

WITHINGTON GIRLS' SCHOOL

ENGLISH

ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

2020

COMPREHENSION

TIME: 45 MINUTES

**Read the story below very carefully. Then answer the questions on the separate question sheet.**

5 Dianne had always been Nadine's best friend, ever since she could remember. She didn't know how they first met – it was as if Dianne had always been there – but she remembered playing in the garden together when they were three and Nadine had first got her pet rabbit. Dianne had splashed mud on Nadine's best party dress when they had been putting the rabbit back in his hutch and Nadine's mother had blamed her. Even though she was now ten, Nadine remembered her mother's words vividly: 'Nadine, you need to stop blaming Dianne whenever anything goes wrong. The only person who spoilt your dress is you! It's filthy now and you won't be able to wear it for the party this afternoon!'

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Nadine had cried and cried – and not only because of the mud on her dress but also because of the unfairness of it! Why wouldn't her mother believe that Dianne had splashed the mud?

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On their first day at school Mrs James, their teacher, had shown all the children to their places in the classroom. Nadine found herself sitting in the corner near a window, with an empty seat next to her. 'Can Dianne sit here?' she asked excitedly.

Mrs James looked confused for a moment but then she smiled kindly and said, 'Of course she can, Nadine.'

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The two girls learnt their alphabet together and together they learnt to read. They did everything together: running around on the field at playtime, helping each other with maths and sharing their school lunches. When they had to work in pairs for PE, Mrs James insisted that they worked with a girl called Zara and Nadine was puzzled why they had to be in a three when everyone else was working in a group of two. Dianne whispered to Nadine:

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'Why don't you trip her up and then she'll have to go back in school to see the nurse?'

Nadine looked at her, appalled. 'I can't do that! I don't want to hurt her!'

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Dianne smiled and stretched out her leg casually so that Zara went flying on the hard gravel pitch, grazing her knee badly. Tears filled her eyes as she looked up at Nadine. 'Why?' she sobbed, 'Why did you do that?'

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Nadine was horrified. 'I didn't! It wasn't me!' She bent down to help Zara to her feet but Zara shrugged off her hand.

'I'm going to tell Mrs James. You're in so much trouble now!'

Mrs James phoned Nadine's parents and Nadine could tell her mum was extremely angry when she came to pick her up. She bundled her into the car without speaking, her lips tight.

40 'But, Mum – it wasn't me! I would never trip someone up deliberately! It was Dianne!'

'I am sick and tired of hearing about Dianne. It's about time you took responsibility for your own actions. I do not want to hear you mention that name to me again!'

45 Nadine sulked in her bedroom for the rest of the day, occasionally glancing at Dianne who was sitting at the desk, **engrossed** in the drawing she was doing. Eventually, Nadine grew bored and, even though she was still angry with Dianne for tripping Zara up, casually  
50 looked over to see what she was drawing. Dianne had some skill, Nadine had to admit. She herself was not a talented artist but the picture which lay on the desk was startlingly good. Nadine recognised her mother with the distinctive white streak in her dark hair, her father, tall and slightly bald and, standing between them, holding her mother's  
55 hand and smiling up at her father...Dianne. Even though the two girls looked similar, Dianne had managed to catch the mischievous glint which enlivened her own eyes and which Nadine did not have.

'Where am I?' burst out Nadine, her anger suddenly **rekindled**.

Dianne shrugged. 'The paper wasn't big enough. I couldn't fit four people in.'

60 Nadine sat on her bed, suddenly feeling a sense of alarm. She wondered if her mother was right. Maybe she should try to find some other friends.

Somehow, though, Nadine always ended up going back to Dianne. Even though she caused Nadine to get in trouble, there was something  
65 **alluring** about her sense of fun and her cheeky grin. But Dianne's tricks became more and more **malicious** as the girls got older and by the time they were in Year 6 Nadine had a sense of **impending** doom. She knew something bad was going to happen.

70 It was a Friday morning and Dianne was suspiciously casual when she approached Nadine at break. 'I've got a plan,' she said. 'I don't know if you'd be brave enough, but it would be fun if we could do it.'

'Not interested,' said Nadine, 'I'm sick of getting in trouble because of you. I'm going to Zara's house after school and you are not invited.'

75 'Fine,' returned Dianne. 'I wouldn't go to boring Zara's boring house if you paid me. But my plan is for next lesson. Something far more

exciting than doing a maths test. Just one last adventure and then you can go and be friends with Zara.'

Nadine was dreading the maths test and despite herself she was intrigued. 'What?' she asked reluctantly.

**80** Dianne outlined her plan and Nadine's mouth became an 'O' of surprise and delight. She had always wondered what the staff room was like and Dianne's plan to ask to go to the toilet and then sneak in and have a look round was irresistible.

'But what if there are any teachers in there?'

**85** 'There won't be – they will all be giving their classes a maths test!' The girls giggled as they skipped back into school.

Ten minutes later Nadine cautiously pushed open the staffroom door. The room was untidy, with coffee cups discarded on every surface and piles of half-marked exercise books on tables. Mrs James' coat was on the back of her chair and Nadine stroked the soft fur. Suddenly Dianne's voice sounded across the room. 'Hey! They've got cake!'

**90**

'Ssh!' urged Nadine. Someone will hear us!

'Don't be so pathetic – look, chocolate cake. Have a piece!'

Just as Nadine was about to put the last crumbs of cake in her mouth, the door opened suddenly. Mrs Bennett, the headmistress, stood there, her surprise turning quickly to anger.

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'Nadine Andrews!' she shouted. 'What do you think you are doing in here? You know you are not allowed in the staffroom under any circumstances. Now get to my office and we can see if you have an explanation before I phone your mother.'

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When she got the phone call, Mrs Andrews was furious. Why did her daughter, usually so well-behaved and studious, keep doing these things which were so out of character? It was as if she became another child every few weeks – and not a very nice child! She insisted that Nadine's father accompanied her to the school. 'You need to see the sort of trouble she's getting herself into,' she said grimly.

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To her surprise, Nadine was sitting in the corner crying. 'Mum, Dad, I'm so sorry! It was Dianne. I know you don't want to hear that, but I promise, I've learnt my lesson – I am not going to listen to her ever again. I'm going to stay away from her for ever!'

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Mrs Bennett explained what had happened and they all agreed that it looked as if Nadine really was sorry this time. Perhaps she deserved one last chance.

**115** Mrs Andrews reached down and took her daughter's hand. The girl smiled through her tears at Mr Andrews. 'I'm sorry,' she said.

**120** Holding hands, the family walked out to the car park, both parents relieved that their daughter had put her bad behaviour behind her. Had the parents been looking more closely, they would have seen a mischievous glint in their daughter's eyes that had never been there before and they would have noticed the flicker of a cheeky grin light up her face as they got in the car.