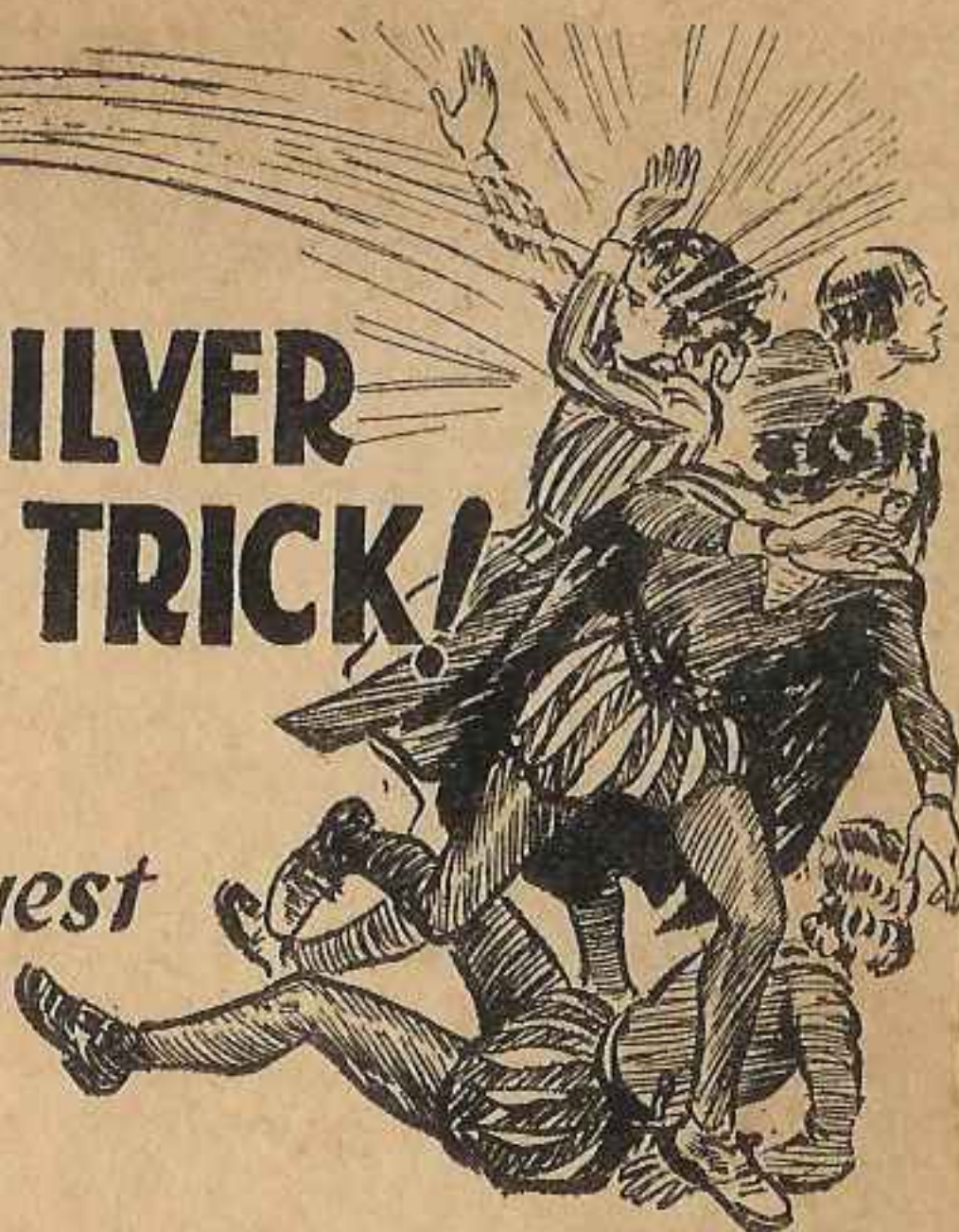




# JIMMY SILVER DOES THE TRICK!

by  
*Owen Conquest*



## THE FIRST CHAPTER AWFUL CHEEK!

**C**RASH!  
The door of the end study was hurled open suddenly and forcibly.

Jimmy Silver & Co. stared round wrathfully. The Fistical Four—Jimmy, Lovell, Raby, and Newcome—were all at home. The heroes of the Fourth were working hard at their prep., having left it rather late.

"What the dickens——" began Jimmy Silver, as the door crashed open.

Then he blinked in surprise.

The doorway was filled by a crowd of fellows—not members of the Fourth—as Jimmy naturally expected.

Hansom, the captain of the Fifth, stepped in, and following him came

four other Fifth-Formers—Talboys, Lumsden, Duff, and O'Rourke.

Jimmy Silver & Co. jumped up at once. It was but seldom that seniors of the Fifth condescended to call in at junior studies. And it was easy to see that this was not a friendly visit.

Hansom and his comrades crowded into the study, some of them looking grim and some of them grinning.

Jimmy Silver's hand strayed to a ruler.

"Hallo, Cabby!" he said, quite

cheerfully. "What's the game?"

Hansom frowned majestically. It always annoyed him to be called Cabby—a playful allusion to his surname.

"If you've come to tea, you're too late!" remarked Lovell. "Besides, we don't want the Fifth to tea. We draw the line somewhere, you know!"

***Hansom & Co. of the Fifth Form at Rookwood will think twice before they again take it upon themselves to put Jimmy Silver and his chums in their place!***



"Our aim," said Jimmy gravely, "is to keep this study perfectly respectable. Consequently, the Fifth are barred!"

"Take your faces away!" implored Raby.

"And bury them!" added Newcome.

"I dare say you know why we've come here," Hansom said grimly.

Jimmy shook his head.

"Can't guess. If you want help with your prep., you will have to wait till we've finished ours, and then we'll do the best we can for you."

Lovell and Raby and Newcome sniggered. It was not really likely that the seniors had come to the end study to request junior assistance with their prep.

"We've come to talk to you," said Hansom.

"Sorry, old scout. We're not holding a *conversazione* this evening," said Jimmy Silver; "besides—if you don't mind my mentioning it—you're a bit of a bore."

The Fifth-Formers sniggered at that, excepting Hansom. Hansom frowned. He gave his comrades a glare.

"What are you giggling about?" he demanded.

"Oh, nothing!" grinned Lumsden.

"Get to business."

"Don't waste all the blessed evenin' on these fags!" said Talboys.

"We've come to talk to you, plainly," said Hansom. "You kids in the Fourth have been getting cheekier and cheekier. This afternoon you tied a kite-tail to Jobson's coat, and he walked about with it for an hour or more before he found it——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You actually had the cheek to bump a Fifth-Form chap in the quad. yesterday——"

"He was bullying a Fourth-Form chap," explained Jimmy Silver. "We thought we ought to give him a lesson. We're always willing to help bring the Fifth up in the way they should go."

"Fags have to be kept in order," said Hansom. "Perhaps Muggins was a bit drastic, but fags have to toe the line. The fact is, ever since you came to Rookwood, Silver, there's been too much cheek from the Fourth, and especially from this study. Having talked it over, we've decided to put an end to it. It's really for your own sakes. Discipline is good for fags."

"You're awfully good," said Jimmy, taking a tighter grip on the ruler. "How are you going to set about it, Cabby?"

"You're going to have a licking all round, to begin with——"

"My hat!"

"And your study will be ragged, as an example," said Hansom. "I've brought a strap for the licking."

"Well, of all the cheeky idiots!" exclaimed Lovell. "Do you think this study will stand it, you silly dummy?"

"I rather think so," grinned Hansom. "This study will be rather roughly handled if it makes a fuss. Better take it quietly, like good little boys."

"You come on and see!" roared Lovell.

"Lock the door, Talboys!"

"What-ho!" chuckled Talboys.

"Rescue, Fourth!" bawled Lovell.

"And now collar them!"

"Hands off!" shouted Jimmy Silver. "I tell you, you cheeky asses—oh, my hat!"

"Collar them!"

Then there was a terrific struggle in the end study.



The Fifth-Formers had come there to vindicate the lofty dignity of a senior Form, and to give the cheeky juniors a lesson they badly needed—in the opinion of the Fifth, at least. Hansom & Co. felt that they were performing a painful duty. They did not expect much trouble, but on that point their expectations were not up to the mark.

They received a good deal of trouble.

Hansom, much to his surprise, found his hands very nearly full with Jimmy Silver.

Still more to his surprise, one of Jimmy's well-known upper-cuts took him under the chin and landed him on the study carpet with a crash.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome were struggling desperately in the grasp of the seniors.

They had no real chance, but they fought it out to a finish, and by the time they were downed the invaders of the end study were looking very flushed and dusty and rumped.

Jimmy Silver had rushed to help his comrades, but Hansom was up in a moment and rushing in.

Jimmy closed with the captain of the Fifth.

"My hat!" gasped Hansom. "You cheeky little beast—yaroo!"

Jimmy hooked his leg in his assailant's and Hansom rolled over. He dragged Jimmy Silver down with him, however, and they rolled on the carpet together. Then the senior came uppermost.

"Ow!" gasped Jimmy, as the heavy Fifth-Former sat on his chest.

"Sit on those cheeky cads!" howled Hansom.



While Lumsden, Duff and O'Rourke looked after Jimmy Silver's chums, Hansom got busy with the strap on Jimmy. Whack! Whack! Whack!



"Ow! Ow!"

"Gerrup!"

"Come and sit on this cheeky little beast, Talboys, and keep him down!" panted Hansom.

"Right-ho!"

Hansom staggered to his feet. The Fistical Four were on the carpet, each with a panting Fifth-Former sitting on him. The invaders had the upper hand, and the end study was at their mercy.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

HANSOM COMES DOWN HEAVY!

THERE was a thump at the study door, and the handle was shaken without.

"What's the row here?" It was Oswald's voice. "What's up, Jimmy?"

"Yow-ow!"

Hansom chuckled.

"Lucky we locked the door," he remarked. "We don't want a mob of fags crawling over us, by gad!"

"Rescue, Fourth!" stuttered Lovell.

"Shut up!" said Lumsden, tapping Lovell's head on the floor, and Lovell gave a howl of anguish.

"You cheeky rotters!" gasped Jimmy Silver. "We'll make you sit up for this!"

"Still the same cheeky little rascal!" grinned Hansom. "We'll give you something to cure all that, my pippin!"

He took a leather strap from his pocket.

"Look here, you rotten bully——" gasped Raby.

"My dear kid, this isn't bullying," explained Hansom. "It's a much-needed lesson—a long-felt want supplied, as they say in the advertisements. It's really for your own good. Roll him over, Talboys!"

Talboys grinned and rolled Jimmy Silver over.

Then the captain of the Fifth got to work with the strap.

Whack! whack! whack!

"Yaroo!"

"Rescue!" yelled Lovell.

There was a hammering on the door. The voices of Van Ryn and Pons and Conroy were heard, and Oswald's and Higgs' and Jones minor's. The Classical Fourth were rallying to the rescue.

But the locked door stopped them effectually.

They raged in vain outside the end study, while the Fistical Four "went through it" within.

Hansom was doing his work thoroughly.

Jimmy Silver received a dozen with the leather strap, wriggling and yelling the while.

Then came Lovell's turn, and he had six. Six each followed for Raby and Newcome.

Then Hansom surveyed the wriggling four with a grin.

Jimmy Silver & Co. gave him furious glares. Never had such an indignity been inflicted upon the end study.

The cool cheek of the Fifth-Form fellows took away the breath of the four juniors; but even that was not so bad as the strapping.

"I fancy that's about enough!" remarked Hansom. "Mind, we've done this for your own good, Silver. It's discipline."

"Yow-ow!"

"You have to learn discipline, you know. You'll be going into the army when you're old enough and you'll find it valuable."

"Ow, you rotter!"

"Now we'll be off," said Hansom. "We've wasted enough time on these



fags. Mind, any more cheek from this study, Silver, and you get a little more of the same."

"Grooh!"

"I say, there's a crowd of fags out there," remarked Talboys, rather uneasily.

"Rats! We'll knock 'em right and left if they bother us," said Hansom disdainfully.

"Well, come on," said Duff.

The Fistical Four were released, and Hansom unlocked the door. Jimmy Silver & Co. scrambled to their feet, prepared to renew the combat at once. But Hansom & Co. rushed into the passage at once.

"Stop them!" yelled Lovell.

The Classical juniors closed up round the five seniors, but the rush of the big fellows drove a way through the crowd.

The heroes of the Fifth went down the passage at a run, knocking the juniors right and left, though they did not escape unscathed themselves. Van Ryn was still clinging to Hansom's neck when the Fifth-Formers reached the stairs.

There he was dragged off and bumped down, and the five seniors went downstairs rather hurriedly. As a matter of fact, they were glad to get out of the hornets' nest they had roused.

In the end study, Jimmy Silver & Co. rubbed their injuries and gasped. They had been severely handled.

"The cheeky rotters!" exclaimed Oswald, grinning a little. "Did they have the nerve to come here and lick you?"

"Yow-ow! Yes!"

"Like their cheek!" chuckled Higgs.

"Yow! There's nothing to cackle at, you chump!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mornington.

"Why didn't you mop them up, you fistical fellows?"

"How could we?" howled Lovell.

"Five to four—and seniors, too!"

"Well, I wouldn't have taken a lickin', I know that," sneered Mornington.

"You'll take a licking now if you don't shut up!" snapped Lovell.

"By Jove, you will take one, anyway. Take that!"

Mornington went headlong out of the study, with Lovell's fist thumping on him. The Fistical Four were in no mood to endure the jeers of the dandy of the Fourth.

"Sure, it's hard cheese on yez," said Flynn, but he was grinning, too.

"You ought to make the Fifth sit up for this, entirely, Jimmy!"

"Yow-ow! We're going to! Ow!"

There was unlimited sympathy for the sufferers. But somehow all the juniors, excepting the victims, seemed to see a humorous side of the affair.

Jimmy Silver was not sorry when the grinning sympathisers left.

Left alone, the Fistical Four blinked at one another dolefully.

"The awful cheek!" said Raby.

"Ow! The rotters!" growled Newcome.

Jimmy Silver's eyes gleamed.

"We're going to make them sorry for this!" he growled. "Why, we shall be cackled at by all Rookwood if we take it lying down!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander," said Jimmy Silver. "This study is going on the warpath!"

"Hear, hear!" said Raby feebly.

Prep. was forgotten. It was no time for prep. For the next hour or so the Fistical Four were groaning over their injuries and laying plans



for reprisals. The Fistical Four were not pacifists; they believed in reprisals, and plenty of them.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER SAUCE FOR THE GANDER!

"COME in!"

Hansom of the Fifth called out carelessly as a tap came at his study door later in the evening.

Hansom and Talboys, who shared that study, had finished their prep., and were just finishing a Welsh rarebit for supper. They had been chatting over the raid on the end study, which was a very entertaining subject for them.

They quite agreed that that drastic lesson would have its effect, and that the cheeky members of the Fourth would, henceforward, treat the great and mighty Fifth with due respect.

They were somewhat surprised, therefore, when the study door opened and revealed Jimmy Silver & Co.

"Hallo, what do you fags want?" demanded Hansom.

The fags did not reply.

Jimmy, Lovell, Raby, and Newcome marched in quickly, and after them came the Colonial Co.—Van Ryn, Pons, and Conroy. Seven sturdy juniors were in the study, and Conroy, the Cornstalk, locked the door.

Hansom and Talboys started to their feet.

It was surprising, after they had taken so much trouble to reduce the end study to a proper state of discipline and respect for their elders, but it was quite clear that this visit meant war.

"Unlock that door at once!" thundered Hansom.

"Bow-wow!"

"By gad! What do you want?" stammered Talboys.

"We want you!" said Jimmy Silver grimly. "Sauce for the gander, you know. As you're rather big beasts, we're taking you in detail—two at a time. Where's that strap, Hansom?"

"That—that strap?" stuttered Hansom.

"Yes. I'm going to lick you!"

"Lick me?" yelled Hansom.

"Yes!"

"Why, you—you—you—you——" Words failed the Fifth-Former. The bare idea of the captain of the Fifth being licked by a junior was astounding—in fact, appalling. If such a thing happened, it was time for the skies to fall. But it was pretty clear that it was going to happen.

"Better take it quietly," grinned Lovell. "We're doing this for your own good, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You see, we think the Fifth are too cheeky!" explained Lovell.

"Too cheeky by half!" said Conroy. "After this, you will treat the Fourth with proper respect—what?"

Hansom found his voice at last.

"You cheeky young scoundrels!" he roared. "Get out of my study before I pitch you out!"

"You'd better begin with the pitching, Cabby."

"Go ahead!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

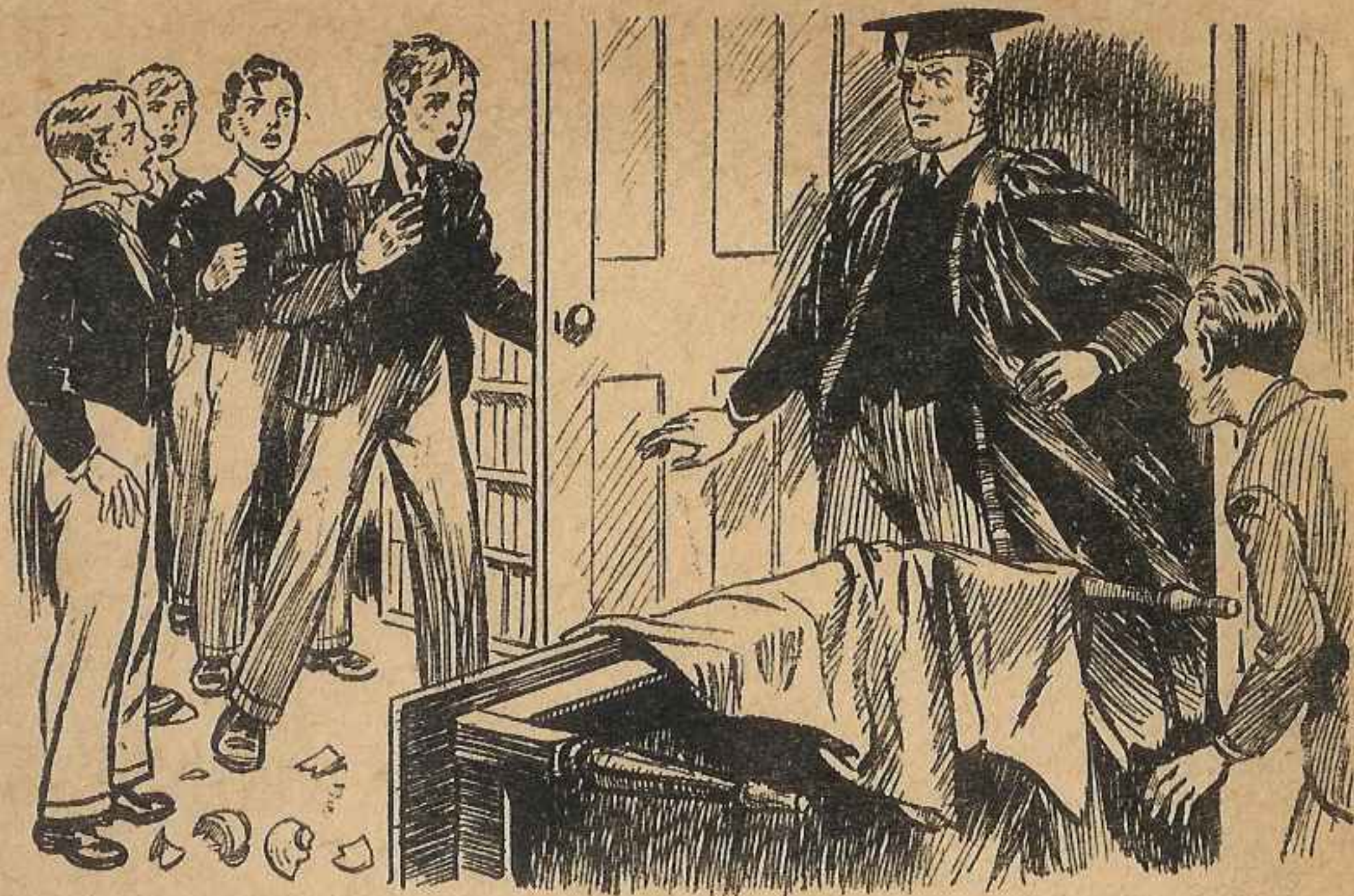
Hansom advanced on the juniors with frowning brow and clenched fists. Even yet he could hardly believe that the Fourth-Formers meant to lay sacrilegious hands upon so great a person.

But he was quickly undeceived on that point.

"Collar them!" rapped out Jimmy Silver.

The Fistical Four jumped at Hansom as one man.





"What does this mean?" thundered Mr. Greely. "Is it possible that this study has been wrecked by insubordinate juniors? Silver, what are you doing here?"

Talboys struggled in the grasp of the Colonial Co. at the same moment. Singly, the juniors would have had no chance, naturally, against the big seniors. But seven to two was long odds.

Hansom, to his surprise and rage, found himself dragged down and bumped on his study carpet with a mighty bump.

Lovell sat on his chest, and Raby on his head, and Newcome trampled recklessly on his sprawling legs.

"Got him!" trilled Lovell.

Talboys was down even more quickly, in the grasp of the Colonial Co.

Two of them sat on him and pinned him down.

"This looks like business!" grinned Jimmy Silver. "Are you ready, Hansom? Sauce for the gander, you know."

Hansom spluttered with rage and apprehension.

"You young rotter! Lemme gerrup!"

"Where's that strap?"

"Lemme gerrup!" roared Hansom.

"Well, a cricket-stump will do!" Jimmy Silver picked a stump from the cupboard. "Roll him over!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Even yet the captain of the Fifth could not quite believe it; but proof was immediately forthcoming.

Struggling furiously, he was rolled over. Then the cricket-stump rose and fell.

Whack—whack—whack!

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

Hansom roared in quite another manner.

"Go it, Jimmy!" yelled Lovell. "Give him two dozen! We must pay



a debt with interest, you know!"

"Yah! Oh! Oh! Oh! Help!"

"Oh, by gad!" gasped Talboys.  
"What's Rookwood comin' to? Oh, gad!"

"Your turn's coming!" chortled Conroy. "Wait a bit!"

Whack—whack—whack!

"Yah! Help!"

There was a sharp knock at the door.

"What is this disturbance? Open this door at once!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver, as he recognised the voice of Mr. Greely, the master of the Fifth.

The avengers of the end study had not counted on that; but they really might have expected it.

In the Fourth-Form passage rags and rows frequently failed to attract attention, but in the august quarters of the Fifth it was quite a different matter.

"Hansom!" thundered Mr. Greely.  
"Open this door at once!"

"Yow-ow! I—I can't!"

"What! I command you to let me in, Hansom! How dare you create such a disturbance in a senior study! Admit me instantly!"

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Lovell.

There was nothing for it—the victims of vengeance had to be released.

Form-masters were not to be argued with.

Hansom staggered to his feet as the juniors let go, and unlocked the door.

With rustling gown and frowning face, Mr. Greely strode into the study.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER

### RATHER A FROST

JIMMY SILVER & Co. stood crimson and silent.

They waited for the storm to burst.

Although reprisals were strictly justified—from the juniors' point of view, at least—they did not quite expect the Fifth-Form master to see the matter in that light.

Mr. Greely stared at the disordered study, the overturned table, the smashed crockery, the panting Fifth-Formers, and the silent juniors.

"What does this mean?" he thundered. "Is it possible—I repeat, is it barely possible—that this study has been wrecked by insubordinate juniors? Silver, what are you doing here?"

"Ahem!"

"Hansom, what has happened?"

"These cheeky little rotters——"

"What?"

"I—I mean, these juniors, sir, have wrecked the place."

"Silver, how dare you?"

"It was tit for tat, sir," said Jimmy Silver. "Hansom licked us, so we licked him."

Mr. Greely gave him a thunderous look.

"You dare to admit, Silver, that you came here to assault members of a senior Form?"

"Oh, no, sir! Not at all! Only—only to lick them!" murmured Jimmy.

"Don't use foolish, slang expressions to me, boy! I can scarcely believe my ears," said Mr. Greely. "Had you been administering correction to these juniors, Hansom?"

"Well, yes, sir."

"You should have reported them to a prefect, Hansom, if they were at fault. But nothing could excuse this outbreak of hooliganism! Silver and the rest, follow me at once. I shall take you directly to your Form-master, and I have no doubt that Mr. Dalton will deal with you severely—as severely as you deserve!"



"But—but, sir——"

"Silence! Follow me!"

The Fifth-Form master fairly flounced out of the study. The seven juniors with grim looks followed him.

Hansom and Talboys exchanged a grin. They had had a somewhat rough experience; but there was no doubt that the mutinous juniors would have the lessons of their lives, and would learn that seniors of the Fifth could not be handled in that manner.

Jimmy Silver & Co. followed Mr. Greely to their Form-master's study. They went in a doleful mood.

Mr. Dalton looked astonished as the Fifth-Form master marched the delinquents into the study.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton. "What is the matter?"

"I have brought these juniors to you, Mr. Dalton," gasped the Fifth-Form master. "They have raided a Fifth-Form study and wrecked it. I need say no more. I leave them to you!"

"Very good, Mr. Greely."

Mr. Greely whisked out, and Mr. Dalton took up his cane.

"I am surprised at you, my boys," he said severely. "You have acted outrageously! I think you must have been out of your senses!"

"If you please, sir——"

"You do not contradict Mr. Greely's statement, I presume?" said Mr. Dalton sternly.

"Nunno, sir! But——"

"You need not acquaint me with your motives for this act of outrageous insubordination," said Mr. Dalton. "The fact itself is sufficient. There is no possible justification. Hold out your hand, Silver!"

"But, sir, we——"

"Enough! Hold out your hand!"

Swish—swish—swish!

For several minutes there was a steady sound of swishing in Mr. Dalton's study, to an accompaniment of gasps and mumbling.

Mr. Dalton was not often severe, but he felt that his was a case for severity, and he did not spare the rod.

It was but seldom that such a licking had fallen to the lot of Jimmy Silver & Co.

When he had finished, the Fourth-Form master looked somewhat breathless. It had been an unaccustomed exertion for him.

He pointed to the door with his cane.

"You may go," he said sternly.

And the juniors went.

Afterwards, in the end study and in No. 3, there was a chorus of groans. Like Rachel of old, the unhappy sufferers mourned, and could not be comforted.

Jimmy Silver was the first to recover a little. He blinked at his chums as they rubbed their hands and mumbled.

"That was a bit of a frost, you chaps!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" came from the unhappy chaps.

"But that isn't the finish!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"We're going for the Fifth——"

"Wow-wow!"

"And we're going to make Hansom squirm."

"Groooh!"

"Ow!"

"Wow!"

Jimmy Silver gave it up.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER

### MORNINGTON ON THE WARPATH

FOR the next day or two Jimmy Silver & Co. understudied the celebrated Brer Fox, and lay low.



When the effects of the licking had worn off, their determination revived in full force to vindicate the inviolability of the end study, and to make Hansom & Co. thoroughly sorry for themselves. But they realised that they had to tread warily.

It was no light matter for juniors to tackle senior fellows in the Fifth; the heavy hand of authority was only too likely to intervene, as it had already done once.

But it was a maxim with the Co. that the end study never gave in, and the four were only biding their time.

Meanwhile, Hansom was quite satisfied with his drastic measures. The cheeky juniors had been put in their places for good. The Fistical Four were giving Hansom a wide berth at present, and the captain of the Fifth grinned when he noted it. But after a day or two he dismissed them from his mind.

There were many discussions in the Fourth-Form studies, especially No. 3 and the end study. It was agreed that, as the Fifth had declared war, they should be the first to cry "Hold, enough!" and that the terms of peace should be stiff. Exactly how to make them sue for peace, however, was not an easy problem to solve. But Jimmy Silver's active brain was at work.

Not only the Fistical Four and the Colonial Co., but Mornington had taken up the matter. The outrage to the prestige of the end study only amused Mornington, and he had no sympathy to waste on Jimmy Silver. But Mornington knew that if he could succeed in bringing down the overbearing Fifth-Formers from their perch, it would help him very materially in his ambition to oust Jimmy Silver from his place as leader of the Fourth Form.

Morny dearly loved the limelight,

and limelight would fall in an ample share to the fellow who succeeded in making the foes of the Fourth squirm.

So Morny discussed it in his study, where he found a plentiful lack of enthusiasm.

Peele and Gower weren't enthusiastic. Neither were Townsend and Topham and the other nuts. They carefully avoided "scraps," as a rule, and a scrap with seniors of the Fifth was an idea that made them gasp.

"But think of it," urged Mornington to a meeting of the nuts in his study. "It's up to somebody! The Fifth can't thrash our Form as much as they like, I suppose. By gad, they might give us the next turn!"

"Jimmy Silver can look after himself," said Townsend. "Let's keep out of their rows and rags. They're no class."

"Leave it alone," said Peele. "We don't want to get the seniors down on this study."

Mornington sniffed. He had more pluck than the rest of the "Giddy Goats" put together, and he was not afraid of the seniors.

"Chap who downed the Fifth would have a chance of squeezing Jimmy Silver out," he said.

"Well, you can't do it!"

"I could with some backing."

"Ask Jimmy Silver to back you, then," yawned Topham.

"Oh, rats! Look here, suppose we caught Hansom and Talboys outside the school; they generally go out together on a half-holiday when there's no match on. There's enough of us to collar them!"

"Oh, rot!"

"And tie 'em leg by leg, and send 'em hoppin' home," said Mornington eagerly. "The school'd laugh 'em to death. They wouldn't dare to show



their faces afterwards. And it would show all the fellows that Jimmy Silver isn't the great chief they think he is if we did it."

"Too jolly risky," said Topham.

Mornington's lip curled.

"Oh, don't keep harpin' on that. Suppose they put up a fight, and you got your necktie disarranged, you'd recover in time. Look here; I know they're going down to Coombe to-

Look here, we'll rig 'em up in their merry theatrical costumes and make 'em come home to Rookwood like that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Even the nuts were tickled at that suggestion.

The difficulty was that the Giddy Goats of Rookwood were not fighting men, and had a deep antipathy to getting hard knocks.



"Go for 'em!" yelled Morny as the two Fifth-Formers came abreast of the ambush, and he led the rush. "My hat!" ejaculated Hansom. "What—oh, crumbs!"

morrow afternoon to see about the costumes for their rotten play-actin'. They've been rehearsin' 'Hamlet' for their silly amateur theatricals. They rehearse in the woodshed, and I've heard 'em spoutin'. They go there to play the goat, because the other fellows chip 'em when they rehearse in the senior room. Well, Hansom and Talboys will be goin' out together, and we could lay for them.

But Morny gained his point at last. He pointed out that even two seniors wouldn't have much chance in a scrap with half a dozen fellows; it would be a cheap victory, and no end of glory to be won without much risk.

That was the kind of glory that appealed to the nuts, and they gave way at last, though with inward misgivings. Mornington had a very



masterful character, and he generally had his way with his followers in the long run.

On Wednesday afternoon the nuts were prepared to go on the warpath, though only Morny was looking forward to it. But Morny kept his men up to the scratch. The merry party were lounging about the school gates when Hansom and Talboys came down together, the former carrying a bag.

Hansom was great on amateur theatricals, and rehearsals went on almost every evening in the woodshed of the drama that was to stagger humanity at Rookwood when it came off. Costumes for the play were on order, and they had been promised for that day for the dress rehearsal, and Hansom was going for them.

The two seniors did not even glance at Morny & Co. as they went out. Fourth-Formers to them were trifles light as air. Morny grinned after them as they went down the road.

"Come on!" he said.

"I—I say, suppose we make an afternoon of it at the Bird-in-Hand?" suggested Peele. "We could have the billiard-table!"

"Oh, dry up!" growled Morny. "We're goin' for Hansom."

"Hallo"—Jimmy Silver came out with his chums—"what's that? Are you going after our game, Morny?"

Mornington stared at him angrily.

"You're not going after them?" he exclaimed.

"We are—we is!" said Lovell.

"Leave 'em to us!" said Mornington. "I'm goin' for them! I've got a scheme for makin' them sit up, and I don't want you fellows shovin' your oar in."

"Rot!" said Lovell.

Jimmy Silver smiled.

"Oh, give 'em a chance," he said.

"I didn't know you merry nuts were on the warpath! Isn't there some risk of getting your neckties soiled or your hair disarranged?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Co.

"Oh, cheese it!" snapped Mornington. "If you want to see something be at the gates in an hour's time or so, an' you'll see Hansom and Talboys come hoppin' home with their legs tied up."

"I'll believe that when I see it," grinned Jimmy.

"Well, you'll see it this afternoon."

Mornington & Co. walked away down the road, leaving the Fistical Four grinning. Jimmy Silver was quite willing to give Morny a chance, as he was keen on it; but he doubted very much whether the nuts of the Fourth would stand up to the big fists of Hansom and Talboys, however great the odds were in their favour.

Morny was looking quite keen. He had a strong whipcord in his pocket all ready to tie the Fifth-Formers leg to leg. There was no doubt that if the scheme succeeded the Fifth-Formers would be the victims of much merriment at Rookwood, and would never get over the humiliation.

But Morny's followers looked anything but keen. There were certainly enough of them to handle two seniors. But—but somebody would be hurt before the enemy were downed, and each of the merry nuts had a strong objection to being the fellow that got hurt.

In the loneliest part of the lane Morny & Co. stopped and took cover among the trees. There they waited for their prospective victims to come by on their return from the village.

They had some time to wait, which they filled in by smoking cigarettes in their nutty way. But the enemy came in sight at last.



Hansom and Talboys came sauntering along the lane from Coombe, chatting, and quite unconscious of danger.

Mornington's eyes gleamed.

"We shall take the cads by surprise!" he muttered. "When I give the word, rush on 'em. We'll have them down before they know what's happenin'!"

And the nuts looked a little brighter at that prospect.

The two Fifth-Formers came abreast of the ambush. Morny gave a sudden yell.

"Go for 'em!"

He led the rush.

"My hat!" ejaculated Hansom.

"What—Oh, crumbs!"

He went down on his back, and Talboys sprawled beside him, with half a dozen juniors sprawling over them.

"Got 'em!" grinned Mornington.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER

NOT AS PER PROGRAMME!

"WHAT the thunder——"

"Gerrup!"

Mornington grinned down at Hansom, on whose broad chest his knee was planted.

"No good wrigglin'!" he said coolly. "We've got you! Take the whipcord out of my pocket, Towny, an' tie their hands!"

"What are you up to?" roared Hansom.

"I'll tell you," chuckled Mornington. "We're goin' to tie you leg to leg, and send you hoppin' home to Rookwood. We're goin' to daub mud on your chivvies, and rig you up with the theatrical clobber you've got in that bag!"

"My hat!" gasped Hansom.

"Then perhaps you'll see that you'd better let the Fourth alone—

what?" smiled Mornington. "Get 'em tied up, Towny!"

Hansom made a terrific effort, and almost threw Mornington off. The dandy of the Fourth clung to him savagely.

"Pin 'em down!" he gasped.

Hansom got one hand loose, and smote with it, and Topham rolled over in the road with a howl. He smote again, and Peele jumped away in time to avoid the blow. He was left with Mornington to deal with and he grasped Mornington, and scrambled to his feet with Morny still in his grasp.

Mornington was fighting like a cat; but alone and unaided, he had no chance whatever against the big senior.

"Buck up!" shrieked Mornington.

But alas for the nuts!

Topham and Peele were already in full flight. They had had quite enough of Hansom's heavy fists at close quarters.

Talboys was rolling on the ground with three more nuts; but one of them broke away and ran, and Talboys pitched off the other two and jumped up. Gower was hurled into the road, and he stayed only to pick himself up before he burst through a hedge and fled.

Townsend would gladly have followed his example, but Talboys had a grip of iron on Towny's collar.

Hansom burst into a roar of laughter. The tables had been turned with startling suddenness.

Four of the assailants were fleeing as if for their lives, and Morny and Towny were wriggling helplessly in the grasp of the Fifth-Formers.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the captain of the Fifth. "Hold that young beggar, Talboys! Don't let these two get away!"



"No fear!" chuckled Talboys.

"Let go, hang you!" panted Mornington, frantic with rage and apprehension. "I'll kick your shins! Yow-ow! Leggo!"

"Not just yet!" grinned Hansom. "So you were going to tie me up—ha, ha!—and send me hopping home—what?"

"So I would have if those rotten funks had backed me up!" panted Mornington.

"Ha, ha! I understand you've got a whipcord in your pocket. I'll borrow that whipcord," said Hansom.

Mornington's struggles were not much use. The big senior held him with one hand and turned out his pockets with the other. He found the whipcord and shook it loose.

"Bring that young cad here, Talboys! Shove 'em together!"

"I—I say——" stuttered Townsend.

"Shut up!"

The two juniors were quite helpless. Hansom, grinning hugely, proceeded to tie Mornington's right leg to Townsend's left. He bent the legs up at the knee, and fastened them so. Morny and Towny were left with one leg each to stand upon. Townsend submitted meekly, but the dandy of the Fourth ground his teeth with rage and wriggled to the last.

"There you are!" smiled Hansom.

"Now you can hop it!"

"Oh, dear!" groaned Townsend.

"Oh, you rotter!" hissed Mornington.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The two Fifth-Formers, roaring with laughter, walked on to Rookwood, leaving Mornington and Townsend standing on one leg apiece, and hopping furiously to keep from falling. Morny's scheme had been a success—the wrong way. It was the unfortu-

nate Morny himself who had to hop home.

Hansom and Talboys found quite a little crowd at the school gates. The word had passed round of Morny's campaign, and half the Classical Fourth and half a dozen Moderns had gathered to see the luckless Fifth-Formers hop in. They stared as Hansom and Talboys came sauntering up sedately.

"My word!" said Tommy Dodd, of the Modern Fourth, as the two Fifth-Formers walked in. "What's happened to Morny? The circus hasn't come off!"

"Funked it, of course!" said Lovell, with a sniff.

"Hallo! Here's some of them!"

Peele and Topham came slinking in, looking dusty and rumped. They had kept their distance till the Fifth-Formers were gone.

"Well, what's happened?" asked Jimmy Silver. "You look as if you've been dust-collecting!"

"Oh, rats!" snapped Peele.

The nuts tramped in without satisfying the curious questioners. A few minutes later Gower and St. John arrived, also dusty and rumped and savage-tempered. They were not allowed to pass unanswering. The Fistical Four surrounded them. Jimmy Silver meant to know what had happened.

"What did you do to Cabby?" demanded Jimmy.

"Oh, rats!" snorted Gower. "We got licked, and we bunked for it!"

"Where's Morny and Towny?"

"Don't know and don't care!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gower and St. John went in. The juniors looked down the road, but there was no sign of Mornington or Townsend. Some of the fellows walked down the road towards



Coombe. They were curious to know what had happened to the leaders of the nutty brigade.

"Hallo!" roared Lovell suddenly. "Look!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Jimmy Silver.

A curious-looking object had come into sight.

At a distance it looked like a very fat fellow with legs very wide apart. But on closer view it proved to be two juniors with a leg each tied up behind them, hopping, one on his right and one on his left leg.

Morny and Towny had delayed some time, wondering how on earth they could get out of their fix. They had to face laughter at Rookwood or take their chance of being "chivvied" by a crowd if they hopped into Coombe for help.

They wisely decided on Rookwood, and started for the school. Progress was slow and difficult, and the things

Morny and Towny said to each other during that painful progress were emphatic.

The Fistical Four yelled at the sight. The two crimson, furious nuts hopped clumsily up to them.

"Let us loose, you cacklin' hounds!" howled Mornington.

"It's worked out the wrong way, then!" said Jimmy Silver, wiping away his tears. "That was Hansom's part in the show, wasn't it?"

"You silly fool, let us loose!"

"Go and eat coke!" said Jimmy Silver cheerfully. "Keep on! You're right for Rookwood!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mornington ground his teeth, and hopped on with Townsend, leaving the Fistical Four yelling.

Another yell greeted the unhappy pair as they arrived at the school gates. They reeled against the gate and gasped for breath.



"Keep on!" said Jimmy Silver cheerfully. "You're right for Rookwood!" Mornington ground his teeth and hopped on with Townsend, leaving the Fistical Four yelling.



"Let us loose!" shrieked Mornington. "We can't go in like this! Let us loose, you fools!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do let a chap loose!" pleaded Townsend. "Conroy, old chap, don't let us go in like this, you know! Oh, dear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Cornstalk junior, weeping with merriment, opened his knife and cut through the whipcord. The unhappy twins were free at last. Mornington scowled savagely at the yelling juniors, and Townsend shook his fist in Morny's scowling face.

"You silly rotter!" he shouted. "Catch me backin' you up again, you silly, burblin' chump! Yah!"

And Townsend strode away furiously. Mornington ground his teeth and followed, his face crimson with rage and humiliation, and a roar of laughter followed them both.

"I don't think the merry nuts will bother with Hansom again after this!" chuckled Tommy Dodd.

And Tommy was right; they didn't.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

### CORNERING THE ENEMY

"ALL here?"

"Yes."

"Good!" said Hansom.

It was evening, and the Fifth-Form Thespians were getting down to business.

The Thespians were quite an institution—miles above the Classical Players, of the Fourth, in importance and dignity. The Thespians sometimes gave Shakespearian performances, to which even the Head condescended to come.

It was a little humiliating for the lofty Thespians to have to hold their rehearsals in the woodshed. Certainly it was quite a spacy apartment

—for a woodshed. There was plenty of room, and it was quiet and secluded—away from the vulgar herd, as Talboys expressed it.

In the senior Common-room the Sixth-Form fellows simply refused to be bored by Thespian rehearsals, and the Form-room was not always at their disposal; and, moreover, mocking fags would sometimes howl in at the door or the window there, and spoil the effect of Hamlet's soliloquy or Mark Antony's oration.

"Hamlet" was the play now, and Hansom & Co. were going to make a tremendous success of it when it came off. And this was the dress rehearsal, and the costumes were all ready.

There were eight Fifth-Form fellows in the woodshed, every one of them a born Roscius, more or less. Hansom was the last to arrive, and after he came in he slipped the bolt on the door. Even in the secluded precincts of the woodshed the Thespians had sometimes been interrupted by cheeky juniors with pea-shooters.

"Now, we've got an hour," said Hansom briskly. "Get into your clobber, you fellows, and let's get going!"

Hansom, Lumsden, O'Rourke, Duff, Jobson, Muggins, Talboys, and Brown major were very soon in costume.

There were small parts which were going to be played by other fellows, but they were not present. The exigencies of lines, prep. and other occupations kept them away. Ere long the voice of Hansom was booming through the woodshed, Hansom being Hamlet—though, as Jimmy Silver had remarked, under the circumstances Hamlet was not handsome.

"To be or not to be—that is the question!"



Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to  
suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous  
fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of  
troubles."

Hansom was going quite strong. Naturally, he did not hear some slight sounds outside the woodshed. Indeed, it was difficult to hear anything else when Hansom's voice was booming away.

"That's Cabby's toot!" murmured Jimmy Silver, as he paused outside the shed door. "He's going it!"

"He is—he are!" grinned Lovell; and Raby and Newcome chuckled softly.

The Fistical Four were on the war-path.

From the shed window came only a faint gleam of light. It was a small window, and covered with a dark blind on account of the lighting regulations. Outside, it was very dark.

In the gloom the forms of the Colonial Co. loomed up, with Oswald and Flynn.

Jimmy Silver, standing close to the shed door, was fumbling in his pocket.

"What's the game?" asked Conroy. "We've come, Jimmy, but what the merry dickens have we come for? We don't want to hear Hansom murdering Hamlet!"

Jimmy chuckled.

"Wait and see!" he replied.

"Well, we're waiting," said Oswald.

Jimmy drew a small bundle from his pocket. His comrades blinked at it in the gloom, and Conroy whistled softly.

"Gimlets!" he said.

"Just so."

"What on earth are you going to

do with half a dozen gimlets?" asked the mystified Australian.

"Screw up the door," said Jimmy cheerfully. "It's a bit awkward for screwing up with screws, so I've collected all the gimlets I could find among the fellows' tool-boxes. They'll fix it. Lend a hand, and drive 'em right in, and don't make a row!"

"But what——" began Flynn.

"Don't jaw, old chap; go ahead!"

Jimmy Silver had not imparted his great plans to his followers yet. He was content to let them wait and see.

The half-dozen gimlets were handed round, and the Classical juniors set to work. It was not easy to drive them into the hard wood, but they progressed steadily with the work. There was little danger of their being heard in the woodshed. The rehearsal was going great guns, and the Fifth-Form Thespians had no ears for anything but their own spouting.

Slowly but surely the gimlets were driven in, through door and doorpost, right to the hilt.

The woodshed door was as fast then as if it had been screwed up. It was a simpler process, but just as effective.

"That's done!" said Jimmy Silver in tones of satisfaction.

"Is that all?" asked Pons.

Jimmy sniffed.

"No, fathead! We've got them prisoners now; the window isn't big enough for those fatheads to get out without squeezing, and we shall see they don't do that. Get round the woodshed and bring the garden hose here!"

"The—the hose?" said Oswald.

"Yes. Buck up!"

"But the hose isn't kept behind the woodshed!" exclaimed Oswald, in astonishment. "It's kept in the shed!"

"I know that, ass! But I came here



and yanked it out and hid it behind the shed an hour ago!"

"Oh, I see!"

"Time you did."

Oswald and Conroy groped round the shed for the hidden hose. They came back with it in a few minutes.

Jimmy's plan was dawning upon his comrades now, and they were grinning joyously.

"Where are you going to fix it?" murmured Lovell.

"The tap in the yard, of course."

"Good! It's more than long enough!"

"Plenty long enough—yards over. Come and help me fix it."

The hose was soon secured and ready for action.

Then Jimmy Silver carried the nozzle to the window of the woodshed. He tapped at the window with it.

Voices in the woodshed stopped suddenly. Jimmy Silver tapped again imperatively.

"That's some blessed fag!" said Talboys' voice.

"Keep on with the bizney!" growled Hansom.

Tap—tap—tap!

"My hat! I'll go out and skin him!" muttered Hansom. "Wait a minute till I've squashed him, you fellows!"

Hansom caught at the door to open it. The door did not move. Hansom dragged at it—in surprise at first, and then in rage.

"By gad! They've fastened up the door!" he ejaculated.

"Oh, rot! How could they?" said Talboys.

"Try it yourself, fathead!"

Talboys tried it, but the door did not open. The Thespians were looking exasperated and furious by this time.

Tap—tap—tap! came the summons at the window; and Hansom strode up to it angrily and dragged the blind aside. Through the glass he could see the grinning face of Jimmy Silver.

The captain of the Fifth tore the little window open and glared at the junior.

"You cheeky young rotter! Have you fastened up the door?" he shouted.

Jimmy nodded coolly.

"Right on the wicket!" he assented.

"I'll come out and——Yarooop!" spluttered Hansom as Jimmy raised the nozzle of the hose and let fly.

Squish—swish—splash!

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a yell from the darkness outside.

Hansom was in all the glory of Hamlet's costume before the sudden flood of water smote him. By the time it had played upon him for a few seconds he looked more like a half-drowned tramp.

"By gad!" stuttered Talboys. "You young demons—Ooooooch!" The jet of water smote Talboys and fairly bowled him over, and Laertes rolled on the floor spluttering. And from the rest of the dramatis personæ came wild yells and hoots as the water swamped right and left.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

### THE FALL OF THE FIFTH

"GROOCH!"

"Gug-gug-gugg!"

"Yarooop!"

Swish—squish—splash! Behind Jimmy Silver a crowd of grinning faces looked into the woodshed, the juniors craning their necks round the little window.

To and fro in the woodshed the Thespians dodged and rushed in vain





"I'll come out and— Yaroop!" spluttered Hansom as Jimmy Silver raised the nozzle of the hose and let fly.

attempts to escape the searching stream.

Hansom led a rush to the window, with a wild idea of squeezing through somehow and getting at close quarters with the enemy. The powerful jet struck him fairly under the chin and threw him back.

The yells and splutters of the Thespians rang through the woodshed, and were answered by yells of laughter from outside.

"Go it, Jimmy!" gasped Lovell. "Oh, my hat! What a merry family of drowned rats! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Fourth-Formers.

"Yow-ow! Ugh!"

"Grooh-hooh!"

"Oh, dear! Oh, crumbs! Stop-pit!"

Jimmy Silver shut off the water at last. (He was laughing too much to

take aim. The floor was swimming with water, the actors were drenched and dripping, and their drenched costumes clung around their limbs. Hansom gouged water from his eyes, and glared at the grinning faces in the window.

"I'll smash you for this!" he roared. "I'll pulverise you! I'll slaughter you! I'll—I'll—I'll——"

"Looks as if the Fourth are top dogs now," grinned Jimmy Silver. "Don't come too near the window, Cabby, or you'll get some more!"

"Oh, you young rotter! Ow!"

"Are you going to apologise for raiding my study?"

"No!" yelled Hansom. Hansom was wet and he was cold, but the bare thought of the captain of the Fifth apologising to a junior made him boil with rage.

"Have some more, then!"



Squish! Swoosh!

Hansom yelled and rushed at the window again, but again the steady jet drove him back. He dodged and fled round the shed, but wherever he ran the jet found him out.

"Stop it!" he shrieked at last. "I—I—I'm willing—yow—to say—yaroooh—I'm sorry—ooch!" Hansom could stand no more.

"You apologise?"

"Ow! Yes! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do you all apologise?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"We—we—we apologise!" stut-tered the unhappy Thespians.

Jimmy shut off the water again.

"Good!" he remarked. "That's a beginning. Now, better get to bizney, or you'll catch cold. I suppose you feel a bit wet."

"Grooh!"

"These are our peace terms," said Jimmy Silver. "You give us a written apology, you tip Mack to clean up the shed so that there won't be a row about this swamping, and you make it pax. Is that agreed?"

"No!" shrieked Hansom.

Swoooooosh!

The water played again at full force. With wild gasps and yells the Fifth-Formers strove to dodge it, but they dodged in vain. Wet and shivering and dripping, they yelled to Jimmy Silver to stop.

The captain of the Fourth obligingly shut off the stream.

"Do you accept the peace terms?" he asked sweetly.

"No—oh, my hat—stoppit—yes!" shrieked Hansom.

"Right!" grinned Jimmy Silver. "Chuck in a pencil and paper, Lovell. You'll write down the apology, Hansom, and all the rest will sign it. And sharp's the word!"

Hansom simply gasped with rage. But there was no help for it. He wrote the apology at Jimmy Silver's dictation, and the rest of the Thespians ground their chattering teeth and signed, and the paper was passed out to the grinning Lovell. Jimmy Silver grinned and nodded as he looked at it.

"You'll tip Mack to clean up the shed, Hansom?"

"Yes!" hissed Hansom.

"And it's pax?"

"Ye-e-ss!"

"Good! I'll mention to a Fifth-Form chap that you're here, and he can come down and let you out," smiled Jimmy Silver. "Ta-ta, dear boys, and think twice before you tackle the Fourth again!"

Later that evening a paper was pinned up on the wall of the junior Common-room, which the juniors read with great glee and roars of laughter. It ran:

"We, the undersigned, apologise humbly for having cheeked the Fourth Form, and beg to be forgiven, as witness our signatures:

EDWARD HANSOM.

PHILIP LUMSDEN.

PAUL MUGGINS.

TOBIAS JOBSON.

HARRY DUFF.

PHELIM O'ROURKE.

CECIL TALBOYS.

H. BROWN major."

The Fourth Form—Classical and Modern—read that paper and yelled over it. The Shell and the Third read it and howled. Even some of the Sixth came in and read it and chortled. And even Mornington had to acknowledge that Jimmy Silver had done the trick!