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Now They Can See Who I Am

by Miriam Silver

“It’s so boring,” William said to no one in particular. He had eaten his breakfast, his mother and father were discussing the progress of the war, and there was no butter for his toast either.

It was the Summer holidays, time hung heavily on his hands, nowhere to go, everything covered in barbed wire, definitely no seaside.

“Boring,” he repeated only to hear his mother’s -

“Yes dear,” and his father’s usual -

“Go and do your homework.”

“It’s the holidays haven’t got any. I’d play tennis if I had some balls or a decent racquet.”

“You’d have both if that dog hadn’t eaten them.”

“Richard’s got all that stuff doing nothing in his room.”

“Better not touch them dear, he may come home on leave soon, how about helping me or tidying...” on hearing those words, he left with Jumble to find consolation with Ginger, Henry and Douglas at their secret place, a dangerous pile of lumber built by their own hands. Wartime restrictions wouldn’t upset him for long.

“Got an idea!” he shouted at the assembled mob.

When no one showed the slightest interest he added,

“Yer know my brother, he’s in the....” only to be interrupted by Henry,

“Oh shut up about your brother.”

“Heard it all before,” and they continued with whatever they were doing.

“Ok then I’ll do it on my own,” William threatened, causing nosy Ginger to raise his head enquiringly, which encouraged William who outlined his plan involving raiding his brother’s room, borrowing his stuff and then... he continued to the now attentive gang,

“We can practice our game, put on a tournament, charge entry, winner get a prize,” only for Douglas and Henry to point out that they neither had the money for prizes or anywhere to put on a stupid tournament.

“Violet Elizabeth’s on holiday, an she’s gotta tennis court. Meet you there, I’ll go and get Richard’s racquet and some balls, Ginger better stand outside my bedroom, he’s a good catcher.”

Assembled on the tennis court disputes began over who should have the two racquets, which was soon solved by Douglas who found a shed containing enough for one each.

They did eventually begin to play, something, causing Douglas to shout, Henry actually did hit a ball, straight into Ginger’s back, Henry stormed off to avoid retaliation.

“That’s not how you score,” their leader informed anyone who would listen, and then smashed a ball straight into the window of the shed, followed by Douglas throwing his racquet down and shouting.

“ Stupid game, I’m going to have some lunch.”

And before his plans could collapse William shouted, “be back by two, wiv competitors, tell ‘em bring money for entry.”

Earnest would-be tennis players keen to win were there early, regrettably they soon discovered that William’s organisers did not include either a game for everyone and that the prizes had been won by William and his gang at which a roar of, “I want my money back” went up fighting broke out during which racquets were used abandoned broken leaving Jumble chasing and chewing balls and Williams gang in retreat.

Unbeknown to the hapless boys Violet Elizabeth's family returned early to find the contents of a wrecked shed strewn over their tennis court where a happy dog was enjoying what was left of the tennis balls.

William didn't reach home in time to hide from his irate father's roar.

"William, come here immediately!"

The Botts, Violet Elizabeth's family had telephoned.

As the totally disgraced William climbed the stairs he mumbled,

"All 'cos silly ole Richard's racquet, I've gotta do tables, no pocket money ever, and in the holidays!"

