I love you!"

"Haw, haw, haw! Weal, I suppose I must welent," the amiable one suddenly simpered. "After all, there are worse places than Morcove—yes, wather!"

"I should say so," Dolly spoke softly, from over by the door. "Wait till you really have to leave, Paula, dear; then you'll know just how much you love the old school."

Then the door again opened, and a girl looked into the room. It was Eva Merrick.

"Dolly, can you—can you come for a moment? I just wanted a word with you."

That said, Eva quickly effaced herself, leaving Dolly to go out after her, wondering greatly. What was coming now?

#### Dolly Says "No!"

IF—if it should mean that Eva, on this very last evening before the prize-giving, was going to own up!

That was the thrilling thought which had seized Dolly as she quitted Study 12 to follow Eva and hear what that girl had to say.

Perhaps, after all, the culprit was going to do the decent thing, the brave thing, at all costs—going to make a clean breast of her terrible misdeed, in time for the prize to be given to the one who had rightfully earned it!

A moment more, and the two girls were alone together in the study which they used to share. It was almost dark enough now for a light to be switched on, but Eva seemed to prefer the gloom, and Dolly did not like to go to the switch. She no longer "belonged" to this study, she felt.

"Yes, Eva?" she asked eagerly, as soon as the door was closed.

"It's like this, Dolly. You—you did a very brave thing last Saturday at the farm, and perhaps I would have been badly injured if—if you hadn't shown such presence of mind."

"Oh, I don't know about that, Eva! Anyhow, any other girl would have done it. I happened to be nearest to the sidecar, and saw the danger first."

"Still, there it was," Eva continued nervously, putting herself farther and farther from the victim of her cheating. "And I have been thinking it is up to me to—to repay you, Doll. I know you badly needed the Grace Pullen Prize, so what I want to do is to—to have the prize passed on to you."

There was a big pause before Dolly asked, in a tense tone:

"How do you mean, Eva? What shall you tell Miss Somerfield?"

"Oh—er—simply that I'm awfully grateful to you for the way you acted last Saturday, and—er—"

"Simply that!" Dolly broke out, her eyes beginning to look large with a scornful expression as she advanced upon Eva in the gloom. "You'll not tell Miss Somerfield anything else?"

"No, why should I?" Eva asked sharply.

"You will have to tell Miss Somerfield something else if you want me to take that prize off your hands," Dolly said sternly. "Eva, it won't do! No, it won't answer with me!"

"What do you mean?"

"I am not going to take that prize as a sup—"

posed reward for anything I did last Saturday. I am not going to give you a chance to be thought all the more highly of, Eva—the chance, too, of salving your guilty conscience. If I take that prize to-morrow, it will be because all the school knows that I really won it!”

“What?”

“I won it, Eva, and you—you know very well I did! You cheated, and—and cheats never prosper!”

Utterly staggered by the sudden, unexpected accusation, Eva sank into a chair, staring wildly.

For the moment she was at a loss, and the girl's very silence confessed her guilt. On the deep silence, her sharp panting for breath was audible, whilst she sat shrinking before the other girl's steady gaze.

“How do I know you cheated?” Dolly spoke on quietly. “Never mind how I know, Eva. You once declared very desperately that you won the prize fairly. That was your guilty conscience, making you wonder if I suspected you. Well, I

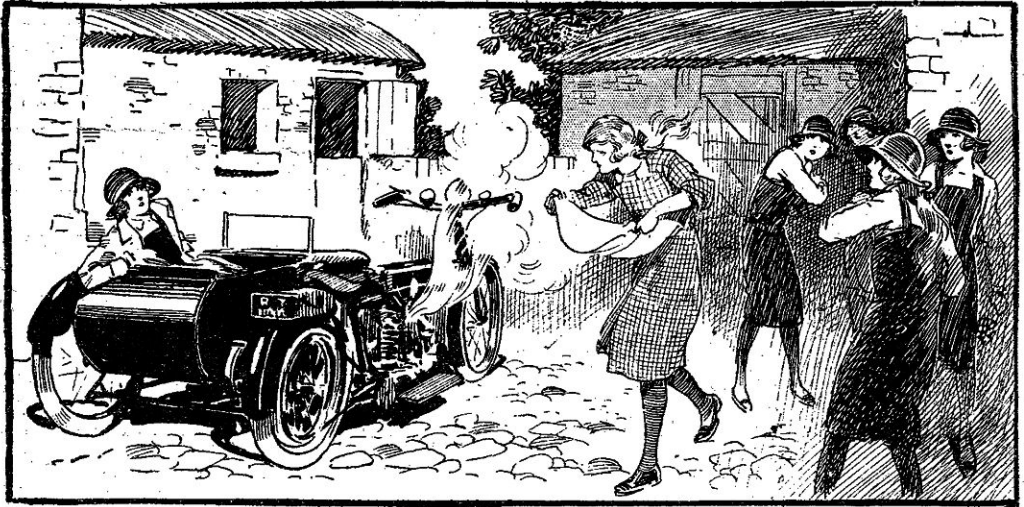
“Eva, take my word for it, there is nothing to be done but that. Do that, and you will yet get right again with your conscience and with the school. Go to Miss Somerfield now.”

“I can't—I can't!” groaned Eva, with a wild look in her white face. “There will be no mercy for me, not after all this time!”

“I think there will be. Come, Eva, you know Miss Somerfield! Shall I go with you, and plead for you? Only say, and I will do that, Eva, for the sake of the friends we were once, for the good of the school, and for your own future happiness.”

“No! Ah, be quiet—don't pester me!” was Eva's miserable entreaty. “Oh, Dolly, you are being hard on me! You'll get me expelled!”

“How can you say that?” And Dolly stamped a foot. “I am not thinking of denouncing you. I am only urging you to own up. If you refuse to do that—But—oh, you won't refuse?” she implored the wretched culprit. “Eva, before it is too late, and by this time to-morrow it will be too late! Pluck up courage!”



**A MOMENT OF PERIL!** Eva Merrick, still huddled in the sidcar, was simply paralysed with fright as she saw the flames leap up. But Dolly did not waver. She caught up her apron and immediately attacked the flames.

was suspecting you I had heard you say in your sleep that you cheated.”

“What does that prove,” panted Eva wildly, “what one mumbles about whilst dreaming? You are mad!”

“I cannot prove it—only too well I realise that!” was Dolly's bitter answer. “And, even if I could—oh, I would still hate to denounce you! It would mean getting you expelled. But, Eva, on this last night before the prize-giving, let me implore you—”

“I'll give you the prize, I tell you!” Eva struck in agitatedly. “Oh, Dolly, don't be hard on me! Isn't it good enough if I hand over the prize?”

“No! You cheated me, Eva; you shall not be allowed to cheat your own conscience! It would be wrong of me to let you get out of it that way. Your only way is to confess to Miss Somerfield, and trust to her to deal leniently with you because it seems like a voluntary confession.”

Dolly suddenly stepped across to the quailing girl.

“No, I can't! It's no use, I can't!” Eva exclaimed, suddenly walking about the twilight study and gesturing wildly. “It is not certain that Miss Somerfield will spare me.”

“Very well, then. Since you are afraid, since you can't have faith in Miss Somerfield's generous nature, I will give in a point to you,” Dolly said earnestly. “I'll let you pass on the prize to me, allowing the school to believe that it is your generous repayment for what I did last Saturday. It's a shame that you should have the credit of being the winner of the Grace Pullen—it's not right that your passing on the prize should earn you greater praise than ever, but I will allow it to be, Eva, on one condition.”

The guilty girl peered eagerly as she asked huskily:

“What condition?”

“It cannot be wrong to give in to you, on the condition I am going to name,” Dolly said, like one thinking aloud. “For it will be for the good of the school, and for your own good, too, in the long run. Eva—”

"What condition? Name it!" clamoured that girl, standing, all strung up, and snapping her fingers excitably.

"This!" answered Dolly, with slow impressiveness. "I will let you pass on the prize to me, and you can account for it to the school just as you please, on condition that you have nothing more to do with Cora Grandways! There, Eva, that's all I ask!"

"All!" gasped the culprit despairingly. "It's impossible! I can't give up Cora!"

"Rubbish! Why not? You finished with that hateful girl once before, voluntarily. Surely you can finish with her now, in return for being let off by me? You are not afraid of Cora, are you?"

Just what Eva was! Yet admit it, how could she? How could she explain to this girl that Cora would instantly retaliate by telling what she knew?

Thus, in the same study that they had shared so long together, the cheat and the cheated stood facing each other, at a deadlock. And what need to say which was the unhappier of the two—Dolly or Eva?

In spite of the black cloud of trouble at home, in spite of her having been cruelly swindled out of all the legitimate pride of being hailed the winner of the Grace Pullen, what was Dolly's distress of mind just then, compared with guilty Eva's?

At last, the girl who had come second in the examination turned away to the door. In the act of turning the knob, she spoke slowly and solemnly:

"Eva Merrick, you have until to-morrow to decide! You know I won't denounce you as a cheat. But I'm not going to let you salve your conscience by making over the prize to me in the way you want to, unless—unless you give up Cora Grandways!"

There was another great pause.

"Unless," Dolly said finally, "you give me your solemn promise to be done with Cora from this time onwards!"

Then she was gone, and it was for Eva Merrick to stand, in a stricken state, in the darkened study, wondering crazily. How could she finish with Cora; when that ruthless, heartless girl had it in her power to tell?

She had been given a most generous chance by the very girl who had suffered by the cheating, but it was a chance at which she dare not snatch!

(END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.)

What can Eva do? If she gives up Cora Grandways, the spitefire of the Form will undoubtedly denounce her as a cheat. And yet, unless she does so, she will not be allowed to salve her conscience. You will learn which way she chose in next week's splendid complete tale, which is entitled: "When Morcove Broke Up!"



### Striking a Tent.

**S**TRIKING a tent means taking the tent down. After pulling out your inner pegs, take out the others, only leaving one at the back, two in the front, and one on either side.

Roll up all the guy-ropes. Now you will want a fellow Guide inside the tent, to hold up the tent-pole while you pull up the back peg. This done, kick the canvas as near as possible to the tent-pole behind. The Guide inside can now come out, and the tent be allowed to fall carefully backwards.

Releasing the side ropes is your next job. With help, seize the tent by the top and drag it along the ground for about two yards, when the canvas will automatically set itself into folds.

Take the two outer points of the canvas, and fold them neatly in towards the middle. When you have folded the canvas at the foot of the tent to about one yard wide, roll neatly from the top, and replace your tent in its bag.

Don't forget to count your pegs before putting them away.

### A Quaint Pet.

**A** GUIDE friend of mine has just made a little pet of a dormouse. They are easily tamed, and make charming pets. Somewhat larger than common field mice, the dormice are covered with fine, beautiful soft fur, and have rather large heads. Their coats are tawny red, and white below.

In their wild state, they make their homes in woods. In preparation for their long winter's sleep, the dormice stock their nest with beech-mast, hazel-nuts, and acorns. Often, too, they bring with them grain from the cornfields.

Dormice are particularly interesting to watch when feeding. Sometimes they hang from the branches of the undergrowth, by their hind feet, as they eat. Their tails hang down rather thick and long, looking something like that of a squirrel.

My friend has put a few branches in the cage for her pet to play upon. In its sleeping-place she has carefully fashioned a snug nest. She tells me the dormouse sleeps all day and feeds in the twilight. Apples, nuts, and acorns are its favourite food, and, of course, a little water is necessary, too.

### How to Hold Rabbits.

**I** WAS asked recently to settle a dispute amongst my Guides as to the proper way to hold a rabbit, and I thought the matter would be of interest to other Guides.

Some girls thought the proper way to lift a rabbit was by its ears. Often a rabbit is valuable for its long, silky ears, and, moreover, it is quite wrong and cruel to handle the animal like this. Rabbits constantly picked up in this way will soon show you how cruel it is, if you look at the base of their ears.

The correct way to pick up a rabbit is to take, with the left hand, a firm grip of the scruff of the neck, just below the back of the head, and, placing the right hand near the tail, on the hind quarters, to comfortably ease the weight, much in the same way as you would pick up a pet cat.