

The

# GEM

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EVERY  
WEDNESDAY



## "THE JAZZ SCHOOLBOY!"

(A dramatic incident from the Grand Long School Yarn inside.)

IF YOU'VE GOT THE 'BLUES' YOU WON'T HAVE 'EM—

# THE JAZZ

## CHAPTER 1. Unappreciated!

**M**OAN!  
"What the dickens—"  
Tom Merry, of the Shell  
Form at St. Jim's, looked  
up from his prep in surprise.

Simultaneously, his chums, Monty  
Lowther and Harry Manners, sat  
upright in their chairs with a  
jerk.

Moan!  
"There it is again!" said Tom  
Merry.

"What the thump—"

Wail! Moan!

"What on earth can it be?"

The Terrible Three regarded each  
other with startled faces.

"Sounds like somebody in agony,"  
remarked Manners. "Think we'd  
better investigate, Tommy?"

"Blessed if I know what to  
think," answered the leader of Study  
No. 10, straining his ears to catch  
the faint unearthly sound which had  
been floating into the study during  
the preceding five minutes. "Where  
the dickens is it coming from?"

"Somewhere outside the Shell  
passage, anyway," said Lowther.

"Moan! Wail! Moan!"

"Perhaps someone's fallen down the stairs and injured  
himself," suggested Manners. "I vote we scout round and  
find out what's wrong, anyway!"

Tom Merry and Lowther nodded, and all three rose and  
made for the door of the study.

The Terrible Three were not the only occupants of the  
Shell passage whose interest had been aroused. Doors were  
opening on both sides as Tom Merry stepped out, and  
wondering juniors were making anxious inquiries.

"What is it, Tom?" asked Talbot, listening, with knitted  
brows.

"Dashed if I know! I'm just going to find out!"

"For goodness' sake put a stop to it, whatever it is!"  
called out Gunn, from the doorway of Study No. 3. "I'm  
trying to do a bit of extra swot for the exams, and it's  
driving me potty!"

"Same here!"

Moan!

"My hat!"

"It's terrible!"

"Ghastly!"

Wail!

"Great pip!"

"Look here, this can't go on!" declared George Alfred  
Grundy, barging his way past Gunn, out of Study No. 3.  
"I'm looking into this. Follow me, you chaps!"

And the great man of the Shell stepped in front of Tom  
Merry and led the way.

Quite a number of juniors joined the party. Most of the  
Shell had finished their prep, and all were curious to know  
the explanation of the weird noises which were disturbing  
the evening serenity of the School House.

In a body they marched out of the Shell passage in the  
direction from which the sounds seemed to proceed.

"It's getting louder now!" said Tom Merry. "Listen!"

Moan! Wail! Moan!

"Oh, my giddy aunt!"

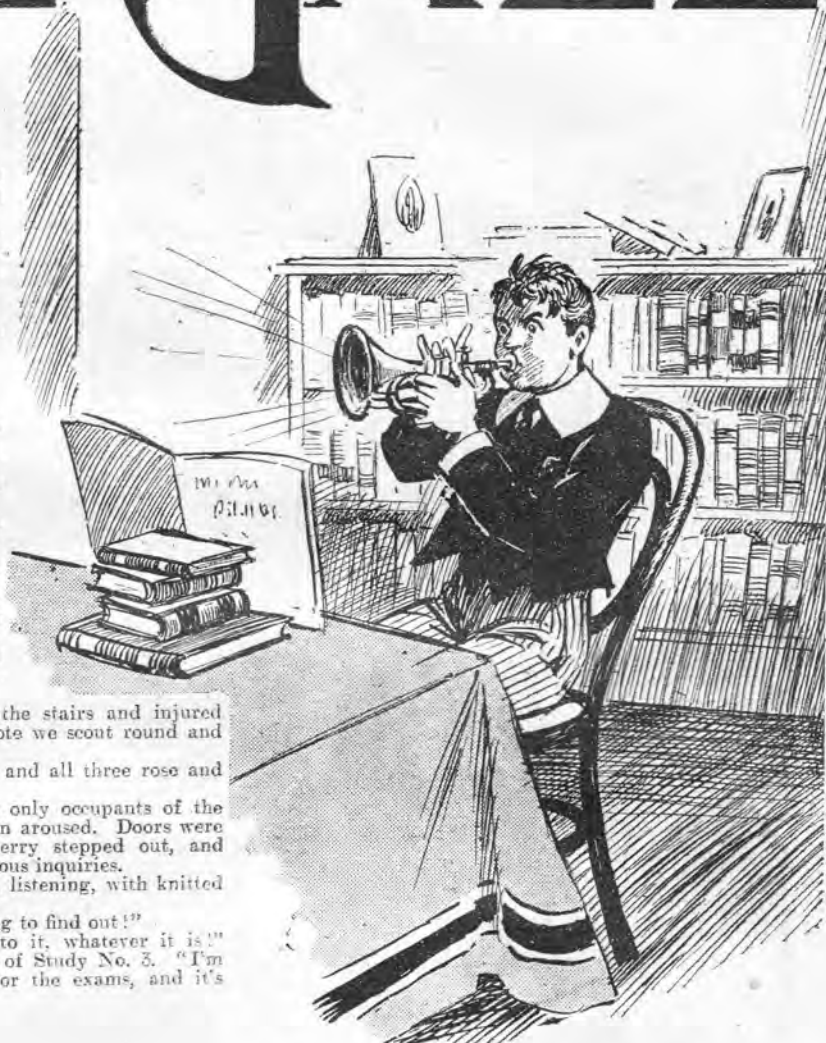
"Worse than ever!"

"It's like some wild animal at the Zoo!"

The weird sounds increased in volume as the Shell fellows  
advanced. The juniors followed their ears, so to speak, and  
their ears led them towards the Fourth Form passage.

On the way their ranks were reinforced by Wally D'Arcy  
and a crowd of excited fags, and it was quite an army that  
descended on the Fourth Form passage, at last.

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"Here we are!" said Grundy grimly. "And now what  
about it?"

Moan! Wail! Moan!

"Oh crikey!"

"Hark at it!"

Undoubtedly they had tracked the disturbance to its source  
now. The passage fairly echoed with it.

Even now, the juniors couldn't make up their minds what  
it was. At times it had the flavour of brassy music, and  
then, without warning, it seemed to change into an agonised  
moan.

The Fourth were evidently as mystified as the invading  
army. Most of the study doors were open, and the occu-  
pants were listening, open-mouthed.

"It's coming from Study No. 6, or I'll eat my hat!" said  
Tom Merry.

"That's Blake's study!"

"I know. Well, here goes, anyway!"

With that, the leader of the Shell flung open the door of  
Study No. 6, and marched in, with half the junior popula-  
tion of the School House at his heels.

And immediately the mystery of the moanings and wail-  
ings was a mystery no longer.

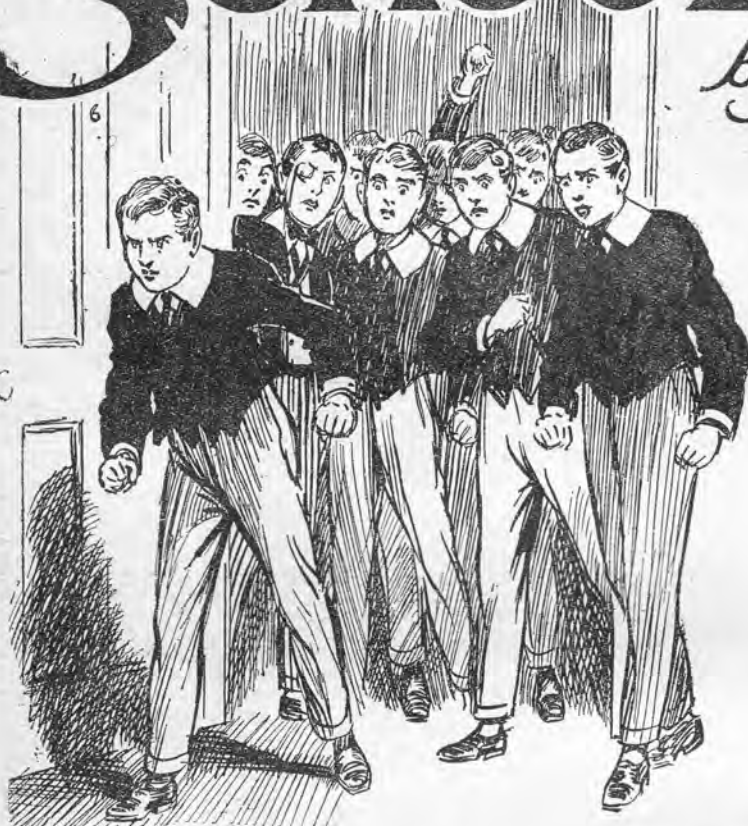
Sitting at the study table, oblivious to the intrusion of  
the invaders, and to all other things besides the task he was  
performing, was George Herries.

Herries' eyes were glued to a sheet of music which was

—WHEN YOU'VE "RED" THIS TOP-NOTCH SCHOOL YARN!

# SCHOOLBOY

by Martin Clifford



What! Never heard of Herries' cornet—with its moans and wails that drive everybody for miles around nearly crazy? Never heard of Herries' bulldog, Towser—the animal that's never really happy till he's got his jaws on some poor blighter's trousers? Make their acquaintance in this grand long story of Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's, and if they don't make you roar—well, you ought to see a doctor

you sounding now?" and 'Little Grey Home in the West' sound pretty good, as a rule."

"Hear, hear!" concurred one or two of the juniors.

"But why these dreadful moans to-night?" asked Tom Merry. "What do you mean, and what's the giddy idea, anyway?"

"You burbling idiot!" roared Herries. "Don't you know anything at all about music? What I've been playing is the very latest!"

"The whatter?"

"The very latest, you silly cuckoos. Do you think I'm going to keep on playing the same silly old tunes all my life? Not likely! I like to move with the times. What I was practising when you fatheads barged in was one of the latest jazz tunes!"

"Oh!"

"It was, was it?"

"Of course it was!" snorted Herries. "It's one of the biggest hits of the dance season, in London!"

propped up before him, and his lips were glued to the cause of all the trouble.

The cause of all the trouble was Herries' cornet!

Moan! Wail! Moan!

"M-m-m-my giddy aunt!"

Wail! Hoot! Wail!

"Oh crumbs! So this is it!" grinned Monty Lowther.

Moan!

"Oh crikey!"

Wail!

Blissfully unconscious of the sensation he was creating, Herries played on. He would have continued to play on indefinitely if he hadn't been stopped. But there is a limit to human endurance, and for most of the crowd, that limit had by this time been reached. A dozen hands descended on George Herries of the Fourth, the music suddenly ceased, and Herries woke up.

"Ow!" he gasped. "What the thump—"

"Thank goodness that's stopped!" said Clive, with relief.

"Hear, hear!"

Herries looked up in wrathful amazement at the surging crowd.

"What's the merry idea?" he demanded, jumping to his feet. "If this is a rag—"

"It's not! It's a desperate effort to avert the transformation of St. Jim's into a home for raving lunatics!" said Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—"

"Another five minutes of cornet-playing on those lines and it might have been too late!" said Lowther severely.

"Hear, hear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Seriously, though, Herries, it's a bit too thick to-night," said Tom Merry.

"We've all heard you practising on it before, and we've been able to stand it in the usual way. Some of the tunes you play are quite decent, in fact; 'Trumpeter, what are

"Oh crikey!"

"Is it really?"

"I should think it is! Of course, it conveys nothing to you, I suppose, but that tune is called 'Blithering Blues!'"

"Called what?"

"'B-Blithering Blues.'"

"Oh grumps!"

"Now we understand!" chuckled Monty Lowther.

"Herries is moving with the times, and going in for modern music—that's all!"

"And quite enough, too!" growled Grundy. "More than enough, in fact!"

"Does that mean that you've decided to inflict that appalling row on us after prep in future?" asked Tom Merry in dismay.

"If you mean my practice—yes!" grunted Herries.

There was a roar from the crowd.

"You jolly well won't!"

"We'll see to that!"

"If you do—"

"We'll slaughter you!"

"Pulverise you!"

"Here, dry up, some of you, and let a fellow hear himself speak!" exclaimed Tom Merry laughingly. "We'd better settle this here and now, I think."

"There's nothing to settle, that I'm aware of," said Herries calmly. "However, if you cheeky Shellfish have come along here looking for trouble, I'm quite willing to oblige!"

And Herries prepared to oblige, by divesting himself of his Eton jacket, and rolling back his cuffs in quite a business-like manner.

"But we haven't come along for a scrap," explained Tom Merry patiently. "We came here in the first place to find out what the unearthly row was—"

"I tell you it wasn't an unearthly row, you cheeky ass!"

"And now that we've found out, we only want an assur-

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ance that it's going to stop. We can put up with the old tunes you usually play—"

"They're bad enough, but we can just tolerate them," explained Lowther blandly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But 'Blithering Blues,' and anything else like it has got to stop. Savvy?"

"No, I don't savvy!" answered Herries bluntly. "I savvy that a lot of interfering Shellfish have shoved their noses into my study, though, and if they don't get out jolly quickly they'll go out on their necks!"

The Shell invaders glared.

"Well, if that's the game, Herries—" began Grundy.

"You'd better make a start at once, old bean!" finished Frere, with a grin.

"I'm going to!" said Herries promptly.

And with that he made a rush.

There was no doubt that the blood of the musical genius of the Fourth was aroused. The ridicule with which his rendering of "Blithering Blues" had been received, had been quite sufficient to cause that result.

But, however great his indignation, George Herries could hardly have hoped to overcome half the Shell. The odds were far too great for that.

Instead of the invaders finishing up on their necks, it was Herries himself who found himself in that uncomfortable posture, and in a remarkably short space of time.

"Sorry if we hurt you!" grinned Manners. "You insisted on it, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Groooooogh!" groaned Herries, rubbing his injured parts with great tenderness.

"And now to resume business!" said Tom Merry. "As I was saying—"

But the skipper of the Shell did not complete his remark. Before he could do so there was a commotion outside.

"Here they come!"

"It's Blake, and the others!"

"Bai Jove!"

"What the thump are you Shellfish rioting in our study for, I should like to know?"

Jack Blake, the leader of Study No. 6, with Digby and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy close on his heels, barged his way through the crowd and glared truculently at the invaders.

## CHAPTER 2.

### Jazz Barred!

**H**ERRIES' three chums had been on a friendly visit to Figgins & Co., of the New House. For once in a way, House feuds and rivalries had been forgotten owing to a keen confab on the prospects of the School First Eleven in their coming match with Greyfriars.

On that subject, if on no other, School House and New House opinions were not at variance. Jack Blake & Co. had come away with the impression that Figgins & Co. possessed certain elements of intelligence after all, and they returned to the School House feeling nothing but peace and goodwill to all men.

That happy frame of mind quickly vanished, however, when they reached the Fourth passage, and saw the riotous crowd assembled round Study No. 6.

"In we go!" said Blake, taking in the situation at a glance.

And in they went!

"Don't get excited, old chap," said Tom Merry soothingly, when Jack Blake had made his first wrathful inquiry. "It's like this—"

"Excited!" snorted the leader of the Fourth. "Wouldn't you get excited if you came back and found a howling mob of savages in your study?"

"Well, perhaps I might," admitted Tom. "But, you see—"

"I see a gang of cheeky asses raiding my study at present, if you want to know what I see!"

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus warmly.

"I don't know that I want Shellfish explanations of it, either!" added Blake. "Let's have your version, Herries."

"I can soon give you that," growled the injured musician. "I was practising on my cornet, when all of a sudden this blessed mob trooped in and started ragging me. That's all I know."

"Why, you cheeky rotters!" exclaimed Blake, turning quite pink with wrath. "Ragging our study while there's only one man left in it!"

"Bai Jove! What a wotten twick!"

"What the dickens were the rest of the Fourth doing, then?" asked Digby.

"Looking on, like a lot of sheep!" snorted Herries. "Fine patriotic lot—I don't think!"

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"Steady on!" called out Hammond, from the back of the crowd. "If it's a Form row we're backing up all right!"

"Rather!" yelled out a score of eager voices.

"Sock it into 'em!"

"Like their nerve barging in here, anyway!"

"Well, it's about time somebody came to put you cheeky rotters in your places!" roared Grundy, above the din.

"When a rowdy lot of fags—"

"Fag, yourself!"

"Chuck him out!"

Biff!

"Yooooooop!"

George Alfred Grundy sat down suddenly, roaring, as a bulky volume, hurled by an unseen hand, landed on the back of his neck.

"That's the way to treat Shell bounders!" shouted Kerruish gleefully. "Now tread on his face, someone!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is this a private row, or can we all join in?" yelled Wally D'Arcy.

But nobody heeded the leader of the fags. The fighting heroes of the Shell and the Fourth were tumbling over each other to get into Study No. 6 now, and all interest was concentrated on the struggle that was going on within that celebrated apartment.

Biff! Bang! Crash!

To and fro swayed the struggling mass. In one corner Tom Merry and Blake were waltzing round in what appeared to be an affectionate embrace. In another, Digby and Grundy were pummelling each other as though their lives depended on it. In the fireplace, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was kneeling on Manners' chest, and cheerfully banging that unfortunate junior's head against the fender, while in the centre of the study a miscellaneous crowd of Fourth-Formers and Shellites wrestled in mortal combat.

The epic struggle might have gone on all night. But the floors of St. Jim's being constructed of wood, and not reinforced concrete, it was perhaps only natural that the attention of other occupants of the House should be attracted.

Suddenly the surging crowd in the Fourth Form passage seemed to melt away like snow before the summer sun, and above the din in Study No. 6 rang out the warning cry:

"Cave!"

Everything happened too quickly, however, to give the principals a chance to get away. In fact, the struggle was only just beginning to wane when hurried footsteps sounded outside, and a frowning figure in cap and gown appeared majestically in the doorway.

"Why—what— BOYS!"

"Oh crikey!"

"Railton!"

Like magic, the battle in Study No. 6 came to an end.

"Upon my word!" ejaculated Mr. Railton.

He appeared to be incapable of saying more for a moment.

"Hem!" coughed Tom Merry.

"Um!" said Jack Blake.

The juniors looked at each other rather sheepishly, and waited for the Housemaster to speak.

"Merry—Blake! What is the meaning of this uproar?" asked Mr. Railton sternly.

"Hem! It's like this—"

"You see, sir—"

The explanations of Tom Merry and Jack Blake didn't get far beyond that point.

"If I might speak, sir—" began Grundy.

"Well, Grundy?"

"It's really my fault. You see, I led the Shell crowd down here, sir. The fellows look to me to lead them, you know—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"And pray what was your reason for leading a crowd of Shell boys to the Fourth passage?" asked Mr. Railton sharply.

"Well, you see, sir, we were all being driven nearly potty by that blessed cornet of— Yarooooooop!"

Grundy's explanation ended in a wild yell, as Monty Lowther, apparently by accident, trod on one of his big feet.

Mr. Railton coughed, and did not question Grundy any more.

He turned his attention to Herries.

"Herries!"

"Yes, sir!"

"You have been practising on your cornet to-night?"

"Yes, sir!"

"May I ask what piece you have been practising?"

"Certainly, sir. It's a new jazz piece called 'Blithering Blues,' sir."

"I judged that it was something of the kind," said Mr. Railton, with a nod. "I suppose it was your rendering of that composition which caused all this trouble?"

"Well, it seems so, sir," admitted Herries. "Though if only the duffers here had half an ear for music—"



"It's about time somebody put you cheeky rotters in your places!" roared George Alfred Grundy, above the din in the Fourth-Form passage. "When a rowdy lot of fags——" Biff! "Yoooooop!" Grundy sat down suddenly, roaring, as a bulky volume, hurled by an unseen hand, landed on the back of his neck. (See Chapter 7.)

"Never mind that, Herries! You must remember that a cornet can be a very irritating instrument."

"Oh, sir!"

"Hitherto, I have not felt that there was any need for me to restrict your practice, Herries, but if it is your intention to take up music of this description, your liberty in practice will have to be considerably curtailed."

"Oh!"

"I must confess that I was quite startled when I heard you begin this evening, and I cannot wonder at these boys taking the law into their own hands."

"But, sir——" gasped the indignant cornet-player.

"The matter need not be discussed, Herries. You must take care for the future that you do not practise this music indoors; that is all. If you must play such pieces, you must play them outside the school premises."

"Oh dear!"

"You Shell boys will now return to your own quarters," said Mr. Railton sharply. "Every boy present will do me fifty lines by to-morrow evening. Herries, as you appear to have been the cause of the trouble, you will remain in detention on Wednesday afternoon."

"Oh!"

"Any more trouble, and I shall deal with it in a more drastic manner!" concluded Mr. Railton.

And with that, the Housemaster quitted the study.

The juniors were left looking at each other, with a little less truculence.

"Well, that's that!" remarked Jack Blake. "So you've been upsetting the House with your blessed cornet, then, Herries?"

"Rats! The trouble is that these silly asses don't know good music when they hear it!"

"Can't make out what all the fuss is about, anyway!" said Digby. "Surely everybody's used to the row Herries kicks up, by now."

"I should wathah think so!"

"That's just it," said Tom Merry. "We're quite used to the usual row, and if it had only been that, we shouldn't have worried. But this time it was different."

"Very different," said Manners, with feeling.

"It was the very latest, you see—the rage of London, so Herries says. And it was called 'Blithering Blues,' wasn't it, Herries?"

"And we didn't like it," grinned Lowther. "Nor did Railton apparently. It might sound all right on the wireless, but on Herries' cornet—well, least said, the better!"

"Bai Jove!"

"So that's it, is it?" grunted Blake. "Well, if I'd understood all that, I shouldn't have been so anxious to kick up a shindy. Strikes me you must have been asking for it, Herries!"

"Look here——" began Herries indignantly.

"In fact, I think we've been scrapping under false pretences," went on Blake. "Better bump him and call it square, I suppose!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"If you touch me——" roared Herries.

"Collar him!"

Herries, struggling wildly but in vain, was collared.

"Now bump the silly ass!"

Bump!

"Yaroooooop!"

"Another for luck!"

Bump!

"Whoooooop!"

"Now that honour is satisfied all round we'll withdraw!" grinned Lowther.

And with that, the Shell contingent marched away to their own quarters, leaving Herries struggling to regain his breath, and the other tenants of Study No. 6 to clear up the mess.

## CHAPTER 3.

## Good Old Railton!

**S**UCH was the manner in which St. Jim's first learned that Herries had become converted to that eccentric, but highly popular form of music known as jazz.

The Lower School was somewhat surprised, and mildly amused, by Herries' new departure. George Herries' cornet, like his bulldog, Towser, was well-known at St. Jim's. Many a rainy half-holiday had the Fourth Form passage echoed to the brazen strains of "Oh, Let me like a Soldier Fall!" and other pleasant, though somewhat ancient songs. And though Herries' neighbours were not always appreciative of the beauties of his solo efforts, they raised no particular objection.

That was largely because George Herries himself was popular. His kindly, if somewhat gruff manner, and his generous and friendly nature were well liked in the Fourth. Herries was usually voted "one of the best."

But however popular Herries might have been, the Fourth could not have tolerated "Blithering Blues," and its kind. It was just as well, therefore, that Mr. Railton had put his foot down and vetoed jazz practice at once.

Herries was dismayed at the Housemaster's decision. "It only shows what a rotten unmusical lot they all are at St. Jim's," he said gloomily, addressing Blake on the following day. "Railton must be as bad as the rest. He told me that a cornet can be a very irritating instrument. What a rotten thing to hear from one's own Housemaster!"

"Awful!" agreed Blake, with a yawn.

"Bai Jove! I am wathah inclined to agree with Wailton for once!" remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy thoughtfully. "I must confess that I have found it vewy twyin' at times, Hewwies!"

"Well, it can't be much more trying than the pattern of your fancy waistcoat!" snorted Herries. "If you don't soon change it I'm going to see an optician about a pair of shaded glasses to preserve my eyesight!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Music! What do you know about music?" asked Herries scornfully.

"Bai Jove! If you are insinuat' that I am ignowant of the pwinciples of music, Hewwies, I'm afwaid I shall have no weccourse but to give you a feahful thwashin'."

"I don't insinuate it; I state it!" said Herries unambiguously. "And now, with regard to that fearful thrashing—"

"Bai Jove! You cheekay boundah—"

"Peace, my infants!" interposed Blake. "Any scrapping, and I shall bang your silly heads together!"

"Weally, Blake! I should uttably wefuse to have my head banged together—I mean—"

"Blow the blessed cornet—and your waistcoat, too, if it comes to that!" added Blake recklessly. "There are more important things to talk about at present. To-morrow afternoon, for instance—"

"That's a better topic!" said Digby, with some enthusiasm. "A half-holiday, nothing on in the footer line, and a prospect of fine weather!"

"Exactly!" nodded the leader of No. 6. "The problem that naturally arises is, what shall we do with our little solves?"

"It doesn't arise with me, worse luck!" said Herries gloomily. "I'm detained, you know."

"H'm! I'd forgotten about that," confessed Blake. "Anyway, there's the rest of us to consider. I was thinking of a cross-country walk with Tom Merry and the others. We could stroll down to the river, row across to the other side, and take the footpath through the woods that leads back to the Grammar School."

"Bai Jove! That's wathah a bwight ideah!" said Arthur Augustus approvingly.

"Top-hole!" agreed Digby. "We haven't done the walk for ages!"

"Matter of fact, I've already mentioned it to Tom Merry, and they've got nothing else on, so I think we can count on them all right."

"Good enough, then," said Dig. "Better fix things definitely. Pity you're out of it, Herries. If it hadn't been for the Shell bounders—"

"And Herries' cornet—"

"Look here—"

"Stow it, you idiots, for goodness' sake!" roared Blake, in exasperation. "Anyhow, the outing's fixed, then?"

D'Arcy and Digby nodded.

"Good! It's rotten about you, Herries. I wonder if it's any good going to Railton and asking him to let you off?"

"H'm!"

"Bai Jove! That's a wippin' ideah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I wathah fancy—"

But what Arthur Augustus fancied was never known.

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There was a tap on the study door just then, and the subject was dropped.

"Trot in, fathead!" sang out Blake. He gave a gasp the next instant as the door opened. "Oh, crumbs! Sorry, sir!"

The newcomer was none other than Mr. Railton!

The Housemaster bestowed a somewhat peculiar look on the cheery leader of No. 6.

"I think you would be well-advised to restrain your exuberance in inviting unknown visitors into your study, Blake!" he observed dryly.

"Ye-es, sir! Awfully sorry, I'm sure, sir! Of course, I didn't know it was you!" gasped Blake.

"I came along to see you, Herries," said Mr. Railton, transferring his attention to that junior. "Since last night I have been thinking over my decision to detain you to-morrow. Perhaps, in view of the fact that you have previously practised your cornet without trouble, I have been a little severe."

"Oh!" said Herries, looking rather hopeful.

"On consideration, I have come to the conclusion that the case will be met if you do me a hundred lines instead of remaining in detention to-morrow afternoon."

"Oh! Thank you very much, sir!" said Herries, beaming.

"Of course, my prohibition of your playing music of the type you were practising last night still holds good," added Mr. Railton. "Apart from the annoyance it is likely to cause in the House, I do not approve of it."

"I see, sir," said Herries, pulling rather a wry face.

"That is all, then," said Mr. Railton, preparing to go.

"Be a little more careful the next time you have a caller, Blake!"

And with a faint smile on his face, Mr. Railton quitted the study.

"Good old Railton!" said Digby, when the door had closed behind the Housemaster.

"Not such a bad old sport!" remarked Herries. "Anyway, I've got the half now!"

"Yaas, wathah! I told you Wailton was a weasonable old bean, deah boys!"

"Now I can join the party," agreed Herries cheerily. "Poor old Towser hasn't had an outing for ages. I'll bring him along, too, I think."

"Oh, crikey!"

"Blow Towser!"

"And I can have a bit of cornet practice if we make a halt at the island," went on Herries cheerily.

"You can what?"

"Have cornet practice?"

"Oh crumbs!"

"I shall wefuse to allow you to do anythin' of the kind, Hewwies!" said Arthur Augustus decisively.

To which remark, Herries made the irreverent monosyllabic retort:

"Rats!"

## CHAPTER 4.

## Another Musician!

**"STOP!"** Knox of the Sixth shouted out that imperative command as the School House chums were crossing the Close on the following afternoon.

It was a fine, crisp November day, and Tom Merry & Co. and Blake & Co., in spite of the rather worrying presence of Herries' bulldog, Towser, were feeling in the best of spirits.

Gerald Knox, on the other hand, was feeling the reverse of genial. The cheery side of the black sheep of the Sixth, if it existed at all, was never in evidence while Tom Merry and his chums were about.

"Stop!" roared Knox, for the second time, seeing that the juniors had allowed his stentorian command to pass by them as the idle wind which they regarded not.

But Tom Merry & Co. continued to stroll serenely on.

Knox breathed hard.

"If you insolent young brats don't stop—" he began ferociously.

The "insolent young brats," quite unimpressed by Knox's ferocity, did not stop.

It was a case of the mountain not coming to Mahomet, and Mahomet therefore having to go to the mountain.

Knox, with an unpleasant glitter in his eyes, broke into a run, and followed the juniors.

He caught them up by the lily-pond in the centre of the Close.

"Stop, I say!" he hooted. "Merry—Blake! You hear me? Stop!"

And the juniors stopped at last.

"Well, I never!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "If it's not Knox! Fancy that, now!"

"I do believe you'd have passed us by, if we hadn't

stopped you, Knox!" said Monty Lowther reproachfully.

"Shame on you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You insolent young cubs!" roared Knox. "Didn't you hear me when I called you before, confound you?"

"Come to think of it, I did hear a soft, musical cry—something like the sound of silvery bells. I suppose that was you, then, Knox?" said Lowther innocently.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Take fifty lines for insolence, Lowther!"

"Thanks very much! Is that what you stopped us for?"

"No, it's not," growled Knox. "Herries is the one I want. Ah, there you are, skulking in the background, I see!"

"Skulking?" repeated Herries, in surprise.

"Rather natural that you want to make yourself small, I suppose, seeing that you're supposed to be in detention this afternoon," sneered Knox.

"Oh!" said Herries.

The juniors grinned. They knew that it was one of Knox's amiable little habits to scout round in search of fellows who had broken detention. Evidently he was under the impression that he had made a capture. Doubtless he had seen Herries' name on the prefects' list of detained juniors, and was unaware that Mr. Railton had cancelled the detention.

"Rather lucky I spotted you before you had time to get away, what?" went on Knox.

"Awfully lucky!" agreed Herries cheerfully. "Now you'll be able to report me to Mr. Railton. And that'll be nice for you, won't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mr. Railton's over at Wayland this afternoon, but he shall hear of it from me as soon as he comes in, mark my words!" said Knox, with a scowl. "Now you'd better get back to your Form-room, at once, Herries."

"Dear me! That's unfortunate!" said Herries.

"Unfortunate? What the thunder do you mean?"

"Why, I've already arranged to go for a walk with these chaps!"

"Then you can sit in your Form-room all the afternoon and imagine them having a good time instead," grinned Knox. "Now, no larks, Herries! Back to the House with you, or I'll lay this ashplant over your back!"

And Knox reached out with the pleasant intention of grabbing Herries' ear, and leading him to durance vile.

But the Sixth-Former had forgotten Towser.

Herries' devoted bulldog had been watching events with considerable suspicion. Once or twice he had licked his chops, and looked up at Knox with a very baleful eye. But he had taken no active part in the discussion until Knox made a grab at his master.

That was Towser's cue, so to speak.

With a deep and angry growl, the faithful animal leaped at Knox. And the bullying prefect very quickly changed his mind about handling Herries.

"Gr-r-r-r! Ur-r-rgh!"

"Oh, good gad! Keep the brute off, hang you!" yelled Knox, dodging wildly. "I'll have you flogged for this, Herries! Yooop!"

The prefect's remarks ended in a wild howl as Towser made another jump at him. Without troubling to look where he was going, Knox took a frantic leap backwards.

It was unfortunate for Knox that he didn't look before he leaped. Had he done so, he would have known that the lily-pond was just behind him.

Splash!

For a second Gerald Knox disappeared from sight; then he came up, gasping and spluttering as if for a wager.

"Whooooooop! Ooooh! Grooooooh!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Look where he's landed!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gug-gug-grooooooh!"

Yelling with laughter, Herries at last secured Towser on the lead and dragged him away, leaving Knox to stagger from his watery bed back to terra firma again.

"Ooooooh! Grooooooh!" spluttered Knox. "Oh dear! Wait till I get you, Herries, you grinning young hound! You'll suffer for this, hang you!"

"That's what comes of interfering, old bean!" retorted Herries severely.

"Yaas, wathah! I'm afraid you deserve vewy little sympathy, Knox, deah boy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mark my words, I'll make you pay for this before you're many days older!" snarled the Sixth-Former. "Look out, Herries, that's all!"

"Cheery little soul, isn't he?" murmured Blake. "Let's get on, chaps! I think we've all had enough of Knox by now!"

"Quite enough!" grinned Monty Lowther. "And unless

I'm much mistaken, Knox has had more than enough of us!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gerald Knox turned on his heel and crawled back towards the House, oozing water at every step, while the juniors went on their way rejoicing.

"Better watch out for Knox, after this, Herries," remarked Tom Merry. "He's a nasty beggar when he gets his knife into anyone."

"I should worry!" chuckled Herries. "We've all had our ups and downs with Knox before, and he's usually come off second best!"

"True enough. All the same, the rotter's a prefect, and he's not likely to miss any chance of getting his own back!"

"Oh, I can look after myself all right!" said Herries confidently.

But Herries hadn't finished with Knox yet, as later events were to show.

The cad of the Sixth was soon forgotten, however, when the juniors got out into the fair Sussex countryside. The keen, frosty air made walking very pleasant, and when they reached the river, the sight of the silvery Rhyl glistening in the wintry sunshine was gratifying enough to drive away all disagreeable thoughts.

Tom Merry secured a boat in which to cross to the other bank. A large boat was necessary to accommodate seven juniors and a bulldog, and the captain of the Shell accordingly selected a craft which had been built more for accommodation than for speed.

"Hallo, hallo! There's the New House crowd!" said Jack Blake suddenly, pointing up the river to a spot just opposite the island.

The rest of the party looked in the direction indicated, and saw a boat with six New House juniors at the oars—Figgins & Co., and Redfern, Owen and Lawrence—moving at a good pace down river.

"Hark!" exclaimed Herries suddenly. "Music, or I'm a Dutchman!"

The juniors listened.

From the direction of the island, borne on the breeze, came unmistakable strains of music.

"Well, I'm dashed!" murmured Herries.

"What's the matter?"

"Matter! If that's not the giddy limit!" said the musician of the Fourth warmly. "Can't you recognise what instrument that is?"

"Blessed if I can! Might be a trombone or a Jew's harp, for all I know!"

Herries snorted.

"It's the same instrument as I play—a cornet!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Just my blessed luck!" said Herries bitterly. "I've brought my cornet out with me with the idea of practising on the island, and some other blighter's forestalled me!"

"Great pip! I believe you're right!" grinned Lowther. "And I really thought you were the only lunatic at large in this neighbourhood, Herries. I must have been mistaken!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hard lines, Herries!"

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, at that moment. "Those New House boundahs seem to be makin' for the island. I wondah what their little game is?"

"Methinks the time has arrived for us to investigate!" grinned Tom Merry. "Keep low until they round that bend, chaps!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

The School House party kept well under cover until their rivals were out of sight. Then they piled into their old tub, and pulled towards the island themselves.

## CHAPTER 5.

### A New House Blunder!

**F**IGGINS & CO. had set out that afternoon without any intention of visiting the island.

Like the School House juniors, they had been drawn out on a country walk by the unusually fine weather, and their course had taken them in the direction of the river.

It was just as they were walking along the towpath opposite the island that the sound of a cornet fell on their ears.

"What the dickens—" exclaimed Figgins, coming to a halt.

"Band practice on the island, at this time of the year?" said Redfern, raising his eyebrows. "Who the thump can it be, I wonder? Nobody from the school, surely?"

"Give it up!"

All at once, Kerr broke into a chuckle.

"Can't you guess what it is?" he asked.

"Sounds like a cornet to me," said Fatty Wynn.  
 "Right first time! It is a cornet! And the chap that's tooting away is the giddy, mad musician, Herries!"

"Oh!"  
 "My hat! Of course!" said Figgins, with a nod. "I'd forgotten Herries' blessed cornet, for the moment. But how do you know it's not someone else? Might be another cornet-player hanging around, mightn't there? And, anyway, why the dickens should Herries come to the island for his cornet practice?"

"For a jolly good reason," answered the Scots junior.  
 "If you sleepy bouders kept in touch with School House doings as I do, you'd know that there was a bit of a shindy in Blake's study after he and Dig and Gussy left us last night. To cut a long story short, Herries had been branching out in a new direction on the old cornet. Practising the latest jazz, so he said!"

"Oh crumbs!"  
 "There was a regular riot over it, anyway, and in the end Railton chipped in, and put his foot down."

"Did he put the bar up to the cornet, then?" asked Owen.  
 "Well, not quite that. But he told Herries that if jazz practice was necessary, it would have to be carried out some distance away from the school. So that's evidently the reason why Herries has come out here to-day."

"Oh, I see!"  
 "That's it, is it?" chuckled Figgins. "Dear old Herries has come out to the island on his lonely own to practise jazz on the cornet. This, my infants, sounds interesting!"

"Oh, rather!"  
 "It sounds even interesting enough to take us over to the island."

"What-ho!" grinned the New House juniors.  
 "Of course, we haven't changed our minds about having a nice quiet walk," went on Figgins thoughtfully. "That still stands. But we shall enjoy it all the more if we put in five minutes work first!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "I don't know about you fellows, but I, myself, don't approve of cornets, or cornet-players. And when a cornet-player happens to be a School House waster, in addition, he deserves all he gets!"

"Hear, hear!"  
 "Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "Then it's up to us to see that he gets what he deserves!" said Lawrence. "We shall have to get a move on. The School House crowd are getting a boat out this afternoon, I believe."

"Sharp's the word, then!" said Figgins. "Got a wheeze, Kerr?"

Kerr wrinkled his brow.  
 "We haven't time to do anything elaborate," he answered. "Perhaps the best thing we can do is to rush Herries, and tie him up, then chuck him into the boat he took to the island, and send it drifting down the river towards the School House crowd when they show up."

"Good egg!"  
 "Top-hole, for a spur-of-the-moment stunt!" said Figgins enthusiastically. "Let's get into this boat and row across, then. Sharp's the word!"

"Keep as quiet as you can!" warned Kerr. "Don't want to advertise our arrival to Herries, you know!"

"No fear!"  
 "He won't hear us, anyway, while he's going strong at the cornet, like he's doing now!" grinned Redfern.

Which was true enough. The music from the cornet which the New House juniors had assumed to belong to Herries, fairly filled the air as they drew near the island.

"Hallo! There's a skiff. That's his, right enough!" said Figgins, pointing to a small boat which was moored at a sheltered spot by the island.

"Better land here," said Kerr. "Herries can't be far away from the boat."

With as much speed as they could safely manage it, the New House juniors made a landing.

"Now for it!" said Figgins softly. "Sounds as if he's somewhere behind those bushes. Bring that tarpaulin with you, Reddy. If we attack from the rear, and throw that over his head to begin with, he won't have a chance to recognise us. And the School House crowd will wonder who the giddy pirates were—until we enlighten them!"

"Good for you, Figgy! That's a brain-wave!"  
 "Forward, the Light Brigade!"  
 "Shush!"

The island raiders "shushed," and, with the stealthy tread of Red Indians on the warpath, moved forward to the attack.

They soon located their quarry. As he still continued to practise on the cornet, the task of finding him was an easy one.

Within a couple of minutes of their landing, the New

House juniors were standing in a group behind the bushes, under whose shelter the lonely cornet-player was at work.

If Figgins & Co. had been on the other side of the musician, they would have known at once that he was not George Herries of the School House. From the position that they occupied, however, they could only see the back of a head and the section of a cornet, and no doubts assailed them as to the identity of their unsuspecting victim.

"Everything O.K.," whispered Figgins.

"Oh, rather!"

"Got that tarpaulin, Reddy?"

"You bet!"

"And the cord, Fatty?"

"What-ho!"

"Right-ho, then! Charge!" yelled Figgins.

And the New House party charged.

## CHAPTER 6.

### Not Herries!

"HARK!"  
 The School House oarsmen rested from their labours for a space, and listened. They were drawing quite close to the island when Figgins' shout rang across the waters, and everybody in the boat heard it quite distinctly.

"Hear that, you chaps?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It came from the island. Sounds like a rag!"

"Well, just a bit!" grinned Blake.

Tom Merry knitted his brows.

"Blessed if I can make it out! It takes two parties to make a rag, and, so far as we know, Figgins' boat is the only one about."

"I know!" yelled Herries. "Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's on, Herries?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the joke, ass?"

"It's Figgins' crowd!" chortled Herries. "They've made a little mistake, that's all! Have you noticed that the cornet has stopped since that yell went up? That's the explanation! They thought it was little me!"

"Oh, my giddy aunt!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What a scream!" chuckled Tom Merry. "It's a natural enough mistake, too. They heard the cornet, and took it for granted it must be Herries!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"For goodness' sake, let's make a landing!" gasped Jack Blake. "This is too good to be missed! Put your backs into it, you men!"

The short distance to the island was very quickly negotiated, and the School House party hurriedly landed.

"There they are!" chuckled Digby, who was first out of the boat. "And they haven't found out their mistake yet!"

"Great pip!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The chap's putting up a dickens of a struggle whoever he is!" grinned Herries. "The silly asses have covered some tarpaulin over him!"

"And they're trying to tie him up! Oh crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fairly yelling with laughter, the School House juniors tore through the bushes and undergrowth, to the rescue of the unknown cornet-player.

Figgins & Co. were too busily engaged to notice the new arrivals for a moment. They were having a rare struggle with the person they supposed to be Herries of the Fourth.

Then suddenly Figgins looked up.

To say that the leader of the New House contingent looked surprised, would not do justice to the extraordinary expression that appeared on his face, as he recognised Herries' cheerful countenance.

"Oh!" gasped Figgins.

"Back up, Figgy!" roared Fatty Wynn, who was endeavouring to secure the prisoner with a cord. "What the thump's the matter with you? Back up, there!"

Then Fatty Wynn looked up, and followed his chum's almost mesmerised gaze.

His eyes almost popped out of their sockets at the sight of the fellow whom he had fondly imagined to be struggling under the tarpaulin at that moment.

"M-m-m-my hat! What the thump!" he gasped.

"Here they are!" gurgled Tom Merry, coming up with the rest at that moment. "Pull 'em off for goodness' sake, before any more harm's done!"

"School House rotters!" roared Redfern, jumping up. "Sock into 'em! Oh crikey! Herries! How the dickens—"

"Surely there isn't another Herries!" yelled Owen.

"We thought—" gasped Kerr.



"Oh, good gad! Keep the brute off!" yelled Knox, as Towser made a jump at him. Without troubling to look where he was going, the prefect made a frantic leap backwards—right into the lily-pond. Splash! "Ooooooh! Groooooh!" "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

(See Chapter 4.)

"You see—"  
"Oh dear! Something's gone wrong!"  
"We've made a mistake!" groaned Figgins. "Oh crumbs! This is awful! It's not Herries, after all!"  
"G-g-great pip!"  
"Oh lor!"  
The New House juniors staggered to their feet, looking quite faint.

"Well, of all the prize idiots—" howled Blake.  
"Of all the crackpots—"  
"It wasn't Herries, you duffers!"  
"It's a giddy stranger!"  
"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Oh dear!"  
Figgins & Co. groaned in unison.  
"Oh crikey! What a bloomer to make!" murmured Figgins. "Kerr, you idiot, this is your fault! We'll slaughter you for this!"

"Well, I like that!" said Kerr indignantly. "Didn't you suggest the rag in the first place?"  
"And didn't you put the idea into my head that it was Herries?"

"Look here—"  
"Rats!"  
"Cheese it!" interrupted Tom Merry. "Help the giddy victim up before you argue!"  
"Yaas, wathah!"

Figgins and Kerr stopped wrangling, and assisted in extricating the unfortunate victim of their attack from the entanglement of cord and tarpaulin into which they had succeeded in placing him.

The New House juniors were absolutely flabbergasted at the realisation of their unfortunate blunder, and they endeavoured to atone in some small measure by displaying great concern and solicitude for Herries No. 2, if the assaulted cornet-player might be so described.

Herries No. 2, when he emerged from the tarpaulin, bore very little resemblance to the St. Jim's junior. He was a short, stout young man of twenty-five, or thereabouts, with sandy hair and a ruddy complexion. He was gasping and blinking as they helped him to his feet, and the expression of dazed astonishment on his face was quite comic—though

the New House crowd hardly appreciated the comic aspect of it just then.

"Great Christopher Columbus!" the stranger repeated at frequent intervals, as Figgins & Co. did their best to restore him to his pre-war condition, so to speak.

"There! I think we've got all the dirt off your clobber now, sir!" said Figgins at last, after a critical examination.

"Here's your hat, sir!"  
"Thank you, my boy!" said the cornet-player. "And now, if you don't mind, I'd like to know exactly what happened to me just now. It wasn't an earthquake, by any chance, was it?"

"No, not exactly!" said Figgins, with a feeble grin. "You see, sir, we thought you were a friend of ours."

"Good heavens! And is that how you usually treat friends of yours?" asked the stranger, in surprise.

"Well, sometimes we do, when they happen to be School House bounders. You see, there are two Houses at St. Jim's—"

"Perhaps you had better let me explain, Figgy," said Kerr hastily. "The fact of the matter is, sir, that one of the fellows in the rival House plays a cornet, and when we heard you, we thought you were he. That's all. Of course, we're awfully sorry—"

"So I should think!" remarked the stranger warmly. "It's come to something when a fellow can't have a bit of cornet practice in a quiet country spot without being set upon by a gang of schoolboys. Did you imagine that your friend was the only cornet-player on earth, then?"

"Not at all, sir! But, you see, as it happens, Herries—that's the fellow in question—has been told he's got to do some of his practice away from the school, and we thought when we heard you, that he had chosen this spot for it."

"Oh, I see!"

The stout young man regarded Kerr severely for a few seconds. Then his plump face broke into a grin.

"Well, luckily, there's no harm done," he remarked philosophically. "I'll say no more about it this time, you young rascals!"

"Oh, good!"

"That's decent of you, and no mistake!" said Kerr.

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"Bai Jove! The act of a true sportsman!" remarked Arthur Augustus.

"All serene! Say no more about it! I hope you'll tell this young Herries what he's missed when you get back, that's all!"

"Herries is here, sir!" said Tom Merry. "He came along in our boat after these New House bounders landed."

"By Jove! Let me meet him, then!"

Herries stepped forward, and extended a hand.

"Here I am, sir! George Herries, my name!"

"And mine's Charlie Chick—leader of Chick's Orpheans, now playing at the Palm Cafe, Wayland," said the stout young man, giving Herries a hearty handshake.

"Is that so, sir?" said Herries, with great interest. "Jolly glad to meet you, Mr. Chick!"

"Brought the cornet with you, I see!" remarked Mr. Chick. "Rather funny that we should both come to this out of the way spot for a practice, what? Ha, ha, ha!"

And Mr. Chick laughed heartily.

The juniors began to like their new-found acquaintance. The appearance of a cheerful grin and an infectious laugh so soon after his disconcerting experience at their hands, indicated that he was an exceptionally good-humoured individual.

"Well, we'll clear off now, I think," remarked Figgins. "We don't want to prevent you getting on with the washing any longer, sir."

"Don't worry about me, my boy! I'd pretty well finished," said the jazz musician. "Anyway, I shall have to pack up soon, and get to Wayland to begin the day's work. This little spot is the only suitable place I've ever found for solo practice. My landlady simply bars cornet-playing."

"That's rough on you, sir," said Herries sympathetically. "And I suppose you have to work hard at the Palm Cafe?"

"Pretty hard," confessed Mr. Chick. "But, bless you, my boy, the work's a pleasure if you're fond of music. I love it!"

"And so should I!" declared Herries enthusiastically. "I'm as keen as mustard on jazz, myself. 'Blithering Blues,' for instance—"

"Ah! A wonderful piece that!" said Mr. Chick. "Have you boys heard it?"

"Hem!"

"Um!"

"You should hear it—it's great! But this is interesting, Herries—your being keen on syncopated music. I play the saxophone, drums, piano, or anything, myself. Why don't you come down and see how you shape in the band? I might be able to give you an engagement."

"By Jove! I should like it," said Herries, with shining eyes. "But I couldn't very well do it, I'm afraid."

"Ah! I forgot you were at school! Hard cheese!" said the cheery leader of Chick's Orpheans. "Well, I'll make tracks now, I think. Hope you boys didn't sink my skiff when you landed."

"No, it's still intact," laughed Tom Merry. "We'll come down and see you off, sir."

And the entire crowd accompanied Mr. Charlie Chick down to the water's edge to give him a good send off.

The musician climbed into the little craft, and, after depositing his cornet, now safely tucked in its case, in the stern, pushed off.

"Cheerio, everybody!" he called out, waving a plump palm. "Be a bit gentler next time, boys!"

"Oh, rather!"

"We won't be such idiots again, sir!" said Figgins.

"No fear!"

"Don't forget to look me up at the Palm Cafe, Herries!"

"Rely on me, Mr. Chick!" sang back Herries.

"Bai Jove! That chap's a real corker!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Give him a cheer, deah boys! Hip, hip—"

"Hurrah!"

And with the cheers of the juniors ringing in his ears Mr. Charlie Chick lifted his oars, and rowed off towards a landing-stage a little way downstream.

## CHAPTER 7.

### Towser Causes Trouble Again!

**A**FTER the departure of the jazz musician Figgins & Co. also pushed off, leaving the School House party in possession of the island.

It was then the turn of Herries to enliven the proceedings with a cornet solo, and while he was so engaged the rest of the party explored the little island.

Having exhausted its rather limited possibilities, they decided to complete the crossing to the other bank of the river, and continue their interrupted walk.

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The interlude on the island had provided a good laugh, and the juniors were in the cheeriest of moods as they got into the boat again.

Towser was responsible for the incident which eventually marred the day's enjoyment.

Since his encounter with Knox, in the Close, Towser had been remarkably quiet. He had meekly obeyed his master's command to remain still in the stern during the trip to the island, and he had submissively followed the juniors about while his master practised the cornet.

But on the second stage Towser suddenly became himself again, and in so doing brought an utterly unexpected misfortune to his master.

The juniors were nearing the river bank, when Towser suddenly stiffened as he caught sight of somebody on the tow-path.

That "somebody" was Gerald Knox of the Sixth. And Towser evidently recognised his old acquaintance.

After having changed his wet clothes the prefect had cycled from St. Jim's with the intention of keeping an eye out for the School House party. He was itching to get his own back on Herries, and he wanted to haul that cheery Fourth-Former before Mr. Railton at the earliest possible moment.

He scowled as he spotted the boat, and his scowl intensified as he saw Towser fairly bristling at sight of him.

But he was quite unprepared for Towser's next step.

Towser stood rigidly in the boat, glaring at him for the space of a second or two. Then, with a suddenness that nearly overturned the boat, he made a spring.

"Towser!" roared Herries, in anguish. "Oh, my hat—"

"Steady!" shrieked Digby, as Herries jumped to his feet.

"Herries! You mad idiot—"

"Oh, great pip!"

Towser landed with a thud on the river-bank. And exactly one second later Herries landed after him.

There was a yell of alarm from those who were left in the boat. For a moment it seemed that nothing would save them from being overturned in the water. But, by a miracle, the boat righted itself, and drifted out towards the centre of the river again, and, with a sigh of relief, the juniors seized the oars and steadied her up.

"Thank goodness for that!" gasped Jack Blake.

"Bai Jove! What a nawwow squeak, deah boys!"

"Good-bye, Herries!" yelled Lowther.

But Herries was too busy to reply. By this time he was sprinting after Knox, who was cycling away down the tow-path like a champion on the race-track.

That was the beginning of a wild chase that continued down the tow-path and across a cart-track leading into the Rylcombe Lane. Knox, with perspiration streaming from him, pedalled away as though his life was in the balance. Towser, breathing fire, pursued a straight line after him. And Herries, puffing and blowing, gamely brought up the rear.

The chase might have continued all the way to St. Jim's. But long before St. Jim's was reached, something happened to bring it to a sudden and disastrous conclusion.

Just as they turned into Rylcombe Lane a cyclist came speeding along in the opposite direction.

Knox shot across the road just in time to avoid a collision, and whizzed off down the lane without once looking back.

Towser was not so lucky.

Crash!

"Hi, you blooming dorg! Whoooooocop!"

Thud!

Towser had brought the cyclist down in the road.

That finished the chase so far as Towser was concerned. A crack on his canine head from the handlebars sent him yelping miserably in the hedge, and by the time Herries came panting on the scene the bulldog had disappeared.

And then Herries had to face the storm.

The unfortunate cyclist, who, judging by his dungarees and his bag of tools, was a workman of some kind, was almost in a state of apoplexy.

"My bike!" he roared, as Herries helped him to his feet.

"My blinkin' bike! Just look at it!"

"Oh dear!" groaned Herries.

The bike was certainly badly damaged. The front wheel had buckled up, the handlebars were twisted, and the rear mudguard was wrenched almost off. By the look of it, the machine hadn't been exactly a thing of beauty and a joy for ever prior to the collision, and now it had been reduced to the state where it was positively an eyesore.

"Was that there bulldog yours, young covey?" hooted the irate workman. "If it was, then let me tell you I'm goin' to 'ave the lor on you, that's wot I'm goin' to do!"

"Oh dear!"

"My bike! Wot I paid eight pun-ten for, only last year! Jest look at it, young shaver! Someone's goin' to sit up for this, or my name's not Bill Smithson!"

"Look here, Mr. Smithson—" began Herries.  
 "Don't you try to smarm me over!" said Bill Smithson fiercely. "Wot I want to know is this—was that there dorg yours or not?"

"Yes, it was. But—"

"No 'buts'! If that there dorg was yours, then it's up to you to fork out the dibs! Eight pun-ten, please!"

And Mr. Smithson held out a grimy palm, and waited for the "dibs."

Herries regarded the extended hand dazedly.

"Eight pounds-ten!" he echoed. "Oh, my sainted aunt!"

"Never mind about your aunt! Money talks! You're the owner of that there dorg, and you're the bloke that 'as to pay for the damage he's done. I'm lettin' you off light, that's wot I'm doin', not asking compensation for injuries and so on, but Bill Smithson always was easy goin'. Now then, young shaver! Are you goin' to pay or ain't you?"

"Great Scott! Do you imagine I've got anything like that amount about me?" gasped Herries. "Eight pounds-ten! Why, I doubt whether I've got eightpence-ha'penny!"

"Ho! Well, I can't get blood out of a stone, I s'pose, so you'd better send it on, that's all. You give me your name, young covey, and I'll give you my address, so you'll know where to send the dibs. I know you're from the school, so it's no good tryin' to do me down!"

"I'm not trying to do that!" said Herries sharply. "If I'm responsible for any damage old Towser causes, then I'll stand the racket over this. But eight pounds-ten! For that old crock! Why, you must be dreamin'!"

"Ho! Well, if that's wot you think about it, you let it go to law, that's all!" growled Mr. Smithson. "P'raps you'll be sorry when you have to fork out costs, as well as a new bike, my lad!"

"But you could obtain as good a bike as that was anywhere for three pounds, or so."

Mr. Smithson appeared to weigh the matter up.

"I always was a soft sort of covey," he said at last. "I won't be hard on you, young shaver. You jest send me along a five-pun note, and I'll let it go at that."

"Oh crumbs!" groaned the Fourth-Former. "But I haven't got a five-pound note, I tell you!"

"The likes of you can soon find it!" retorted Mr. Smithson. "You, up at the school, and without a five-pun note! I like that! Haw, haw, haw!"

"Look here!" said Herries desperately. "I don't want to dodge my responsibilities, and I don't want anyone at St. Jim's to hear about this, or Towser will get into trouble over it. I'll send you a fiver, if I can possibly raise it, but you'll have to wait a day or so for it. There, I can't say more than that!"

"H'm! Well, if that's the best you can do, I shall 'ave to put up with it!" grunted Mr. Smithson. "But, mind, no larks! If you don't send the dibs along to reach me by next Wednesday morning, I go straight round and see the solicitor bloke. And I shan't be satisfied with a fiver then, take it from me!"

"Oh dear! I'll do my level best to send it along by then!" groaned Herries. "Give me your address!"

Mr. Smithson duly obliged with the required information, and then wrote down Herries' name and address in a grimy notebook.

After that they parted, Mr. Smithson wheeling off his battered bike on the back wheel, and Herries trudging back to St. Jim's in a very unenviable frame of mind. His affection for Towser remained undiminished, but he was considerably perturbed by the financial problem which Towser's exuberance had created.

Five pounds to be paid out—and within a week! Herries arrived at St. Jim's feeling quite dizzy at the prospect that lay before him.

## CHAPTER 8.

### Wanted—a Fiver!

THE first person to greet Herries on his return to St. Jim's was Gerald Knox.

Herries had Towser on the lead, that troublesome bulldog having rejoined his master down the Rylcombe Lane, and until Towser was safely tucked away in his kennel Knox was content to follow his quarry at a distance.

After that, however, the Sixth-Former pounced on Herries like a hawk on its prey.

"Now, you cheeky young cub, you're going to regret your insolence!" he said malevolently. "In you come to Railton!"

And grasping Herries' shoulder with quite unnecessary force Knox yanked him along towards the School House.

"Leggo my shoulder, Knox!" said Herries, between his teeth. "I'll come to Railton, if you're set on it, though if you'll take my advice you'll let it drop."

Knox reluctantly released his prisoner. He would gladly have welcomed some show of opposition, so that he could have had an excuse for using his ashplant, but if Herries was willing to come quietly, Knox realised that he would only bring ridicule upon himself by using undue force.

"Very well, then!" he snapped. "If you're willing to drop ruffianism for the time being, I won't trouble to hold you. As to your advice, you can save your breath. I'm

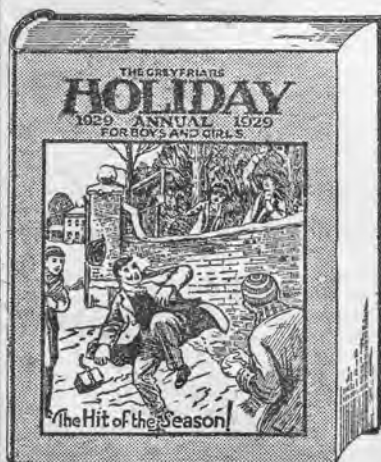
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## NOW'S THE TIME!

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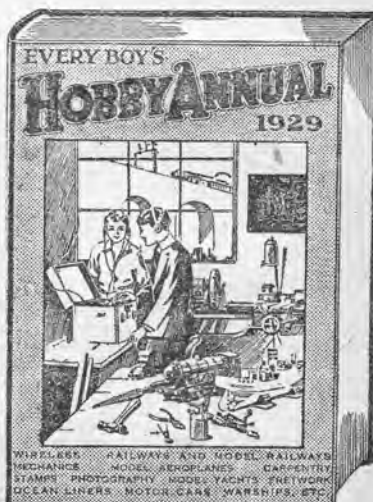
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reporting you to Railton, and I hope he gives you the licking of your life!"

After which charitable hope Knox remained silent until Mr. Railton's study was reached.

"Come in!" called out Mr. Railton, in response to Knox's tap on the door.

They entered.

The Housemaster looked up with a slight frown. He was preparing questions for the approaching school examinations, and the interruption was unwelcome.

"Well, Knox?"

"Sorry to trouble you, sir! I have brought this junior to you to be dealt with."

"Dear me! Has Herries been committing some misdemeanour?" asked Mr. Railton.

"A serious one, I regret to say," replied Knox, in the respectful tones he always used in addressing the Housemaster. "Furthermore, he has given me a tremendous amount of trouble in my apprehending him."

"Is this so, Herries?" asked Mr. Railton severely.

"It certainly isn't, sir!" answered Herries promptly. "So far as I'm aware I've done nothing wrong yet."

"You hear what Herries says, Knox?" said Mr. Railton, turning to the prefect again.

"The young rascal is lying, sir—"

"Kindly moderate your language, Knox!" interrupted Mr. Railton sharply. "Let me hear what Herries has done."

"Very well, sir. He wilfully took advantage of your absence in Wayland this afternoon to evade detention and go out for a walk with his friends," answered Knox, formulating his charge with a relish that he could hardly conceal.

The Housemaster stared.

"And is that all, Knox?"

"That's all, sir—apart, of course, from the trouble I had in endeavouring to detain him. Knowing how seriously you regard breaking bounds, I thought it advisable to bring the matter to your notice at the earliest possible moment."

Mr. Railton regarded Knox with penetrating eyes.

"Your sense of duty is commendable, Knox, but you should not allow it to lead you astray," he said coldly. "I cancelled Herries' detention last night, and the alteration was duly noted on the Detention List."

"Wha-a-at?"

Gerald Knox turned almost green.

"You—you cancelled it?" he stuttered. "Cancelled Herries' detention?"

"That is what I said!" snapped Mr. Railton. "Have you any objection to my action, Knox?"

"Nunno, sir! Certainly not!" gasped the Sixth-Former. "Of course, I didn't understand the circumstances, or I shouldn't have dreamt of interfering with Herries."

"I trust not!" said Mr. Railton. "Well, Knox, I am rather busy, and if that is all—"

"Oh, that's all, sir!" mumbled Knox. "I'm sorry to have troubled you in any way."

"Very well!"

Knox, white to the lips with anger, turned on his heel, and strode out of the study.

"You may go, Herries," said Mr. Railton.

"Thank you, sir!"

Outside, in the passage, Knox turned on the grinning junior with fury in his eyes.

"Why didn't you tell me you'd been let off when I first spoke to you?" he snarled.

Herries gave a shrug.

"In the first place, old bean, you didn't give me much of a chance to explain," he answered coldly. "And, secondly, I thought it wouldn't be a bad idea to teach you that it sometimes pays to mind your own bizney!"

Knox choked.

"All right!" he said thickly. "You win! But it won't be for long!"

And with that the cad of the Sixth went off, his face the picture of baffled rage.

Herries went back to No. 6. The grin quickly vanished from his face after he left Knox. The problem of Mr. Bill Smithson's compensation had left Herries in no frame of mind to see the humorous side of anything for long.

Blake and D'Arcy and Digby had just arrived when Herries entered the study. They gave their colleague a far from affectionate welcome.

"Back again, then!" remarked Blake. "Wonder you didn't break your silly neck!"

"And a wonder you didn't drown the lot of us!" added Dig warmly. "If you ever suggest bringing that mongrel out with us again, Herries, we'll slaughter you and Towser!"

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus emphatically. "I twast that I have as much wegard for our animal friends as anyone else, but Towser is uttably beyond enduwanse!"

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"Oh, rats!" said Herries crossly.

And that finished the discussion. After tea the juniors got out their books and started prep in a decidedly more frigid atmosphere than usually existed in Study No. 6.

Prep finished, Herries went down to the Common-room on his own, and sat in a chair pretending to read, but in reality pondering on the problem of how to raise the urgently-needed sum of five pounds.

Five pounds was a large amount to the average junior at St. Jim's. One or two, such as D'Arcy and Cardew of the Fourth, and Racke of the Shell, occasionally handled five-pound notes like other fellows handled half-crowns. But Herries was not of these. Five pounds seemed a fortune to him.

In the ordinary way, he would have gone to D'Arcy and asked for a loan. But Herries felt resentful of the attitude of the swell of the Fourth towards Towser, and did not care to apply in that quarter just then. Furthermore, the money which he needed was for damage which had been directly caused by Towser's unfortunate little ways, and he could hardly expect that Arthur Augustus would feel exactly enthusiastic about lending a "fiver" for such a purpose.

If it had been a unique and unprecedented occurrence Herries would not have hesitated about writing home for money. But it was not. Only a few weeks before Towser had created havoc in Taggles' kitchen garden, concluding by leaping through the glass window of a hothouse in pursuit of Mrs. Taggles' cat. The bill for damages, coupled with the vet's account for patching up Towser, had called forth caustic comments from Herries' father. So Herries' reluctance to writing home for a further five pounds can be easily understood.

But Bill Smithson's claim had to be met somehow. Herries was quite determined on that point. He clearly foresaw that if he gave the angry cyclist the chance of putting the matter in the hands of a solicitor, that would finish the career of Towser at St. Jim's. Towser had been making himself a nuisance recently. Mr. Railton had begun to regard him with an unfavourable eye. Legal proceedings brought against a junior in his House would quickly reach Mr. Railton's notice, and the chances were a hundred to one that he would order Herries to send the bulldog away from the school.

That dreadful calamity had to be avoided at all costs. And Herries made up his mind that it would be avoided.

Ralph Reckness Cardew strolled elegantly into the Common-room some little time after Herries' arrival. Herries eyed him with a hopeful eye.

"Spare a minute, Cardew?" he called out.

"Two, if you like, dear old bean!" replied Cardew. "How's the cheery cornet? And the merry old bloodhound?"

"Both fine, thanks!" answered Herries, with a faint grin. "Look here, Cardew, I want to ask a favour of you."

Herries halted and coloured slightly. Borrowing money was a task he was quite unused to, and he hardly knew how to make his request.

"Say on, dear man!" said Cardew, eyeing him rather curiously. "If it's within my power it's already granted!"

"I—I—well, the fact is, Cardew, I want to borrow a fiver. Not for myself, you understand, but for a certain purpose," blurted out Herries rather vaguely.

Cardew looked genuinely distressed.

"I say, old chap, I really am frightfully sorry!" he said, dropping his careless drawl for once. "I'd do it like a shot if I could. But you've caught me just at the wrong moment. Nunky's abroad on business, and nothin's come through for a fortnight."

"Oh! Well, that's all right, then!" said Herries uncomfortably. "Hope you didn't mind my asking?"

"Don't talk rot, dear man! Look here, Herries, I'll tell you what! If you can wait till to-morrow I'll buzz over to Wayland and run my tucker into the handy old pawnshop—"

"Oh crumbs! If you do anything of the kind I'll punch your nose!" gasped Herries. "Still, thanks very much for the offer, Cardew. I'll manage all right, though."

"The offer will remain open, if you care to avail yourself of it, old bean," said Cardew.

"Thanks all the same—but no!" said Herries firmly.

And that was that, so to speak.

Herries did not approach anyone else that evening. There was nobody else he could very well approach, except Arthur Augustus.

He went up to bed, therefore, without having raised the fiver, and without having discovered even a remote prospect of raising one.

The Fourth-Former spent a restless night.

The problem was beginning to worry him seriously.

## CHAPTER 9.

### A Way Out!

THE relations between Herries and the other occupants of Study No. 6 continued to be rather cool on the following day.

There was no actual break. Herries drifted into the study after morning lessons in quite the usual way, but his study-mates—who, as a matter of fact, were quite willing by this time to forget their animosity towards Towser—detected an aloofness and gruffness in Herries' manner that tended to keep them away from him.

It was surprising that a usually rather thick-skinned individual like Herries should be sensitive on the subject of a bulldog. But sensitive Herries undoubtedly was where Towser was concerned.

Towser was the apple of Herries' eye. For Towser's sake Herries would have sacrificed innumerable friendships. On this occasion there was no need to sacrifice anybody's friendship. But Herries felt aggrieved over the hostility of the rest of the Co., and he deliberately kept aloof.

Once or twice during the day he eyed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in a dubious manner. He was wondering whether to approach him over the all-important matter of a loan of five pounds. But the thought of his noble chum's antipathy towards Towser held him back.

After tea, however, Herries came to the conclusion that Arthur Augustus was the only real hope he had, and he made up his mind to put the question to the swell of the Fourth.

Jack Blake and Digby quitted the study as soon as tea was finished, leaving Herries and Arthur Augustus alone together. Such an opportunity was not to be missed.

"Hope you won't think it a cheek, Gussy," blurted out

Herries awkwardly. "I'm a bit stumped for cash, and I need the loan of a fiver rather badly. If you could—" "Bai Jove! Delighted to assist in the mattah, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus readily.

"Thanks awfully! Of course, I'll let you have it back as soon as I can."

"No huwvy whatevah, I assuah you, Hewwies," said the swell of the Fourth cheerfully. "Are you suah that a fivah will be suffish?"

"Absolutely enough, thanks! I say, it's very good of you, old chap!"

"Not at all, deah boy! I am vewy happy to be able to oblige."

Herries breathed a sigh of relief. It looked as if his worries were over now. D'Arcy would not be in a hurry for the return of the fiver, and by saving up his pocket-money and such tips as he received from fond relations Herries would in time be able to repay the loan.

Arthur Augustus, smiling benignly, fumbled in his pockets for a five-pound note.

Herries waited expectantly.

The swell of the Fourth explored his trousers-pockets, his waistcoat-pockets, and the pockets of his Eton jacket. Herries began to get impatient.

The benign smile died away from D'Arcy's noble face. A slightly worried expression appeared in its place.

He went through his pockets again.

"Bai Jove!" he exclaimed.

"What's the matter? Lost your money?" asked Herries anxiously.

"Bai Jove! Now I wemembah what has happened to the tennah I had on me this mornin'."

(Continued on next page.)



Here's more wisdom while you wait, boys! Our office Oracle assures us that he knows more than Solomon, Demosthenes, and Baggy Trimble, rolled into one.

#### Q. What is a bhistee?

A. An Indian carrier of water, J. B. When British troops take part in fighting on the North-West Frontier, for instance, it is often necessary to have natives to take water in goatskin bags to the troops in an engagement. It is quite common, as well, to see water carriers on the railway stations throughout India, selling drinks to native travellers for a few annas.

#### Q. What is the best time to study the book of Nature?

A. I should say, Eddie Finch (who has sent in this question), that the best time is autumn, when Nature turns the leaves.



#### Q. Where is there a reptile that is under Government protection?

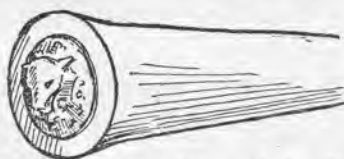
A. In India. The monitor lizard, which grows to a length of eight feet in some parts is protected in India by a special law, because of its service to mankind. This reptile is the deadly enemy of snakes and rats, which are two of the greatest pests of the Indian peninsula.

#### Q. What is a fjord?

A. A term used for an inlet or arm of the sea on the coast of Norway.

#### Q. What is a bulkhead?

A. Freddy Day, of Leicester, writes to say that he was recently reading a sea story in which "bold Clive Daring cracked the bo'sun's head against the bulkhead." Then Freddy asked the question as set out above, pointing out that whatever a bulkhead is, it must have been something pretty solid, to crack the bo'sun's cranium, which in the previous chapter was described as being of "cast iron." A



The decorative plug used for the muzzle of a gun on a battleship is called a tampon.

bulkhead, Freddy, is any upright partition or wall in a ship, acting as division between cabins, water-tight compartments, and so forth. It can be either of wood or steel—probably steel in the book you were reading!

#### Q. What is a tampon?

A. This, "Enquirer," is the name given to the plug or stopper used for the muzzle of a gun. In warships, the gun tampons are of polished brass and beautifully engraved with a crest. Aboard H.M.S. Tiger, for instance, which was Admiral Beatty's flagship at Jutland, each tampon bears a tiger's head.

#### Q. What is meerschaum?

A. This substance from which the bowls of a certain type of tobacco pipe are made, is really hydrous silicate of magnesia, which is found in soft, white masses. Meerschaum is a German word derived from *meer*, sea, and *schaum*, foam; which gives a very good description of what the stuff looks like in its original state.

#### Q. What is a tizzy?

A. This, Maurice Winter, is an old slang term for a sixpence. It is still used in the phrase, "tizzy snatcher," in the Navy, a term applied to any junior paymaster.

#### Q. What is a "terminological inexactitude"?

A. Dicky Rolfe, a Taunton reader, heard this term used by a man in the train. Above, Dicky, I have spelt it correctly—it is not as you suppose, "terminozoological-in-exactitude." The expression was used in Parliament many years ago, by Mr. Winston Churchill. It was his polite way of telling an opponent that a statement was a lie. And that's merely what it means—a lie, fib, falsehood, canard, or beastly whopper!

#### Q. Was the name England manufactured in Germany?

A. Yes. The prefect for whom you fag, Harry Racknell, was not pulling your leg when he told you that. Centuries ago among the invaders of England were a tribe from northern Germany called Angles. These settled in the south of Britain which they called Angleland after themselves. This name has been corrupted to its present form, England.



A Meerschaum Pipe. (Made in Germany.)

"Well, what's happened to it, then?"

"I've wemembahed now," said the swell of the Fourth, with relief. "I cycled down to Wigge, the outfittah, dinner-time and settled a bill with it."

"A bill for ten pounds?" asked Herries.

"Yaas, deah boy! Pwecisely ten pounds. I wemembah now!"

"Then how the dickens can you lend me a fiver?" roared Herries.

"I can't, deah boy! I'm afwaid, undah the circs, it's imposs!"

"Oh crumbs! You—you dummy!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"You prize, burbling idiot!" hooted Herries, letting himself go, under the stress of his indignation.

"I wefuse to be chawactewised as a pwize idiot! Bai Jove! I have wathah a bwight ideah, Hewwies. I'll go down and ask Wigge if he would mind lettin' me have a fivah back!"

"Ass!"

"Weally, deah boy—"

"Never mind, Gussy; I'll do without it," said Herries, calming down. "Thanks for offering, though. Don't you worry your little noddle about it."

"Bai Jove! Hewwies, if you wefuse to my head as a little noddle I shall have no othah wecourse but to give you a feahful thwashin'!" said Arthur Augustus warmly. "I considah—"

"Tell me the rest some other time, old chap! I want to get out before bed-time to-night!" said Herries.

With a faint grin, he quitted the study.

Arthur Augustus fixed his monocle in his eye and stared after his retreating chum, inwardly debating whether to let him depart in peace or strew the Fourth Form passage with his bones, so to speak. Eventually he decided on the latter course; but as Herries had vanished by that time the decision didn't matter much.

Herries, in a very troubled frame of mind, tramped out of the House and down to the gates, trying to think of a way out of his predicament.

It was certainly a blow to be turned empty away from the most opulent junior in the Lower School. The possibility that Arthur Augustus would be short of cash had hardly occurred to Herries. He felt completely nonplussed now.

"Five pounds!" he muttered. "A mouldy fiver! Surely I can raise it, somehow! There must be something I can sell."

He mentally ran through his saleable personal possessions. His cricket bat would fetch a pound, perhaps. A rather well-worn set of boxing-gloves might realise ten shillings. A sadly-neglected collection of foreign stamps ought to find a purchaser for thirty shillings or so. Various other odds and ends could be sacrificed to bring the total up to five pounds.

But who was going to buy them? Fellows were not waiting in every study at St. Jim's with thirty shillings conveniently at hand to spend on a stamp collection. A little reflection was sufficient to convince Herries that the chances of his raising the money by a sale of his effects were remote in the extreme.

There was the cornet.

That set Herries on a new train of thought. The recollection of his celebrated musical instrument brought back sharply to his mind the somewhat chaotic events of the previous afternoon, and out of the chaos arose a picture of the other musician whom he and his chums found on the island—Charlie Chick.

Charlie Chick, leader of Chick's Orpheans!

Herries had a sudden brain-wave.

Hadn't that same plump, sandy-haired musician mentioned something about offering him a place in the orchestra?

Herries' heart began to beat more rapidly.

Of course, he had turned it down at the time. In ordinary circumstances, that was the only thing to do. He couldn't very well be a full-time member of Chick's Orpheans and a St. Jim's schoolboy as well.

But if only, somehow or other, it could be managed for a short time—say a few days—wouldn't it solve all his troubles in an ideal way?

Herries had only the vaguest ideas on the subject of what jazz musicians in a Wayland orchestra were likely to earn, but he remembered reading somewhere or other about London players who earned fabulous salaries at the game. It struck him that a five-pound note might be earned with comparative ease.

"By George! I'll go and see that ginger fellow, anyway!" he muttered.

He sprinted back to the House and fetched his cornet, then hurried to the bicycle-shed and wheeled out his machine. No time was to be lost if he was to get to Wayland and back before locking-up time.

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Herries' eyes were bright as he swung into the saddle and pedalled through the gates. To any unbiased person the prospect of his earning five pounds quickly by obtaining an engagement in a band would certainly have seemed too slender for serious consideration. But the cornet-player of St. Jim's was blessed with plenty of optimism, and the fantastic nature of his enterprise did not occur to him.

Herries must have broken all records down the lane and over the Wayland Moor that evening. Even when he reached the old town he continued to "scorch" down the High Street until he sighted the Palm Cafe; then only did he slacken speed.

Perspiring freely, he dismounted outside the place where, according to the sign hanging over the entrance, Chick's Orpheans performed every afternoon and evening. Then, after hastily dusting himself down and mopping his heated brow, he went inside.



Jack Blake & Co. watched every movement of Herries' shadowy figure in his coat and cap, Blake, Digby and D'Arcy leapt out of their respective beds. Herries. "What the dickens—oh, oh!"

"Hallo, youngster!" came a cheery hail, as he went through the revolving door. "You didn't forget me, then?"

And Mr. Charlie Chick himself, wearing the same broad grin that had captivated the juniors on the island, stepped forward and gave Herries a hearty handshake.

"By Jove! This is lucky, running into you at once," said Herries delightedly. "I wanted to see you badly; and I've got to get back to St. Jim's before lock-up time, of course. It's about what you were saying yesterday."

"Go ahead, laddie," encouraged Mr. Charlie Chick, with interest. "You mean playing in my band—eh?"

"That's it. You said yesterday that you might be able to offer me an engagement, didn't you?"

"I did. And what Charlie Chick says he means, young Herries! What's your proposition?"

"Well, I'm afraid I haven't one," confessed Herries. "Any proposition will have to come from you. But, to be quite frank, I need money rather badly. And if I can earn some, playing in your band at odd times during the next few days, I shall be jolly glad to do it!"

Mr. Chick's eyes gleamed.

"Great Christopher Columbus! That's an idea!" he exclaimed. "You see, Herries, the reason I mentioned an engagement was that we recently lost our cornet-player, and we're finding it hard to get another like him. Do you think you play well enough to figure in the band?"

"Well, I don't think I'm likely to make an exhibition of myself, anyway," answered Herries modestly.

"We can try you over in a minute," mused Mr. Chick. "Listen, Herries. Can you get over here for the supper rush, after the theatre and the pictures turn out, at night? That means from about ten to midnight."

"Oh, great pip!"

"Of course, it's absurd," grinned the musician, with a shake of his head. "Just for a moment, I was thinking that it would be useful if you could. You see, in that case, you'd bring the band up to full strength for the busiest period."

"I see," Herries pondered. "Well, I could, for a while. It would mean breaking bounds; and, of course, I couldn't keep it up for long."

"I shouldn't want you to keep it up after we'd got a permanent cornet in the band again," said Mr. Chick. "But



the gloom of the dormitory. Suddenly, as the junior donned his over-collared shirt, "Yaas, wathah!" There was a startled gasp from Blake! (See Chapter 14.)

perhaps it's wrong of me to put the idea in your head, Herries. Forget it. And stick to your school books a little longer."

"Half a minute!" exclaimed Herries anxiously. "How much would the pay be?"

"H'm! If you were worth it, a guinea an evening."

Herries' heart leaped. A guinea an evening! Five evenings' work and he would have sufficient to pay for Mr. Bill Smithson's bike!

"I'll do it," he said. "That is, if you'll have me." "Come through this door, then, and we'll soon decide that," grinned the jazz leader. "Trust Charlie Chick to find out whether a man can play, inside two shakes!"

Herries' try-out proved a great success, and within two minutes he was scorching back to the school, his face flushed with excitement.

Herries, of the Fourth at St. Jim's, had been engaged to play the cornet in Chick's Orpheans!

#### CHAPTER 10. The Jazz Schoolboy!

"B EEN for a spin?"

Jack Blake asked that question as Herries, still breathing hard from the effects of his speedy return journey, rejoined the Co. in Study No. 6. Herries nodded.

"Just been over to Wayland and back," he answered. "I went to see that chap—"

Herries stopped abruptly. He had already decided that he would say nothing of the daring step he had taken, even to his chums. He still felt resentful of the antipathy of the Co. towards Towser; and, so far, he had not even told them of Towser's unfortunate collision with Mr. Bill Smithson in the Rylcombe Lane. Until his resentment abated sufficiently to enable him to inform them of that occurrence, there was no sense in telling them of his engagement to play at the Palm Cafe.

The possibility was that Blake and the rest, had they known, would have objected very strongly to the wild project which Herries had undertaken. Their objections might even have been carried to the length of trying to prevent his going, and that fact alone was sufficient to seal Herries' lips.

Consequently, when he thoughtlessly began to tell them why he had just visited Wayland, he very quickly pulled himself up before he had pronounced Mr. Charlie Chick's name.

"That is to say, I have just been over to Wayland to see a chap," he corrected, rather lamely.

"Oh!" said Blake, looking rather blank.

"Must have been jolly important, for you to have gone so dashed late," remarked Digby.

"Oh, nothing special! Matter of business, that's all," returned Herries, rather evasively. "Better make a start on prep now, hadn't we?"

And Herries proceeded to get out his books.

The others looked at each other rather uncomfortably. There was no special reason, of course, why Herries should give them an account of all his actions, and the Co. were not particularly interested to know what had taken Herries to Wayland. Certainly, none of them wished to pry into his private affairs.

All the same, Herries' reticence left them with the feeling that he was keeping them in the dark on some matter about which they, as his chums, had the right to know something.

As a result, prep in Study No. 6, for the second evening in succession, took place in a somewhat chilly and unfriendly atmosphere.

After prep, Blake and Digby and D'Arcy went down to the Common-room.

Herries did not accompany them, a circumstance which did not improve the relationship between him and his study-mates. Herries, however, was not worrying over that. All his thoughts were engaged, as a matter of fact, with the serious business which faced him—the business of systematically breaking bounds, and playing in an orchestra at Wayland for a whole week.

The risks attaching to that desperate project were certainly serious enough. Discovery would mean a flogging, at least—possibly expulsion. It behoved him, therefore, to act with the utmost caution.

He spent the time between prep and bedtime in making preparations for his first nocturnal excursion.

First, he quitted the House and strolled down to the bike-shed. It was a dark night, which was just as well from Herries' point of view, for he did not wish to be recognised.

Taggles had not yet paid his final visit to the shed for locking-up purposes, and Herries was therefore able to walk straight in. He quietly removed his machine from its stand, and wheeled it out.

Luck was with him. Nobody seemed to be about, and he was able to wheel the bike, in the shadows of the elms, to a convenient spot under the school wall.

Here, he carefully deposited his machine, pushing it as far under a rhododendron bush as it would go.

"That'll do!" he grunted.

And after a cautious look round to assure himself that he had not been observed, he strolled back to the School House.

In the House once more, he returned to Study No. 6, packed up his cornet in its case and took it, together with his school cap and a light overcoat, up to the Fourth Form dormitory.

Here again luck favoured him, and he managed to conceal the articles under his bed before anybody came along.

Just as he rose to his feet, however, Trimble of the Fourth rolled in, carrying a bulging bag under his arm. The paper bag doubtless contained the proceeds of one of Trimble's little marauding expeditions, tuck-raiding being his principal spare-time occupation.

The fat Fourth-Former eyed Herries suspiciously.

"My hat! What are you doing up here, Herries?" he exclaimed. "I say, you do look guilty, you know! Been committing a crime, or something?"

"Don't talk piffle!" growled Herries. "What the dickens are you doing up here, anyway? Come up to wolf somebody else's grub, I suppose!"

"Oh, really, Herries! If you think I've taken a couple of pork-pies from Cutts' study, you're mistaken! Besides, he's got plenty of cash to buy more with—and, anyway, he's a beast!"

"Fat burglar!" snorted Herries. "Let me catch you round No. 6 on your burgling stunts, that's all!"

After which dark remark, Herries quitted the dormitory. Baggy Trimble watched him go, with a look of deep suspicion in his cunning little eyes.

"What the thump was he doing up here, I wonder?" he asked himself, as he sat down on the edge of his bed and commenced operations on the first of Cutts' two pork-pies.

And while he munched away, Trimble, with his usual insatiable curiosity, tried to think of a reasonable explanation of Herries' presence in the dorm at such an unusual hour.

Trimble's podgy brain was not capable of supplying a solution to the problem. But an inquisitive inspection of the vicinity of Herries' bed, after the pork-pies had been demolished, soon gave him a clue.

"Phew!" whistled Baggy, gazing under the bed with great interest. "The deep boulder!"

Even the obtuse Baggy could put only one construction on the presence of Herries' cap and overcoat. It was quite clear to him that Herries intended breaking bounds that night.

The prize porker of the Fourth chuckled as he went downstairs again. Inwardly, he had already made up his mind to keep a very careful eye on Herries when bed-time came.

Knox shepherded the Fourth to bed that evening. The bully of the Sixth scowled at Herries. Evidently he had not forgotten his misadventures of the previous day. Herries smiled back sweetly, which only increased the intensity of Knox's scowl.

After lights out, the usual desultory conversation continued for ten minutes or so. Then, one by one, the juniors dropped off to sleep, until perfect peace reigned in the dormitory.

Herries sat up in bed.

"You fellows awake?" he asked softly.

There was no reply. A bed creaked slightly on the other side of the room, and Herries peered through the gloom suspiciously. The sound had emanated from the direction of Trimble's bed.

"You awake, Trimble?" he whispered.

No answer.

Herries breathed a sigh of relief and got up.

To dress was the work of a couple of minutes. Herries slipped into his clothes silently but swiftly, for time was of the greatest importance to him.

Within five minutes he was climbing through the window of a box-room on to the roof of an outhouse below. Very soon after, he was dragging his bicycle out of the rhododendron bush where he had left it.

The work of negotiating the bike over the wall presented an unlooked-for difficulty. Herries decided that on future occasions he would have to provide himself with a length of rope, so that he could haul it up to the top, then lower it down the other side.

Eventually he managed it somehow by propping it up on one wheel, and reaching down for it from the top of the wall. That process, of course, had to be inverted in getting it into the road.

Into the saddle at last!

After that, a wild, reckless ride through the gloomy, deserted lanes, and across the Wayland Moor, into the town.

There was very little life in the Wayland streets at that hour, but a blaze of light still illuminated the pavements outside the cinema and the theatre, and a blazing electric sign glittered about the entrance to the Palm Cafe.

Herries gave his bike into the keeping of the porter and went inside.

In contrast to the deserted streets outside, the interior of the Palm Cafe was filled with a noisy supper-time crowd.

Mr. Charlie Chick welcomed Herries like a long-lost brother.

"Just in time, laddie! Just in time!" he cried enthusiastically. "We're just going to give 'em that tune we spoke about yesterday—'Blithering Blues.'"

"Oh, good!"

"Sit down here by the piano. You haven't got a boiled shirt on, so you'd better not show yourself too much."

"I won't!" promised Herries.

That arrangement, as a matter of fact, suited the St. Jim's junior very well. Herries had every reason for not wanting to call too much attention to himself.

The piano struck a chord, and Charlie Chick's Orpheans, including the new cornet-player, entered with a zest into the mournful wailings and bleatings of "Blithering Blues."

That celebrated composition had not met with approval when it had been played as a cornet solo at the School

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House at St. Jim's. But it met with whole-hearted approval in the Palm Cafe. At the conclusion the crowd fairly roared its applause.

"Good for you, kid!" said Mr. Chick, who was playing the saxophone. "You did that as well as the chap we used to have, didn't he, boys?"

The other performers, whom Mr. Chick had familiarly and inaccurately addressed as "boys," quite agreed.

Herries flushed with pleasure. For the first time in his life he had met people who appreciated his capabilities. He felt that his staunch adherence to the cornet during his career at St. Jim's was at last justified.

The time passed quickly that night. Herries enjoyed himself thoroughly. He felt that he could have gone on all night, and he looked quite sorry when the cheery Mr. Chick gave the order to play "God Save the King."

It was another proud moment for Herries when the jazz leader handed him a pound Treasury note and a shilling.

"Then you think I'm worth it?" he asked, his eyes shining.

Mr. Chick nodded.

"You're O.K., my boy. Just what we wanted. Can't you chuck school altogether, and join the band?"

Mr. Chick apparently didn't attach so much importance to education as to his Orpheans.

Herries shook his head.

"In some ways, I'd like to. But in others, I wouldn't, and it's impossible, anyway. Will you want me to-morrow?"

"Sure thing! And the next night! Perhaps when you've been with us a week, you'll change your mind about staying on at the school, youngster! Well, I'm off! Good-night!"

George Herries cycled back to St. Jim's on air—metaphorically speaking, of course.

It seemed a weird change, to be climbing cautiously through the box-room window, and tiptoeing down the passage leading to the Fourth Form dormitory again. Dozens of popular tunes were echoing in his ears, and the gay colour and movement of the Palm Cafe continued to dance in front of his eyes.

But once he was back in bed the vivid impressions of the exciting evening soon became dim.

Within a couple of minutes of the time when his head first touched the pillow, Herries was doing something which, strictly speaking, he had no right to do.

He was sleeping the sleep of the just.

## CHAPTER 11.

### Trimble is Unlucky!

CLANG, clang, clang!

Rising-bell rang out over St. Jim's in the clear air of a frosty morning.

In the Fourth Form dormitory many of the juniors were already up. Early morning slackness was at a discount in the Fourth.

Long after the sound of rising-bell had died away, however, George Herries remained in bed.

Blake and D'Arcy and Digby were fully dressed, and ready to go downstairs when the remaining member of the Co. stretched himself languidly, yawned a tremendous yawn, and climbed out of bed.

Blake & Co., who were just about to quit the dorm, bestowed curious glances on their chum.

"Tired?" asked Blake, rather unnecessarily.

"Yaw-aw! Just a bit," answered Herries sleepily.

"Didn't you sleep well last night?"

"Oh, quite well, thanks! I'll soon wake myself up."

"He, he, he! Haven't been out on the tiles by any chance, have you?" chuckled Baggy Trimble.

"Dry up, Baggy!"

"Yaas, wathah! That remark was entirely uncalled for, Twimble!"

"Oh, rats! No harm in it if he has, is there?" grinned Trimble. "Personally, I like to see a chap break out now and again. I'm a bit of a goer, myself!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to laugh at!"

"Have a look in that mirror over there. old fat bean!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Trimble granted, and the discussion ceased, greatly to Herries' relief. The jazz schoolboy had begun to feel rather alarmed at the drift of Baggy's remarks.

Herries was sleepy-eyed and inattentive in class that morning. On several occasions Mr. Lathom had to take him seriously to task. Blake and Digby and D'Arcy began to feel quite perturbed.

At the midday break, all four went along to Study No. 6, as usual.

"And now, Herries," said Jack Blake, with determination, when they had gained the privacy of their sanctum, "we want an explanation."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I don't understand what you mean!" growled Herries uneasily.

"It's soon explained, then. All we want to know is—what's the matter with you to-day?"

"The matter? Nothing. What do you suppose is wrong with me, then?"

"A good many things, by the look of you. You look tired and washed-out, as though you've been out half the night. Is anything worrying you?"

"Don't be an ass! Of course not!"

"Then you're not going to tell us?"

"There's nothing to tell," answered Herries, after a moment's hesitation.

Just for an instant he had felt tempted to confide everything to them. But the thought of the efforts they would undoubtedly make to prevent him breaking bounds again, made him overcome the temptation.

"Well, all right, then. If there's nothing to tell, we needn't talk about it any more!" said Blake gruffly. "Any-one coming down to punt a ball about till dinner-time?"

Arthur Augustus and Digby signified their willingness.

"Aren't you coming with us, deah boy?" asked Gussy of Herries.

"I—I—perhaps I will a little later on. I do feel a bit tired just now, as a matter of fact. I was thinking of having a doze."

"A doze! Oh, crikey!"

"Perhaps a five-minutes' nap will freshen me up a bit," said Herries hopefully.

"Great pip!"

"You wouldn't like me to send you up a bath-chair, I suppose?" asked Blake sarcastically.

"Oh, rats!"

The trio quitted the study feeling more surprised than ever at Herries' behaviour.

No sooner had they left than the podgy figure of Baggy Trimble rolled across from Study No. 2.

Without bothering about the usual preliminary of knocking on the door, Trimble barged straight into the study.

Herries gave him a glare.

"Didn't they teach you manners in the reformatory you came from?" he inquired pleasantly.

"Oh, really, Herries! You know jolly well I've never been to a reformatory in my life! At Trimble Hall—"

"I always thought that was the name of the reformatory! But, anyway, what do you want?"

"I've come to speak to you about last night, Herries, old chap!"

"Last night?"

"About your breaking bounds last night, you know!"

"You—you—"

"Look here, Herries! No need to get excited! Don't think I'm going to tell old Railton, or anybody else, if it comes to that. Perish the thought, old chap!"

"You spying worm! How do you know I broke bounds last night?" hissed Herries furiously.

"He, he, he! You can't pull the wool over my eyes! I heard you go out!"

"You would!"

"Oh, really, Herries! That's hardly the way to speak to a chap who's trying to be a pal to you."

"A pal? What the thump do you mean?"

"Just what I say," replied Trimble, with a cunning look at the angry Fourth-Former. "I'm not like the other softies in this blessed Form, you know. I like to go out on the ran-dan now and again myself!"

"You fat idiot!"

"Oh, really! I mean it! But what I really came about was this, Herries—I shan't sneak to the beaks about last night—"

"By Jove! You'd better not!"

"I won't! Don't worry! But I've been thinking that it would be just as well if you had a pal to see that the coast's clear next time you go out blagging. Someone to—er—shove his head out of the dorm window and see that everything's all right, you know. That's where I come in!"

"It is, is it?" said Herries, in a dangerously calm voice.

"I'll see that things are O.K. first. Then I can give you the wire, and you can buzz off to the Green Man, or wherever you're going," explained Trimble.

"You're very kind, Trimble!"

"Of course I am! Always ready to do a chap a good turn, and all that, you know," said the fat Fourth-Former.

"I see! So you're doing me this good turn just out of the kindness of your heart?"

"Exactly! There's only one thing, old chap—"

"What's that?"

"I've been disappointed about a remittance that should have reached me from Trimble Hall."

(Continued on next page.)

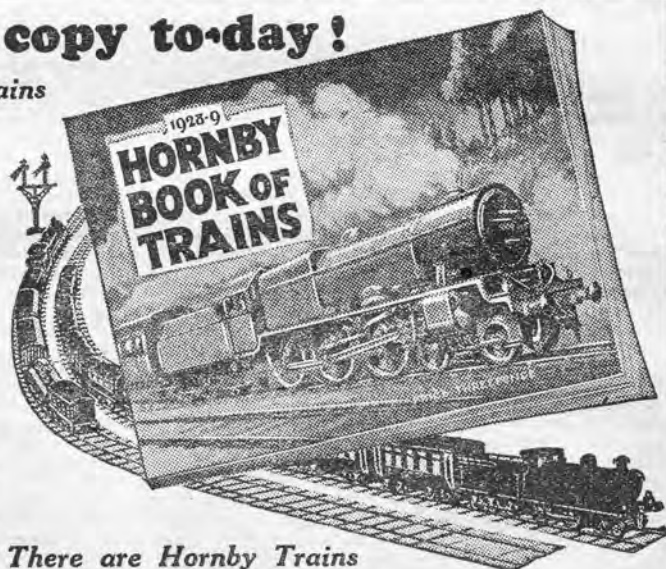
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"Oh!"

"Not much of a remittance, it's true," went on Trimble casually. "Nothing like the usual fiver or tanner, you know. Just a paltry quid!"

"I see!"

"As I'm keeping things dark, and looking after you, and treating you like a pal, I was wondering whether you'd like to cash it for me in advance?"

"Oh!"

"As soon as it comes I'll hand it straight over to you. Perfectly simple, you see! Now what do you say, Herries?"

Herries rose to his feet, with an expression on his face that even the fatuous Baggy could not misunderstand. The fat Fourth-Former backed away rather hurriedly.

"I think my answer can be better expressed in deeds than words!" said Herries grimly.

"Look here, if you lay hands on me—" began Trimble, in alarm.

"I'm going to, old fat bean!"

"I'll withdraw my protection!" howled Trimble. "I'll show you up all round, you blagging rotter!"

"You will, will you?" growled Herries, grasping Trimble by the scruff of the neck and shaking him until the fat junior hardly knew whether he were on his head or his heels. "Well, just you understand this, my fat pippin: If you say one single word to anybody about my going out last night, I'll give you the lamming of your life!"

"Yow-ow-ow! All right, you beastly rotter! Yoooop! Leggo my collar! I won't say a word to anyone, on my honour!"

"That's better! Now get out, before I kick you out!"

Trimble was only too thankful to get out. Leaving the door wide open, he scuttled away like a scared rabbit, and didn't pause until he reached the end of the passage.

From that comparatively safe point, he turned a fat and furious face towards No. 6 and delivered a Parthian shot.

"Yah! Catch me treating you like a pal now! Yah!"

There was the sound of a hurried movement from within the study, and Trimble fled.

## CHAPTER 12.

### Trimble on the Track!

AS a result of the lack of success attending his efforts to become a paid "pal" of Herries, Trimble burned with indignation for the rest of the day. The fat Fourth-Former really believed that Herries had been out "blagging" at the Green Man, as Racke and Crooke, of the Shell, occasionally did. And he had fondly imagined that Herries would part up with a little hush-money to have his shady secrets kept quiet. Consequently, he was extremely annoyed to find that Herries would do nothing of the kind.

Most willingly would Trimble have told the "beaks" what he knew, had there been no risk of injury to his own fat person. It seemed quite certain from Herries' attitude, however, that something painful and unpleasant would happen to Trimble if he did sneak to any of the masters. The fat junior therefore wisely held his tongue.

But he kept a watchful and suspicious eye on Herries for the rest of the day. And in the evening he was rewarded.

For the second time Herries went to the bike-shed and got out his machine, then concealed it underneath the same rhododendron bush. This time, however, although Herries did not know it, two inquisitive eyes were watching him from the shadow of a neighbouring elm. Baggy Trimble was on the track.

After Herries had returned to the House, Trimble rolled over to the rhododendron bush and inspected the bicycle. He gave a fat chuckle as he observed that the spot Herries had selected was just by that part of the school wall usually favoured by fellows breaking bounds.

"So this is what he does!" murmured Trimble. "I'd just like to know for certain whether he goes to the Green Man. I'd show the ungrateful rotter up then if I got the chance!"

The fat Fourth-Former stood there cogitating for some little time. As he did so, his little eyes began to gleam.

"Wonder if I could follow him?" he muttered reflectively.

He weighed up the pros and cons. To a fellow of Trimble's unheroic temperament, breaking bounds at night was not a task to be taken without a good deal of consideration. He didn't relish such an enterprise in any way.

But Baggy's boundless interest in the affairs of other people was strong enough to overrule his natural cowardice at times. And by this time his interest in Herries' movements had become very keen indeed.

"By George, I'd like to find out!" he murmured.

And it was the craving to find out that eventually won the battle. Trimble decided to take the risk, and follow Herries out of bounds that night.

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Having formed his decision, the fat junior made the same preparations as Herries had already made. First, he cautiously entered the bike-shed and procured a bike. The bike was not his own property—it was D'Arcy's, as a matter of fact. Trimble's "jigger" was a somewhat ancient and rusty article, whereas D'Arcy's was an up-to-date and well-kept machine. So Trimble naturally took possession of Gussy's bike without the thought of asking permission of its aristocratic owner crossing his fat mind.

He wheeled the machine through the shadows across to the school wall, and tucked it away under another bush, near the one which Herries had chosen.

After that, he carried his light overcoat and school cap up to the dormitory and put them away under his bed, as Herries had done but a few minutes before.

Everything being ready, Trimble waited with impatience for bed-time to come. And once in bed, he took good care not to allow himself to fall asleep.

Once again Trimble listened to the hum of conversation gradually dying down, until the regular breathing of the sleeping juniors was the only sound to be heard.

"You fellows awake?"

It was Herries' voice. Trimble felt quite a little shiver of excitement run down his spine at the sound of it.

The fat junior remained perfectly still, and cunningly feigned an occasional snore in order to counteract any suspicions that Herries might entertain regarding the genuineness of his somnolent appearance. The ruse succeeded, for Herries, after listening intently for a minute or so, silently slipped out of bed and began to dress.

Trimble watched him through half-closed eyes as he donned his overcoat and reached under the bed for his cornet-case. The cornet-case rather surprised Trimble. What use a fellow who was going out "blagging" could have for a cornet the fat junior simply could not understand. He made up his mind, however, that he would understand before the evening was through.

No sooner had Herries quitted the dormitory than Trimble was out of bed, and dressing with a speed that would have astonished the Fourth had they been awake to see him.

Within a couple of minutes of Herries' departure, the fat junior was rolling along the passage in his wake. Trimble realised the urgent necessity of keeping as close behind his quarry as he possibly could, without being detected. If Herries got a good start on his bike, he might well be out of sight by the time Trimble was ready to take up the chase down the road.

Herries was just disappearing over the wall as Trimble entered the shadow of the old elms. The fat junior waited only to hear his quarry mount his machine and pedal off before following him.

Without some sort of assistance, Trimble would probably have found it a difficult proposition to scale the high wall, not to mention the problem of safely getting the bike over into the road. In passing the bike-shed, however, he had observed a trestle left outside by Taggles when he locked up, and he now dragged this up to the wall and, standing on it, lifted up D'Arcy's bike over his head, and transferred it to the top of the wall.

Then he hauled himself up beside the machine, gingerly lowered it to within a foot or two of the ground, and let it drop. The drop certainly didn't improve the condition of the bike, but as it belonged to somebody else, Trimble bore that circumstance with fortitude.

After that, he lowered himself from the top of the wall by his hands, and dropped safely into the roadway.

The rear light of Herries' bike was just disappearing in the distance by the time Trimble was ready. Without troubling to light up, Baggy jumped into the saddle, and spurred after Herries.

The fat Fourth-Former had all his work cut out to keep pace with Herries. Fortunately, D'Arcy's bike possessed a three-speed gear, and carried its fat burden along in tip-top style, without the necessity of too much effort on the rider's part.

And so the two juniors rode into Wayland, Herries pedalling along in front, in blissful ignorance of the fact that he was being followed, and Trimble, puffing and blowing from the unaccustomed exertion, bringing up the rear.

Before entering the town, Trimble took the precaution of lighting up. Then, emboldened by the success of his chase, and being desirous of watching Herries' movements more closely, now the objective was evidently near, he lessened the distance between himself and his quarry.

Herries, of course, dismounted outside the Palm Cafe, and his pursuer then slowed up, and, in a state of great surprise, watched the porter take charge of the bike and the musician of the Fourth disappear through the revolving doors.

"Well, of all the silly asses!" murmured Trimble, almost disgustingly. "He's come all this way for a feed—when he might have had one in Rylcombe!"



"With luck, we'll just dodge them," muttered Jack Blake, leading the way out of the restaurant. "Here we are, Herries—Oh, my hat!" The chums of Study No. 6 let out a simultaneous groan. Just as they were about to step through the door, they walked right into the arms of Mr. Railton! (See Chapter 16.)

Trimble was not a little disappointed. He had quite imagined that Herries had been making for an inn of ill-repute, where card-playing and other forms of gambling might have been expected. It was rather disconcerting to find that Herries' destination was a place where such shady pastimes could have no possible existence.

Having come so far, however, the podgy Fourth-Former didn't intend to turn back. Besides, he still hadn't fathomed the problem of what had caused Herries to bring the cornet with him. There was an air of mystery surrounding that circumstance which intrigued Trimble.

Trimble, therefore, stood up D'Arcy's bike against the kerb, and went inside. It was some little time before he spotted Herries for, rather naturally, his eyes at first travelled over the various tables in search of the fellow he was after.

Then, suddenly, he glanced over at the orchestra, which was at that moment playing and, with a gasp of astonishment, he recognised Herries.

Simultaneously, Herries happened to look up, and his eyes met Trimble's.

"M-m-my hat!" murmured Baggy, a broad grin spreading over his podgy face as the truth dawned on him. "Well, this is a find, and no mistake! Herries in a jazz band! He, he, he!"

He rolled over to the raised platform where Chick's Orpheans were performing, and waited till they had concluded the piece they were playing.

Herries leaned down towards him then, and gave him a furious look.

"You—your rotten little toad!" he hissed. "Mean to say you've followed me all the way from St. Jim's?"

Trimble frowned.

"Look here, Herries, if you're going to adopt that tone, all I can say is, I shall consider it my duty to let somebody know about your little game. I wonder what Railton would say, if he got to know. He, he, he!"

"Shut up, you fat idiot!" snapped Herries. "Breathe a word to Railton, or anyone else, and I'll slaughter you! And now, buzz off!"

"What—without a snack? I'd watch it!" said Trimble indignantly. "Look here, Herries, it's your fault I've

come here, and now that I've come, I think it's up to you to stand me a feed!"

"Great Scott! I can just see myself doing it!"

"Well, then, lend me five bob," suggested Trimble. "You can have it back as soon as I get that remittance I told you about."

"You fat blackmailer!" growled Herries. "Here's a bob for you! Blue it, and get out quickly, or I'll boot you all the way back to St. Jim's!"

Trimble grunted, but accepted the proffered shilling with alacrity, and rolled off towards the snack counter at the end of the room.

After remaining there exactly three minutes, during which time he consumed food to the value of precisely one shilling, Trimble made for the door, and went out into the street. There, he mounted D'Arcy's bike again, and rode off in the direction of St. Jim's. Such ideas as he had entertained of having the companionship of George Herries on the return journey had vanished now. Much as Trimble wished to be helped along, he had no desire whatever to be helped along by Herries' big boots!

## CHAPTER 13.

### Knox Takes a Hand!

**B**Y the time Herries returned to St. Jim's, Baggy Trimble's unmusical snore had long since been reverberating through the Fourth Form dormitory. The Jazz Schoolboy was, therefore, not troubled again by his fat shadower that night.

After breakfast on the following morning, however, Trimble rolled up to Herries outside the dining-hall, and drew him away from the rest of the crowd.

Herries looked tired and irritable after his second night at Wayland.

"Well?" he snapped.

"I've been thinking about last night——" began Trimble.

"Idiot!"

"Oh, really, Herries! On consideration, I've come to the conclusion that I can't stand idly by, and see you disgrace the old school, like you're doing."

"Dry up, you fat ass!" said Herries, laughing, in spite of himself, at the fatuousness of the podgy Fourth-Former.

"I won't dry up! This is jolly serious, I think. It's a perfect disgrace for a fellow from St. Jim's to be playing in a blessed jazz band at night-time. I don't know what the Head would say about it."

"Quiet, you fat cormorant! Do you want the whole school to hear you?" growled Herries.

"Yes, I jolly well do!" snorted Trimble; then he changed his tone a little, and went on: "That is to say—Not at all, old chap! I don't! And, although I don't approve of what you are doing, I'm perfectly willing to keep mum about it!"

"You are?"

"I am—provided you're willing to treat me as a pal."

"That means bribing you to keep your long tongue still, I suppose?" growled Herries. "Well, take it from me, Fatty, there's nothing doing!"

Baggy Trimble grunted. He had rather anticipated that, back at St. Jim's, Herries' demeanour regarding his threat to sneak would change considerably from what it had been in the Palm Cafe overnight. Apparently, he had again miscalculated.

"All right; then," he said viciously. "If you're not going to treat me as a pal, in spite of all I know about you, all I can say is, I shall decline to keep mum!"

Herries glanced round to see that they were not overheard, then he caught Trimble by the arm and said, in a calm but concentrated voice:

"Look here, Trimble, I'm going to give you a word of advice. I know you're several sorts of a fool—"

"Oh, really, Herries—"

"But you're fond enough of your fat skin to realise which side your bread is buttered, and I can tell you that if you sneak, you'll regret it!"

"Oh, rats! Leggo my arm!"

"In a minute. Let me tell you this. I'm not going down to Wayland at night-time for the fun of the thing. I'm going because I need money badly. Get that into your wooden head, if it'll take it!"

"Look here, Herries—"

"If you've a scrap of decency in you, you won't sneak, now I've explained that much," went on Herries. "But, just in case you still feel like going to Railton, I'll give you this warning. In the event of my getting into serious trouble as a result of your sneaking, I'll tell the chaps just what you've done—how you spied on me and followed me, just in order to blackmail me. Savvy? And I think you'll very soon be mighty sorry you went to Railton, then!"

With that, Herries released Trimble's arm and strode away.

The fat Fourth-Former was left blinking after him in a state of great indignation, which, however, was not unmixed with fear.

"The awful rotter!" muttered Trimble indignantly. "Practically telling me I'm a blessed blackmailer, just because I offered to be a pal! Blow him! I've a jolly good mind to go to Railton now!"

But Trimble did not go to Mr. Railton. Dense as he was, the truth of Herries' prediction that he would regret such an action was obvious. The fellows would undoubtedly send him to Coventry, and give him a pretty rough time of it, for his part in the affair.

Trimble stood cogitating, a fat frown on his brow. He was disappointed, and very angry indeed, at not obtaining a "loan" from Herries, after all his trouble. He felt a sense of personal injury against that junior, in fact. If only he had dared, he would have gone to Mr. Railton without further delay. But after Herries' words he didn't dare.

Then, as he stood cogitating, Knox of the Sixth came along, and Trimble's eyes gleamed again.

"Out of my way, Trimble!" snapped Knox, as he strode down the passage.

Knox had a short way with juniors.

"Excuse me a minute, Knox—"

"Well?"

"I was wondering whether you could help me out of a difficulty—"

"No time. Scat!"

"But half a minute, Knox—"

Knox turned back, with a frown.

"I've got no time to waste on grubby fags. What the dickens is the matter?" he asked ungraciously.

"You see, it's about Herries—"

Knox displayed a little more interest. He looked at Trimble with narrowing eyes.

"I don't know whether to tell you," continued Trimble.

"I'm afraid he'll go for me afterwards."

"No need to be afraid of that, Trimble. I'll see you're not molested in any way."

"Look here, if I tell you, is it understood that I don't come into it at all?" asked Trimble anxiously.

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"Certainly. Why should you?"

"You're quite sure? You see, I don't want Herries to think I gave the game away."

"You may reply on me, Trimble," said Knox, hardly able to disguise his impatience. "Now tell me what the trouble is."

"All right, then. If I can rely on you—"

"Of course you can. Go on."

Trimble nodded, and, sinking his voice into a thrilling whisper, told Knox all he knew about Herries' nocturnal excursions.

As he listened, Knox's shifty eyes glittered with excitement. He did not interrupt his podgy informer once.

When Trimble had finished, Knox drew a deep breath.

"This is all true?" he asked, with ill-concealed eagerness.

"You're certain there's no mistake?"

"Absolutely. I saw it all myself."

"And he's going there again?"

Trimble nodded.

"From what I saw of it, he seemed to be a regular member of the band," he replied.

"Very well." Knox smiled quite pleasantly. "I'll see that your name doesn't come into it. Naturally, as a prefect, I am bound to look into it."

"Naturally," grinned Trimble.

Knox, with a nod, went his way, and Trimble rolled off to the Fourth Form passage, feeling a little mollified.

Gerald Knox, after leaving Trimble, went straight to Mr. Railton's study. But he did not go to give the Housemaster the information he had just received. That was not Knox's way. The black sheep of the Sixth preferred to make a real coup of it, while he was about it—a coup in which Mr. Railton himself would catch Herries red-handed. That would be much more effective than a bald recital of Herries' past misdeeds. And while Trimble had been spinning his yarn, Knox had thought of a way in which he could manage it.

Mr. Railton's greeting to Knox was rather abrupt. He had not forgotten the Sixth-Former's little mistake on the previous Wednesday.

Knox was very polite.

"I'm not interrupting your work, sir, I hope?"

"Pray proceed, Knox."

"I believe one or two of the Sixth are going with you to Wayland next Monday evening to a lecture at the public hall, sir?"

"That is so, Knox," said Mr. Railton, rather more mildly. "Professor Tones, the archaeologist, is lecturing on Roman remains found in the Wayland district. Kildare and Darrell and Baker are coming. Why do you ask?"

"I was wondering if I might come with you too, sir. We don't often have the opportunity of hearing such an eminent lecturer, and the subject is an interesting one," said Knox gravely.

"By all means you may come," agreed Mr. Railton, quite warmly. "I am pleased to note your interest in the subject, Knox. I am sure you will enjoy the lecture."

"Thank you very much, sir. We shall cycle over, I presume?"

Mr. Railton nodded.

"The train service is not very good at night-time, and we had already decided to do the journey by road. I may expect you to accompany us, then, Knox?"

"I shall certainly turn up, sir."

Outside the Housemaster's study the expression of quiet seriousness dropped from Knox's face like a mask, and a cynical grin took its place.

"By gad! That lecture was providential!" he muttered. "There's a nasty shock in store for Master Herries in the very near future, unless I'm very much mistaken. This is where I'm going to pay back many an old score!"

## CHAPTER 14.

### After Lights Out!

"T O-NIGHT'S the night!"

Thus Jack Blake on the following Monday evening.

And Digby nodded, while Arthur Augustus murmured emphatically:

"Yaus, wathah!"

The chums of Study No. 6 had been discussing Herries, and they had just made a momentous decision.

It was after a conference in Tom Merry's study that they had come to the conclusion that their chum was systematically breaking bounds. All the evidence had been brought forward at that conference. Herries' recent strange tiredness had been discussed thoroughly; his unusual reticence had been commented on; and a final circumstance—the accidental discovery by Digby, of Herries' cap and coat under his bed—had been well weighed up.

Taken together, these circumstances were quite sufficient

to establish in the juniors' minds the truth of their suspicions regarding their chum. Herries was breaking bounds. They felt convinced of it.

Returning to Study No. 6, Blake and Digby and D'Arcy debated as to what was the best course to take. And eventually they decided to lie awake in bed that night, and find out what Herries did. In the event of his getting out of bed the plan was for them to prevent him getting away.

"Bai Jove! I twust aifah to-night that ewevythin' will be mewwy and bwight again!" said Arthur Augustus, as he turned to get out his books for prep. "Since that aifahnoon when we went for a walk Hewwies seems to have been a diffewent man."

"I hope we shall put things on a better footing, myself," said Jack Blake. "It's not like old Herries to be so stand-offish and secretive. Something funny must have happened to him, I should think."

Suddenly Blake sat up in bed.

"Ready, you chaps?" he called out.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Collar him!"

Three shadowy figures leaped out of their respective beds.

There was a startled gasp from Herries.

"What the dickens— Oh crikey! Blake!"

"Little me!" grinned Jack Blake, through the darkness.

"Where do you think you're off to, Herries?"

"I'm going out somewhere."

"Your mistake! You're not!"

"No feah, deah boy!"

Herries gritted his teeth.

"If you try to stop me—"

"We're going to, old top!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Look here—"

"I can't! It's too dark! Put a light on, somebody!"

"Hallo, hallo! What's the giddy rumpus?" called out Hammond from the other end of the dormitory.

Fellows all round the room were waking up at the unaccustomed noise. Questioning voices began to sound on all sides now.



There was the sound of a scuffle in the passage outside Mr. Railton's study. A moment later there was a knock at the door, and Mr. Lathom entered, leading by the ear the podgy person of Baggy Trimble. "Excuse the interruption, Mr. Railton," said the master of the Fourth, "But I discovered Trimble, here, listening outside your door!" (See Chapter 16.)

"Perhaps if we catch him on the hop he'll tell us what's been wrong," said Dig. "Anyway, whether he does or not, we're on the qui vive to-night. If Herries gets out of the dorm this time, it'll be over our dead bodies!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Herries entered the study just then, and the subject was dropped.

In the Fourth Form dormitory that night, therefore, three other juniors besides Herries forced themselves to remain awake. In point of fact, there was a fourth. Baggy Trimble, nursing a secret of his own, also kept watch.

Time passed slowly while they were waiting. But their watchfulness was rewarded at last.

"You fellows awake?"

Herries' voice echoed softly across the dormitory, breaking the long silence.

Blake and Digby and D'Arcy, who were all beginning to get rather weary of their vigil, held their breaths, and made no reply. A loud snore, artistically assumed, reverberated from Trimble's bed.

Followed a faint rustling, as Herries got out of bed and began to dress.

Blake & Co. watched every movement of his shadowy figure through the gloom. They saw him donning his Etons, and after that his overcoat and cap, and they realised, as the last stage was reached, that there was no room for further doubt as to Herries' intentions.

Arthur Augustus groped his way towards the electric-light switch, and Jack Blake and Digby reached out to lay detaining hands on the law-defying chum. Another moment and Herries would certainly have been unable to escape from St. Jim's that night.

But Herries saw his danger and acted like lightning. As Blake and Digby advanced on him he made a dive under the bed, where his cornet-case and boots still reposed. Snatching these up, he scrambled out on the other side, and flew down the dormitory towards the door, just as Arthur Augustus switched one of the lights on.

The swell of the Fourth turned round with a gasp, but he was too late to stop Herries from getting through the doorway.

Herries' stockinged feet died softly away down the passage outside, and his three chums were left looking at each other rather dazedly.

"What a rotten muck-up!" said Blake disgustedly. "Fancy letting him get away, after all!"

"Rotten!" agreed Dig. "But why not go after him?"

The leader of Study No. 6 shook his head.

"Too late. He's got too good a start. Besides, three of us are more likely to make a row and fetch up the beaks than one on his own, and we don't want to risk that."

"What's up, Blake?" called out several juniors. The entire dormitory was awake now.

"Nothing much!" answered Blake. "Someone I thought had better sense making an ass of himself—that's all!"

"Oh!"

"It's Herries!" sniggered Baggy Trimble, from his bed.

"Herries on the tiles, you know! He, he, he!"

"By Jove!"

"Herries, of all men!"

"Would you believe it?"

There was a buzz of surprise in the dormitory.

"Fancy Herries!" chuckled Mellish. "Herries the Good, the apple of his kind teacher's eye, and all that sort of thing, you know! What a show-up!"

"Can it, Mellish!" snapped Jack Blake.

Mellish "canned" it. But the rest continued to comment on the surprising discovery. They simply couldn't make it out.

"Mean to say you don't know where he's gone, Blake?" asked Levison.

"No idea whatever," answered Blake. "I only wish I did know; I'd go after the silly ass! But, anyway, I'll make sure he doesn't do it again!"

"He, he, he! I know! And I don't think there'll be any need for you to stop him going out again, either; p'raps he may not have the chance again!"

It was Trimble's voice. Baggy Trimble was apparently enjoying the situation. There was a satisfied smirk on his fat face, and his eyes gleamed vengefully.

The rest of the Fourth looked at Trimble wonderingly.

"What's the fat ass burling about?" asked Julian.

"Ask me another! What do you know, Trimble?"

"Oh, n-n-nothing!" said Trimble, pulling himself up with a jerk at the sudden realisation that he had said rather more than he should have said. "Nothing at all, you chaps, I assure you!"

Jack Blake crossed over to the fat junior's bed and eyed him keenly.

"I'm half inclined to think you know quite a lot, though, Trimble," he said. "It would be a wonder if you didn't, anyway!"

"Bai Jove! That's true!"

"Oh, really, Gussy—"

"What did you mean by what you said just now?" demanded Blake.

"Nothing whatever, Blake, really!" replied Trimble nervously. "I don't even know he's gone to Wayland."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So he's gone to Wayland, has he?" said Blake grimly. "What else?"

"Nothing, honestly! What are you looking at me like that for, Blake? I—I'm as innocent as a babe—really! Don't you run away with the idea that I'd give the game away—I wouldn't! It's not my fault if Knox knows—"

"Knox!" gasped Blake. "Knox knows?"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"He doesn't!" said Trimble hastily. "That was what I meant, really—he doesn't! Or if he does, I assure you I didn't tell him! I should scorn to sneak. I—"

"You worm!" breathed Blake. "You've put Knox on the track! Oh, you cad!"

"Look here—" protested the fat Fourth-Former feebly.

Blake fixed a grip of iron on Trimble's podgy arm.

"Out with it—quick! The whole story!" he rapped out.

"I—I—"

"Tell me what you know, while there's time to do something!" ground out Blake, almost tearing his hair at the delay.

"Oh, lor'! It's not my fault, really!" groaned Trimble, in quite a panic now. "Herries is playing in a jazz-band at the Palm Cafe, at Wayland, every night—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"P-playing at the Palm Cafe?"

"Oh, my sainted aunt!"

"And Knox knows about it. Of course I didn't tell him. I should scorn—"

"Never mind about that. Go on!"

"Well, Knox is going with Railton and some other Sixth-Formers to the Public Hall at Wayland to-night. And I believe—mind you, I don't know—that he's going to get Railton to look in at the Palm Cafe—"

"Bai Jove!"

Jack Blake almost flung the trembling Trimble from him. "No time to waste, you chaps!" he said grimly. "You coming to Wayland with me, Gussy? And you, Dig?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You bet!"

"Get inside your togs, then! Put the light out, for goodness' sake, before somebody comes!"

Wildrake slipped out of bed and did the needful, and

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Herries' three chums, with frantic haste, tumbled into their clothes.

"We shall have to force the door of the bike-shed, I suppose!" muttered Blake, as he dressed.

"No need to, dear man!" drawled Ralph Reckness Cardew. "Here's a key I had made myself. I've often found it useful!"

"Gweat Scott!"

"Thanks, Cardew!" said Blake gratefully. "You chaps ready?"

"Weady for anythin', deah boy!"

"Come on, then!"

Leaving the dormitory fairly buzzing with excitement, Jack Blake & Co. departed.

## CHAPTER 15.

### Too Late!

"Q U I E T!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Quiet, you ass!"

"I was merely pointin' out that I wealise the necessity for our bein' quiet, deah boy!"

"Oh crikey! Suffocate him, Dig!"

"Wats!"

Jack Blake, Digby, and D'Arcy were creeping along in the shadow of the School House, towards the bike-shed. Lights were still glimmering in several of the windows, the masters and some of the seniors having not yet retired. The utmost caution was necessary. Hence Blake's warning. Hence, also, D'Arcy's enthusiastic but embarrassing approval of Blake's warning.

"We shall have to dash across the grass now," said Blake softly as they reached the last sheltered point before the bike-shed was attained. "Run like the dickens. The longer we're out in the open, the more likelihood there is of our being spotted, remember."

"Wight-ho, deah boy!"

"Now!" murmured Blake. "All together!"

The three raced across the open as one man, scudding swiftly and silently across the turf, and not pausing until the shadow of the bike-shed was reached.

"Good biz!" panted Blake, looking back keenly towards the School House to see whether there were any signs of their having been observed. "Everything O.K., I think. Now for the bikes!"

He turned to the door of the shed, and inserted Cardew's key in the keyhole. There was a click, and the lock turned easily.

"Good old Cardew!" murmured Digby. "Never knew a chap so useful in emergencies!"

"He's saved us some trouble this journey, anyway!" said Blake. "Let's hope the time we've gained gets us to Wayland early enough to save old Herries."

"Bai Jove! I trust so!"

"Shin up that wall, Gus, and I'll hand you up this bike," said Digby.

Arthur Augustus looked dismayed.

"Gweat Scott! How vewy unforch!"

"What's up now?"

"Bai Jove! This is vewy wotten! In the excitement up in the dorm I forgot that we should have some climbin' to do. I have put on one of my best pairs of twousahs."

"Oh, you—"

"Don't argue! Dump the dummy on the wall!" snapped Jack Blake. "I'll give the silly ass best trousers!"

There was a gasp from the swell of the Fourth, as he felt himself lifted bodily off his feet and bundled up towards the top of the ivy-covered wall.

"You feahful wottahs! My twousahs—"

"Blow your trousers!" snorted Blake. "Grab that wall—quick!"

And Arthur Augustus, faced with the possible alternative of coming a terrific cropper, grabbed the wall, and climbed on to the top.

After that the swell of the Fourth apparently abandoned all hope of saving his immaculate nether garments. At any rate, he uttered no further complaints, and worked with a will to get the bikes transferred to the other side of the wall.

In a remarkably short space of time the three machines were standing up against the wall on the other side, and Blake and Digby were lowering themselves down to the spot where their chum was already standing.

"So far, so good!" remarked Blake. "And now to break all the road records ever known! Must light up, I suppose. Got some matches, either of you?"

Digby obliged with the matches, and they lighted their lamps.

A few seconds later they had mounted and were racing down the lane.

Very few words were exchanged on the journey. The juniors needed all their breath for the work in hand, and certainly the speed at which they travelled left them with very little breath for talking purposes.

One single idea actuated all three of them—Herries had to be saved! And that idea was sufficient to inspire them to an effort of speed which in other circumstances they might have regarded as impossible.

Just exactly why Herries had behaved as he had, they didn't know—and, furthermore, didn't care. Herries was their chum—the chum who had certainly been a little "stand-offish" and strange for a few days, but their chum, for all that. And Herries was in danger of being caught out of bounds by the "beaks." That was quite enough for Blake & Co., and as they flew along through the dark, whispering lanes, their thoughts were dwelling not on the strangeness of Herries' behaviour, but on the great problem of whether they would arrive in time to get him away from the danger that threatened.

The lights of the old town glimmered in the distance at last.

"Another five minutes will do it, now," gasped Blake. "Can you manage a spurt, you chaps?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Go ahead, then!"

A clock began to chime in the centre of the town.

"Half-past ten!" muttered Digby. "It'll be touch-and-go, and no mistake!"

"Hurry, for goodness' sake!" said Blake, between his teeth.

With a final tremendous burst of speed the trio raced through the outskirts of Wayland and came into the High Street at last.

"No sign of Railton or the others, yet," said Blake.

"Bai Jove! But the people are just comin' out of the Public Hall down the woad, deah boys!"

"So they are! Sharp's the word!"

With frantic haste the juniors finished the few remaining yards of their journey and drew up outside the Palm Cafe.

"All coming in?" asked Blake.

"What-ho! Then if he starts arguing, we can yank him out between us!"

"That's it! Come on, then!"

The chums of the Fourth raced up the steps and went into the cafe.

Chick's Orpheans were just finishing a tune as they entered, and roars of applause were echoing through the crowded room. Herries of St. Jim's was seated at the back of the orchestra and partly obscured by the piano. But the juniors recognised his face instantly.

"Bai Jove! There he is, deah boys!"

Without standing on ceremony, Blake & Co. rushed down the aisle between the rows of surprised diners and made for the platform, where Herries was idly fingering his cornet.

The Fourth-Former nearly jumped out of his chair at the sight of them.

"What the merry dickens—" he gasped.

"Get up and come out, as quickly as you can!" rapped out Jack Blake. "Knox is bringing Railton here in a minute."

"Oh, great pip!"

"What's that?" interrupted Mr. Charlie Chick, turning round with a stare. "Hallo, hello! Some more of your young friends! What's your little game, boys?"

"Good evenin', Mr. Chick! I twust you are vewy well, sir. If I might explain—" began Arthur Augustus genially.

"No time for your explanations, Gussy," broke in Blake.

"To put it in a nutshell, sir, one of our masters is on the track of Herries, and we've got to get him away."

"Oh! That's bad! Can I help?"

"I'm afraid not," said Herries hastily picking up his cornet. "This looks like the finish of my engagement with you, worst luck! I'm afraid I shall have to bunk now."

Mr. Chick pulled a wry face.

"Very well! I suppose we couldn't expect it to last long! Come and see me again—the rest of you included!"

"We will!" promised the juniors.

"And now for a dash!" said Blake, leading the way out of the restaurant. "Got your bike, Herries?"

"It's in the porch, with the porter."

"Good egg!"

The chums of Study No. 6 hurried across the room to the exit.

"With luck, we'll just dodge them," muttered Blake.

"Here we are, Herries— Oh, my hat!"

Just as they were about to step through the door, they walked right into the arms of Mr. Railton!

"Oh, crumbs!"

The four juniors let out a simultaneous groan.

Behind the Housemaster they could see the little group of seniors—Gerald Knox amongst them.

One glance at the cad of the Sixth, an undisguised expression of malicious triumph on his face, was sufficient to show that he had carried out his scheme of revenge.

Mr. Railton fixed a terrifying look on the chums of Study No. 6.

"You boys will accompany me back to the school at once!" he said sternly. "I will inquire into this affair in the morning."

Without a word, Blake & Co. followed the Housemaster into the street, and the whole party mounted.

The ride back to St. Jim's was accomplished in silence, and it was a woebegone quartette indeed that entered the Fourth Form dormitory that night, with the knowledge that trouble, with a capital "T," awaited them on the morrow.

## CHAPTER 16.

### All Serene!

ON the following morning, a serious-faced assembly paraded in Mr. Railton's study at St. Jim's.

Herries was there, looking pale and ill-at-ease.

Blake and D'Arcy and Digby, ranged in a row near their chum, looked equally uneasy, though not so pale, for they, unlike him, had not gone four nights out of five with half the usual allowance of sleep. Gerald Knox, who had the pleasant task of conducting the quartette from their Form-room, looked grave like the rest, but a gleam in his shifty eyes belied the appearance of the rest of his countenance.

"Perhaps you had better remain, Knox," said Mr. Railton.

"Very well, sir."

Mr. Railton turned to the juniors.

"Now that you are all here, we will inquire into last night's extraordinary affair," he said, eyeing them sternly. "I gathered from such disjointed explanations as I was able to get from you, that Herries was the first to break bounds, and that the rest of you came on after. Is that so?"

Jack Blake compressed his lips.

"If you don't mind, sir, we would rather you dealt with us all together."

"Yaas, wathah! I assuah you, sir, we would wathah share and share alike—"

"Silence, D'Arcy!"

"Certainly, Mr. Railton! I was merely explainin'—"

"Will you please remain silent?"

Arthur Augustus decided that perhaps silence was advisable. He gave it up.

"Now, Herries. May I inquire what induced you to break bounds to visit a Wayland restaurant, and at such an hour?"

Mr. Railton's tone was icy. It was quite clear that he regarded the whole matter in a most serious light.

Herries hesitated. Now that the time for explanation had come, it seemed almost disrespectful to inform the Housemaster that he had been playing in the restaurant band.

But Herries was not the kind to beat about the bush for long. He braced himself up.

"I went to play my cornet in the orchestra there, sir," he answered, in a low voice.

Mr. Railton jumped.

"You—you went there to play in the orchestra!" he stuttered. "Upon my word! The matter is even worse than I thought!"

The juniors fidgetted uncomfortably.

"Is this the first time such an event has occurred?" demanded the Housemaster.

"No, sir. I've been going there every night since last Thursday, with the exception of Sunday."

Mr. Railton's look became almost terrifying.

"Every night since last Thursday!" he articulated.

"Upon my word!"

Blake & Co. looked at each other hopelessly. Rarely had they seen Mr. Railton in such a disturbed state. It certainly looked as if Herries was "for it" with a vengeance.

But the darkest hour is always before the dawn. And so it proved on this occasion.

While the juniors stood nervously in front of the Housemaster's desk there came a welcome relief to the tension, in the shape of a sudden scuffle in the passage outside.

A moment later there was a knock on the door, and Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, entered the room, leading by the ear the podgy person of Bagley Trimble.

"Excuse the interruption, Mr. Railton," said Mr. Lathom apologetically. "Trimble, here, asked to be allowed to leave the Form-room a few minutes ago, on the plea that

he felt ill. Being a little suspicious, I came out after him, and discovered him listening outside your door."

Mr. Railton glared at the wretched Trimble.

"Trimble! Boy! How dare you!"

"Oh crikey! I wasn't listening at all, sir!" bumbled the fat Fourth-Former. "If you think I'm interested in Herries breaking bounds, you're mistaken; because I'm not! Not me, sir!"

Mr. Railton picked up a cane from his desk, and Trimble's fat knees began to knock together.

"I was only tying up my shoelace, sir, really!" he wailed.

"Surely you're not going to—"

"No, I am not going to cane you for tying up your shoelace, Trimble," said Mr. Railton grimly. "You know better than that, I imagine!"

Trimble's woebegone countenance took on an expression of surprise. The fat Fourth-Former was not very quick on the uptake, and for a moment he wondered what other crime he had committed besides eavesdropping.

Then he had a sudden idea—an idea which, strangely enough, led to the complete undoing of Knox.

"Oh crumbs! So Knox has sneaked!" he groaned.

"Look here, sir, don't you believe Knox; he's lying!"

"What?"

"I shouldn't take Knox's word if I were you!" jabbered Trimble. "Everybody knows what a fibber he is, sir; and if he's been telling you I went down to Wayland last Friday to find out about Herries—"

"Boy!"

"Then all I can say is he's deceiving you!" finished Trimble.

"Are you telling me that you broke bounds to follow Herries last Friday?" thundered Mr. Railton.

"Oh dear! Certainly not, sir! I suppose that's what Knox told you; but he's fibbing!" gasped Trimble. "When I told Knox about Herries on Saturday morning—"

"He's wandering in his mind!" burst out Knox harshly. "Don't you think he had better be taken to the sanatorium, sir?"

"I do not, Knox!" replied Mr. Railton very emphatically. "Trimble, you say you told Knox about Herries last Saturday morning?"

"Yes, sir. Not that I had actually seen Herries, mind you, sir. Nothing of the kind! You see—"

"I quite understand!" interrupted Mr. Railton grimly.

"Knox!"

"Ye-es, sir?"

"I naturally assumed when you called my attention to the presence of a St. Jim's boy at Wayland last night that you knew nothing about it before that time."

"Neither did I!" declared Knox desperately. "It's all a tissue of lies—"

"Pray do not express yourself so strongly, Knox! Do you positively deny, then, that you knew of Herries' playing in that orchestra before last night?"

Knox licked his dry lips. He had no scruples about denying anything. But he could tell by the look in Mr. Railton's eyes that the Housemaster meant to get to the bottom of the business, and he divined that complete and utter denial might place him in a very awkward position if all the facts came out.

"I—I admit certainly that I heard Trimble spin some yarn or other, but I naturally paid no heed to it at the time," he stammered.

Mr. Railton's eyes gleamed.

"You did not, by any chance, apply for permission to come with me to Wayland with the deliberate idea of putting Herries into my hands and making the case against him as black as possible?" he snapped.

Knox turned white. Mr. Railton seemed to be getting uncomfortably near the truth.

"How can you think such a thing, sir?" he muttered.

"We will go into that later," said Mr. Railton coldly. "You may remain here, Trimble. Mr. Lathom, if you wish to leave I do not want to detain you any longer."

Mr. Lathom quietly withdrew; and Mr. Railton turned to Herries. His expression this time was considerably less terrifying than it had been prior to Trimble's entrance.

"Reverting to the matter of your breaking bounds, Herries. Have you any reasonable explanation to offer for your extraordinary behaviour in breaking bounds to play in a Wayland restaurant orchestra at night?"

Blake, D'Arcy, and Digby brightened visibly. Mr. Railton's tone was considerably more promising than it had been when he last addressed Herries.

"Well, sir, I didn't do it for fun exactly," replied Herries. "I only intended keeping it up for a week, anyway. The fact was that I was badly in need of five pounds—"

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, remembering the occasion when Herries had tried to borrow that sum from him.

"And that was the only way I could see of earning it," concluded the musician of the Fourth.

"Bless my soul! And pray what was your reason for requiring such a large sum of money?" asked the Housemaster.

"Well, you see, sir, Towser—"

"Towser?"

"My bulldog, you know, sir! He brought down a cyclist in the lane, and smashed up his bike. The chap threatened to make a law case of it unless I paid him a fiver."

"Good gracious! Why did you not report the circumstances to me, then, Herries?"

"Well, sir, I—I thought perhaps as Towser has been so unlucky lately, you might order me to get rid of him."

"I see," said Mr. Railton, with a faint smile. "In other words, you broke bounds in order that the matter might be kept quiet, thus ensuring the retention of your dog in the school kennels?"

"That's it, sir!"

Mr. Railton shook his head.

"I understand. Nevertheless, your behaviour was inexcusable, Herries. You will be detained next Wednesday afternoon, and you will do me five hundred lines. And, of course, you will appreciate that this must not occur again!"

"Oh, quite, sir! Thank you very much indeed!" gasped Herries, almost overwhelmed.

"And now, what of the rest of you? You were not members of the orchestra, too, I presume?"

"They went after Herries, sir, to tell him Knox and you were on the track," explained Trimble. "It was like this, sir—"

"That will do, Trimble! Blake, D'Arcy, and Digby, you will each do me five hundred lines!"

"Yes, sir!" chorused the three, with the utmost cheerfulness.

"As for you, Trimble, I begin to believe you are hopeless," said Mr. Railton. "Apparently you broke bounds to spy on Herries, and afterwards repeated what you had seen from purely vindictive motives. You will report to me after morning lessons for punishment."

"Ow!"

"You may all return to your Form-room now. Knox, kindly remain here!"

"Yes, sir!"

The juniors trooped out with joyful grins on their faces, leaving the black sheep of the Sixth, with a scowl on his face, and bitterness in his heart, to endeavour to explain away his part in the affair to Mr. Railton—a task which the juniors knew would prove formidable.

Once again, in the old feud between Knox and the chums of the Fourth, Knox had nearly won. But at the very last moment victory had been snatched from him, and he had come the cropper of his life instead.

"Well, of all the old asses!" said Blake, at the celebration tea that was held in Study No. 6 that evening.

"Of all the chumps—" grinned Tom Merry.

"I'm the biggest!" finished Herries, with a smile.

"Well, I can see it now, chaps. I ought to have told you about that accident of Towser's at the start. But, I thought, as you were a bit fed-up with Towser—"

"You'd be independent!" said Blake. "And all the trouble was over a paltry fiver! Gussy!"

"What's the mattah, deah boy?"

"Didn't you get a remittance from home this morning?"

"Yass, wathah! A tennah, as a mattah of fact! But what—"

"Lend Herries a fiver of it!"

"Bai Jove! With pleasuah!"

And Arthur Augustus produced a wad of Treasury notes. "Two will do now," grinned Herries. "Thanks very much, Gussy!"

"And if, after this, we hear you ever suggest breaking bounds to play jazz again," said Blake solemnly, "we'll shove that cornet of yours on the fire!"

Herries shook his head.

"Four nights of it out of the last five have been just about enough to last me a lifetime," he said. "I'm through!"

And Herries meant it. After that day he gave St. Jim's no further cause for endowing him with the name of the Jazz Schoolboy!

THE END.

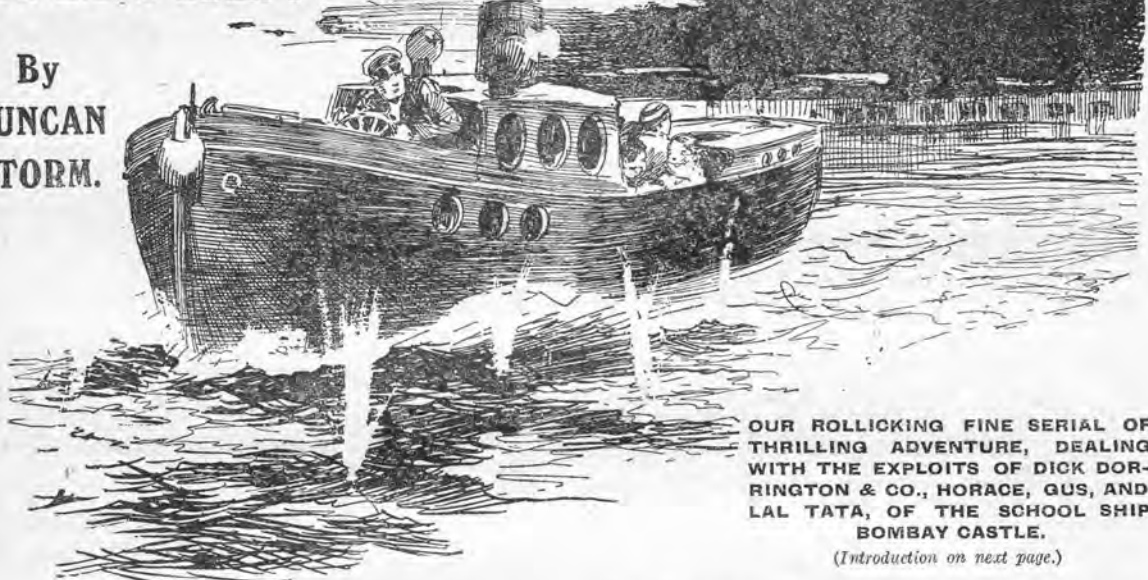
(You all like stories featuring Ralph Reckness Cardew, don't you, chums? Well look out for: "JUST LIKE CARDEW!" next week's magnificent yarn of Tom Merry and Co. That it's a winner goes without saying.)

## ADVENTURES IN THE EAST!

What ADVENTURES— What PERILS— What BREATHLESS EXPLOITS the Bombay Castle gang go through! And they glory in them; live for them! You'd be just the same if you were out East with the gang—and you can be by following their adventures in the story below!

# CHUMS OF THE BOMBAY CASTLE!

By  
**DUNCAN  
STORM.**



OUR ROLICKING FINE SERIAL OF THRILLING ADVENTURE, DEALING WITH THE EXPLOITS OF DICK DORRINGTON & CO., HORACE, GUS, AND LAL TATA, OF THE SCHOOL SHIP BOMBAY CASTLE.

(Introduction on next page.)

## "Exchange is no Robbery!"

IT was a menacing and ugly crowd that surged about the harbour pier of Bungaloo, full of suspicions and doubt. Waterside mobs in all parts of the world are none too gentle. But this particular gang of pirates had too many affairs of piracy on their conscience to appreciate a visit from a white launch such as the Duty Steamboat.

They connected her with official inquiries which were not without results in those seas.

As a rule, the inhabitants of Bungaloo carried on the old-established trade of small piracy unchecked. They put out false lights and looted wrecked junks. The various Governments of China had so much trouble on at home that they did not worry much about a few missing tripang, or rice junks.

The crowd round the pier was puzzled by the sultan's conduct. The "D.S.B." had been sighted off the coast before dusk, and instructions had been given that should she enter the harbour she was to be trapped by the chains, and all her crew arrested and brought to the palace for trial.

This had been done.

Now they had returned from the palace in company with the sultan as his dearest pals. They had even chummed up with the sacred white elephant, which was never seen outside the palace walls and was not supposed even to be looked at by the common people.

It is said that a cat may look at a king, but no inhabitant of Bungaloo was allowed to look at the white elephant. And this superstition was general, save amongst the Chinese and mixed pickles of the port who were mostly in the pay of the sultan.

Mr. Pugsley had slipped off the elephant's neck, and was now standing arm-in-arm with the young sultan like the closest of pals, watching the longshore gang who were bringing the "D.S.B." alongside the prahu, moored to the harbour wall.

No wonder the crowd of yellow, brown, and black men gathered around were suspicious and doubtful.

They did not like Mr. Pugsley's Navy-pattern, white-topped cap. It reminded them of cruisers with long-range guns.

"You'll come aboard and 'ave one!" said Mr. Pugsley.

"I do not drink," answered the sultan sullenly.

"Oh, you can 'ave a small ginger ale or a lemon squash an' soda!" said Mr. Pugsley amiably. "We 'aven't got any penny ices on board. But you will drop down in the cabin with a few of our nibs, and you will stay there till I've overhauled the ship and seen if any of your J. Hawkinses have been over her."

A gangway was laid down to the deck of the prahu, and Mr. Pugsley and the sultan, arm-in-arm, walked down it.

A murmur went up from the crowd.

"These Feringhee dogs are taking our sultan!" were the words that went from mouth to mouth.

The crowd surged forward on the party, but the boys, carrying Cecil on their shoulders, barged the end of the cricket bag into their faces; and Porkis, who was leading Horace, turned on them.

"Stop crowding," said he, "or I'll let the goat loose!"

The sultan heard the murmuring, and he turned to the mob.

"These are my friends," said he. "They are not taking me away. I pay them a visit on their ship before they depart in peace."

The crowd were silent at this, and their minds were again confused by the sight of John Henry shaking "hands" with his trunk all round. And having shaken hands once he shook hands again.

Mr. Pugsley, with a cold chill crawling up his back lest this happy state of things should be upset by any untoward incident, handed the sultan carefully down from the prahu to the Duty Steamboat, whilst the two watchmen gladly hopped ashore.

He put the sultan down in the cabin, and told Skeleton to give him a bottle of ginger-beer and a bun.

Old Gus was handed aboard and placed in the engine-room, whilst Mr. Pugsley ran over his beloved engine to see that it had not been messed about with.

There was a stir amongst the sullen crowd as the engine started running. But, as there was no sign of casting off the mooring-ropes, they became reassured again. They did not know much about motors in Bungaloo, and many of the

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inhabitants still thought that steamships were moved by fire-dragons which were imprisoned in their stomachs.

Down in the cabin the sultan glowered at the boys.

"Here you are, sultan," said Skeleton hospitably. "Have a glass of pop and a stodger!"

"I do not want pop! I do not want stodgers!" growled the sultan. "I am a prisoner, and I will not break bread with you. I hate the English! I was at school in England. I know you! You are dogs!"

"Steady on, sultan," said Skeleton reproachfully. "We aren't asking you to break bread with us, we are asking you to break a stodger, and a drop of ginger-beer won't do you any harm. What did they do to you in England that you hate us so?"

The sultan glowered at Skeleton as if he would like to knife him.

"I went to Hamilton House School," said he, "and there was a boy called Donkin who kicked me and called me 'nigger.' He made me black his boots, and treated me as a slave. He rubbed raspberry jam on my head, and forced me to cook sausages of pig flesh which is abomination!"

"Did he, now!" said Skeleton, chewing a bun. "And do you mean to say that you went to Hamilton House School with Donkin, the Kid Killer? Bully Donkin?"

"It is so," replied the sultan. "By the beard of the Prophet it is so. He hit me kicks and bruised my sit place, and he hit balls at cricket and made me run after them like a dog, this Bully Donkin."

"You poor beggar!" said Skeleton, forgetting all resentment against the sultan. "We've all been to school with Donkin. He's a dirty dog, isn't he? Did he ever give you knuckles?"

The discovery that they all knew Donkin seemed to move the sultan.

"I no longer wear a top-hat and those silly little coats—freezers, you call them," said he. "I am now a man and wear robes of state. If ever I catch this Donkey I'll throw him to my tigers! Because of Donkey I hate the English!"

"Here, steady on, sultan!" returned Dick Dorrington cheerfully. "Stop that hymn of hate! If you had left us alone to-night we would have left you alone. Have a ginger-beer if you won't have the bun. There's no pig fat in the bun, either!"

The sultan was very thirsty, and the glass of ginger-beer looked cooling.

"That man in the white cap is not going to take me away and put me in prison?" he asked.

"What Puggo?" asked Dick. "Not him. He's just holding you as hostage till he finds that everything is all right for getting clear. And look here, we took a few weapons from your bed-room walls to defend ourselves with in case your crowd turned ugly. Who shall we hand them to, ashore?"

"Keep them," said the sultan grimly. "Keep all that you have taken from my palace. You will need them to defend yourselves with if I ever catch you again; and if I catch Donkey—"

"All right," said Dick. "We'll keep your weapons, but we'll swap something in return, as all should be fair and fair. Here is my cricket bat!"

"And here's my gramophone and records," said Arty Dove generously. "There's all the Savoy Orphans and a lot of jazz stuff."

Conkey Ikestein was not going to be behind with gifts.

"For the thing I've taken," said he, "I'll swap you my camera. You can take some snaps of your old leopard and send 'em to us, care of Post Office, Singapore. We'd like a few of the elephant."

"The elephant is sacred and must not be photographed!" said the sultan.

"That doesn't matter," said Conk. "Everything is photographed nowadays for the picture papers. Don't be afraid of the elephant. He won't break the glass."

They all showered gifts on their hostage. Even the sultan's sulkiness could not stand out against their good-nature. He showed the first sign of a smile they had seen on his ugly face.

"It's an unfortunate thing, sultan," said Conkey Ikestein, "that you met Donkin at your preparatory school. He always had been a bit of a boot, that chap. And if he

hadn't ill-treated you when you were a kid we might have come and done some nice strokes of business with you."

"I don't want to do business with you," said the sultan, closing up like a sea-anemone touched on a tender spot. "I spit on the English!"

"We don't mind you spitting on us if we are doing business," said Conkey. "You have to put up with a good deal when you are doing business. Now look here, sultan!"

Conkey leaned across the table confidentially.

"Look here," said he, "I've got a knife here that's a better thing than any knife that's ever been put on the market. It's got eight blades, scissors, a corkscrew, a tin-opener, a pair of tweezers, a foot rule, a gimlet for putting your skates on, and a thing to take stones out of horses' feet. I don't know if your elephant ever gets stones in his feet," added Conkey, "but if he does this is the very knife for you! Now, I'm not going to sell you the knife," continued Conkey, working up the tale, "but I will give it to you. I will make you a present of this splendid knife if you will only tell me what you know about Claude Fairbrother and the Star of the East."

The sultan's face suddenly turned to a mask of Oriental impassiveness.

"I do not know Claude Fairbrother," said he. "I do not know the Star of the East. I know nothing!"

"Now, come on!" urged Conkey. "You are only playing hide-and-seek and puss-in-the-corner. Look at this lovely knife, and think. See if you can't remember something of Claude Fairbrother, the flapper's delight, the great movie actor, the million-dollar-a-week star?"

"I know nothing of actors or of pictures," replied the sultan. "In my Faith it is forbidden to make pictures. The Koran forbids it."

"Does it say anything about photographs?" asked Conkey.

But the sultan did not answer. Mr. Pugsley cut the questioning short by calling down the skylight.

"Tell that kiddo to drink up his ginger-beer," said he. "We are all clear and ready for sea. He can come up out of the cabin now!"

### Treachery!

A SIGH that was a sigh of relief went up from the mob on the wharf as they saw their ruler appear again, laden with presents.

The boys led him to the side of the landing-stage and helped him aboard with his parcels.

"Don't forget to send us a few snapshots!" were Skeleton's parting words as the ropes were cast off and the Duty Steamboat turned her bows for the harbour mouth.

"All down below, boys!" said Mr. Pugsley, in a low voice, as he set the engine running full speed for the harbour mouth.

The boys looked at one another in surprise, but they went down into the cabin.

They saw the old elephant waving an affectionate farewell with his trunk. They saw the sultan marching up to the harbour wall, carrying his golden elephant ankus.

Then they ran through the harbour mouth with increasing speed. Mr. Pugsley gave a sigh of relief as he felt the sea under the forefoot of the gallant little craft.

"We are well out o' that," said he. "Now, Mr. Lal Tata, sir, you get below with the boys!"

"Why?" asked Mr. Lal Tata.

"You'll see why in half a mo!" said Mr. Pugsley, setting his course and dropping down low in the steering-well, getting his head behind a stout steel ventilator.

The words were hardly out of his mouth when a dozen red flashes spat from the dark shadow of the harbour wall, and six jingal balls tore up the sea about the motor-launch. Then came a rattle of musketry, which filled the air above them with missiles of all sorts.

"There goes a brass bed knob!" said Mr. Pugsley, as a whistling projectile flew close over the little vessel.

"What's all that, Puggo?" called the voice of Conkey Ikestein, from the cabin.

### INTRODUCTION.

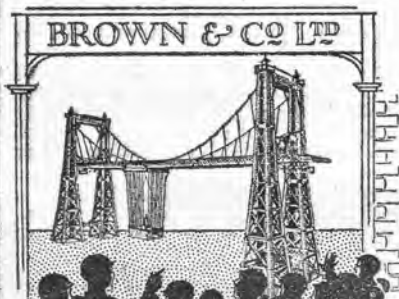
Dick Dorrington & Co., of the school ship, Bombay Castle, together with their master, Mr. Lal Tata, are detailed to search for a shipload of movie actors who have mysteriously disappeared somewhere within the vicinity of the pirate-infested Archipelagoes of Pahang. In addition to the crew are the school pets—Horace the goat, Gus the crocodile, and Cecil the ape. On nearing Bungalow the boys are captured by pirates and taken before the Sultan of Bungalow, who falsely accuses them of smuggling, and imprisons them in a leopard's cage in the palace yard. They are rescued from their perilous position, however, by the school's pets and John Henry, the sultan's sacred elephant, which proves to be an old friend of Mr. Pugsley, the Bombay Castle's gunner. Armed with choice weapons from the sultan's armoury, and headed by Mr. Pugsley, mounted astride John Henry, with the sultan as hostage, the strange procession arrives at the harbour. "Stand back for the passengers for the London boat!" cries Hamish, forcing his way through the mob to where the boat belonging to the Bombay Castle party is moored.

(Now read on.)

(Continued on page 28.)

# Boys—this is MECCANO WEEK!

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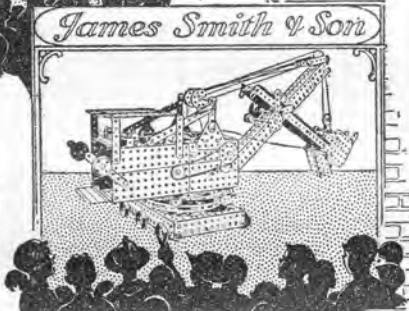
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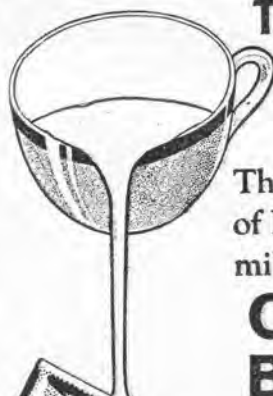
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# CHUMS of the BOMBAY CASTLE!

(Continued from page 26.)

"Those are some of the snapshots you were askin' that pudden-faced young nib to send you!" said Mr. Pugsley.

Next a large cannon boomed. But it was plain that the sultan's gunners were not up to the standard of the Regiment of Royal Artillery, for the shell roared high overhead.

"They are shootin' the moon!" said Mr. Pugsley. "In a little while we'll be out of range. Get up some blankets, boys, and hang 'em over our white paint. It makes a mark in the moonlight!"

Thus camouflaged in blankets, the Duty Steamboat threaded her way out to sea through the passages in the coral reefs, the one big gun plugging an occasional shot at it. At last it fired no more.

Mr. Pugsley gave a sigh of relief, and Mr. Lal Tata put his head out of the cabin.

"Are we safe?" he asked.

"Safe as 'ouses!" replied Mr. Pugsley. "And it's one o'clock in the morning. We can give 'em the glad riddleeo now!"

Mr. Pugsley slowed down his engine as the boys came out on the deck.

"The dirty young dog!" said Arty, with great indignation. "Why, he was as friendly as anything when he left the ship!"

"You never can tell with these Orientals!" said Mr. Pugsley, shaking his head. "You can never trust one of these niggers round the corner with the change of a half-pint, as you might say—and meaning no offence to you, sir," added Mr. Pugsley politely to Mr. Lal Tata.

"Don't mention it!" said Mr. Lal Tata, rather stiffly. "But I sincerely hope, Mr. Pugsley, that you will not lead us into any more of these hairbreadth perils. Several times to-night we have been in great danger of our health. And what have we learned of the information we came out to get, which is the whereabouts of the Star of the East and of Claude Fairbrother?"

"Why," said Mr. Pugsley, "we've learned more, maybe, than you think, Mr. Lal Tata. For instance, you'll agree that Bungalow is as big a nest of pirates as it ever was in the palmy days."

"I agree that most heartisome!" replied Mr. Lal Tata.

"Did you count the number of prahus in that little harbour?" asked Mr. Pugsley.

"No," replied Mr. Lal Tata. "I was more concerned in counting my last minutes!"

"Well, there were thirty-seven refitted, and six on the slipways," replied Mr. Pugsley, "and the dozen I had a chance of casting my optics on when I was steering that there elephant down the wall were all fitted for eight brass guns and a bow-chaser."

"It is the custom of Oriental potentates to like guns," said Mr. Lal Tata, trying to wangle out of it.

"Yes," replied Mr. Pugsley, "but not on the high seas. They're piratin' Chink junks, and they'll soon be piratin' steamers if that sleepy Dutch government what's supposed to police these seas don't look after them!"

"I don't see what all this has to do with Claude Fair-

brother and his party of movie actors and the Star of the East!" objected Lal.

"Why," replied Mr. Pugsley, "it's my belief that Claudey has been pirated, and his ship as well. He's been taking pictures round these islands, and, as like as not, flashing the quids a bit, and telling all these nibs how much he's earning—multiplied by six, as these movie stars do. Claudey's been telling 'em that he's the only thing on earth, and he's been paying them about four bob a day as supers, and they've taken him at 'is word that 'e's the big rajah, and they've pinched him and his cluck!"

"How should a dollar a day tempt them to ideas of immense riches?" asked Mr. Lal Tata, still arguing obstinately.

Mr. Pugsley gave a grunt of disapproval of Mr. Lal Tata's ignorance.

"Why," said he, "these chaps sign on for piratin' or fishin' for their rice and twopence a day. And when they see a chap throwin' 'is money about, they want to know where they come in. Stands to reason," added Mr. Pugsley, "piratin' is their trade, and fishing is their recreation."

Mr. Pugsley peered ahead over the moonlit sea. "We are now three miles from the shore," said he. "In a few minutes we'll be in the Bungalow Passage, and then we shall be all right. But, what's that?"

The engine suddenly gave a rush and a roar. Mr. Pugsley leaped into the engine-room and cut off the juice. Then he put his head up.

"What's up, Puggo?" asked Dick.

"It ain't up, it's down," said Mr. Pugsley. "Our propeller's dropped off and gone to the bottom of the briny!"

"Oh, goodness!" exclaimed Mr. Lal Tata. "We are dogged by direful misfortunes! Our lucks are out. Can they see us from the shore?"

"Considering that all these Malays have got eyes like toments at night," replied Mr. Pugsley, "I should say that in a few minutes that lot of lads will be getting their sweeps out, and after us. There's no wind, and if we hoisted the sail, they would see there was something wrong, and give chase just the same."

"Have you got another propeller on board?" asked Mr. Lal Tata.

"Don't talk silly! Of course I have! Would you go away for a fortnight's holiday without a spare shirt?" said Mr. Pugsley. "I got three spare propellers on board. You can lose 'em in these parts like collar-studs. Maybe we've hit a bit of coral, and that's cut the shear-pin. More likely some o' them corner-boys got at it while she was in the harbour mouth. Tried to pinch it for old brass, I expect. Pinch anything, they would!"

Mr. Pugsley hove the lead.

"We can drop the anchor," said he. "It's not a matter of spare propellers. It's a matter of getting it on afore those roosters are after us. The tide is running in strong through this passage. Let her go, or we'll be on the rocks if we don't watch out!"

The anchor flew out and held in the coral bed.

(The chums of the Bombay Castle seem to be dogged with misfortune, don't they, chums? But do they care? No, not a bit of it! Make sure you follow up their exciting adventures by reading next week's gripping instalment.)

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