

# Miss Dilly and the Crystal Vase

By Lila Lennon



MISS DILLY knew what they said about her. She was too old to teach . . . too set in her ways. Hadn't she overheard that mother last week saying, "I just can't imagine Miss Dilly ever being a child!" What sentimental bosh. Some of those mothers ought to try handling a roomful of second graders. Especially

with a child like Robert.

Robert evaded her, somehow, with his ready laughter, his inattention. And, if laid end to end, the bottles of milk he spilled would reach clear to the assembly room. Only this time it wasn't milk.

She looked down again at the shattered fragments of the crystal vase on the floor. Re-

turning to the room after lunch, she had found Robert bending over them, picking up the few flowers. Anger and futility filled her. Her lovely vase. It had been her mother's, one of the few really nice things she had left. One room in a home that didn't belong to you . . . people who were not your own . . . no wonder

a little thing like a crystal vase meant so much. And there it was, ruined forever.

"Robert! What have you done? You've broken my crystal vase!"

His blue eyes were frightened. "I didn't break it, Miss Dilly. I was just picking up the flowers. . . ." His voice trailed off, uncertainly.

Her voice was sharp. "I expect the truth, Robert."

He planted his feet solidly apart, and looked at her defiantly. "I didn't break the vase, Miss Dilly."

He'd say that, anyway, she thought wearily.

She rapped on her desk with the ruler. "Children, one of you has broken my vase.

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