Dakota Blue Richards

Dakota Blue Richards was born in London on 11th April 1994. In primary school she took weekend drama classes and enjoyed acting, but considered it a hobby and not a career choice.

From an early age Dakota read Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials* series, and she loved the books, particularly the character of the wild girl Lyra. When she heard that the books were being made into a movie, she jumped at the chance to audition and won the role of Lyra Belacqua in *The Golden Compass*. Richards has been nominated for several awards including a Critic’s Choice Award. She plans to continue acting, but would like to combine it with being a substitute teacher.

Ed and his friend Cassidy

*written and illustrated by Dakota Blue Richards*

Ed the Stick Insect is a very special Stick Insect. He is about as long as a small stick and as fat as a small stick, and... Ed can talk.

This is Ed

Ed likes to watch the children through the school window and this is how he taught himself to read and write. Ed loves to read books and learn

Ed’s greatest ambition is to go to school, but unfortunately, there aren’t schools for Stick Insects. This is the story of how Ed achieved his dream.

One day, Ed decided to start a protest, so he worked very hard and made a sign. Then he went to stand outside the school.

But nobody seemed to notice him. Some people nearly squished him. Ed decided it was no good protesting alone. So he made another sign advertising his campaign. It said:

- **STICK INSECTS SHOULD GO TO SCHOOL TOO!**

- **MEETING - HERE FOUR O’ CLOCK TODAY**

Ed waited but nobody arrived, and
just when he was about to go home, he heard a voice behind him. “Hello” said the boy. “Are you here for the meeting?” said Ed (hopefully). “Yes. My name is Cassidy” smiled the boy.

From that moment on, Ed and Cassidy became the best of friends. They had a lot of fun together. They played football in the park. They played ‘fetch’ with the dog (although this game made Ed a bit nervous). They played hide and seek (this was Ed’s favourite).

Ed and Cassidy read books together…and of course, they protested outside the school together. But the teacher always made Cassidy come inside and he was forced to leave Ed protesting alone.
Finally, Ed and Cassidy decided that protesting outside the school was not enough. So they went to see the Queen.

“I completely agree” said the Queen, “Everyone should be allowed to go to school”. So she talked to some very important people and made some very important arrangements. Now Ed goes to school every day, and learns lots of new things.

The most important thing that Ed has learned is that if we work together we can change the world. The only problem Ed has now is that the teacher doesn’t believe him when he tells her the dog ate his homework!

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