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WILL HAY IS INSIDE

# The PILOT

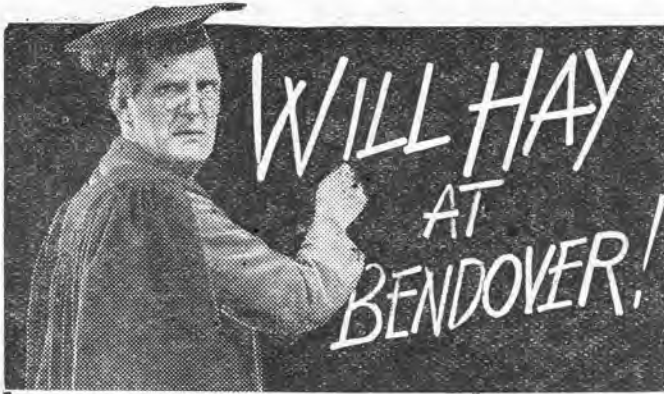
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No. 108. Vol. 5. Week ending October 23rd, 1937.

EVERY FRIDAY







"The PILOT'S" WINNING DOUBLE.— Side-splitting picture-strip and complete comedy story, starring the one-and-only WILL HAY, master of the Fourth and master of mirth.

(By Courtesy of Gainsborough Pictures.)



"WHAT'S that?" Sammy Straw and Dicky Bird, of the Fourth Form at Bendover, came to a sudden halt. The two juniors were taking a stroll before calling-over, and the spinney which they were just passing looked shadowy and mysterious. The spot was some little way from Duddlebury, and very lonely.

It was Sammy Straw who had uttered the whispered words, and he took a fierce grip on Dicky's arm.

"What's what, you prize ass?" asked Dicky.

"Didn't you hear something—from the wood?"

"Of course not, fathead—"

The sound came again—a hard, sardonic laugh, and large chunks of ice formed all up and down Dicky's spine.

"My only sainted aunt!" gurgled Sammy Straw. "Have a look through here, Dicky—quick!"

The sapling bowed gracefully, but said nothing. The wind probably had something to do with this movement, but Will seemed to imagine that he was responsible.

"As for you, my lad, report to my study in half an hour, and prepare for the worst!" he said ominously.

Sammy Straw looked at Dicky Bird, and Dicky Bird looked at Sammy Straw. In a word, they looked at one another.

"Clean off his onion!" murmured Sammy sadly.

"Mad as a coot!" whispered Dicky. "I've often wondered how long that brain of his would last before it cracked. We'd better not let him see us. He might be dangerous."

"My hat! I hadn't thought of that!" breathed Sammy. "Let's dash off and tell the others. Then we can overpower him and carry him off to the loony shop!"

They sped off; and Will Hay, quite unconscious of the fact that his solitude had been disturbed, suddenly relaxed his tension and took another look at the little booklet he was holding.

"My yes! Perhaps so," he mused doubtfully. "And then, again, very likely not! It seems all right, but I can't judge properly until I've tried this stuff on some of those little warts of the Fourth!"

He looked at the booklet again. Its title was certainly striking: "Why Remain a Worm?" And underneath this: "Be a Leader of Men—In Twelve Lessons." Will had memorised Lesson 1 practically by heart, but he was not very bucked.

Everything would depend upon the reactions of the Fourth. One can be as masterful as one likes with saplings and thistles and worms, but the only real test is to be masterful with flesh-and-blood subjects. Not that Will was

completely satisfied that the Fourth Formers were really composed of flesh and blood.

But something had to be done. Something drastic. Will had never received the complete respect from the Fourth that a man in his position had a right to expect. And, of late, the little blisters had been getting worse and worse.

Only a couple of days ago Will Hay had been attracted by a striking advertisement in one of the more popular weekly magazines—a blood-and-thunder thriller, in fact, which he had purloined from Fruity Snell, in order to destroy it. It was not until he had read the magazine from cover to cover that he had spotted the advertisement. A man, fashioned something after the style of a heavy-weight champion, pointed a stern finger at him from the middle of the page, saying: "Why Be a Worm?" As Will was not particularly good at riddles, he proceeded to read the rest of the advertisement; and he had discovered that he could, for a purely nominal fee, learn to become Dominant, and even Compelling and Masterful.

In order to acquire this power, it seemed, it was necessary to fix your intended slave with the Forceful Eye, and while he was under the 'fluence, give your orders in a stern and masterful voice. Lesson 1 had arrived that morning, and having digested most of the contents during the day, Will Hay had come along in the quiet spinney to do a spot of private practising.

"Ah, well, we shall see to-morrow," murmured Will philosophically, as he prepared to leave. "I'm going to spring the new system on the young scallawags during morning classes, and then we shall see what the harvest will be!"

There was such a suggestion of suppressed laughter in Sammy's voice that Dicky felt reassured. Sammy had parted some dense bushes, and was looking into the spinney, where there was a shadowy clearing.

Dick took a look, and jumped. He saw a man in a billowing gown and a mortar-board, and although he did not at first recognise Will Hay, master of the Fourth Form, he could be forgiven for this lapse. It was a bit gloomy in the clearing, and Will Hay, for reasons known only to himself, had struck a rigid posture, with his head thrust forward and his finger pointing accusingly at an innocent sapling.

"Remember, you will do as I say—now and always!" said Will Hay, his voice sounding rather like a file being drawn across a chunk of granite.





"IN here?" Jerry Smart, the japer-in-chief of the Bendover Fourth, dropped his voice to a mere whisper as he and about a dozen other juniors crept through the dusk towards the spinney, where Will Hay had last been seen.

"Yes, and we'd better go easy," murmured Dicky Bird. "He was looking pretty dangerous and we mustn't take any chances."

"By the look of him, he's ready to slay the whole lot of us with his bare hands," breathed Sammy Straw. "I think we ought to have brought lots of strong rope and a strait-jacket, and a bottle of chloroform."

"Rats!" said Jerry Smart. "We'll make one rush and overpower him. Ready, you chaps? Go!"

The juniors burst into the spinney in a flood. It was a good effort, as far as it went, but the whole effect was spoilt by the fact that the little clearing was empty. Will Hay might have been there ten minutes ago, but he wasn't there now. Jerry Smart gave Sammy and Dicky a hard look.

"Is this a new kind of joke?" he asked suspiciously.

"But he was here!" gasped Sammy Straw, giving an uneasy glance over his shoulder. "Perhaps he's lurking in the undergrowth. Hallo! What's this?"

He bent down and picked something out of the grass.

"Lesson No. 1!" said Jerry Smart, in surprise, as he looked over Sammy's shoulder.

"What the dickens— Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see any joke," said Sammy.

"Why, you blithering ass, have another look at this booklet!" gasped Jerry. "Will Hay wasn't dotty! He was learning how to be Masterful and Dominant!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They eagerly perused the precious booklet. "My only hat!" chirruped Carboy. "What a scream! I'll bet he's going to try this on us to-morrow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It looks a pretty good system to me," said Jerry Smart, with a sly wink at the others. "I don't see any reason why it shouldn't be a huge success."

"And how?" grinned the others.

Next morning, when Will Hay entered the Fourth Form Room, he found everybody as noisy and as unruly as usual—perhaps a bit noisier, and bit more unruly. He was rather worried, because he had mislaid the booklet of Lesson No. 1; but as he had memorised most of the pointers, it didn't much matter.

"Put a sock in it, you little blisters!" he said severely, as he brought his cane down with a whack on the desk. "Er—that is to say, silence! Carboy, you young gangster, stop pouring ink down Green's neck! Straw, go to your place!"

Then Will blinked. The racket ceased as though somebody had turned off a tap, and, with a wild scuffle, the juniors dashed to their places and sat at attention.

"My only tattered gown!" murmured Will, with a jump.

Never before had the juniors obeyed so promptly: and he hadn't even started the system. There could be only one explanation. In some subtle way, he had acquired the fluence. It was coming out of him like an invisible force.

"Ahem! That's better!" said Will, arching an eyebrow, and gazing over the tops of his nose-nippers at the juniors. "I'm glad to see that you're learning obedience."

The Fourth sat silent and attentive, and for some moments Will was so astonished

that he was rather at a loss. He didn't quite like the wide grin on Jerry Smart's face, but he couldn't have everything.

"Smart!" Will rapped out the word as per instructions on page three. "Smart, wipe that grin off your face at once!"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Jerry Smart.

With great deliberation he stood up in his place, took out his handkerchief, and wiped it across his face. As he did so the grin vanished, leaving an expression of such extreme gravity that Will Hay shied like a frightened horse. He did not even hear the titters which arose from other parts of the room.

"My goodness gracious me!" muttered Will feebly.

"Pardon, sir?" said Jerry.

"Eh? Nothing—nothing!" said Will hastily. "You can sit down, Smart."

Jerry Smart sat down, and at that moment Will noticed that Sansom was scribbling something on his desk top. Evidently Will wasn't concentrating enough.

"You're not attending, Sansom!" snapped Will, giving Sansom the hard look described on page four. "Did I tell you to write things on your desk top? Cut it out!"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Sansom.

To the sheer joy of the other juniors, he snapped open his pocket knife, and commenced slicing at the woodwork with the sharp blade. It was not until the shavings began to fall all over the floor that Will noticed what was going on.

"Hey, you young fathead!" he ejaculated, striding forward. "What do you think you're doing?"

"I'm doing what you told me to do, sir," replied Sansom, in innocent surprise. "You told me to cut it out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"





"Silence!" roared Will; and the yell of laughter died so abruptly that Will clung to the nearest desk for support. "I didn't tell you to carve your desk to bits, Sansom, you little, thick young chump! I told you to stop scribbling."

"Oh, I see, sir!" said Sansom. "Sorry, sir!"

Will Hay went back to his desk, conscious that the perspiration was beginning to ooze out of him. He was more startled than he cared to admit. His command over the Fourth was a bit staggering. This Will Power stuff was the goods.

Clearly, however, it was necessary to concentrate all the time. For as soon as he allowed his thoughts to stray, he found that the boys were getting back into their old habits. With a start, he realised that Fragon and Smythe had started a heated altercation, and were hissing threats at one another, sixteen to the dozen.

"Where do you think you are, you two?" roared Will, striking a dramatic attitude, and exerting all the fluence on Fragon and Smythe. "Didn't I tell you to be quiet? Put a sock in it!"

Fragon and Smythe jumped, and Will Hay experienced a sensation of faintness as he beheld the two juniors, with a large sock between them, stuffing the two ends of it in their mouths.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hey! Stop it!" gasped Will. "I didn't mean put a sock in it! I meant, dry up!"

Fragon and Smythe removed the sock, and then after that things were fairly normal for a space. First lesson began in an air of peace and quiet that rather got on Will's nerves. He was overjoyed with the success of the great system. The juniors simply fell over themselves in their eagerness to obey his orders. In fact, they were a bit too eager, for Will's unfortunate habit of using slang resulted in all sorts of confusion.

Not that the Fourth cared. The morning was slipping by very nicely, and hardly any work had been done. The more of that particular kind of slipping there was, the better. They were pleased, and Will Hay was pleased, so everybody was satisfied. It would have been less embarrassing, of course, if the juniors had not taken him so literally; but there was no doubt about it that Will Hay's mastery of the Fourth was complete.

His command of the boys was colossal; he had not expected such results for weeks. If this sort of thing happened after he had soaked up Lesson No. 1, he was likely to be a world dictator by the time he had finished the whole course!

It never entered Will's head that the juniors were kidding him up to the eyebrows. The Fourth took care not to overdo it, for this was the best rag of the term, and they wanted to get all they could out of it.

They kept it up all day, and afternoon classes were just as hectic as the morning. In fact, by the time school was dismissed, the Fourth was feeling slightly exhausted. When it came to concentration, they had beaten Will Hay by miles.

"IT'S not good enough!"

Jerry Smart made that remark when after tea, he and a group of other Fourth Formers were in the quad. Before long they would have to go into the Form-room for prep. The rag, in fact, had developed in a way which the Fourth had not expected. Will Hay, encouraged by his success, had sprung his bombshell just before the school had been dismissed. This evening, as a trial, the juniors would do their prep in the Form-room under his eye!

"It's not good enough by a long chalk," added Jerry gloomily. "The old chump is getting big ideas now, and we've got to put a stop to 'em. I vote we don't turn up for prep at all!"

"We might get some fun out of it," argued Jimmy Carboy. "All we need is an idea. Who's got an idea?" He looked round without much hope. "Something big, you know—"

At this moment Sammy Straw, who had cycled into Duddlebury, came tearing into the quad, hot and breathless, and he practically fell off his machine. He didn't know it, but he had brought the big idea for which Carboy was looking.

"Heard the latest, you chaps?" gasped Sammy. "There's a tiger at large!"

"A what!"

"A ferocious tiger of the jungle—"

"My only sainted aunt!"

"It escaped from Heere's Circus about an hour ago," panted Sammy Straw, fairly bubbling with his news. "Everybody's talking about it down in Duddlebury. It's the circus that was here a week or two ago. It's still in the district—over at some place about seven miles away."

"So the tiger escaped seven miles away?" asked Jerry Smart. "I thought you said it was at large in this district?"

"Seven miles isn't far—for a tiger," protested Sammy. "Of course, the brute was last seen going in the other direction, so it's not likely to come near Bendover. The keepers are searching everywhere, and they say there's no need to be alarmed."

"Why not? Wouldn't you be alarmed if you suddenly met a whacking great ferocious tiger of the jungle?"

Sammy Straw looked a bit sheepish. "Well, it's not very large," he confessed. "In fact, they say it's only a small one. And it's quite tame, too. Wouldn't hurt a fly."

Carboy held up both his hands. "Quiet, you chaps," he gasped. "I've just thought of the jape of the century! Let's make old Will Hay believe that this tiger is a regular man-eater. Then, when it appears in the quad, he can use his Dominant Personality on it and make it obey his every command!"

"And supposing," asked Jerry Smart, sarcastically, "the tiger doesn't show up in the quad?"

"But it will show up!" grinned Carboy. "That's just the point! It can't help showing up— Shush!" he added, with a hiss. "Here's the old chump himself!" He raised his voice. "A real man-eater?" he asked, in a tone of horror. "Great Scott! We'd better get indoors, hadn't we? It's a bit thick, allowing ferocious tigers to romp all over the countryside."

Will Hay, who was about to pass, paused abruptly. His billowing gown settled about him, and he gave the juniors a hard, suspicious look as he rubbed his nose.

"What's the joke?" he asked. "If you think you can kid me with all that talk of man-eating tigers—"

"We're not trying to kid you, sir," interrupted Carboy. "Straw's just come from Duddlebury."

"But Straw's not a man-eating tiger," said Will, giving Straw a doubtful look. "Of course, if you had said a monkey, or a chimpanzee— Well, let it go!"

"You remember that circus that was here a week or two ago, sir?" asked Jerry Smart. "Well, it's still in the district, and this tiger escaped not long ago. In fact, it's at large now."

"When do you think I was born—yesterday?" retorted Will, with a sniff. "You can go and eat coke—the whole lot of you! You and your tigers!"

"Mr. Hay!"

Dr. Shrubbs came hurrying up, very alarmed.

"Have the gates closed at once, Mr. Hay," panted the Head. "The escaped tiger might—"

"The wha-wha-what?" gasped Will, jumping a foot into the air.

"My dear sir, haven't you heard?" went on the Head frantically. "The police have just telephoned to me from Duddlebury. They say the danger is not excessive—in fact, infinitesimal—but we can't take any chances with the boys."

Thus it came about that the boys of Bendover soon found themselves gated for the evening—or until the tiger was recaptured. Will Hay heard reports of the beast from some of the seniors, too, so he could no longer doubt the authenticity of the story. A tiger of sorts was certainly at large, and Will made the discovery that his study was very comfortable and cosy, especially with the window locked. It would have been even cosier with shutters, but a large bookcase pulled in front of it kept out quite a lot of draught.

Furthermore, Will Hay came to the conclusion that watching over the Fourth while they did their prep in the Form-room was quite unnecessary. No reason why the Fourth shouldn't look after themselves. With a feeling of comfort and security, he turned on his radio to listen to the six o'clock news. The light came on behind the dial all right, but the instrument seemed strangely silent, except for a few unaccustomed crackles.

"Before the news, there is a police message," said the radio, in a hoarse, forced voice—which caused Will to raise an inquiring eyebrow. "Residents of Duddlebury and district are warned to be on the look-out for an escaped tiger. The ferocious animal, with slaving jaws, was last seen in this neighbourhood, in the vicinity of Bendover College."

"No!" gasped Will Hay, horrified. "Yes!" said the radio impatiently. "But

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there is no need for alarm, as the tiger is temporarily satisfied, having consumed a couple of Duddlebury rustics for its supper. It is, therefore, likely to be docile until it gets hungry again. In order to facilitate the search, the transmission from this station will now cease."

There was a terrific crackle in the loud-speaker, and the instrument suddenly became dead. Will Hay was so startled by the alarming news that he did not think of examining the radio, or he might have found that all was not in order. He might even have discovered the hastily concealed wire which ran out to a microphone outside his window.

"It worked!" chortled Jerry Smart. "The old fathead has locked himself in his study and dragged some of the furniture in front of the door."

"Good egg!" grinned Carboy. "On with the show, my sons!"

The juniors went dashing up to a box-room, where they kept a number of old theatrical props. During the previous winter they had presented a species of pantomime, and a property tiger had played an important part in the show.

To be strictly truthful, it was really a property lion, but, with its mane cut off, it would easily pass as a rare species of tiger. Not that Will Hay would be able to see much in the gloom of the quad, anyhow.

Jerry Smart and Jimmy Carboy were to fill the interior of the tiger—while the rest of the Fourth hung out of the Form-room windows, watching the show. Rather a good thing that Will had ordered them to do their prep in the Form-room, as their appearance at the windows would look quite natural.

The only snag was to get Will out of doors—and it was a snag that was fairly easily overcome. When the telephone rang in Will Hay's study, some little time later, he grabbed the instrument eagerly, hoping to hear that the tiger had been recaptured.

"Mr. Hay," said a hoarse, urgent voice, "I want you to come straight over to my House, Mr. Hay!"

"Then go on wanting!" retorted Will Hay. "If you think I'm going to turn myself into a tiger's supper—I mean, if you think I'm going to risk catching a cold just because you want me to go to your House—Who are you, anyway?"

"How dare you talk to me in that tone, Mr. Hay!" came an angry bellow through the phone. "I am Dr. Shrub, sir! And when I tell you to come to my House, I expect you to come to my House without any quibble or question!"

"But—but the tiger, sir—" gasped Will. "Are you a man, sir, or a jelly?" roared the angry voice. "Bother the tiger! Aren't all the gates locked? I want you at once, Mr. Hay, and I shall expect you in three minutes—or else—"

There was nothing for it but to obey orders. Will shifted the furniture, unlocked his door, and ventured out. When he reached the quad, all was quiet and deserted. A rather chill wind was blowing from across the playing fields.

"Who's afraid of tigers, anyway?" muttered Will Hay. "Anybody with a powerful personality and a Dominant Eye can make tigers eat out of his hand!"

It was an encouraging thought. After all, Jerry Smart & Co. were just as bad as any tigers of the jungle, and he had quelled them like nobody's business. He started across the quad with a firm, purposeful stride. At least, he thought it was a firm, purposeful stride. Actually, it was more like a timid cat making its first trip across hot bricks.

He rather regretted that he did not possess eyes in the back of his head—and a few others at each side. As he advanced, he looked this way and that, but saw no reason for alarm. Then, suddenly, a deep-throated roar brought him up all standing, and if anybody could have taken a look at his blood at that moment it would have been quite colourless.

The awful sound came from the shrubbery, and Jerry Smart and Jimmy Carboy, who were in that shrubbery, nearly had a fit.

For that roar had not come from them!

They were on the very point of emerging, so that Will Hay could see the property tiger in all its fearsomeness. But they suddenly changed their minds. The animal broke in halves, and the two juniors looked about them in horrid apprehension.

"Run!" squeaked Carboy. "It's the real tiger!"

And there, sure enough, it was! A handsome brute, crouching quite near to them, lashing its tail! With one accord, the two juniors ran—they ran for the nearest tree, hoping that they would be able to find it before death overtook them.

"So that's the gag, is it?" murmured Will, ramming his mortar-board more firmly on his head, and squaring his shoulders. "So the little squirts thought they'd fool me, did they?"

He chuckled with glee, and strode boldly forward. It was at that moment that the tiger—the real, honest-to-goodness animal—emerged from the shrubbery. Then he paused, for there was something about Will Hay's masterful advance that reminded him of his keeper.

"Ah, a tiger!" said Will casually, believing that his words were falling on the japers' ears—which, incidentally, they were, only the two japers, tongue-tied, were clinging to the branches of a tree, many feet from the ground. Other japers were hanging out of the Form-room window, waiting for results.

"Keep your distance, tiger!" commanded Will, pointing an accusing finger at the surprised animal. "It's like your nerve to walk about Bendover as though you owned the place!" His voice was stern and commanding to a degree. "Follow me, you wretched beast! To heel, dog—I mean, tiger!"

And the tiger was so surprised that it obeyed. When Will went striding towards the School House, the tiger obediently followed him. The phenomenon was not so startling as might be supposed. For one thing, Will's voice was chockful of vital command, and that's a thing that no well-trained tiger can resist; also, the animal was fed up to the teeth, and its one desire was to get back into its comfortable cage. Liberty, it had found, was not all that it is cracked up to be.

"This way, unhappy beast!" said Will grimly.

He strode to the Fourth Form Room, and the unhappy beast remained at his heels. A sly grin appeared on Will's face as he suddenly flung open the Form-room door and caught a glimpse of the juniors in the lighted room.

"And hold this!" added Will gaily.

Wham!

The kick he delivered on the unsuspecting tiger's rear quarters was so effective that the animal shot through the doorway, sprawling. Will slammed the door, and gave a yell of laughter.

"That'll teach the young warts that I'm not to be made a fool of!" he chuckled. "That'll show 'em I was wise to their trick all the time!"

He ignored the howls and screams and hoots which were proceeding from the interior of the Form-room. His attention was attracted, in fact, by a police-constable and two startled-looking men—circus hands—who had just come dashing along the corridor.

"Where is it, mister?" gasped one of the men. "The kids told us that the tiger came after you!"

"I don't think it's the tiger you want, my man," said Will Hay, with a shrug. "But you can have a look at it, if you like."

He flung open the Form-room door, and waved an airy hand.

"I'm afraid—" he began, and then something went wrong with his throat. "Whooooop!" he howled. "Who put that there?"

Squatting in the middle of the Form-room floor was a tiger so real that Will Hay reeled. Clinging to the window-ledges, hanging from the electric-light standards and the cross-beams, were the Fourth Formers. The scared juniors were in every conceivable place, in fact, except on the floor.

"Save us!" went up a wild howl. "It's all right; he's harmless!" said one of the men.

He and his mate dashed forward with a net,

and in a surprisingly short time the tiger was made fast. The policeman mopped his brow, and the circus hands looked at Will Hay with awe and respect.

"Well, blimey, gov'nor, if you don't take the cake!" said one of the men. "We know that Sebastian ain't dangerous, but you didn't! The way you made that tiger follow you, so's you could put it in this room, is a fair knock-out!"

It was such a fair knock-out, in fact, that Will didn't get over it for two or three days. But his stock went up by leaps and bounds in the Fourth, for the juniors never knew that Will had trapped the animal by mistake. Their respect for him—until it wore off—was the real thing.

*Form-master Will Hay is in the thick of things again next Friday. You'll reel in his latest stunt—a mechanical "swishing" machine; but you wouldn't like to be Will's "demonstrator." Whacks, laughs, thrills—all booked for you next week.*



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