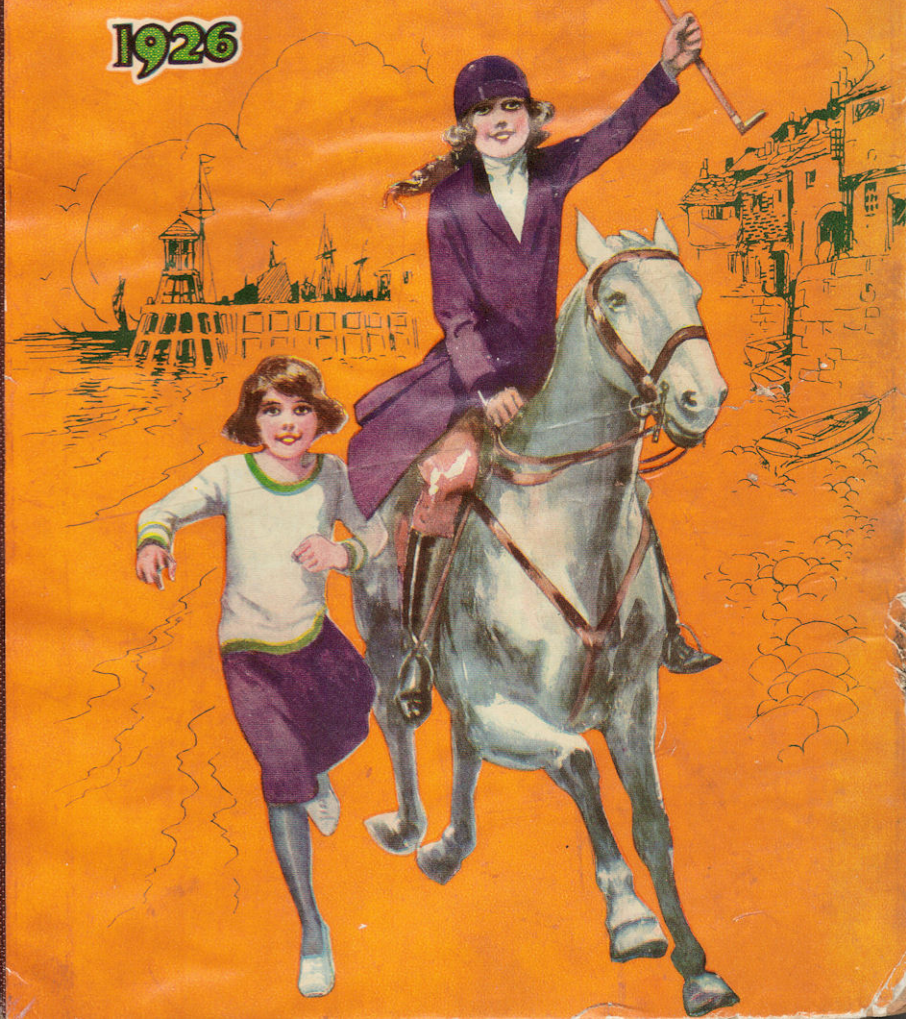


THE

GOLDEN

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The TYRANT of the THIRD

A Delightful School Story
By HILDA RICHARDS



CHAPTER I.

AN INTERRUPTED PUNISHMENT.

"**I**DA JACKSON'S the sneak!"
"Catch her!"
"Send her to Coventry!"
There was noise—even more noise than usual—in the Third Form common-room at Cliff

House School.

At least seventeen voices were all trying to make themselves audible at the same time—a state of affairs that struck Madge Stevens as being quite wrong for the Third Form.

For Madge Stevens was their elected chief, even though she was a captain whose authority was not officially recognised.

If the Third Form desired to speak with one voice—as it clearly desired to do—it was the privilege of Madge to have that voice.

She gave the table a thump and exclaimed: "Order!"

The exclamation was not heard. Madge, unfortunately, was not vociferous enough. The only voice that would have drowned the seventeen other voices would have been a voice eighteen times as loud as one of them.

But Madge had other methods.

She picked up a cushion and threw it with swift and unerring aim at three girls who were making more noise than any others. Three voices suddenly ceased.

Then Madge grabbed another girl by the shoulders and sat her suddenly upon a chair. She pinched a second one, and nudged a third. Then she sprang on a chair, clapped her hands, and exclaimed:

"Order! Silence! Listen to me!"

The hubbub half subsided. Only a few of the louder voices still persisted. Madge pointed a dramatic finger to one girl and exclaimed:

"Sit on Minnie, Doris! Give her a shake!"

Doris Redfern, Madge's able first lieutenant, sprang at Minnie Jerome and plumped her into a chair with such force that Minnie Jerome emitted a little squeak.

"Help! For goodness' sake, Doris——"

"Order!" exclaimed Madge, clapping her hands again. "What's the good of twenty of you yelling at the same time? Let's have this out properly!"

"She's a sneak, Madge!"

"She told Connie, her sister, that we were going to jape the Fourth!"

"We actually saw her sneaking!"

The chorus of cries broke out again, but Madge did not mind them this time. They were addressed to Madge, instead of the world in general. Madge felt quite capable of dealing with a situation when the complaint was addressed to her first.

"Silence!" she exclaimed. "It's Ida Jackson again, is it? Ida, stand out there! What have you got to say about it?"

All eyes turned upon the pink-cheeked girl thus addressed, the silence in the room being almost eerie after the pandemonium that had preceded it.

Ida Jackson would have been considered a pretty girl if it had not been for a peculiarly cunning look in her eyes, and an unpretty way she had of drooping her mouth.

"I'm not a sneak!" she exclaimed, with a tremor in her voice. "You're always saying that about me. I won't have it. I'll speak to my sister Connie whenever I like, and you shan't stop me!"

"We will!" declared a voice. "Sister or no sister Connie's the monitress who's always up against the Third Form. She hates us!"

"Silence!" exclaimed Madge Stevens. "This is a serious matter. Tarooo-tah-too! I proclaim the Third Form Council!"

"Tarooo-tah-too" was a word that Madge herself had specially invented for occasions like this.

She admitted in confidence that it had no particular significance, but sounded rather good on a solemn occasion. She declared that it might be likened to the compelling sound of a herald's trumpet when a royal personage was approaching. It was the signal, generally accepted, that the Third Form was very much on its young dignity.

"Tarooo-tah-too! The Council will assemble!" directed Madge.

Four girls immediately stepped forward and ranged themselves around their leader, looking very solemn and very important. By name they were Doris Redfern, Iris Marshall, Pansy Carter, and Minnie Jerome. Minnie was on the Council because she asked so many questions if she was left off it; she was also considered good at cross-examination.

"Prisoner in the dock!" said Madge. "You are here——"

"I'm not a prisoner in the dock!" Ida protested, mutinously.

"You are here, prisoner, to answer to a charge of sneaking. Do you deny speaking to your sister Connie, of the Sixth?"

"No, I don't! But——"

"Wait! Do you deny knowing that we were intending to play a jape on the Fourth Form at dinner time to-day?"

"Of course not! But——"

"Wait!" said Madge, sternly. "How is it that a warning has reached us, from a Fourth Former, who knows a Fifth Former, who knows a Sixth Former, that we'd better be careful?"

It was a somewhat complicated statement, but Madge said it so dramatically that Ida had no difficulty in grasping it.

"Someone else must have sneaked!" she exclaimed. "I—I—I know I didn't. It's Connie's business to find out things——"

"Ooooooh!" came a murmur from the audience.

"I mean to say that—that as a monitress," stammered Ida. "She—she has to look round—that is to say——"

"She's admitting it!" cried a chorus. "She's making excuses for Connie. Of course she sneaked!"

"I didn't!" yelled Ida, turning pinker than ever.

Madge Stevens gazed down upon her Council.

"Do you consider the prisoner guilty, Council?" she exclaimed.

"We do!" said the Council promptly.

Considering the well-known reputation of Ida Jackson in the Third Form, they could scarcely do anything else.

"She is deserving of punishment?" asked Madge.

"She shall be shown the will of the

Third!" recited the Council, solemnly.

"I won't! You dare to touch me!" cried Ida. "I'll shriek if you do!"

"Tarooo-tah-too!" said Madge Stevens.

"Tarooo-tah-too!" echoed a girl who stood on guard at the door. "The President of the Council will now give the sentence!"

"Prisoner at the bar!" said Madge Stevens sternly. "You have been given a fair trial and you are found guilty of this dreadful charge of sneaking to a monitress. The decision of the Third Form is that you shall undergo the sentence of Under the Table at Sea!"

"Help!" shrieked Ida Jackson.

But there was no help for her.

Madge jumped off the chair, the Council promptly broke up, and the girl at the door abandoned her vigil and rushed forward. Hands grasped Ida on every side and reduced her struggles to impotency. She was propelled towards the table; hands forced her to her knees and caused her to creep beneath it.

And the whole of the assembled Third Formers lined up round the table, making escape impossible for the girl who was underneath it.

"Under the Table at Sea" was one of a number of weird and wonderful "punishments" that Madge had invented for the special purpose of keeping order in a distinctly disorderly Form.

"Heave-ho, my hearties!" exclaimed Madge, in a voice that the Third Formers fondly believed to be rather nautical. "The good ship will sail from Finland to Timbuctoo. Heave up the anchor! Box the compass! Off goes the ship!"

The table, pushed by those who surrounded it, commenced to move.

Ida Jackson rebelled until a knee nudged her in the back with some sharpness, and then did the only possible thing and followed the antics of the table.

The table went from the centre of the room to one corner, and then swiftly retreated and rushed to the opposite corner, only to start moving round in clumsy circles as Madge directed further nautical operations of her strange craft.

It was a queer but effective punishment. The individual beneath the table could not possibly be hurt in any way if she kept moving. To stop, however, when there were sixteen or seventeen Third Formers rushing the table round, was simply to ask for trouble. Everyone knew that it was ridiculous to pit one's own will against the will of sixteen or seventeen.

At a signal from Madge the table suddenly stopped.

"Sorry, Ida Jackson?" asked Madge Stevens.

"No, I'm not!" said the muffled voice of the humiliated girl beneath.

"Heave-ho, my hearties!" instructed Madge. "Timbuctoo to Land's End this time! Full steam ahead!"

The extraordinary gyrations of the table commenced again.

Ida Jackson crawled and stopped, darted forward and retreated, side-stepped and paused, each time doing just what the table did.

Cheerfully determined to teach Ida that sneaking was a thing that was very much despised in the Third Form—if, of course, it was possible that Ida ever could assimilate such a lesson—the Third Formers continued their gay sea voyage with the table.

They were just about opposite the cupboard, which was the receptacle for many strange things in the Third Form, when the door opened.

The very girl who was the indirect cause of the excitement stood in the doorway.

Connie Jackson had appeared!

The table stopped abruptly, and seventeen girls made a lightning effort to pose themselves around it as though nothing at all untoward had been going on before the arrival of the monitress.

"What is all the noise in this room?" demanded Connie.

"Noise?" said Madge. "I can't hear any noise. What noise?"

Connie stared at the table.

"Why is that table over there, instead of in the centre of the room?"

Madge looked at the table and affected a laugh. The laugh was intended to signify that Madge was quite surprised to discover the table in its present position.

"This table here?" she said. "Oh, that—er—it's a new arrangement of the room. Seeing that the cupboard's where it is, and considering that door is just over there, it seems—"

"You have been moving the table about!" declared Connie.

"Fancy you guessing that!" said Madge.

Connie took a step into the room and looked grim. There was the suggestion of a peculiarly malicious smile hovering about the corners of her lips.

"You have been moving the table about!" said Connie.

"Rather!" said Madge. "Seeing that it isn't in the centre of the room, it stands to reason that if the fairies haven't moved it—"

"Who is under the table?" demanded Connie.

"Which table?"

"Do not bandy words! Who is under the table?"

"Miss Primrose," said Madge, seeing that it was all up. "She's just tacking down the carpet again, Connie. Don't disturb her, because she may be angry—"

Connie stepped forward, brushed a couple of Third Formers to one side, and jerked the tablecloth up. Her younger sister, looking very red and aggrieved, crawled out.

"You?" said Connie, in amazement. "You, Ida? They have treated you like this! Why?"

Ida did not speak. Ida might be a sneak, but she was a cautious one. To answer in front of the Form was more than Ida dared.

"You are responsible for this, Madge Stevens!" exclaimed Connie Jackson, wheeling on the unofficial captain of the Third. "What does it mean? What explanation have you?"

"One that wouldn't interest you, I'm afraid, Connie," said Madge. "You see, it happens to be a Third Form matter."

"You are a little bully, Madge Stevens!" said Connie, her eyes glinting. "You will take two hundred lines!"

"Oh, that's not fair!" burst out Doris Redfern. "Madge, you can appeal to Miss Drake about that! We're all in this with you!"

"You, Doris Redfern, will take a hundred lines for insolence!" snapped Connie. "It happens that you cannot appeal to Miss Drake. I am in charge of the Third Form at the moment."

"You?" gasped a dozen voices.

The amazement her announcement caused brought a grim smile to Connie Jackson's lips.

"Yes; Miss Drake was suddenly taken ill this morning," she said. "She is going to stay in her room for the present. I am in charge of this Form until other arrangements have been made."

Miss Drake was very popular indeed with the Third Form girls, who had not nicknamed her "the Duck" for nothing. Beneath her stern manner she had a very understanding nature indeed. The Third Formers loved her to a girl.

"Is Miss Drake very ill, Connie?" Madge asked.

Her cheeky manner had dropped completely. She had even forgotten the imposition. Madge had a tender and loving heart in spite of her little demonstrations of authority in the Third.

"The doctor has not yet arrived," said Connie airily.

"Can we go and see her?" asked Madge eagerly.



The table, pushed by those who surrounded it, began to move. Idajackson rebelled until a knee nudged her in the back with some sharpness, and then did the only possible thing in following the antics of the table.

"No, you little hypocrite!" said Connie. "This sudden affection is not necessary. No one will go and see her!"

Madge Stevens flushed to the roots of her hair.

"Connie!" she gasped. "You—you call me a hypocrite?"

"Yes. But don't think I shall cancel your lines because you show such a sudden interest in Miss Drake!" said Connie. "Off to the class-room, all of you, at once!"

"But, Connie——"

"Not a word of argument! To the class-room instantly, where I can watch you!"

There was obviously nothing to do but to obey. So far as the Third Form of Cliff House was concerned the word of a mistress was law. They were powerless against it.

So they trooped out of the common-room and headed for the Third Form class-room, uneasy, dejected, and angry. It was a cruel blow of Fate that they should be placed like this, in the hands of the Third Form tyrant!

CHAPTER II.

CONNIE IN CHARGE.

"DORIS REDFERN! Stand up!" said Constance Alma Jackson.

"What is the capital of Australia?"

"A, Connie," said Doris, standing up.

"What do you mean by saying 'Eh, Connie?'"

"I said A—capital A," pointed out Doris Redfern.

There was a titter of amusement in the class.

"All right! Sit down! You will take another hundred lines!" said Connie Jackson. "I will soon teach you that I am standing no impertinence in this class. You need not think that I am only here for the morning. I may be in charge of you for several days. You will learn obedience in that time."

Doris Redfern sat down and continued to look cheerful, despite the fact that her lines had now mounted to the total of three hundred and twenty-five. Lines had been falling thickly and heavily in the Third Form that morning.

"Minnie Jerome!" said Connie Jackson. "I see you are grinning. Stand up! What is the first thing you have to learn about obedience?"

"O, Connie," said Minnie innocently.

"Why do you say Oh?" asked Connie.

"O's the first thing you learn about obedience. It starts with the letter O. Wasn't that what you meant?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a chuckle from the class.

No one had expected Minnie to keep quite such an innocent expression.

"One hundred lines, Minnie!" said Connie, her cheeks going pink. "Continue with your reading. You will learn who is mistress here before long."

The Third Formers obeyed. They were fed up with Connie Jackson. Even Madge Stevens, herself a stickler for authority and order, was heartily fed-up.

Despite their grief at the absence of Miss Drake, they had made a genuine effort to put up with Connie for the morning. If Connie had been an understanding sort of girl she would have had little trouble with the Form.

But Connie had been out for vengeance.

Connie had witnessed the punishment of her sister, and she had guessed the reason for it. Considering that she encouraged Ida to tell tales, it was not surprising that she should guess.

The punishment of Ida was, therefore, to Connie's way of thinking, an affront to Connie herself.

Consequently, by the time the last lesson of morning school was reached, the members of the Third Form were in great tribulation. More than half of them had received impositions, and some of the impositions had grown to considerable size. Connie had spent a deal of time recording them all.

Seeing that it was apparently certain that they would all receive lines, whether they really deserved them or not, the Third Formers were taking good care to see that they deserved them every time. It was better than getting them for nothing, they argued.

They were exchanging that view amongst themselves in low tones, when Connie suddenly looked up.

"There is whispering going on in this class!" she said sharply. "It must cease at once."

Bzzzzzz! came at once from the corner of the room.

Connie sprang up instantly.

"Who made that noise?" she exclaimed.

"Was it you, Elsie Brane?"

"What buzzing noise?" gasped Elsie.

"You will take fifty lines, Elsie Brane!" said Connie.

"But I didn't do anything, Connie!" protested the victim. "I was reading my book."

"Well, if you didn't some one else did. You will do the lines unless you tell me the name of the girl who made that buzzing noise!"

"Shame!" said a voice.

Connie whirled round.

"Who said that?" she exclaimed.

Madge Stevens put up her hand.

"Did you, Madge Stevens?"

"No, but I think it is a shame, Connie," said Madge. "Miss Drake never asks girls to sneak in class!"

"I am not concerned about Miss Drake!

You'll write another fifty lines," said Connie. "Let me hear no more."

She returned to her desk and sat down.

She had hardly done so before——

Bzzzz! came from the other corner of the room.

"Was that you, Sylvia Sands?" cried Connie, leaping up again.

"I—I haven't thaid a thound!" said Sylvia, who lisped.

"Who made that buzzing noise?"

"I can't thay——"

"Fifty lines, Sylvia Sands!" said Connie, making a note of it. "Perhaps that will teach you that I am standing no nonsense."

Sylvia collapsed, and the Third Form fell ominously silent. A moment later the bell rang for the close of the morning lessons.

Connie rapped out an order.

"Sit where you are! No girl will move until I give the command!" She held up the sheet of impositions and gazed at it, keeping the paper so that the long list of names was visible to the class. "This is a long list."

No one commented on the fact; comment was superfluous.

"Any girl who wishes to apologise," said Connie, "may step out in front and do so now."

Madge Stevens stood up at once and made her way to the front of the class.

There was an amazed gasp as she did so. Connie looked as surprised as anyone.

"You are going to apologise, Madge Stevens?" she asked.

"Certainly, if you wish it," said Madge.

"Very good! You may do so!"

Madge turned and faced the class.

"Ladies and gentlemen," she said, "on behalf of Connie Jackson I apologise for the long list of impositions given this morning. She doesn't mean any harm. It's only her temper that's to blame—oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a yell of laughter from the class as Connie, losing her temper, sprang from her seat and leapt at Madge.

Madge, expecting something like that, jumped out of the way, with the result that Connie leapt past her, and her hand, instead of catching Madge Stevens, caught the blackboard. The easel immediately collapsed, and the blackboard flew to the floor.

Crash!

"Ha, ha, ha!" pealed the Third Form again.

"Dinner! Off to dinner, girls!" exclaimed Madge Stevens. "Connie doesn't want us any longer!"

Crimson with anger, Connie cried an order. It was too late. Led by Madge Stevens, the Third Form was already in rapid retreat,

chuckling cheerfully as they crowded through the class-room door.

Connie stared after them and then bit her lip. It was obvious, even to the tyrant of the Form, that the Third had won this time.

Considering the tribulations that had come upon them the Third Form girls were a very cheerful party at dinner that day.

But they had not forgotten Connie Jackson, who sat watching them at the monitresses' table, with a dark and scowling face.

They left the dining-room as soon as the meal was over, and wisely gave their common-room a wide berth.

Madge Stevens and Doris Redfern were conferring in the quadrangle when Fanny Tibbitts joined them.

Fanny was a girl who always managed to find out the very latest news.

"What is it now, Fanny?" asked Madge. "Has a chimney fallen off, or is it only that the headmistress has resigned?"

Fanny answered in a low and cautious voice.

"It's Connie and Ida," she said. "They've gone into the class-room together. I saw them."

Madge's expression changed.

"Oh, have they?" she said. "There's some scheme behind that, I'll wager! Doris, we'd better see into it."

The Third Form common-room was on the ground floor, being one of the rooms that looked out into the quadrangle.

One of the windows had been opened an inch or two that morning for the express purpose of causing a draught that would annoy Connie.

Connie had not noticed the window, however, and it had not been closed. It was now destined to prove very useful.

Creeping cautiously to the window so that they made no sound, Madge and Doris peeped through the narrow gap.

Fanny's news was instantly confirmed for they saw Connie and her sister standing

at no great distance from the window. Connie was talking in a low voice that carried quite distinctly to the two Third Form girls outside.

"What is the best way of punishing them?" she asked. "What annoys them most, Ida? I will have order in the form, I tell you—I will make them sorry that they've been so cheeky."

"They don't like being in detention," said Ida. "It upsets their arrangements."

"But I don't want to put them in detention," Connie answered. "You know that if I do I shall have to take detention

myself, because there will be no one else to do it. I can't miss that dance to-night."

"They don't like afternoons when it's all writing," said Ida.

"But—but I'd better be going off now, in case we're seen together. They—they'll be sure I've been telling tales again."

"Let them! I'll look after you!" said Connie. "I'll see that you have your rights in the Form. Er—you said that writing is unpopular?"

Madge and Doris tip-toed silently away and gazed at each other.

"So that's the little wheeze, is it?" said Doris. "That's the latest move? She isn't satisfied with giving us lines."

Madge Stevens began to chuckle.

"It's just as well we found that out," she said. "I've got a great idea coming along. You know that if ten of us have a grievance we can always appeal to the Headmistress?"

"But she wouldn't take our part against Connie," objected Doris. "As Connie's a monitress Miss Primrose would back her up."

"Exactly!"

"Of course," said Doris. "I don't think it could be called sneaking, because Connie's simply being spiteful. But Miss Primrose would have to look very stern——"

"That's just the idea! Let her!" said Madge. "Then we've only got to stick to our point and we'll win! Come on, Doris—we've got to beat up the other six who are going to



"Prisoner in the dock," said Madge sternly, "you are here to answer the charge of sneaking. Do you deny speaking to your sister, Connie of the Sixth?"

back us up. It's going to be a great idea—also the biggest shock Connie's ever had!"

CHAPTER III.

THE VENGEANCE OF THE THIRD.



"OOOOOH!"

"Oooooer!"

"Oh, dear! My goodness!"

Connie Jackson looked up sharply from her desk and frowned upon the Third Form, as a number of strange and extraordinary groans sounded from all over the room.

It was near the end of afternoon lessons, and Connie was beginning to feel that she could congratulate herself on having mastered the rebellious spirit of the Third Form.

Connie's tactics during the afternoon had been different from the morning, and they had been artful.

As soon as the Third Form assembled she gave them a writing exercise to do.

For geography lessons they had to write out lists of towns and other information needed in their copy-books. For history lesson she gave them dates and events to inscribe in their books, and for English lesson she set an essay.

The writing, Connie judged, would serve a double purpose. Not only would it keep them quiet and give them plenty to go on with. It would also serve to make them tired of writing, and consequently make their impositions doubly laborious during the evening.

There was trouble at last, however.

"Silence!" said Connie sharply. "I will not have this noise! Get on with your work!"

"Oooooer!"

Connie Jackson's eyes lit upon Madge Stevens.

"Did you make that noise then, Madge Stevens?" she exclaimed.

Madge gripped her right wrist and nodded.

"Yes, Connie. I can't help it!"

"What is the matter with you?"

"My wrist aches," said Madge. "I've got writer's cramp, I think. Oooooer!"

"Oooooer!" came from all over the room.

"The next girl who makes a noise," threatened Connie, "will have her lines doubled!"

"But we can't write!" said Minnie Jerome pathetically. "Why have we had to write all afternoon? Don't you think it's enough to make anyone's wrist ache, Connie?"

"Please Connie," said Madge, "we shan't be able to write our lines for you after all!"

Connie looked startled at the remark. Her lips compressed.

"You will most certainly write your

lines—every one of them!" she declared.

"Oooooh!" said the Third Form, as one girl.

Connie Jackson's cheeks coloured.

"If those impositions are not written by to-morrow morning there will be very serious trouble!" she declared. "I am not to be trifled with! You will be reported to the headmistress if they are not done!"

"You'd better report us now, Connie," said Madge, "because we can't possibly do them!"

"Silence!" said Connie. "I will wait and see. The morning will be time enough!"

"Oooooer!"

"Who made that noise?" cried Connie, springing up.

Madge Stevens' hand rose in the air, and nine others immediately followed it.

"We did, Connie!" said a chorus of ten voices.

"Why?" demanded Connie.

"Please, Connie," said Madge meekly, "if you say we've got to write all those lines we shall have to appeal to Miss Primrose."

"Hear, hear!"

Connie's eyes glinted.

"Appeal to Miss Primrose, indeed!" she exclaimed. "Hah! And you think that Miss Primrose will take your side?"

"She's bound to!" said Madge.

Connie Jackson rose, with a smile of grim amusement and satisfaction playing about her lips.

"Very good! You have asked for it! I shall take you at your word!" she exclaimed. She sat down and scribbled a note, and sealed it in an envelope. "Ida, take this to the headmistress!"

Ida Jackson darted off at once, and the groans in the room seemed no longer to annoy Connie Jackson. She stalked up and down in front of the class, looking very dignified and important.

In a very little while Ida returned—and Miss Primrose was with her!

Connie wheeled round.

"I thought I would come at once, Constance," said Miss Primrose. "It will be more convenient for me to see these girls now than after school hours." She turned and directed a very stern look at the Third Form. "Who are the girls who have appealed against Constance's orders?"

Ten girls stood up meekly at Miss Primrose's command.

"You are the girls?" said the Headmistress. "I will concede that you have the right to appeal to me in accordance with school regulations. Is anyone speaking for you?"

"Please, Miss Primrose. I am," said Madge Stevens.

"What have you to say, Madge?"

"Please, Miss Primrose," said Madge Stevens, "we're very sorry that we can't write Connie's lines to-night, but we've all got writers' cramp."

"Writers' cramp!" gasped Miss Primrose.

The expression was not unfamiliar to her. She knew that senior girls, writing for two or three hours at their fastest speed in an examination, sometimes found their wrists grow so numb as to render further writing difficult. She had also encountered cases where girls taking examinations had actually had to give up on account of the cramp in their wrists.

It was difficult, however, to imagine that such a complaint could be abroad in a Form that was not noted for its speed in writing or its zeal at that art. And, naturally, Miss Primrose became instantly suspicious.

"Madge Stevens," she said, "step out here with your copy-book. Show me what you have written this afternoon."

Madge stepped out with her copy-book and demonstrated. She turned the pages quickly back and forth, as though she had an idea that Miss Primrose might be bewildered by such a manoeuvre, and think there was a great deal more writing than there was. Miss Primrose was not at all bewildered, however.

"There is not much writing there, Madge Stevens."

"It seemed a lot to do," explained Madge hopefully.

"Probably," said Miss Primrose. "What you need, if you have this muscular stiffness in your wrist, is more practice in writing."

"Ahem!"

Connie Jackson smiled in a satisfied manner.

Miss Primrose looked at her Third Form scholars in a hard and searching manner.

She was fond of them, but she knew that they needed timely correction frequently. Perhaps she was not very, very fond of Connie Jackson; but Connie was

a monitress whose authority must unhesitatingly be supported.

In this instance Connie appeared to be in the right, and the Third Formers very much in the wrong.

"I see no reason why the wrists of any of you should ache," said Miss Primrose, addressing Madge. "However, you have appealed to me. Do you still persist in that appeal?"

"We must, Miss Primrose," said Madge meekly.

Miss Primrose's eyes twinkled for a moment.

"Very well, my girls," she exclaimed, "I will take your word for it. But you cannot escape punishment, of course. You ten girls will all remain in detention instead for an hour and a half this evening."

And she turned and smiled at Constance Jackson.

"Er — er — Miss Primrose!" gasped Connie, her expression suddenly changing.

"Yes, Constance?" asked Miss Primrose.

"I—I would like to say," gasped Connie, "that perhaps they did not mean to complain. I would like to appeal for their punishment—"

"It is very good of you, Constance," said Miss Primrose, "but my mind is made up. I must teach young girls not

to make frivolous complaints. Nothing will induce me to change the punishment now."

And Miss Primrose walked in a stately manner from the room.

At precisely seven o'clock that evening ten Third Form girls trooped into the detention-room and sat down.

Connie Jackson, sitting at the desk with a scowling face, glanced at her wrist watch and frowned.

"You thought you would do good by appealing to Miss Primrose, did you?" she asked bitterly. "Do you prefer this to writing lines?"

"It's ever so much better," said Doris Redfern.



"Who are the girls who have appealed against Constance's orders?" Miss Primrose demanded. Ten girls stood up meekly.

"Haven't we got anything to do?" asked Madge Stevens.

"Yes," Connie said. "I will give you pens and papers, and you can spend the time writing an essay. It will give your wrists exercise so that you will be able to write to-morrow."

"Very good, Connie."

The ten pieces of paper were accepted almost with alacrity. Ten pens commenced to write at once. Connie returned to her seat and took up a book.

Presently, when a request was made for more paper, she looked up in amazement. She fetched the paper and handed it out; but her interest in her book had gone. It was amazing to find the Third Formers so keen and energetic on their self-chosen tasks, when their professed inability to write had brought them to detention.

What were they writing? Such unexpected enthusiasm rather took the wind out of Connie's sails and left her with a vague feeling of disappointment. Why, they actually seemed to be enjoying it!

They were. The ten girls were busy, their heads bent low, their pens scribbling furiously. Connie felt an overpowering curiosity to get up and see what they were writing, but her dignity as a monitor forbade it. Moreover, her attention was only half on the class. The other half was on the clock.

With a growing bitterness, however, she watched the minutes pass. Her dance should have started at six, and would have been over at half-past eight. It would be at precisely that hour that detention was over.

How the Third Formers would chuckle if they only knew!

The time was up at last. The ten

essay-writers had all finished their efforts. Connie glanced at her watch and nodded curtly to them.

"You may go now," she said. "Put the essays on that end desk. Perhaps this will be a lesson to you for the future."

"It will, Connie," Madge assured her. "We've learnt quite a lot to-day. Thank you very much. Good-night."

Connie rose as soon as the door had closed, and hurried across to the desk upon which the essays had been left. Her eyes fell upon the bold title of the one that lay uppermost.

"Why I Hate Missing a Dance!" it read.

A flush of anger came to Connie's cheeks. She snatched up the essay with a trembling hand, and looked at the one beneath it. The title was precisely the same. She turned the papers over rapidly. Each girl had written an essay on the subject that had been in Connie's mind all the time.

A titter of laughter outside the door caused Connie to whirl suddenly and dart across the room. She opened the door just in time to see ten hilarious Third Formers racing down the stairs.

Connie opened her mouth to call to them, and then checked the impulse. Her lips set in a hard line, and she turned back into the detention-room.

"They must have known all the time," she muttered. "They've punished me far more than I've punished them! My goodness! To-morrow morning I'll make them sorry! To-morrow morning--"

But it was a morrow that was destined not to materialise.

To the joy and relief of the Third Formers, Miss Drake appeared in the class-room, restored to health again, and the opportunity for Connie Jackson to have her revenge never came.

