GRAND COMPLETE TEDDY LESTER STORY!

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TEDDY LESTER'S PERIL!

A Stirring Complete Tale of Slapton School.

Our Readers are informed that the characters in the following Story are purely imaginary; no reference or allusion is made to any living person. Actual names may be unintentionally mentioned, but the Editor wishes it to be distinctly understood that no adverse personal reflection is intended.]

CHAPTER I.

How Tom Sandys and Big Baldwin Fell Out.

THE playing-field of Slapton School was filled by a breathless and expectant crowd. The big match of the season was on.

The Slapton School eleven were matched against the club of the neighbouring town of Oakford. Oakford had batted, and made 125. The Slapton boys had made 32 for six wickets. This was not very brilliant on so easy a wicket, but half an hour before things had been much worse. Then the score had stood at 39 for six, but a splendid stand had been made, and runs were coming at tremendous speed. Tom Sandys and Big Baldwin were in, and hitting furiously.

The Oakford players had looked upon the match as theirs for a dead certainty half an hour ago. Now they were bowling and fielding for their life. The Slapton boys bowled and yelled with delight as 4 after 4 was added to the score-sheet. Big Baldwin was cheered even more rapturously than their usual cricket hero, Tom Sandys. For while they expected Tom to make a stand and a score, it was quite a new thing for Baldwin to come out like this.

"Well, this is Big Baldwin's lucky day!" cried Arthur Digby, Tom Sandys' particular chum, throwing up his cap as Baldwin made a happy snick past long-slip to the boundary. "Never saw him hit like this in my life!"

"I hope they'll get a few more," said Teddy Lester, a smaller boy. "The others who have to go in yet ain't up to much. If the Oakford chaps get either of these out they can win the match comfortably enough yet."

"Good old Tom!" roared Digby, as Sandys got the bowling, and made a beautiful clean drive to the off all along the carpet. Two overs again, and the hundred went up to a perfect roar of Slapton cheers.

A change of bowlers was tried, and the score moved forward more slowly; but it soon stood at 110, and the two batsmen still seemed to have taken a free hold of the wicket. Big Baldwin let out with all his might at a half-volley, and drove it for 3. Then it was seen that he was shaking his bat, as if there was something wrong with the handle. Next he shouted for another bat, waving the disabled tool in the air.

"Spring the handle!" said the onlookers, as a boy ran out with a fresh bat. It was the end of an over, and Baldwin came half-way to meet his chum Dowse, who was bringing the fresh bat.

"Go it, old man!" said Dowse. "You're astonishing the natives to-day!"

"I feel fit, I can tell you!" bragged Baldwin. "This bowling's just toffee to me! I could win this match off my own bat as easy as winking!"

"I wish that cocky Sandys was out; you'd do it then," said Dowse.

When the latter returned to his companions he began to boast of his friend's powers.

"Baldwin feels pretty fit, I can tell you," he remarked. "He just said to me he can do what he likes with this bowling."

"That's lucky," drily returned Arthur Digby, who stood close at hand, "because Tom's a certain sticker now he's set like this, and the match is safe."

Several boys laughed, for Baldwin's bragging ways were well known. Then all eyes were fixed once more on the batsman as the bowling began again. One hundred and twenty up! Then Tom made a cut for 2. Only 5 to win, and the two victorious batsmen firmly set. It was all over bar shouting. The Oakford supporters were glum and dumb; the Slapton boys could scarcely breathe. The excitement was tremendous. One or two rousing hits, and the game would be snatched gloriously out of the fire.

Tom Sandys had the bowling, and received a ball of fine length, pitched on the leg stump and breaking a little. It caught the edge of his bat and went to leg. It was for Baldwin to call, and he shouted "Come on!" Tom darted from his crease, but everyone saw that Baldwin only made a feint of starting.

"We can't do it!" cried the latter. "Go back—go back!"

Tom saw that Baldwin did not mean to come, and he turned and raced for the white mark he had left. He lost by inches! The man at short-leg had fielded and returned in a flash. The wicket-keeper gathered the ball smartly, and the bails were whipped off as Tom pushed his bat home.

"How's that!" roared Oakford as one man.

"Out!" said the umpire. And Tom walked towards the pavilion.

A loud groan of sorrow and despair rose from every Slapton throat, and mingled with the laments were cries of anger.

"Oh, too bad—too bad!" called out several. "That's a bit too thick! Baldwin never meant to start. He's run Tom out on purpose!"

"Pooh, pooh!" said Dowse. "The match is safe enough. Baldwin will be sure to hit off the few runs we want in a couple of knocks."

"You're bound to try and make it look rosy for Baldwin," cried Digby, "but it's plain enough to everybody what's happened. There was one run easy enough, but Baldwin called on purpose to send Tom back and get him out. Your man wants to pose as the winner of the big match."

Dowse was about to make an angry reply, when all talk was drowned in a chorus of outcries and warning to the boy now going to the wicket.

"Play a straight bat, Shepherd!" "Don't lose your head!" "You've only to keep your end up a bit, and it will be all right!"

Shepherd looked profoundly unhappy as he nodded glumly to all this well-meant advice. It was very fine for fellows to sit at ease on the grass and tell him what to do. He was a capital field and a fair bowler, but he knew quite well that as regards batting he was among the tail.

"I wish Shepherd wasn't going in to the bowling," said Dowse. "If old Baldwin only had it, the runs would be polished off in no time."

"It's all very fine for you to talk like that," said Arthur. "This clever game of Baldwin trying to shine all by himself may lose us the match yet."

Every ball was now watched with the keenest anxiety. Shepherd stopped one well, fumbled one, and missed one. The last ball just shaved the wicket, and Slapton groaned aloud in terror.

Baldwin now had the batting, and there was a roar of relief as he cut the first ball clean and hard for 3. Only 2 to win! Surely three wickets to fall, and Baldwin still in, must be worth 2 runs!

Slapton breathed again. But Shepherd was now caught in two minds. He jumped out to hit, then tried to play the ball. In the end he spooned it up, and a third man darted in and brought off a fine catch.

Now Leigh went in, very nervous and shaky, with a face as white as his flannels.

He, too, was given heaps of earnest advice, but all to no purpose. Too frightened to hit out, he blocked several balls, and kept his wicket up, but no more. Baldwin made a desperate effort to keep the bowling. He backed up now with the heartiest goodwill. But the Oakford players were fielding for all they were worth.

Not a single bye was given away, not a single run could be snatched.

Crash!

A fast yorker had got into the timbers yard, and Leigh's wicket was spreadeagled. He walked slowly back to the pavilion, and Slapton trembled with excitement as their last man went out in search of the all-important 2.

"If old Billy can get hold of one it will be all right yet," murmured Tom Sandys, who had taken off his pads and joined his chums.

"I say, Tom," said little Lester, "what a frightful cad and sneak that Big Baldwin is! He ran you out on purpose! I'm sure of it!"

"Oh, I don't know!" said Tom.

"That's an awkward thing to say, Teddy. I couldn't exactly see for myself. Of course, he wasn't keen on losing his wicket."

"You're talking like a sportsman, old chap," said Digby quietly, "but for all that I believe Teddy is right."

"Well, we'll hope Billy will get hold of one, and shout it for 6," said Tom. "As long as the match is

Continued on the next page.

TEDDY LESTER WILL APPEAR AGAIN NEXT WEEK! TELL YOUR CHUMS!

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FRANK MONK'S LIBEL

A Splendid Complete Tale of GORDON GAY & CO.,

By PROSPER HOWARD.

CHAPTER I.

A Little Mistake.

"HERE you are, Monk!"

"Give us one!"

"Let's have a copy—quick!"

A crowd of juniors surrounded Frank Monk, captain of the Fourth Form at Rylcombe Grammar School, and clamoured eagerly for copies of the little printed journal from the bundle which he held in his arms.

The little paper was the "Grammar School Junior Gazette," which had just arrived from the printer's, and which was eagerly looked for by the members of the junior forms at the Grammar School. It was their own organ, and Frank Monk, their junior captain, was its editor, so that its pages were devoured with intense interest and not a little criticism.

"Here, hold on, you chaps! Don't shove! No hurry, you know," said Monk good-humouredly, as he handed out the copies. "I know how anxious you are to read the editorial, though, of course."

There was a roar from the surging crowd.

"Rats to you, Monkey!"

"How the editorial?"

"It's my article I want to read!"

"And my poem!"

"And my essay!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Monk doled out the "Gazette," laughing, until the clamourers were satisfied. Then, gathering up the few copies that remained, he strolled away to his study, followed by his study-mates, Lane and Carboy, and also by Gordon Gay & Co.

Frank Monk was assisted in his arduous task of editing the "Gazette" by six sub-editors—his two study-mates and Gordon Gay, the schoolboy actor, Jack and Harry Wootton, the Australian brothers, and Horace Tadpole, the artistic junior of the Fourth.

The latter four juniors were study-mates, and were commonly known in the Grammar School as Gordon Gay & Co.

The editor and his subs were accustomed to con over each issue of the "Gazette" as it came out in company, and for that purpose they adjourned straight to Monk's study.

"Take a seat, the rest of you—if you can find one," said Monk, waving his hand airily round the study, "and we'll look through to-day's number. It ought to be a jolly good number, I think. My editorial——"

"How your editorial!" remarked Gordon Gay, seating himself on the coal-locker and opening out the "Gazette." "What makes the number such a good one is—— My hat!"

Frank Monk stared.

"What the dickens has your hat got to do with it?" he demanded, with a snort.

"My—my aunt!"

"Or your aunt, either? Are you off your blessed rocker, Gay?"

Gordon Gay groaned.

"Ass! Look at the headlines!" he exclaimed, in a hopeless tone of voice. "Just look at them!"

"Why—what——"

Frank Monk glanced at the top line on the pages of the "Gazette," and the next moment he gave a yell.

"Great Jupiter!" he yelled. "That's absolutely done it!"

Across the top of every page in the previous paper was this sardonic announcement, in bold type:

"IF YOU WANT TO BE DONE, BUY YOUR TUCK AT MAYOR JENKINS'S, WAYLAND."

There was a general gasp from the entire editorial staff of the "Grammar School Junior Gazette."

"And I promised old Jenkins something good in the way of an ad.!" groaned the luckless editor. "He let me have some things cheap for the end-of-term football supper, and I wanted to do him a good turn!"

"He'll be fearfully mad about this!" muttered Lane. "There'll be an awful shindy!"

"How on earth did it happen?" asked Gordon Gay.

"Why, it should have read 'If you want to be done well, buy your tuck at Mayor Jenkins's, Wayland'!" howled Monk. "That ass of a printer must have dropped out the 'well' by mistake. It's a libel, that's what it is!"

There was a gloomy silence in the study until it was disturbed by a sudden yell of laughter from Gordon Gay:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, ass?" roared Frank Monk.

But the schoolboy actor vouchsafed no reply. He had evidently been struck with some extremely humorous idea, but he did not explain what it was.

He only roared:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER 2.

Mr. Septimus Bloggins, Solicitor.

CRICKET practice was over at the Grammar School for the afternoon, and Frank Monk & Co. were in their study, having just finished tea, when there was a knock at the door.

"Come in!" called out Frank Monk.

The school pageboy, evidently in a state of considerable excitement, opened the door and popped his tousled head in.

"Please, Master Monk, there's a gentleman downstairs 'oo wants to see you immejit. 'Ere's 'is card, sir."

Frank Monk & Co. stared at each other in blank surprise, not unmixed with consternation.

"Let's have a look!" said Monk, after a pause, taking the card. "M-my hat, chaps! Listen to this! 'Mr. Septimus Bloggins, solicitor, Wayland.'"

"Phew!"

"My aunt!"

Carboy and Lane gasped simultaneously. The same thought occurred to them at once, as it had to Monk:

"Old Jenkins's solicitor, for a pension!" muttered Lane.

Monk groaned.

"That's it! I told the printer to send Jenkins a copy of the 'Gazette' direct. He's evidently seen the headline, of course! And I was going down to see him this evening to explain!"

The chums stared at each other for a moment aghast. Visions of themselves in court, haled up to answer to the charge of grossly libelling a respectable tradesman of Wayland, who was also the mayor of the town, rose before their startled visions—especially Monk's. But the music had to be faced.

"Show the gentleman up!" said Monk, in a hollow voice; and the round-eyed page vanished with alacrity.

The next moment there was a tramp of feet in the passage, a knock on the door, and a thin little gentleman in black, with bushy side-whiskers and dark spectacles, and carrying a small black bag, bounced into the study.

"Have I the honour of addressing Mr. Frank Monk?" demanded the energetic little gentleman, in a thin, high voice.

"I'm Monk, sir," answered the captain of the Fourth, getting up nervously. "Won't you sit down?"

And Monk pushed the only easy-chair forward, at the same time shutting the study door, much to the disappointment of the interested pageboy.

"Thank you—no. I prefer to stand while attending to business," snapped the little gentleman. "I am Mr. Septimus Bloggins—Septimus Bloggins, of Wayland."

"So I see from your card," remarked Frank Monk.

Mr. Bloggins glared and coughed.

"Ahem! Am I to take it, Master Monk, that you act as editor of this—this publication?" And Mr. Bloggins whisked a copy of the "Gazette" from his bag and tapped it peremptorily.

"Yes-s," admitted Monk, "I—I'm the editor."

"Well, Master Monk, perhaps you will not be surprised to hear that I have called on behalf of Mr. Jenkins, Mayor of Wayland—I—I mean Mayor of Wayland, to know what on earth the meaning of this is, sir!" And Mr. Bloggins fairly seemed to bristle as he tapped the offending headline of the "Gazette."

Monk & Co. looked extremely blue. The worst had happened.

"I—I—I——" began Monk, stammering in his agitation of mind.

"It's libel, sir, that's what it is—rank libel!" shouted Mr. Bloggins, bounding with excitement. "There'll be heavy damages for this, my young friend—heavy damages!"

Monk & Co. turned pale. Heavy damages. It was awful to think of!

"But—but——" stammered poor Monk.

"But, but!" repeated Mr. Bloggins shrilly. "You are not a cent, my young friend, so no more butting, if you please. Let us be businesslike. Shall we say five thousand?"

"Pu!—five thousand!" gasped Monk & Co., in chorus.

"Certainly, my young friends! Mr. Jenkins's loss of trade, great though that is bound to be, is not the most serious damage which this malicious libel has wrought. He has become so thin with worry in this one day, sir, that he won't be able to wear his mayoral robes again! They would smother him, sir; they are so much too big! And as for his appetite, it's ruined—literally ruined!"

And Mr. Bloggins appeared on the point of exploding with indignation at the miserable mental picture he had conjured up of the afflicted Mr. Jenkins.

The juniors could hardly believe their ears. The last time they had seen his Worship of Wayland he was as round as a barrel. He must indeed have had a fearful shock to reduce him to the parlous state so graphically described by Mr. Bloggins. But five thousand pounds!

"But—but it was all a mistake, sir!" burst out Monk desperately. "My intention was to give Mr. Jenkins an advertisement. What I put was 'If you want to be done well, buy your tuck at Mayor Jenkins's.' It must be a fearful mistake of the printer's!"

Mr. Bloggins pursed his lips and shook his head.

"We can't accept that, Mr. Monk. The editor of a paper takes full responsibility for everything that appears in his journal."

"But—but I can't pay anything like five thousand pounds, of course!" exclaimed Monk desperately. "It's—it's all rot, you know, Mr. Bloggins!"

"Rot, is it?" cried Mr. Bloggins. "Rot—eh? We'll see, my young friend! When you're breaking stones on Dartmoor with a convict gang, perhaps you'll have more respect for the law of libel! Rot—eh? We'll see!"

And the little gentleman glared at Monk with extraordinary fierceness, and opening his black bag, drew out a huge bundle of papers tied round with pink ribbon.

Frank Monk gave a groan.

"Well, anyway, I can't pay! I'll have to go to prison, that's all!" he said desperately.

The little legal gentleman looked somewhat mollified.

"Well, well, well! As it was an accident, we'll see if we can modify our terms somewhat. Shall we say one thousand?"

"One thousand or five, it's just the same to me," said Monk recklessly.

"As a matter of fact, I've only got thirty bob in the world, and that's only because I've just had a tip from my uncle."

Carboy and Lane held their breath as their chum delivered this reckless ultimatum. They expected to see Mr. Bloggins have a fit, or stamp out of the study breathing vengeance at the mention of so small a sum as thirty shillings, after he had been talking in thousands. But Mr. Bloggins did nothing of the sort. He appeared to muse a moment before he spoke again.

"H'm!" he remarked thoughtfully. "Thirty bob isn't much, of course. Still, it's better than nothing. Thirty bob is thirty bob."

The three juniors looked at each other and gasped. For a moment they thought they were dreaming. But no. There stood Mr. Septimus Bloggins, as large as life, his whiskered face puckered into a thoughtful frown.

Lane plucked up courage.

There was a knock at the door, and a thin old gentleman, with side whiskers and dark spectacles, bounced into the room.

"I—I've got half-a-crown, if that'd be any good, sir!" he ventured.

"I've just got half-a-crown, too," added Carboy.

"H'm! Thirty-five bob altogether! It's not much, but——"

Lane looked at Mr. Bloggins keenly, and suddenly broke in:

"Look here, Monk, suppose Mr. Bloggins were to see your pater, the Head? Perhaps he'd——"

"No fear!" said Frank Monk promptly.

"Yes, rats to that—I—I mean—that is, I think I can arrange it without making an interview with Dr. Monk necessary," said Mr. Bloggins hastily. "What I propose by way of settlement is this: You, Master Monk, write out an order on Mr. Jenkins's emporium to provide a feed—that is, grub—I—I mean a meal for seven persons at five shillings a head, enclosing the thirty-five shillings in payment thereof. The provisions will be delivered in time for tea to-morrow. In consideration of your order, and of the fact that the libel complained of arose out of a mistake, I can promise on Mr. Jenkins's behalf that he will not take proceedings."

"My hat!" exclaimed Frank Monk, with a gasp of relief. "That's ripping! I'll do it immediately. Thanks awfully, Mr. Bloggins!"

"Not at all," said the little legal gentleman stiffly. "I am glad to have settled the matter satisfactorily. Perhaps you will be good enough to enclose an apology for the mistake with your order to prevent any unpleasantness."

"Certainly, Mr. Bloggins! And thank you so much!"

"Good-day, young gentlemen."

And Mr. Bloggins took up his black bag, and bounced out of the study, shutting the door behind him. Outside in the passage he behaved somewhat peculiarly. For a whole minute he stood outside the door of the study he had just left, doubled up in a paroxysm of silent mirth. Then, as if suddenly recollecting himself, he gave a pull at his whiskers, which came off in his hand, pulled off his dark spectacles, and made a bolt for Study No. 13, a little way down the Fourth Form passage.

Was it only a coincidence that No. 13 was the famous apartment occupied by Gordon Gay, the schoolboy actor, and his chums?

Having ordered the feed for seven persons, of course it was Gordon Gay and his chums, Jack and Harry Wootton and Horace Tadpole, whom Frank Monk invited to tea on the following day. Although the rivalry between the two companies was keen, they were really the best of chums.

As they were seated round the festive board, which was set out with a really good spread, Frank proceeded to tell the story to his guests of how he came to be holding the feed. As he related the amazing tale of the eccentric Mr. Bloggins's visit the faces of his guests expressed great amazement, but, curiously enough, not a sign of incredulity.

"The most curious part of the whole business," said Monk, in conclusion, "is that old meddlesome Jenkins sent the thirty-five bob back by the man who delivered the grub this afternoon, saying that it had already been paid for. It's a mistake, of course."

"Not at all!" said Gordon Gay calmly, with his mouth full of ham. "We had a whip-round in our study and paid for it. We didn't want to let you in for thirty-five bob, you see, Monkey. I only wanted to jape you. And I did that properly, old chap, didn't I?"

"What?" roared Monk & Co., with one voice.

But Gordon Gay remained calm. His party were four to three, if it came to a row, anyway.

"I was Mr. Bloggins, solicitor, Wayland, of course, my young friends," he went on. "Old Jenkins knows nothing about it. He is quite satisfied with your apology and order. So that's all right, isn't it?" finished the schoolboy actor cheerfully.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared his chums.

But Monk & Co. were silent. Their feelings were too deep for words.

THE END.

A PROFITABLE HOBBY.

Wood-carving may become a really profitable hobby if a lad has any talents in that direction. You will only require about a dozen tools to start with. The most useful for ordinary work are flat gouges. Instead of being quite flat, however, like ordinary chisels, they are slightly rounded. The following sizes are recommended to start with: ¼, ½, ¾ in. The remainder can be made up with different kinds of chisels, including a corner chisel, which comes next to the gouge in point of usefulness. Take particular notice of the handles. They should be of hard wood, preferably boxwood, made perfectly smooth.

The best wood for carving is foreign oak, whilst Spanish chestnut and mahogany also are good but the most popular wood for this purpose is American walnut, which is fairly hard, and cuts clean.

PECULIAR.

Tom: "Queer, isn't it?"
Dick: "What's queer?"
Tom: "Why, the night falls."
Dick: "Yes."
Tom: "But it doesn't break."
Dick: "No."
Tom: "And the day breaks."
Dick: "What's so."
Tom: "But it doesn't fall."
And he was gone.

NOT WHAT HE MEANT.

"John, did you run round and ask how old Mrs. Jones was this morning, as I asked you?"

"Yessir, and she said it was like your impidence, but she 'ad no objection to letting you know that she was seventy-eight."

Teddy Lester & Co. also appear in "The 'B.R.' Football & Sports Library"—½d. Every Thursday.