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Meanwhile, Mr. Simpson had confiscated both the girls' papers, and dismissed them from the class, remarking as he did so: "I will report you to the rector, Bertha, for disturbing the class during an exam; and as for the charge you have made against Elsa here," laying a chalky hand on Elsa's sleeve, "well, we shall have to prove it!"

In silence the two girls went to the cloakroom. Elsa stood calm, indifferent, gazing at Bobbie, who gave vent to her indignation. "You mean sneak!" she exclaimed, passionately. "I am surprised that you'd lower yourself to copy! You must have precious little self-respect!"

Elsa's lip quivered; she sent a quick look of appeal in Bobbie's direction, but that young lady did not see it, for she was marching off home.

Several times during the evening did Bobbie's thoughts revert to the scene in the class, and when she went to bed she could not sleep for thinking of it. For a school scrape is just as real to a girl as are the more serious of the world's trials or grown-ups.

"It must be true," were her last wakeful thoughts when at length she dropped off to sleep. "It must be quite true that Elsa was as heartless as the girls said she was, else she would have confessed."

Next morning, as soon as Bobbie set foot in school, she was informed that Mr. Simpson wished to speak to her. When she got to his room she was surprised to find Elsa, looking tired and sad, yet cold as ever, standing erect and dignified before Mr. Simpson's desk.

"Well, young lady, you've got yourself into a mighty tight fix," was his gentlemanly greeting.

Mentally, Bobbie compared him, rough, unpolished, with the English master, refined, sensitive, afraid lest he would hurt anyone's feelings.

"What do you mean?" she asked, quickly, looking him between the eyes.

"I mean that you have wrongly accused an innocent girl of cheating," he went on, glad to think that at last Bobbie would have to eat humble pie. It was what the proud little fool needed, was his opinion.

"I have not," replied Bobbie, firmly.

"Don't contradict me!" thundered the little man, growing purple with his exertions. "I tell you I have proved that Elsa did not cheat. There is not one figure in her working which would give evidence of it. And I now ask you, insist, in fact, that you apologize for your unjust accusation."

"I cannot believe that I have cause for apologizing to Elsa, Mr. Simpson, for she knows whether or not I owe it to her."

"You refuse?" gasped Mr. Simpson, blankly. Was this chit of a girl actually defying him?

"Then I'll have you reported to the Rector," was his parting shot.

Bobbie merely shrugged her shoulders, for this threat of Mr. Simpson's was rarely, if ever, put into execution. It was a well-known fact that the pompous little man had a great fear of his superior, and deemed it wiser

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to punish his pupils without appeal to the Rector.

After that day things went on very much as before. The incident was becoming hazy in the minds of the class; only Elsa and Bobbie were reminded of it continually.

Bobbie was working hard for the mathematics prize, and her marks were much above the average. It was to be a close fight between Elsa and herself for the prize—and only one day more remained to settle it.

There was great excitement among the girls, and much speculation indulged in on the result. The preponderance of votes went to Bobbie, for not only were her marks decidedly above those of Elsa, but Bobbie was a general favourite on account of her sunny nature, and because her standard of honour was set high.

Elsa certainly had her friends, but no one could quite fathom her. She was old for her fifteen years, and was inclined to hold aloof from the girls, and smile at their pretty ways. But she, too, held a high reputation for honour, which made this episode all the more incomprehensible.

As Bobbie was walking away from school one afternoon, the day before their last test for the coveted prize, she noticed Elsa's tall, lithe figure a few yards in front of her. Somehow or other a feeling of pity surged through her, and she determined to speak a few words with her, just to show her she had forgotten all about it. Forgive her she could not, since she knew that Elsa would never confess to having acted dishonourably.

Making up on her, Bobbie slid her arm through Elsa's, and said brightly, "Hello Elsa!" She got no farther, struck dumb by the tragedy in the other girl's face.

"Why, what's up?" she asked, concernedly.

"Oh, Bobbie, Bobbie!" cried Elsa, brokenly; "I've been so unhappy since—since that day." She faltered over the last part of her sentence.

Bobbie knew quite well to which day she referred.

"Well, Elsa, dear, I want you to forget all about it. Perhaps I was too sharp in speaking up, and maybe I just thought I saw you—"

She stopped, not wishing to inflict further pain.

"No, no!" cried Elsa, and Bobbie saw that her eyes were full. "You were not wrong at all. I did cheat! But, oh, Bobbie, how I was tempted!"

"Can you tell me about it?" coaxed Bobbie, and soon Elsa, whom none of the girls had understood, whom they had thought cold and distant, was pouring out her story in the sympathetic ears of the girl she had wronged.

She was only human after all. The temptation had been very great. She had fallen. She was but a child, crying out for pity—for love.

Bobbie guessed from Elsa's tale that the girl did not lead a very happy home life, and her quick sympathy, once roused, could never again sleep.

"Look here, Elsa," she said at length, giving her arm an affectionate squeeze, "do come and have tea with me, and then we can both talk this matter over afterwards in my den."

Elsa gratefully accepted the kind invitation.

And what was the result of it all? Well, the class, Mr. Simpson included, marvelled that, when the quarter's marks were added up, the prize went to Elsa; and the curious thing about it was that it was only in the very last paper that Elsa had scored so heavily, while Bobbie, whom they all knew to be really brighter, had done wretchedly.

But perhaps what surprised them most of all was the fact that from that day onward Bobbie and Elsa were inseparable chums.

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